

The DAWN

VOLUME No. LXXXI, Number 8
(USPS 149-380), August 2013

TABLE OF CONTENTS

First-class postage paid at Rutherford, NJ. Published monthly by The Dawn Bible Students Association, 199 Railroad Avenue, East Rutherford, NJ 07073. \$12.00 a year.

ARGENTINA: A. Lupsor, Calle Almirante Brown 684, Monte Grande C.P., 1842 Buenos Aires

AUSTRALIA: Berean Bible Institute, P.O. Box 402, Rosanna, Victoria 3084

BRAZIL: A Aurora, Caixa Postal 77204, Nova Iguaçu, Rio de Janeiro, CEP 26210-970

BRITISH ISLES: Associated Bible Students, 102 Broad Street, Chesham, HP5 3ED, England

CANADA: P.O. Box 1565, Vernon, British Columbia, V1T 8C2

FRANCE: L'Aurore, 45, Avenue de Gouvieux, 60260, Lamorlaye

GERMANY: Tagesanbruch Bibelstudien-Vereinigung, Postfach 1103, 64368 Ober-Ramstadt

GREECE: He Haravgi (The Dawn), 33-33 149th Street, Flushing, NY 11354 USA

INDIA: The Dawn, Blessington, #34, Serpentine Street, Richmond Town, Bangalore 560025

SPAIN/ITALY: El Alba/Aurora, L. Cacioppo, Via Ignazio Paterno N2, 92100 Agrigento, Italy

HIGHLIGHTS OF DAWN

Permission of Evil

Part 1—The Reason 2

Part 2—The Result 24

INTERNATIONAL BIBLE STUDIES

Festival of Booths 16

Community of Confession 18

Dedication of the Wall 20

Sabbath Reforms 22

CHRISTIAN LIFE AND DOCTRINE

The Mind of Christ—Part 8

Claiming Christ's Promise—

"Fear Not, Little Flock" 37

The Christian's Four Freedoms 50

Weekly Prayer Meeting Texts 15

OBITUARIES 15

SPEAKERS' APPOINTMENTS 62

CONVENTIONS 63

Permission of Evil

Part 1—The Reason

“Of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.”
—Genesis 2:17

WHY DOES GOD PERMIT

all the evil and suffering that is in the world today? This question is asked in time of war when cities are destroyed, and the young, the old, the infants, the righteous, the wicked, the believers and

the unbelievers perish because of man's inhumanity to man. It is asked by those who experience or observe suffering on beds of sickness. Why does God allow an innocent baby to sicken and die? Why does he permit the unrighteous to prosper, while his own faithful people often experience hardships?

Then there are those who are killed or injured by natural disasters such as hurricanes, typhoons, earthquakes, tsunamis, floods, and, most recently, the horrific tornadoes in Oklahoma, and the wild-fires in Arizona which claimed the lives of nineteen firefighters just days before this writing—cannot God do something about these things? When we

read and hear of such events, the question arises concerning this terrible loss of life, "Has God no pity?" Indeed, there are countless situations in which man, who the Bible says was created in the image of God, experiences suffering, and, of course, finally death.

This situation is not limited to our generation, nor is it confined to one part of the earth; it is universal. As far back as history reaches, man has suffered and died in war, in pestilence, in famine, in calamities, in sickness and disease. All in every generation have died, having been beaten down by the great enemy, Death. Abel, a son of Adam, whose sacrifice was pleasing to God, was the first to suffer and die, being murdered by his brother, Cain. Today, over 150,000 humans die worldwide every twenty-four hours. Our hospitals, nursing homes, mental institutions, and many other kinds of care facilities are filled with the suffering and dying. No wonder many question where God is, and what he is doing about the distresses of his human creatures.

JOB SEEKS THE ANSWER

The question of why God permits evil is not a new one. It has been asked by thinking men and women throughout the ages. Thousands of years ago, Job, a faithful servant of God, became personally concerned with discovering the meaning of his own suffering. The record of this is found in the book of the Bible which bears his name. The first verse of this book informs us that Job was an upright man who feared God and shunned sin.

To begin with, Job was a prosperous man, abundantly blessed by God along material lines. The

record is that "his substance . . . was seven thousand sheep, and three thousand camels, and five hundred yoke of oxen, and five hundred she asses, and a very great household; so that this man was the greatest of all the men of the east." (Job 1:3) Job was also blessed with a large family, and he desired that they too should be blessed by the Lord. Job prayed for his family, and offered sacrifices, because, as he said, "It may be that my sons have sinned, and cursed God in their hearts." (vss. 4,5) Job felt, apparently, that in the event that his sons had sinned, his prayers on their behalf would be heard and favorably answered.

However, experiences were ahead for Job for which he was not wholly prepared. Satan, the great adversary of God and men, charged that this servant of the Lord was loyal to God only because his loyalty had been bought by the abundance of good things with which he had been blessed. In answer to this charge, God permitted Satan to inflict calamities upon Job to test his fidelity. God had no doubt about the outcome of this trial, and in his wisdom knew that any temporary suffering he permitted to come into Job's life would, in the end, prove to be a great blessing to him.

Job did experience great trouble. The record states: "There was a day when his sons and his daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house: and there came a messenger unto Job, and said, The oxen were plowing, and the asses feeding beside them: And the Sabeans fell upon them, and took them away; yea, they have slain the servants with the edge of the sword; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee. While he was

yet speaking, there came also another, and said, The fire of God is fallen from heaven, and hath burned up the sheep, and the servants, and consumed them; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee. While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, The Chaldeans made out three bands, and fell upon the camels, and have carried them away, yea, and slain the servants with the edge of the sword; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee. While he was yet speaking, there came also another, and said, Thy sons and thy daughters were eating and drinking wine in their eldest brother's house: and, behold, there came a great wind from the wilderness, and smote the four corners of the house, and it fell upon the young men, and they are dead; and I only am escaped alone to tell thee."—vss. 13-19

JOB STILL LOYAL

Job's reaction to these evil tidings was: "Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD." We read that "in all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly." (vss. 21,22) Then God permitted further troubles to come upon Job. His health was taken away. He was smitten with "boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown. And he took him a potsherd to scrape himself withal; and he sat down among the ashes." (chap. 2:7,8) Then Job's wife turned against him, and said, "Curse God, and die." To this Job replied, "Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?"—vs. 10

Job did not turn away from God when trouble came upon him, as so many throughout the ages have done. His chief concern was to know why God permitted him to be afflicted with such bitter experiences, and throughout his book we find evidences of his search for this understanding. After Job was stricken down with disease, three of his friends visited him for the supposed purpose of giving comfort. Later in the book we are informed that these three did not speak the truth concerning God, implying that the viewpoints they expressed to Job were not correct.—Job 42:7

There is chapter after chapter of philosophizing and interchange on the part of Job and his three friends. However, what it all amounted to was that, according to Job's friends, he was suffering because he had committed some gross sins which he was hiding from them, and for which he had not repented and sought God's forgiveness. Job, of course, knew that he was not perfect, but he also knew that he had not willfully transgressed God's laws, so he could not accept this explanation.

WHY DO EVIL MEN PROSPER?

Job knew that, while as a servant of God he was now suffering, frequently evil men prospered, and apparently escaped the evils that come upon so many. So in answer to his friends, he said, "Wherefore do the wicked live, become old, yea, are mighty in power? Their seed is established in their sight with them, and their offspring before their eyes. Their houses are safe from fear, neither is the rod of God upon them. Their bull gendereth, and faileth not; their cow calveth, and casteth not her calf.

They send forth their little ones like a flock, and their children dance. They take the timbrel and harp, and rejoice at the sound of the organ. They spend their days in wealth, and in a moment go down to the grave [without suffering a long, painful illness].”—chap. 21:7-13

Job knew that the explanation offered by his friends was not the true one, yet he did not understand why God was allowing him to suffer so severely. In a beautiful, poetic manner he describes his search for an understanding of God in the light of his own experiences, saying, “Behold, I go forward, but he is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive him: On the left hand, where he doth work, but I cannot behold him: he hideth himself on the right hand, that I cannot see him; But he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold.”—chap. 23:8-10

Job realized, by faith, that there was a divine purpose for his being tried so severely, but he had not yet discovered that purpose. He also knew that if he maintained his integrity before God he would pass the test successfully, and would “come forth as gold.” Job’s wife wanted him to curse God, but he knew this would be foolish. In all ages, there have been those professed believers who, when affliction came upon them, have wondered where God was, and what he was doing to protect their interests. Many such have even turned against God, but faithful Job did not.

GOD’S REPLY

Beginning with chapter 38 of the Book of Job we find God’s answer to Job’s searching. This answer

is couched largely in question form. The many questions were designed to remind Job that he really knew very little about God, and because of his limited knowledge in every field where the Lord manifests himself, he should not be surprised at failing to comprehend fully why he was being permitted to suffer.

This is an important viewpoint for us to keep in mind when we ask why God does not do something about human suffering, are we not assuming that if God had the intelligence we possess he certainly would do something? Then, perhaps, if we do not see our wishes carried out, we may tend to doubt that there is a God. If we should find ourselves guilty of such faulty reasoning, it would be well to consider the questions which God asked Job.

There are four chapters of these questions. They all concern the wonders of God's creation. God asks Job if he was present when he laid the foundations of the earth—if he understood the laws by which the tides of the sea were controlled. He asks him about the instincts and habits of the various birds and animals, and even of the great creatures of the sea. Then Job is asked if he can explain the wisdom and power that are represented in these marvels of creation.

As the questioning proceeds, Job interrupts and says, "Behold, I am vile; what shall I answer thee? I will lay mine hand upon my mouth. Once have I spoken; but I will not answer: yea, twice; but I will proceed no further." (Job 40:4,5) In Job's expression, "Behold, I am vile," the meaning of the Hebrew word translated vile is, according to Prof. Strong, literally, "swift, small, sharp." Apparently Job was

acknowledging to God that he had spoken too quickly—that his viewpoint was too limited, and that it was voiced too sharply.

IMPORTANT LESSON FOR ALL

Job was now beginning to understand his own proper position before the Lord—that it was not for him to judge God according to his own limited understanding, and then so freely to speak his opinions when he really knew little about the matter. This is also a good lesson for all of us. The basic fact is that the world is filled with evil. It is not for us to lose faith in God because of this, or even to criticize him. Our proper attitude should be one of humility, and of earnestly seeking the answer to our questions from the only proper source, which is the Word of God.

God's questions continued, and eventually Job spoke again, saying, "I know that thou canst do every thing, and that no thought can be withholden from thee. Who is he that hideth counsel without knowledge? therefore have I uttered that I understood not; things too wonderful for me, which I knew not. Hear, I beseech thee, and I will speak: I will demand of thee, and declare thou unto me. I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee."—chap. 42:2-5

Job finally learned the meaning of his severe trial. He learned that its loving purpose was to give him a clearer understanding of God, that he might serve him more faithfully and with greater appreciation. He speaks of this clearer understanding as "seeing" the Lord, instead of merely having heard about him. Since he had gained such a wealth of

understanding, Job's brief period of suffering must have seemed to him to have been a most valuable experience.

Besides restoring Job's health, we read that "the LORD blessed the latter end of Job more than his beginning: for he had fourteen thousand sheep, and six thousand camels, and a thousand yoke of oxen, and a thousand she asses. He had also seven sons and three daughters. . . . And in all the land were no women found as fair as the daughters of Job: and their father gave them inheritance among their brethren."—Job 42:12-15

AN ILLUSTRATION

God's design in the general permission of evil throughout the ages was, and is still today, the same as in the case of Job. He created Adam a perfect human, in his own image. Being in the image of God implied an ability to reason. One of the questions which God asked Job was, "Who hath put wisdom in the inward parts? or who hath given understanding to the heart?" (chap. 38:36) It was the Creator who had endowed Adam with the ability, through the process of reasoning, to attain knowledge and wisdom. This was in contrast to what we call instinct, which had been given to the lower animals.

However, God did not miraculously implant knowledge upon Adam's mind with the intention that he would arbitrarily be governed by this knowledge. God did not desire his human creation to be like robots, which move about mechanically and without any sense of understanding. Man was given the ability to learn, and was free to make

choices for himself by the knowledge he attained. What man would do with this knowledge was ultimately to determine his eternal destiny.

Man acquires knowledge through his five senses. He learns from observation, which is the exercise of his sense of sight. He learns from what he hears, the sense of hearing being the “antenna” which collects information. With the sense of touch, man feels pain when he comes in contact with boiling water, and learns by experience to temper the water he uses for internal and external purposes. Man smells the fragrance of a rose and is delighted by it, but turns in revolt when his sense of smell detects the presence of unpleasant odors. Man rejoices in the taste of wholesome food, but learns to avoid the eating of unpalatable things, even though his sense of sight might at first indicate that they are beautiful.

Thus we see that in the exercise of his five senses man learns from information communicated to him through observation, and through experience. According to the dictionary, man also acquires knowledge through “intuition,” but this is not strictly true, because the so-called intuition of man is based upon information already at hand. God alone possesses the inherent ability to acquire and develop knowledge entirely independent of all outside sources. The knowledge acquired by man through his claimed intuitive ability is, at best, trifling and of little value.

For man to be a faithful child of God it is essential that he receive a knowledge of evil as well as of good, that he might be able to make an intelligent choice between the two. God desires those to worship him who “worship him in spirit and in truth,”

Jesus said. (John 4:23,24) God does not desire blind worship, but a fidelity to, and trust in him which is based upon understanding and appreciation. The accomplishment of this in connection with Adam and his offspring is one of the major objectives of the permission of evil in God's great plan of human salvation from sin and death.

EXPERIENCE—THE ALL-IMPORTANT FACTOR

Right and wrong, as principles, are established by divine law. The world today is filled with war, crime, chaos, and suffering because God's laws—his standards of right and wrong—are ignored and denied. While man was endowed with a conscience, the conscience itself is not aware of what is right and what is wrong unless it is furnished with this information from an authoritative source. This source, we believe, is only to be found in the Word of God, the Bible.

Knowing that Adam possessed the ability to understand facts which were communicated to him, God placed a test of obedience upon his human son, defining the law which was involved. The Creator had provided our first parents with a wonderful home "eastward in Eden," possessing "every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food." (Gen. 2:8,9) There were the trees of life, and another which is described as "the tree of knowledge of good and evil." God commanded Adam not to partake of this particular tree, and informed him that the penalty for disobedience would be death: "In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die." (vs. 17) The Creator had a right to demand obedience from his human creature, and to sentence him to death if he disobeyed.

This demand of obedience was a divine law, and since God informed Adam that death would be the penalty for disobeying, we can say that by information he knew the result of transgression. True, Adam could not look down through the ages and visualize all the suffering and death that would be brought about by human sin and selfishness which had their beginnings in his own disobedience. However, he did know that his disobedience would lead to his own death.

However, this information was not sufficient to deter Adam from taking the wrong course. He lacked a heart understanding of what was involved in his disobedience, because his knowledge was based, not on experience, but merely on what he had been told. Doubtless, Adam loved his Creator, but perhaps falsely reasoned that since Eve had already transgressed, and would die, it would be better to die with her than to live without her. So, not having the additional strength that experience would have given him, Adam transgressed divine law and was plunged into death.

A KNOWLEDGE OF GOOD AND EVIL

In God's plan, in which he could foresee man's fall, it was Adam's freewill disobedience that was to lead ultimately to his acquiring a fuller knowledge of God and of his standards of right and wrong. The tree of which he was forbidden to partake was "the tree of knowledge of good and evil." It followed that having partaken of this tree he would gain the knowledge implied by its name, even though in the process he would need to suffer and to die.

After both Adam and Eve had partaken of the forbidden fruit, God said concerning them, "Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil." (Gen. 3:22) This does not mean that the forbidden fruit had some magical effect upon our first parents, enabling them at once to have a full knowledge of good and evil. We do read that soon after their disobedience they became ashamed of their nakedness, but this was no doubt due in part to the sense of guilt they felt in having disobeyed their Creator's command.

We think God's statement means, rather, that because of disobedience man was now destined to know both good and evil, and that he was to gain this knowledge through experience. Thus, the education of our first parents immediately began. They were driven out of their garden home into a harsh environment where they would die. They were to be plagued with all sorts of unfavorable elements, spoken of as "thorns" and "thistles," which the "cursed" ground would bring forth to them, and against which they would have to struggle until, in death, they would return to the earth from which they were taken.—vss. 17-19 ■

(This article to be continued on page 24)

*"I will sing of the LORD'S great love forever;
with my mouth I will make your faithfulness
known through all generations.*

*"I will declare that your love stands firm forever,
that you established your faithfulness
in heaven itself."*

—Psalm 89:1,2

WEEKLY PRAYER MEETING TEXTS

AUGUST 1—"Death and life are in the power of the tongue."—Proverbs 18:21 (Z. '99-75 Hymn 247A)

AUGUST 8—"Into whatsoever house ye enter, first say, Peace be to this house. And if the son of peace be there, your peace shall rest upon it: if not, it shall turn to you again."—Luke 10:5,6 (Z. '04-108 Hymn 338)

AUGUST 15—"Now we exhort you, brethren, . . . be patient toward all."—I Thessalonians 5:14 (Z. '03-24 Hymn 154)

AUGUST 22—"Wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business?"—Luke 2:49 (Z. '03-53 Hymn 261)

AUGUST 29—"Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss."—James 4:3 (Z. '03-204 Hymn 114)



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 H. B. Ramakrishnan, Ooty, TN, India—
May 27.

Sister Lois King, Fort Worth, TX—June 18. Age, 81

Sister Rebecca Hess, Columbus, OH—June 21.
Age, 56

Sister Jean Walters, York, PA—July 1. Age, 87

Brother Al Johnson, Kelso, WA—July 17. Age, 82

Sister Theodora Baracos, Pittsburgh, PA—July 21.
Age, 76

Festival of Booths

Key Verse: *“All the congregation of them that were come again out of the captivity made booths, and sat under the booths: for since the days of Jeshua the son of Nun unto that day had not the children of Israel done so. And there was very great gladness.”*
—Nehemiah 8:17

Selected Scripture:
Nehemiah 8:1-18

(Neh. 2:9-6:19) Throughout the period of the nation of Israel's captivity in Babylon, the periodic public reading of the Scriptures was not observed as required by God.—Deut. 31:9-12

“All the people gathered themselves together as one man into the street that was before the water gate; and they spake unto Ezra the scribe to bring the book of the Law of Moses, which the LORD had commanded to Israel. And Ezra the priest brought the law before the congregation both of men and women, and all that could

THE RETURN OF THE FIRST

Jewish exiles from Babylonian captivity to Jerusalem was under the leadership of Zerubbabel, who supervised the rebuilding of the Temple. Several years later, Ezra, a scribe and priest, came to the holy city with a second group of Jews and instituted sweeping reforms.—Ezra 3:8-13; 9:5-15; 10:18-44

Another faithful servant of God, Nehemiah, subsequently received authorization from King Artaxerxes to return to Jerusalem and, during turbulent times, accomplished the rebuilding of the walls surrounding the city in his capacity as governor.

hear with understanding, upon the first day of the seventh month. And he read therein before the street that was before the water gate from the morning until midday, before the men and the women, and those that could understand; and the ears of all the people were attentive unto the book of the law.”—Neh. 8:1-3

After being instructed in God’s Word, the people responded initially by weeping. They realized they had been chastised because they had failed to observe the divine ordinances associated with their covenant relationship with God. Nehemiah and those conducting the services under his direction admonished the people not to mourn. Rather, he told them to rejoice and give thanks to God for the blessings that would be theirs as a result of their repentant attitude and resolve to obey his statutes in the future.—vss. 9-12

The following day was an occasion of special study for the leaders, the priests, and the Levites who discovered the ordinances of the Mosaic Law regarding the Feast of Booths [or Tabernacles] to be observed later in the month.—vss. 13-15

Our Key Verse asserts the spirit of revival that then permeated the entire assembly of people as they resumed the practice of feasting and worshipping in booths for seven days while remembering with gratitude God’s blessing of delivering their nation from Egyptian bondage into the promised land centuries earlier.

Today, consecrated followers of Christ often leave their normal dwelling places and come together to study God’s Word, sometimes for several days. Whenever possible, let us avail ourselves of such opportunities for provoking one another unto love and good works by faithfulness in assembling together during such holy convocations. “Let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: . . . Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together; . . . but exhorting one another.”—Heb. 10:24,25 ■

Community of Confession

Key Verse: “The seed of Israel separated themselves from all strangers, and stood and confessed their sins, and the iniquities of their fathers.” —Nehemiah 9:2

Selected Scriptures: Nehemiah 9:2,6,7,9,10,30-36

AFTER CELEBRATING THE

Feast of Tabernacles, the children of Israel assembled together in humble repentance to acknowledge the sins they had committed. (Neh. 9:1) Our Key Verse indicates that the people confessed not only their own sins but also the transgressions of their ancestors who had been disobedient to God’s instructions.

The leaders and Levites then led the Israelites in worship, prayer and praise, extolling the majesty and goodness of God, who chose Abraham and made a covenant with him and his descendants. (vss. 4-8) It was evident that a genuine spirit of revival was experienced by the people. They recounted how God had heard the afflictions of their ancestors while in Egyptian bondage and delivered them to safety through the Red Sea. They recalled how God had guided them throughout their wilderness journey and established a covenant with them through Moses.—vss. 9-15

The Israelites also acknowledged both the obstinacy of their forebears as well as God’s mercy to them. “They and our fathers dealt proudly, and hardened their necks,

and hearkened not to thy commandments, And refused to obey, neither were mindful of thy wonders that thou didst among them; but hardened their necks, and in their rebellion appointed a captain to return to their bondage: but thou art a God ready to pardon, gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and forsookest them not.”—vss. 16,17

The cyclical nature of Israel’s relationship with God in terms of their frequent rebellions, as contrasted with repeated manifestations of divine mercy, is recorded in a lengthy prayer by the people, recorded in verses 18-37. In this prayer the people acknowledged the fact, as well as the consequences, of their waywardness.

Perhaps the most significant part of this prayer is found at the very end. “Because of all this we make a sure covenant, and write it; and our princes, Levites, and priests, seal unto it.” (vs. 38) The Israelites were determined to do something regarding all their transgressions against God by resolving to be obedient to him from thenceforth.

Footstep followers of Christ, those who have received the Holy Spirit, realize it is possible to be overtaken by sin with the potential for the direst of consequences. When we commit acts of disobedience, they need to be acknowledged and repented of if we are to be restored to God’s merciful favor. The use of prayer, as well as filling our minds with holy thoughts, can be effective tools towards preventing or reducing the incidence of sin in our lives. The Apostle Paul had to overcome much in his previous behavior when, as Saul of Tarsus, he persecuted believers prior to becoming a member of the body of Christ. His admonition to brethren in the Early Church is as applicable today for us as when it was penned long ago. “Finally, brethren, . . . whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.”—Phil. 4:8 ■

Dedication of the Wall

Key Verse: “Also that day they offered great sacrifices, and rejoiced: for God had made them rejoice with great joy: the wives also and the children rejoiced: so that the joy of Jerusalem was heard even afar off.”
—***Nehemiah 12:43***

Selected Scriptures:
Nehemiah 12:27-35,38,43

as well as the gates and the wall, were all purified. (vs. 30) This action was in harmony with other scriptures which emphasized the necessity of being cleansed before acceptable worship could be offered to God—“Who shall ascend into the hill of the LORD? or who shall stand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully.”—Ps. 24:3,4

THE RETURN OF THE

priests and the Levites from Babylonian exile to Jerusalem was an important aspect of reestablishing worship in the land. In this chapter, there is a detailed account concerning the many individuals and family members who were involved in this process.—Neh. 12:1-20

“At the dedication of the wall of Jerusalem they sought the Levites out of all their places, to bring them to Jerusalem, to keep the dedication with gladness, both with thanksgivings, and with singing, with cymbals, psalteries, and with harps.” (vs. 27) As part of the preparation for the dedication, the priests, Levites, and the people,

Two choirs were enlisted to lead the inhabitants of Jerusalem in joyful praise, thereby ensuring that the dedication service would be appropriately memorable. (Neh. 12:31-42) Our Key Verse conveys the emotions the people felt on this occasion as great sacrifices were offered. It was indeed a celebration of rejoicing and thanksgiving, one which not only the men experienced, but also the women and children.

As a result of the zeal with which this restoration activity was conducted, Nehemiah had succeeded in rebuilding Jerusalem's walls. He also, in so doing, revived the authority of the Mosaic Law among the people, and reestablished the Temple ministry according to divine direction.—vss. 44-47

Among the lessons which the followers of Christ may take from the foregoing narrative is an appreciation for our magnificent Heavenly Father. He is most worthy of our praise and adoration for his mercy and kindness in inviting us to become a part of his divine family to bless all mankind during the Messianic kingdom. When all the willing and obedient members of the human family are returned from the tomb and receive the blessings of life at that time, they will rejoice. They will see and understand the magnificent sacrifice of Christ Jesus as well as the part we, the body of Christ, will play in helping to restore mankind back into heart harmony with God.

How wonderful is our God that he has great riches in store, not only for the faithful members of the body of Christ, but for each member of the redeemed race who comes to a full appreciation of our Creator and worships him supremely and obediently.

The attitude of heart that will forever be reflected by all intelligent beings, both spiritual and human, when God's plan is fully understood and appreciated, is reflected in these words: "I will praise thee, O Lord my God, with all my heart: and I will glorify thy name for evermore."—Ps. 86:12 ■

Sabbath Reforms

Key Verse: *“I commanded the Levites that they should cleanse themselves, and that they should come and keep the gates, to sanctify the sabbath day. Remember me, O my God, concerning this also, and spare me according to the greatness of thy mercy.”*
—**Nehemiah 13:22**

Selected Scripture:
Nehemiah 13:15-22

allowed Tobiah, an Ammonite, to have a dwelling place inside the Temple courts. Tobiah previously had attempted to thwart Nehemiah’s work in rebuilding the wall around the city. Nehemiah rectified the situation by removing Tobiah’s goods and ceremonially cleansing the rooms he had occupied so that they could be properly put to use as storerooms for the sacred items of the Temple.—vss. 4-9

Additionally, Nehemiah rebuked the people for neglecting the Levites, who had to abandon their spiritual

UPON READING FROM THE

Law of Moses it was discovered that the Ammonites and Moabites were prohibited from participating in the spiritual life and worship of the people of Israel. (Deut. 23:3,4) Accordingly, as foreigners who had not entered into a covenant relationship with God, they were excluded from recognition as part of the Jewish community.—Neh. 13:1-3

Sometime after the remarkable spiritual revival cited in our previous lesson, Nehemiah returned to his duties in the Persian court. Later, however, he returned to Jerusalem and found that Eliashib the priest

services associated with the Temple in order to provide for their own temporal needs. As a result of Nehemiah's actions, the practice of tithing was reinstated to support the Levites, so that they could once again minister to the spiritual needs of the Israelites.—vss. 10-13

Nehemiah also observed that the Sabbath was being violated. Foreign merchants were selling goods, and the Jews were also engaged in commercial activities on that sacred day. (vss. 15-21) Our Key Verse underscores Nehemiah's corrective action in this matter by commanding the Levites to cleanse themselves and secure the city gates against those alien merchants in order to put an end to profaning the Sabbath.

Beginning at the time of his First Advent, Christ magnified the Law and made clear God's true intent in providing the Sabbath ordinance. Jesus was offering more than just a day of rest from physical toil for his followers. He was proposing a rest of faith to those burdened with the weight of the Law and of the sin inherited from Adam. "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." (Matt. 11:28) Each true follower of Christ, in proportion to his or her knowledge and faith, will have rest. The perfect Sabbath rest comes when, as believers, we consecrate our all to God, accepting joyfully his promised guidance through a "narrow way" which leads to kingdom honors and blessings. Thus we rest from our own works and efforts to justify ourselves. We acknowledge ourselves to be imperfect, in need of divine grace, and gratefully accept God's mercy extended toward us through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

What a blessing it will be for all who have ever lived to realize the depth and benefits of God's provision for Sabbath-keeping, now by faithful believers, and during the Millennial kingdom by all who shall come to know and love our sovereign Creator. ■

Permission of Evil

Part 2—The Result

*“Weeping may
endure for a night,
but joy cometh in
the morning.”*

—Psalm 30:5

GOD’S DESIGN IN THE

creation of our first parents was that they should be the progenitors of an entire race.

God also knew that in order for Adam’s children to really know him and have a true appreciation of his standards of right and wrong they, even as Adam, would need to learn by experience the terrible results of disobedience, and later, by contrast, the blessings which would be showered upon them by his love. So the Creator designed that all of Adam’s offspring should be carried into death with him. Paul wrote, “As by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that [in whom, *Margin*] all have sinned.”—Rom. 5:12

DEATH PLAGUES ALL

For six thousand years the human race, having come under condemnation to death because of sin, has been exposed to evil, and by experience has been learning the terrible results of disobedience. The seeds of death have manifested their presence

in humans, young and old, by myriads of infirmities and diseases of both mind and body. Neither the young nor the old have escaped the plague of death—infants often falling before this enemy at a tender age with no understanding of what is taking place in and around them. Perchance, some live to “a ripe old age,” finally succumbing to the ravages of death which preys upon all.

Not only by disease are the people brought down to the grave, but as cited earlier, upheavals of nature contribute to the process, as do accidents, and men’s own cruelties to one another in war, in crime, and in many other types of human conflict.

Throughout all the ages God has not interfered with the great enemy Death. Paul informs us concerning mankind as a whole, that “God gave them over to a mind void of judgment.” (Rom. 1:28, *Margin*) This implies that he has not restrained the human race from taking its own course, selfish and sinful though that course has mostly been, nor has he interfered with the carrying out of the death sentence, in the sense of protecting some and not protecting others.

Thankfully, God’s great design does not end with the human race prostrate in death, for through Jesus, the Redeemer, he has made a provision for all to be awakened from death and to be restored to perfection of life. Paul wrote, “Just as all men die by virtue of their descent from Adam, so all such as are in union with Christ will be made to live again.” (I Cor. 15:21,22, *Williams Translation*) This provision of life through Christ is based on Jesus’ own death and resurrection. He said, “My flesh . . . I will give for the life of the world.” (John 6:51) It

was for this reason that Jesus was born into the world as a human.—Heb. 2:9,14

In describing the arrangement by which Jesus became the Redeemer of the world through his death, the Bible uses the word “ransom,” which, according to the Greek word from which it is translated, means “corresponding price.” Jesus was a perfect man, even as Adam was a perfect man before he sinned. Thus in death Jesus became a corresponding price for the forfeited life of Adam. As all mankind lost life through Adam, so all mankind is redeemed from death through Christ.

JUST AND UNJUST

In God’s due time, all will be awakened from the sleep of death. Paul informs us that there is to be “a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust.” (Acts 24:15) Yes, throughout the ages, while sin and selfishness have predominated, there have been noble men and women who, by virtue of their faith and obedience to God’s laws of righteousness, are spoken of by Paul as “just.” However, these also have been allowed to suffer, even as did Job—not to punish them, but to test and prepare them further for exalted positions which the Creator has designed for them in his arrangements for the future.

There have also been millions of noble, unselfish people throughout the ages who have had no faith in God. One reason for their unbelief has been their observation that the innocent suffer as well as the guilty. They have not been able to understand why an infant is allowed to die. They have not been able to reconcile the idea of a loving, powerful God with

the fact that so many, through no willful fault of their own, have suffered for years on beds of sickness, while others have been afflicted with disease, mental illness, and every other conceivable malady. Had the unbelievers known the full plan of God they would have understood these situations.

Additionally, throughout the ages, the true God of the Bible has been flagrantly misrepresented. Many of the professed believers in Christianity, who bemoan the suffering they see taking place around them, try to believe that all who die in unbelief will be tortured eternally in a burning hell of fire and brimstone. This blasphemous teaching has helped to create many unbelievers, for a properly reasoning mind cannot believe that a God of love would thus torture his creatures. Such cruelty is even contrary to the laws of civilized men.

MANKIND TO PROFIT

The fact presents itself that few in all the ages have as yet profited by their experience with evil. Indeed many, as noted, have been turned to unbelief by it. This is understandable, and if we were to base our conclusions on man's limited abilities and his restricted viewpoint, there would be no satisfactory answer as to why God permits evil. In the limited viewpoint of many, death is the end of existence. To others it is the end of all opportunity to learn and to profit from past experiences. These viewpoints, however, are not supported in the Bible.

As we have seen, according to the Bible, those who are asleep in death will be awakened from that sleep and given an opportunity to profit from the experiences of the present life. Just as it often

happens now, the difficulties and distresses of a certain day are understood and appreciated only at a later day. So it will be on a grander scale, as those who are now sleeping in death are awakened and they enter another term, as it were, in their school of experience.

THERE WILL BE “JOY IN THE MORNING!”

In Job’s case, while he could not understand at the time why God allowed him to suffer, yet, when the experience was over, he could say, “I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee.” (Job 42:5) So it will be with the world of mankind. When the experience of suffering and death is over and they are awakened from death, their faulty vision or understanding of God will be corrected, and they will rejoice to learn of the gracious and loving provision the Creator has made for them through Christ, the Redeemer, to ransom them from death. They will be restored to perfection of life if, in the light of this true knowledge of God, they obey him by conforming their lives to his standards of right and wrong.

The psalmist wrote, in the words of our opening text, “Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.” (Ps. 30:5) This “night” of sin, sorrow, and death began with the disobedience of our first parents, and it has indeed been a night of weeping. The sorrow that has borne down upon the human race has been bitter, and many in their distresses have wondered whether or not God has any pity, or even exists at all.

However, there is to be a morning of joy for the human race! That morning of joy will be ushered in

by what the Scriptures refer to as the rising of “the Sun of Righteousness,” who will have “healing in his wings.” (Mal. 4:2) Jesus is this glorious Sun of Righteousness. The new day of blessing he will cause to dawn will be brought about through the establishment of his kingdom, which is the government of righteousness foretold by all God’s holy prophets since the world began.

Associated with Jesus as rulers in his kingdom will be his faithful followers—those who have suffered and died with him. Jesus died the just for the unjust. Likewise, his footstep followers voluntarily suffer and die with him, and will be exalted to the highest of all spiritual realms of life, to be associated with Jesus in the rulership of his kingdom. Jesus said to his disciples, “I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.” (John 14:2,3) The Scriptures also declare that these will live and reign with Christ a thousand years, being brought forth from death in “the first resurrection.”—Rev. 20:6

Christ and his followers, a “little flock,” will be the invisible rulers of the world during the thousand years of his kingdom. (Luke 12:32) They will be represented here on earth by another group of God’s faithful servants, each one of whom proved loyal to God under adversity during the ages preceding the coming of Jesus. These, as the Bible tells us, will be made “princes in all the earth.” (Ps. 45:16) This group will consist of the ancient and worthy servants of God of past ages, beginning with righteous Abel. It will include such outstanding figures as Abraham, Moses, David, Elijah, Daniel, and all God’s holy prophets.

These “princes in all the earth” will be awakened from death in the resurrection, and for a thousand years will be the representatives of the divine Christ among men. What a wonderful governmental arrangement this will be! It will establish universal and lasting peace, which man in his selfishness has been unable to do. The divine head of this government, who is Christ, is referred to in prophecy as “The Prince of Peace,” and we are assured that “of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end.”—Isa. 9:6,7

THE HOUSE OF THE LORD

In Micah 4:1-4, the kingdom of Christ is referred to as God’s ruling “house”—this ruling house consisting of Jesus and those who, through faithfulness in following in his footsteps, are also exalted to heavenly glory as sons of God. This prophecy reads, “In the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the house of the LORD shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow unto it. And many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among many people, and rebuke strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree; and

none shall make them afraid: for the mouth of the LORD of hosts hath spoken it.”

The ancient nation of Israel, to whom this prophecy was first addressed, was governed from a mountain. It was Mount Zion in Jerusalem, so God uses this background in presenting this prophecy of Messiah’s kingdom, and his promises of the blessings that it will assure to the people. The “mountain of the LORD” is the kingdom of God, centered in the Christ, and represented by the symbolic “Zion” of this prophecy.

Notice that under the rulership of this kingdom the people learn God’s way. The entire period of Christ’s kingdom will be one of learning—of education. In this prophecy, one of the results of this education is that the people will learn war no more. It will be then that the angels’ message of “peace on earth” will be translated into reality. The Prince of Peace will then reign supreme.—Luke 2:13,14

UNDER VINE AND FIG TREE

In addition, there will be economic security. This is symbolized in the prophecy by the assurance that every man will dwell under his own vine and fig tree. Much of the suffering in the world throughout the ages has been due to lack of food, clothing, and shelter. Even today millions of the human race exist on subnormal supplies of food, have but little clothing, and live with no roof over their heads. However, this will be corrected through the agencies of Christ’s kingdom.

Peace and security will not be the only blessings guaranteed to the people under the rulership of “the mountain of the house of the LORD.” Isaiah

wrote, "In this mountain shall the LORD of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined. And he will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people, and the vail that is spread over all nations. He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth: for the LORD hath spoken it. And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, . . . we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation."—Isa. 25:6-9

In addition to the "feast of fat things" which this prophecy assures us will be spread for mankind in Messiah's coming kingdom, we are also informed that the covering and the veil now cast over the faces of the people will be removed. This clearly refers to a symbolic curtain which hinders the people from seeing and knowing God in his true light. Another prophecy says that then "the eyes of the blind shall be opened." (Isa. 35:5) Those literally blind will then have their sight restored, and those spiritually blind will acquire a true vision of God and his glorious character.

ALL EVIL TO BE DESTROYED

Of this same time of Christ's kingdom, we read, "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea." (Isa. 11:9) Then there will be no more suffering and death as a result of Adam's transgression. It will be the time when Adam's children are being

made alive through Christ. Killing, as well as all other kinds of calamities, will no longer be permitted. The peaceful and prosperous conditions which men and women today would like to see throughout the earth will then exist, because “the knowledge of the LORD will fill the earth as the waters cover the sea.”

God assures us further that he “will swallow up death in victory,” and that he will wipe away tears “from off all faces.” What blessed assurances these are! Paul wrote that Christ would reign until all enemies are put under his feet, and that “the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.” (I Cor. 15:25,26) The result of this is described in Revelation 21:4, which reads, “God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.”

FIRST EXPERIENCE WITH GOOD

It will be during the reign of Christ that Adam and his children in general will receive their first real experience with “good.” It will be this that will complete their education with respect to the validity and importance of the standards of right and wrong established by God. Though perfect when created, Adam did not then have sufficient knowledge from experience to prevent his transgression. Job maintained his integrity before God under test, yet he also needed to experience evil and to be delivered from it in order to “see” God. Adam and his race will likewise “see” God as a result of their experiences.

The God they will then see and know will be the one they have longed to understand and to serve. They will recognize the value of the experiences through which they have passed. Understanding real values, they will realize that the few short years of hardship through which they passed while under condemnation to death were as nothing compared with the eternity of joy then stretching out before them under the panoply of divine love. No wonder they will then say, "Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, . . . we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation."

At the conclusion of the harrowing experiences through which Job passed, he was restored to health, and his family was also restored to him. This partially illustrates the great blessing which lies ahead for all mankind during the reign of Christ. Peter speaks of this period as "times of restitution of all things," which, he declares, had been spoken "by the mouth of all his [God's] holy prophets since the world began."—Acts 3:20,21

Peter's declaration concerning the restoration of the human race to health and life was based on the miracle he had just performed of healing a man who had been lame from the time of his birth. During "the times of restitution," all the lame will be restored to soundness of limb, and all other human maladies will be cured by the "Sun of Righteousness," who will then rise "with healing in his wings."—Isa. 35:6; Mal. 4:2

As we have seen, this loving provision for the human race includes those who have fallen asleep in death. This is, in reality, the key to an understanding of why God permits evil, for it means that

his viewpoint of human experience is not dependent upon man's present short span of life. God is viewing man's experience with sin and death, rather, as a lesson which, in the resurrection, can be compared with all the "good" which will then be showered upon the people, that "feast of fat things" which he will then spread before all nations.

A TIME OF LEARNING

This future period of blessing is also described in the Bible as one of judgment, or trial. Isaiah wrote that when God's judgments are abroad in the earth, "the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness." (Isa. 26:9) All the inequalities of the present will then be righted. Those who now willfully oppose God and his laws, and unjustly treat their fellows, will then receive appropriate discipline designed to correct their wrongdoings. All the present circumstances relative to every individual will then be taken into consideration, and the people dealt with, and blessed or punished accordingly.

Even those who have died in infancy will be awakened, mature to adulthood, and have an opportunity to enjoy God's blessings. In a comforting promise to mothers who lose their children in death, we read, "Thus saith the LORD; A voice was heard in Ramah, lamentation, and bitter weeping; Rachel weeping for her children refused to be comforted for her children, because they were not [they were dead]. Thus saith the LORD: Refrain thy voice from weeping, and thine eyes from tears: for thy work shall be rewarded, saith the LORD; and they shall come again from the land of the enemy. And there is hope in thine end, saith the LORD, that thy

children shall come again to their own border [they shall return to life on earth].”—Jer. 31:15-17

Having had real experience with both good and evil, each individual will be able to decide intelligently whether or not he wishes to choose the good and live forever, or choose evil and again be sentenced to death—a death from which there will be no resurrection. Christ will then be King supreme in his kingdom, and he will be Judge supreme. Peter also refers to him as a great “Prophet,” and informs us that it shall come to pass “that every soul, which will not hear [that is, obey] that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people.”—Acts 3:22,23

During the present nighttime of sin and death, all die—believers and unbelievers, the innocent and the guilty, the righteous and the unrighteous. However, during the reign of Christ only those who willfully disobey the laws of God will be destroyed. All others will continue to live and to mature toward perfection. If these continue faithful, they will enter as perfect humans into the everlasting future ages of happiness and life “with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.”—Isa. 35:10 ■

“Dawn Devotional Radio” Internet Radio Station

24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year

—Web Address—

www.live365.com/stations/dawn_radio

Claiming Christ's Promise—

“Fear Not, Little Flock”

“Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.”

—*Luke 12:32*

THE “KINGDOM” IS ONE of the prominent themes of the Bible, being referred to considerably more than a hundred times in the New Testament alone. The Bible’s many references to the kingdom fall into two general categories—one having to do with its rulers and the other with its subjects. The references of scripture pertaining to the rulers in the kingdom include those which set forth the conditions upon which one may hope to attain to such a high position, while the references to the subjects of the kingdom include the many promises of the blessings of joy and life which, through the kingdom agencies, will be showered upon them.

When Jesus said, “Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom,” he referred to the hope of sharing in the

rulership of the kingdom. Jesus addressed this assurance to his disciples, who at that time were composed entirely of the natural descendants of Abraham. Long centuries before this, God had promised the Israelites as a nation that if they were obedient to his law he would make of them a “kingdom of priests, and an holy nation,” and Jesus’ disciples, by accepting him and following in his footsteps of self-sacrifice, were proving their worthiness to inherit this promise.—Exod. 19:5,6

However, there were not many in Israel at that time to whom it was “the Father’s good pleasure” to give the kingdom. The majority followed the leadership of their religious rulers by rejecting the one whom God had sent to be the King in the long-promised kingdom, so he said that the kingdom would be taken from them and given to a nation “bringing forth the fruits” of obedience and righteousness. (Matt. 21:43) Later, the Apostle Peter identified this new “nation” to which the kingdom would be given when, addressing an epistle to “the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia,” he said, “Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people.” To this, Peter adds, “Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God.”—I Pet. 1:1; 2:9,10

Peter’s reference is to Gentile believers who had become God’s chosen, or elect people, “through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience.” (I Pet. 1:2) The Scriptures reveal, however, that the first of these who comprised the new nation to which the opportunity for eventual rulership in the kingdom was given were believing Jews. In John

1:11,12, we read concerning Jesus, “He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name.” It is the “sons,” or children of God, by faith and obedience who will share the rulership of the kingdom with Jesus. Paul wrote, “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.” (Rom. 8:17) Thus, to this special class, a key element to their development of the “mind of Christ” is the importance of claiming the promise, “Fear not, little flock.”

THROUGH MUCH TRIBULATION

We note Paul’s words—“if so be that we suffer with him.” This is one of the conditions upon which followers of Jesus, whether Jew or Gentile, may hope to reign with him. In another place Paul, in exhorting the brethren to continue in the faith, explained that it is through “much tribulation” that we will “enter into the kingdom of God.” (Acts 14:22) On the night before he was crucified, Jesus said to his disciples much the same thing, “In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.”—John 16:33

How reassuring it is to hear Jesus say to us, “Fear not,” with the explanation, “It is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.” Offering us the “prize of the high calling” is not something that our Heavenly Father reluctantly does. It is his “good pleasure.” He wants us to “live and reign with Christ,” and has placed all the necessary resources

at our disposal to enable us to follow in the footsteps of Jesus.—Phil. 3:14; 4:13

So fear not! “Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves,” Jesus further said. While he wants us so far as possible to be “wise as serpents and harmless as doves,” we need not be concerned that we will be devoured by the “wolves,” for they will be permitted merely to threaten us with harm. (Matt. 10:16) This is in order that our faith and confidence in the Heavenly Father and his ability to care for us might be tested. Fear not, for actually there is no one that can harm us, no circumstance or combination of circumstances that can injure us as “new creatures” so long as we do “that which is good.”—I Pet. 3:13,14

In exercising the wisdom of serpents, “Beware of men: for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues; and ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake.” However, fear not, “when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you.”—Matt. 10:17-20

Many of the little flock at the beginning of the age experienced literally these aspects of persecution. It has been true of some even in this end of the age. We are confident that all of these experienced the fulfillment of the Master’s promise that the Father, through the Holy Spirit, was present to give the needed aid, to strengthen them, and to give them utterance in bearing witness to the Truth. Those who use their quiet moments to study and to meditate upon the Word of God will be so filled

with its message, that out of this rich abundance of their hearts the Lord will enable them to speak forth the proper words of life and truth under any and all circumstances.

Fear not, for even though members of our own family or household may be opposed to us, he whose good pleasure it is to give us the kingdom will stand by us in our most severe moments of loneliness and ostracism. This will be true even though “the brother shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child: and the children shall rise up against their parents, and cause them to be put to death,” and even though you will be “hated of all men for my name’s sake.”—Matt. 10:21,22

“Fear not,” the Master tells us, for the Father is merely testing our loyalty to him. It is his good pleasure to exalt us to the divine nature to reign with Christ, and he wants to prove us to see if we love him more than father, or mother, or sister, or brother, or even our own life. So we must be faithful, yielding to whatever experiences divine love may permit. Our faith should enable us to trust him, come what may, knowing that it is the Father’s good pleasure for those who are faithful unto death to receive a crown of life.

We, however, do not seek persecution. “When they persecute you in this city, flee into another: for verily I say unto you, Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of Man be come.” (vs. 23) Neither should we, through fear, retreat in the face of persecution. Instead, remembering the Master’s admonition, “fear not,” we should be prepared to face any experiences which the Lord’s providences may permit. On the other hand, it is sometimes

better to withdraw from a trying situation and seek opportunities of service elsewhere, or along other lines. To do this might require more grace and courage, but we should follow the leadings of the Lord whatever the cost might be.

AS HIS MASTER

How needful it is to be reminded by Jesus that we cannot expect to experience fewer difficulties in the world than those which surrounded and confronted him. "The disciple is not above his master," Jesus said, "nor the servant above his lord. It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his Lord. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of his household? Fear them not therefore: for there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; and hid, that shall not be known."—Matt. 10:24-26

Paul wrote, "consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds." (Heb. 12:3) Jesus' enemies attributed wrong motives to much that he did and said. He was the prince of devils, they said, and a blasphemer. Again, "Fear not," said Jesus. While the world will treat us as it treated him, our true position of loyalty to the Father, and to his great kingdom cause, will in his due time be recognized, "for there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed." Meanwhile, he whose pleasure it is to give us the kingdom, and who is able to read the heart, knows our love for him. Since we have been called according to his purpose, he will cause all things, even the false charges that may come against us, to work together for our good.—Rom. 8:28

Our enemies, and the enemies of the Heavenly Father, may “kill the body,” but fear not, for they are not able to take away life eternal. (Matt. 10:28) If we have taken up our cross to follow Jesus we must expect to die sacrificially, because we have presented ourselves for that purpose. (Rom. 12:1) The only way now to save our life and to live and to reign with Christ, is to lose our life in sacrifice. (Matt. 16:25) To suffer and to die with Jesus is the manner in which it is the Father’s good pleasure to give us the kingdom.

As we lay down our life in sacrifice, and one after another of those earthly things which we may have once cherished are destroyed, we may at first wonder if the Heavenly Father really cares, but fear not. “Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows.”—Matt. 10:29-31

“Beloved, think it not strange,” wrote Peter, “concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ’s sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.” Since we are partakers of Christ’s sufferings, it is the good pleasure of the Heavenly Father to sustain us in every trial, for “the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers.”—I Pet. 4:12,13; 3:12

It is the Father’s good pleasure to give the kingdom only to those who seek for it with all their hearts, making every other interest of life of secondary

consideration. There are certain necessities to which we must give attention, such as food, raiment, and a place to live for ourselves and for our families. However, these are to be viewed in the light of seeking “first” the kingdom of heaven. “Seek not ye what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, neither be ye of doubtful mind. . . . Your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things. But rather seek ye the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you.”—Luke 12:29-31

SECURE IN HIM

“My sheep,” said Jesus—that little flock to whom it is the Father’s good pleasure to give the kingdom—“hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.” (John 10:27) Have we heard the “voice” of Jesus, the voice of truth, inviting us to take up our cross and follow him? If we have, and we have accepted his invitation, then we are secure if we continue on in this way of righteousness, for Jesus said, “I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father’s hand.”—John 10:28,29

“I and my Father are one,” said the Master. (vs. 30) Just as it is the Father’s good pleasure to give us the kingdom, it is Jesus’ good pleasure also. “The Father himself loveth you,” and Jesus loves us also. (John 16:27) “Having loved his own which were in the world,” we read that Jesus “loved them unto the end.” (John 13:1) He gladly laid down his life for them, that they might have life, and be with him in his kingdom.

The good pleasure of the Heavenly Father and of Jesus is shown in the precious promises made to his disciples, many of which were given by Jesus in the “upper room” the night before his crucifixion. “Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. . . . I go to prepare a place for you, And if I go, . . . I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.” (John 14:1-3) Fear not, for Jesus went away to appear in the presence of the Father for us, so that if we continue to love him, and keep his commandments, we may ask whatever will be for our highest interest as members of his little flock, and it will be given unto us.—vss. 13-15

“MUCH FRUIT”

As we have noted, Jesus said that the kingdom would be given to a nation, or people, bringing forth the fruits, and in the upper room he said, “Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.” (John 15:8) Paul wrote, “The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.” (Gal. 5:22,23) In a sense, love is the sum of all these, and this is the love which emanates from the Father. “As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love. If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father’s commandments, and abide in his love.”—John 15:9,10

The little flock to whom it is the Father’s good pleasure to give the kingdom, is an elect, or chosen, people. However, it is essential to make that “calling

and election sure,” and that is done by bearing much fruit. “Unto us,” Peter wrote, are given “exceeding great and precious promises,” the purposes of these being to assist us in attaining unto the divine nature, and to association with Jesus in his kingdom.—II Pet. 1:4

These “precious promises” are among the evidences of the Father’s good pleasure. He wants to give us the kingdom, and he has provided every needed help in order that we might attain to this high position, but there is the necessity of bearing much fruit. So we are to give “all diligence” in adding to our “faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness love. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”—II Pet. 1:5-11

“FEAR NOT”

Because of his knowledge of the Old Testament promises of God, Jesus could, with authority, assure his disciples of the Father’s love and protection, and, therefore, that they had no need to fear. How strengthening it is to our faith to hear the Father speak to us

through Jesus, “Fear not.” If we love him with all our heart we will be dwelling in the “secret place” which God has provided, that place of security that is overshadowed by his love and power.—Ps. 91:1

The psalmist said of the Lord, “He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust.” We, too, can claim this promise, because we have the Master’s own assurance that the Father loves us even as he loved him. (Ps. 91:2; John 17:23) “Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler,” our “adversary the Devil,” who goes about as a roaring lion “seeking whom he may devour.” Yes, the psalmist continues, “he shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth shall be thy shield and buckler.”—Ps. 91:3,4; I Pet. 5:8

The mother hen must take pleasure in protecting her chickens under her feathers and wings. So our Heavenly Father, whose good pleasure it is to give us the kingdom, will see to it that “no evil” shall befall us, and that no plague shall come nigh our dwelling. So we fear not, claiming the promise: “Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night: nor for the arrow that flieth by day.” (Ps. 91:5) None of the bitter words of envy and hatred will harm us if we have on the whole armor of truth and abide in the Father’s love. Because it is his good pleasure to give us the kingdom, he will help us to fight every battle in the “good fight of faith” that we might come off “more than conquerors” and receive the promised “crown of life.”—I Tim. 6:12; Rom. 8:37; James 1:12; Rev. 2:10

Fear not, for “he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways.” (Ps. 91:11) Jesus claimed this promise for himself, and told

Peter that if he wished, he could ask his Father, and the Father would send “more than twelve legions of angels” to protect him. (Matt. 26:53) Jesus did not ask this protection as a man, for he had come to give his flesh for the life of the world. However, he did realize the protection and care which were afforded him as a New Creature by the holy angels, who, he said, “always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven.” (Matt. 18:10) The same is true of us. How wonderful it is to be in the encircling arms of divine love in which we can enjoy the same benefits of the Father’s good pleasure as were bestowed upon Jesus.

Continuing in Psalm 91, the Heavenly Father speaks to Jesus and to us, the little flock, whom he will not allow to be plucked out of his hands, saying, “Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him: I will set him on high, because he hath known my name. He shall call upon me, and I will answer him: I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honour him. With long life [immortality] will I satisfy him, and shew him my salvation.”—Ps. 91:14-16

Have we set our love upon the Heavenly Father? Then we may be sure that he will deliver us, even as he delivered Jesus. He will set us on high, even as Jesus was highly exalted, and we can call upon our Heavenly Father and be assured of an answer. Jesus’ life confirmed this statement, “I will be with him in trouble.” Jesus was not delivered, or spared from trouble, but he was given strength by the Heavenly Father to overcome. To us, he said, “In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.” (John 16:33) We

know that the same power which enabled Jesus to overcome will give us strength to bear our burdens, and courage to go forward, knowing that it is the Father's good pleasure to give us the kingdom.

Just as the Father was with Jesus in trouble, so he will be with us, and in his own due time will deliver us in the "first resurrection" to live and to reign with Christ. This is the Father's good pleasure for us, and also Jesus' good pleasure, for he said, "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne."—Rev. 3:21

What more could the Heavenly Father say to assure us of his love and protection, and of victory! So fear not, knowing "he that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? . . . Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" Paul's conclusion was that "neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."—Rom. 8:32-39

Let us then remember the words, "Fear not, little flock." Though we may be small in number, unnoticed and unknown to the world except as objects of scorn, yet the great God of the universe, the Creator of heaven and earth, our Heavenly Father, wants us to share with his Son in the rulership of a world government which will establish peace throughout the earth, and assure joy, health, and life to all mankind. It is his good pleasure that his faithful little flock shall have this kingdom! ■

The Christian's Four Freedoms

*“There is therefore
now no
condemnation to
them which are in
Christ Jesus, who
walk not after the
flesh, but after the
Spirit. For the law
of the Spirit of life
in Christ Jesus
hath made me free
from the law of sin
and death.”*

—*Romans 8:1,2*

THE BIBLE DISCLOSES

four main things from which the true child of God, the disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ, is said to be delivered now, before his change into the likeness of his Lord in glory. The first in importance is his deliverance or “liberation” (*Diaglott*) from the condemnation of sin and death as disclosed by this statement of Apostle Paul. It

will be noticed that this statement of the apostle does not indicate that we, as followers of Christ, are freed from the effects of sin and death, but rather from “the law of sin and death.” There can be no question that in using this language the apostle was referring primarily to the Law given to Israel at Mt. Sinai—for in the third and fourth verses he continues, “What the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the

likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin [by a sacrifice for sin, *Margin*], condemned sin in the flesh: That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.”

In the seventh chapter of Romans, verses 6 and 7, Paul writes, “Now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter. What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust [desire], except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet.” He further goes on to show that the Law which was unto life, he found to be unto death. In other words, that Law which was designed to show how life might be gained, he found to be the means by which he stood condemned before God.

“God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us,” thus opening a way of escape from the condemnation resting upon all humanity—Jew and Gentile alike. (chap. 5:8) Counter to that Law which further emphasized the inability of mankind to escape the penalty of sin—death—Paul declares there is now in evidence another law which he calls “the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus.” This law, as the apostle so forcefully indicates, is operative only in them who are in Christ Jesus. These follow in the way of suffering and sacrifice because of their love for righteousness and truth, even as Jesus did, that they might also share in the glory promised to the faithful.—Ps. 45:6,7; Heb. 1:8,9

Few of those who have named the name of Christ, and even some of those who have been enlightened

as to the plan and purpose of God with respect to the church and humanity, have fully realized what is comprehended in this liberation from the condemnation of sin and death through the “law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus.” Only the consecrated child of God has this realization. No longer is he subservient to the power and influence of sin. Rather, he is fully committed to the righteousness and truth of God. Having the advocacy of Christ’s righteousness, and standing in the imputation of his meritorious sacrifice, the way of the flesh in its selfish pursuits—even though some of them may be laudable enough from their standpoint—no longer controls his motives and interests. Hence the words of his Lord and Master have a deeper and more realistic significance to him, when he reads, “It is the spirit that quickeneth [maketh alive]; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.” (John 6:63) Therefore the Word of God through his beloved Son, Jesus, becomes his meat and drink, his sustenance, and the antidote for sin and its poisonous results—death.

CLEANSED FROM ALL SIN

The Apostle John writes (I John 1:7), “If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.” “From *all sin*”—can such be the case? Yes, Jesus’ blood cleanses us from all sin due to the weakness and depravity of the flesh on account of the original transgression, but not from willful, deliberate sin against light and knowledge. Such sin has to be expiated as indicated in the scriptural testimony of instances of that kind.

Even in cases where willful or partially willful sin has been committed, and such sin is recognized for what it is and deeply regretted and consequent amends made, it is not held against the perpetrator. However, suffering and loss may be entailed as a consequence in order that the lesson may be deeply impressed. Such was the case with Paul for his persecution of the early disciples, and it is well that we take cognizance of this principle in connection with God's dealing with us. Other instances of this character might be cited, such as David, a man said to have been after God's own heart.—I Sam. 13:14; Acts 13:22

If our sin has been more or less willful, we can take consolation in the fact that we recognize it as such, and with the determination thenceforth to resolve that we shall not be overtaken again. It is only when we treat with indifference such lapses and failures that our condition of heart may become calloused, with serious consequences to our spiritual lives and interests. If, though, we have a tender conscience, it is a hopeful sign indeed, and the experience under the guidance and power of the Lord may prove to be a strengthening of character and fortitude realizable in no other way.

This should not be construed to mean that willfulness in any degree on our part is commendable, nor that God looks upon it with sympathy and favor. Some personalities are inclined to be of a willful disposition, and such are likely to be strong, determined characters. Such was Paul. It required more than an ordinary experience to make him see his mistaken zeal. Likewise, that may be true of others of the Lord's people. God

alone knows what is best suited to produce the desired results.

Let us ever be mindful of the fact that all willful sins require expiation and are not forgiven in the sense of absolution, even though the grace and favor of the Lord may not be lost. Experience and the numerous instances recorded in the Scriptures remind us of this fact. We can be assured, however, that the chastening hand of the Lord is designed for our recovery and ultimate good if we are rightly exercised thereby, and do not repine nor resent it as inconsequential and unnecessary—for he is “longsuffering to us-ward [the believers], not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.”—II Peter 3:9

FREEDOM FROM THIS PRESENT EVIL WORLD

The second thing from which the footstep follower of Christ is now said to be delivered is “this present evil world.” In his message to the churches of Galatia, Paul writes, “Grace be to you and peace from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ, Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world.” (Gal. 1:3,4) How can it be said that we are now delivered, or rescued (*Diaglott*), from this present evil world or age? We are still living in this present evil age, but from God’s standpoint, and from our own as New Creatures in Christ Jesus, we are no part of it. We are to have no part in its spirit, nor in its ways, schemes, and plans, no matter how appealing they might be made to appear and no matter how highly they may be regarded by the world and even by many church organizations. Our Lord and his apostles set

us the example in this respect. They entered not into the politics and social reforms of Israel, neither were they ordained by the Sanhedrin.

God has decreed that this present evil order and age shall come to an end, and due to human selfishness it is to be a calamitous end—a time of great tribulation. This old order can no longer stand in the light of the coming new day, the dawn of which we even now see, through the light of Christ's invisible presence. It is God's determinate counsel that nothing of Satan's degenerating and disintegrating order shall be carried over into the new dispensation of grace and truth. (Isa. 65:17; Rev. 21:1-5) Hence, his people cannot afford to enlist their time and energy toward the perpetuation and extension of that which God has ordained shall soon end, and upon which his wrath is to be visited.—Isa. 13:9; 26:21; 34:8; Jer. 51:6; Zeph. 3:8; II Pet. 3:7,10,11

The secret of our triumph, our victory over this evil age, lies in the fact that Christ died for our sins and that he has called us out from the world and the worldly church organizations that we might not partake of its spirit of rivalry, vainglory, pride, ambition and selfishness. Our lives henceforth are to be controlled by God's Holy Spirit of love as contrasted with the self-interest and selfishness so predominant in the world.

Thus being governed by the Holy Spirit, we are privileged to escape much of the care, anxiety and tumult with which the closing scenes of these evil times abound. None of the cares of this life, the deceitfulness of riches, the earthly rewards and enticements, could tempt the Master from the course outlined for him by his Heavenly Father—the course

that brought suffering and death upon him. Neither could any of earth's allurements distract nor deter his faithful apostles from thus following in his steps. This same attitude and determination should characterize every true follower of the Lamb—"whithersoever he goeth." (Rev. 14:4) Let the world count us fools for Christ's sake. What should this matter? What if we lose our earthly life with its interests and pleasures? We have a faith, a hope, a love that surmounts all these, and, if faithful to our trust, we have a more enduring and eternal estate awaiting us "beyond the veil." Let, then, the world ridicule us with remarks about our interests being but visionary, and our ideals a mere illusive hope. Let us continually ask ourselves whether we prefer the present unsatisfactory things of this old order to the inward sense of peace and joy which is the present heritage of every true child of God, along with the promise of a future of glory, honor and immortality—the divine nature. What, then, shall we fear? "What can man do unto us?"—Ps. 56:4,11; 118:6

OUR PRESENT ADVANTAGES

Let us remind ourselves, too, of the great enlightenment that has come to us as the result of our consecration to do God's will. We have learned to know our Heavenly Father in the true light of his character and purpose, not only for his chosen people now, but soon for all men. We have come to know something of his peace—the peace which passeth human understanding. (Phil. 4:6,7) We have been enabled to see the stately steppings of our God as they have been unfolding through

the pages of history and to realize that we are now witnessing the closing scenes in the drama of the ages.

We have been privileged to enjoy many advantages over those who have lived and fought the good fight of faith in past ages. We see, however, that these advantages have not always brought forth gratitude, and the desire to know and to do that which would be pleasing to the divine Creator. In the closing days of this present world, many now believe they will succeed without God. They see little or no need for his plan of redemption. They are sufficient unto themselves and think they can satisfactorily solve all their problems without alignment to his methods and ways.

Hence with all the present-day benefits of these closing days of a dying world order, we see more distress, more suffering, more confusion and fear than at any time in the world's history. How glad we should be that we have been called out of these perplexing conditions of "darkness into his marvelous light"—into the haven of the Heavenly Father's counsel and rest—that we may show forth his praises both now and forever.—I Pet. 2:9

FREED FROM THE POWER OF DARKNESS

The third thing from which the apostle declares we are delivered is the power—authority or dominion—of darkness. This statement is found in Colossians 1:12-14, and reads, "Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: Who hath delivered us from the power [dominion, authority] of darkness and hath translated [caused a change

of sides, *Diaglott*] us into the kingdom of his dear Son.” In this statement, the power of darkness is contrasted with the light of the coming reign of righteousness of Christ’s kingdom. It is into this coming kingdom of righteousness we are now said to be “translated”—to be sided with—and for which we earnestly pray, “Thy kingdom come.”

As we consider the darkness of the past six thousand years with all its suffering, sin and death, we are reminded by this text of scripture of all the beauties of true holiness and righteousness of the new day. The Prophet Isaiah well said, “Darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the LORD shall arise upon thee, and his glory [splendor] shall be seen upon thee [the Christ, head and body].”—Isa. 60:2

BLIND LEADERS OF THE BLIND

When Jesus was apprehended by the religious rulers of Israel, he used the expression, “the power of darkness.” (Luke 22:53) Additionally, the Apostle Paul writes, “We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world.” (Eph. 6:12) It is often those who may at first appear to be serving the right and the truth, and generally recognized as representing law and order, who are the most flagrant violators of honesty, truth, and righteousness. It was so in the days of Jesus and his apostles, and it is true today. Often it is through deceit and fraud that world leaders wield power and influence over the people—and the people are either unable or unwilling to resist. Largely influenced by personal bias, prejudice, party spirit, and often

intimidated by threats of one kind and another, people often readily espouse the cause of those leading them into a state of irresponsibility and eventual chaos. Jesus said, concerning the sad state of affairs in his day, “If the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch.” (Matt. 15:14) Such is also the case today, with many falling into the “ditch” of despair and disillusionment.

The Prophet Isaiah also recounts such conditions, when he says, “As for my people, children [the immature in understanding] are their oppressors, and women rule over them.” Contrary to the divine arrangement, the churches, symbolically spoken of here as women, dictate what the people shall and shall not believe, setting aside individual faith and faithfulness and the spiritually guided conscience. Isaiah continues, “O my people, they which lead thee cause thee to err, and destroy the way of thy paths. The LORD standeth up to plead, and standeth to judge the people.” (Isa. 3:12,13) Similarly, in Jeremiah 5:31, we read, “The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it so: and what will ye do in the end thereof?”

The Prophet Malachi shows that after the Lord makes up his jewel class—the little flock to whom it is the Father’s good pleasure to give the kingdom—then they shall return, and discern between the true servants of God and the false. (Mal. 3:15-18) Meanwhile, however, the true follower of Christ, having espoused the cause of righteousness and truth—the Lord’s cause—is neither influenced nor cajoled into cooperation with these powers of darkness. Indeed, Paul tells us that their destruction is

inevitable and will occur as part of the bright shining of the Lord's presence.—II Thess. 2:7-12

FREED FROM EVERY EVIL WORK

The fourth and last thing from which we are now delivered is "from every evil work." This statement is found in Paul's last letter to Timothy, written shortly before his final appearance before Nero: "The Lord shall deliver me, from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen." (II Tim. 4:18) When the apostle wrote these words to Timothy, he had reason to believe his end was near at hand. He had carried the message of the Gospel of God's coming kingdom far and wide throughout the then-known world. Additionally, he had, to the best of his ability, endeavored to follow in the footsteps of his glorious Master, even though it entailed suffering and privation. He also had received some remarkable manifestations of the Lord's favor and blessing in the abundant revelations, the gifts of the Spirit, and even a glimpse of his glory.

The Lord had seen the great possibilities in Paul for spreading the Gospel message, being a man of strong, resolute character with a keen intellect. He knew Paul would not shrink from the things he would be called upon to suffer for his name's sake. Therefore, the apostle boldly faced suffering and trial for the interests of the Truth and those who would espouse it through his ministry. Nothing could swerve him from the course the Lord had outlined for him. No machinations of the Adversary and his blinded emissaries could influence him away from the course

of faith and faithfulness to God and his Son Jesus Christ.

It is not to be wondered, therefore, that he could write with such confident assurance that the Lord would deliver him from every evil work and preserve him unto his heavenly kingdom. We may not be privileged as was Paul to have such remarkable manifestations of our Lord's favor and blessing, nor to be used so extensively in his service. However, whether used much or but little, we, too, as God's devoted children, can have the same assurance of his protecting power and ultimate deliverance from every evil work or device that might be employed against us. To those who have God's Word and Spirit in their hearts and are yielding to his direction in their lives, the prophet gives the assurance, "No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, and their righteousness is of me, saith the LORD."—Isa. 54:17

Thus we, even in the midst of present-day distress and perplexity of nations, as faithful followers of Christ, surely can lift up our heads in praise and thanksgiving to the God of all grace and truth, for the clear unfolding of his purposes concerning us and all men. Having a consciousness of the divine presence through the testimony of his Word and the imbibing of its Spirit of holiness, we can have a realization of freedom from the condemnation of sin and death; freedom from the present evil world; freedom from the powers of darkness; and freedom from every evil work. ■

SPEAKERS' APPOINTMENTS

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

M. Balko

Seattle, WA
August 31-September 2

R. Charlton

West Wickham, England
August 11
High Leigh 15-18

O. B. Elbert

West Wickham, England
August 11
Chesham 12
Castle Donington, Kempsey 13
Lydney 14
Lutterworth 15
Brighton 16
High Leigh 18
Seattle, WA
31-September 2

R. Goodman

St. Petersburg, FL August 11
Jacksonville, FL 25
New York, NY 31-September 1

L. Griehs

New York, NY
August 31-September 1

S. Jeuck

Louisville, AL August 18

E. Kuenzli

Atlanta, GA August 4

H. Montague

New York, NY
August 31-September 1

P. Mora

Seattle, WA
August 31-September 2

A. Oystriky

Seattle, WA
August 31-September 2

T. Ruggirello

Seattle, WA
August 31-September 2

G. Tabac

Jackson, MI
August 31-September 1

J. Trzeciak

Jackson, MI
August 31-September 1

MOVING?



If you are moving, please let us know six weeks before you move so that we can change the address on your Dawn subscription.

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.

NIGERIA MISSION GENERAL CONVENTION, August 23-25—Emmanuel College, Owerr Imo State, Nigeria. Contact C. Egbu, #2 Darlington Street Mokola Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria. Phone: 2348033339949 or 2348082146621. E-mail: egbucaje@gmail.com

JACKSON CONVENTION, August 31-September 1—(New Location) Holiday Inn Jackson NW, 2696 Bob McClain Drive, Jackson, MI 49202. Contact V. Lumley, 2531 Ashton Road, Jackson, MI 49203. Phone: (517) 782-7252 or E-mail: lumley@aol.com

NEW YORK CONVENTION, August 31-September 1—Doubletree Hotel Mahwah, 180 Route 17 South, Mahwah, NJ. Deadline for subsidized room rate is August 15. Phone: (201) 529-5880. Contact A. Williams. Phone: (718) 261-3053 or E-mail: austin@osnetinc.com

SEATTLE CONVENTION, August 31-September 2—Seabeck Conference Center, 13395 Lagoon Drive NW, Seabeck, WA 98380. Contact L. Flinn, 33020 10 Avenue SW, #S-203, Federal Way, WA 98023. Phone: (253) 838-3822 or E-mail: laurie@flinn.us

HUNTSVILLE CONVENTION, September 6,7,8—Radisson Inn Huntsville Airport, 8721 Madison Blvd., Madison, AL 35758. Reservations: (800) 395-7046. Mention Huntsville Bible Students for special rate by August 31. Contact J. Cothren, 1300 Huntsville Hills Drive, Huntsville, AL 35802. Phone: (256) 852-8505 or E-mail: jimmycothren@att.net

COLUMBUS HARVEST CONVENTION, September 21,22—Ledwinka Farm, 10004 E. 550 N., Columbus, IN 47203. Contact D. Ledwinka. E-mail: dwwinka@yahoo.com or dwinka@hughes.net

COLORADO CONVENTION, September 27-29—
Quality Inn Central Denver, 200 W 48th Avenue, Denver,
CO 80216. Contact L. Turner. Phone: (303) 809-1957 or
E-mail: twink94@comcast.net

MILWAUKEE CONVENTION, September 28,29—
Lake Lodge, 1235 East Howard Avenue, Milwaukee, WI
53207. Contact D. Farchione. Phone: (262) 895-4583 or
E-mail: debfarchione@aol.com

LOS ANGELES CONVENTION, September 29—
Burbank Auditorium, 406 Irving Drive, Burbank, CA
91605. Contact: J. Wojcik. Phone: (818) 438-1086 or E-mail:
jrbwojcik@yahoo.com

PITTSBURGH AREA CONVENTION, October 5,6—
Sewickley Grange Hall, Route 136, West Newton, PA
15089. Contact G. Balko. Phone: (724) 771-0139

GRAND RAPIDS CONVENTION, October 12,13—
Kenowa Hills Middle School, 3950 Hendershot Avenue NW,
Grand Rapids, MI 49544. Contact J. Houlmont. Phone:
(231) 972-4259 or E-mail: ljhoulmont@charter.net

ORLANDO CONVENTION, October 26,27—South
Seminole Masonic Lodge, 122 Triplet Lake Drive, Cas-
selberry, FL 32707. Contact J. Kuenzli. Phone: (407)
831-2098 or E-mail: jkuenzli@cfl.rr.com

SAN LUIS OBISPO CONVENTION, October 26,27—
Masonic Hall, 859 Marsh Street, San Luis Obispo, CA. Con-
tact M. Allard, 637 Shamrock Lane, Pismo Beach, CA 93449.
Phone: (805) 773-2962 or E-mail: medlallard@juno.com

*How sweet to leave the world awhile,
And seek the presence of our Lord!
Dear Savior, on thy people smile;
Draw near according to thy Word.
—Hymns of Dawn*