

The DAWN

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The Nations Healed

“He shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.”

—Revelation 22:1,2

Preface: Shortly after this article was completed, we and the entire world learned of the tragic events which took place at a nightclub in Orlando, Florida during the early morning hours of Sunday, June 12th. Forty-nine people died and dozens more were injured in a mass killing, making this horrific act of violence the worst of its kind in modern United States history. At the time of this writing, law enforcement and other government officials are only in the early stages of investigating the motive and other details surrounding the killings. Regardless of what is learned in coming weeks, such a heinous crime as was committed in Orlando sadly underscores the mental and moral sickness of the world today—

the focus of this article. How thankful we are, however, that God has an eternal remedy for this sickness—his kingdom of righteousness, which will accomplish the healing of all peoples and nations. We continue to earnestly pray for God’s kingdom to soon come, and bring to an end this sick and weary nighttime of sin and death.

WE ARE LIVING in a sick world. It is a sickness unto death which began when our first parents fell from perfection in Eden through disobedience, and today it has reached crisis proportions. The chief diseases which have brought about this condition are sin and selfishness. Sin is a flouting of the laws of God, and selfishness is an inordinate seeking of one’s own interests regardless of what the consequences to others might be. Some of the symptoms of these fatal diseases are pride, hatred, and a lust for power which tolerates no interference, even at the cost of murder.

One of the most vivid descriptions of this fatal sickness of human society is the one given to us by the Apostle Paul, when he wrote, “In the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God.”—II Tim. 3:1-4

At the present time, the earth, sea, rivers, lakes, and atmosphere are all being polluted by man’s inability to properly use the resources which God has provided for him. Yet, the worst of all defilements

is the pollution of the human mind and heart by sin and selfishness. Since Adam's disobedience in Eden, these pollutants have been abroad throughout the earth, plaguing mankind and the various societies he has tried to create. However, now in these "last days," the situation has become acute, for as we look about us, the cancer of sin and selfishness is now reaching unimaginable and calamitous levels.

DILEMMA FORETOLD

The present chaos and distress which have come unexpectedly upon the world are not a surprise to the Lord. There are many prophecies of his Word which have forecast such a condition. One of them, presented in symbolic language, is found in these words from Isaiah: "Behold, the LORD will lay waste the earth and make it desolate, and he will twist its surface and scatter its inhabitants. And it shall be, as with the people, so with the priest; as with the slave, so with his master; as with the maid, so with her mistress; as with the buyer, so with the seller; as with the lender, so with the borrower; as with the creditor, so with the debtor. The earth shall be utterly laid waste and utterly despoiled; for the LORD has spoken this word. The earth mourns and withers, the world languishes and withers; the heavens languish together with the earth. The earth lies polluted under its inhabitants; for they have transgressed the laws, violated the statutes, broken the everlasting covenant."—Isa. 24:1-5, *Revised Standard Version*

The words "earth" and "world," when used in the prophecies of the Bible, such as in the above passage, often denote a social or civil structure which exists at any given time, one of the important

parts of which is the people. However, the planet Earth is also often referred to in the prophecies, and sometimes there is an intermingling of both the symbolic and literal in the same prophecy. An example of this is Psalm 46:6,10. Verse 6 reads, “The nations rage, the kingdoms totter; he utters his voice, the earth melts.” (*RSV*) In this verse the earth “melts,” but in verse 10 the earth still exists, and God’s name is exalted in it. We quote: “Be still, and know that I am God. I am exalted among the nations, I am exalted in the earth!”—*RSV*

In this prophecy of the time in which we are now living, it is the symbolic “earth” that melts, whereas the literal planet Earth remains. Indeed, by divine decree to the raging nations, peace is brought to mankind, and God’s name becomes exalted among the people. Likewise, in the prophecy quoted above from Isaiah 24, we find the symbolic earth “twisted” and “polluted,” and in it we see a leveling of all segments of human society. All of this is to the great consternation of the worldly-wise.

GOD’S PLAN FOR MAN’S RESCUE

As pointed out in Psalm 46:10, in the Lord’s due time he will say to the raging nations of earth, “Be still, and know that I am God.” This suggests divine intervention in the affairs of men at a juncture when, if left to their own devices, the sin-sick and selfish people of the earth would utterly fail in their efforts to solve the problems which they have brought upon themselves. Thus, in our approach to this subject, we should keep in mind that the great Creator is still interested in his human creatures, and will deliver them. Man will not be permitted to

destroy himself, either by weaponry, pollutants, or any other catastrophic forces.

God's wonderful plan for the rescue of mankind from the results of sin and selfishness is presented to us in the Bible in various ways. The outline of one of these begins with the narrative of the Garden of Eden. We read that in this garden the Lord provided "every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil. And a river went out of Eden to water the garden."—Gen. 2:9,10

THE ORIGINAL PARADISE

The "garden" area prepared for man in Eden was evidently a most beautiful and wonderful paradise. The idea of paradise for mankind has often been associated with some sort of spiritual existence far removed from this planet. However, God's intention from the beginning was that the earth was to be man's paradise. Eden, that small section of land which God prepared especially for our first parents, was but a sample of what the whole earth was to be, and yet will be, when God's glorious design concerning man has been fully accomplished.

In Eden much emphasis was placed on beauty. In describing the trees of the garden, those "pleasant to the sight" are mentioned first, and then those which were "good for food." We conclude from this that God not only made preparation to sustain the lives of his human creatures, but he wanted them also to enjoy their lives through appreciation of the beautiful environment which surrounded them. God was delighted with his human

creation, and he wanted them to have joy in him by being constantly reminded of his love and care.

THE FORBIDDEN FRUIT

The Garden of Eden, in addition to its life-giving trees, contained one called “the tree of knowledge of good and evil.” It is not necessary that we know the nature of this tree. The important lesson for us is that our first parents were forbidden to partake of it, and the death penalty was attached to violation of that commandment. (vss. 16,17) During the long centuries since Adam and Eve’s disobedience, the human race has been acquiring a “knowledge of . . . evil.” Correspondingly, during the thousand years of Christ’s kingdom they will have the opportunity to acquire a “knowledge of good.” Man’s experiences with both “good and evil” will enable them finally to make a fully informed choice between the two.

In the Garden of Eden there was also a river, which “went out of Eden to water the garden.” Thus, we are told in that original paradise setting were life-giving trees, and a river was there to provide water. However, because our first parents disobeyed God, they were driven out of that garden into a land full of “thorns . . . and thistles,” in which they would exist by toil and sweat, until they died. (chap. 3:18,19) The record continues, “The LORD God sent him forth from the Garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.”—vss. 23,24

The Apostle Paul wrote, “The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ

our Lord.” (Rom. 6:23) Death was the penalty which was inflicted upon man. The banishment from Eden and its trees of life to thorns, thistles, and toil were the means used by the Lord to inflict that penalty. How efficient these “executioners” have been. For six thousand years man has been a suffering and dying creature, unable to overcome the hazards of his natural environment, and the failure of his fallen mental and moral behavior. Hence, he is still a dying creature, with no ability to escape that certain fate.

THE REMEDY FOR MAN

While throughout the centuries all human plans and efforts to better the condition of the fallen race have proven unsuccessful, God has a plan which will not fail. It is centered in his Messianic kingdom. In brief, this plan is, through Christ, to reestablish divine authority in the earth. It is suggested in the prayer which Jesus taught to his disciples, “Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.” (Matt. 6:10) Man is in his present and ever-worsening dilemma because of disobedience to divine law, and only by obedience to the Creator’s law will he be able to enjoy peace, health, and life.

This kingdom remedy for the many ills of man which have been brought on by disobedience is presented to us in many ways in the Bible. One of these is contained in the words of our opening text, Revelation 22:1,2. These verses speak of a “pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.” The “throne” of God suggests the exercise of divine authority in the earth. The “Lamb” is also mentioned, which

reminds us that the exercise of God's authority will be through Christ, the "Lamb of God" who died for the "sin of the world." (John 1:29) Thus will be made possible the reestablishment of the divine will among the world of mankind, for whom Christ died.

THE "RIVER"

In some places in the Bible water is used to symbolize a cleansing agency in the heart and the mind—a cleansing by the Word of truth. (Ezek. 36:25; Eph. 5:26; Heb. 10:22) In our opening verses, however, it represents life—"a pure river of water of life," which is "clear as crystal." While this is a symbolic river, as we read about its purity and clarity, we are reminded by way of contrast how man has greatly polluted the natural rivers of the earth. Instead of being life-sustaining agencies, quite the opposite is the case in many parts of the world. How hopeless would be the outlook for man's future on this earth but for the wonderful provisions the Lord has made!

Verse 2 of our opening text says, again in symbolic language, that on "either side of the river" was "the tree of life." When our first parents transgressed God's law they were driven out of Eden in order that they might not be able to partake of the tree of life which the Lord had planted there. As previously quoted, God "drove out the man" from the garden, and placed "Cherubims" and a "flaming sword" at its entrance in order to guard the "way of the tree of life."—Gen. 3:24

Thus God ensured that man would have no opportunity to perpetuate his life. He had sinned, and now the penalty—"Dust thou art, and unto dust

shalt thou return”—fell upon him. (Gen. 3:19) There was to be no way of man’s getting himself out from under this penalty. God, however, still loved his earthly creatures, and in due time made a provision for their escape from death. That provision was Jesus, who in the symbology of the prophecies became the “Lamb of God,” the “Lamb that was slain,” for the sin of the world.—John 1:29; Rev. 5:12

Now, in the verses of our lesson, we find the “Lamb” empowered with governmental authority. From the Lamb’s throne, and the throne of God, is flowing the water of life. It is not symbolized as containing a limited supply, such as a pond or lake, but as a flowing river, and on either side of this river is the “tree of life.” It is as though in the outworking of God’s plan instructions are to be given from the “throne” that the Cherubims should no longer keep the people away from the tree of life, but that the time had now come for them, through obedience to the laws of the kingdom, to return to God’s favor and have free access to the source of life of which they had been deprived due to sin.

AN ABUNDANT FRUITAGE

Concerning that future tree of life, the prophecy states that it will “bare twelve manner of fruits,” and that it will yield fruit “every month.” This language is interesting, in that it suggests a continuous, never-failing source of life-giving fruit. It is symbolic language, but serves as a reminder of how miserably man has failed to provide even the basic necessities of life.

It is true that in certain areas, such as North America, and in many parts of Europe, food is in

plentiful supply, and we may be prone to think of the entire world from the standpoint of our restricted surroundings. The truth is that on the earth as a whole many millions are starving, and a significant portion of humanity never gets enough to eat. We speak of our society as relatively affluent, but let us remember that our “world” represents a very small part of the planet, so great a part of which is hungry and starving.

We do not know the details of how the Lord will supply an abundance of food for the billions who will ultimately fill the earth in keeping with the divine decree, but we know that he is fully able to do it. While we need not think of the fruit on the symbolic “tree of life” as representing literal food, we know that man will need food, as did our first parents in the garden. Mankind will be supplied in the kingdom with all the wholesome food that is needed, and through faith and obedience, the symbolic fruits of the tree of life will also be available. Such abundant provisions will enable man to live forever.

Our text further informs us concerning “the tree of life” that its leaves will be “for the healing of the nations.” In another prophecy of “the river of life,” where it is shown flowing from the temple, or sanctuary of the Lord, we read, “On the banks, on both sides of the river, there will grow all kinds of trees for food. Their leaves will not wither nor their fruit fail, but they will bear fresh fruit every month, because the water for them flows from the sanctuary. Their fruit will be for food, and their leaves for healing.”—Ezek. 47:12, *RSV*

How great will be the need for the nations to be healed! This will be true of the people of all nations,

not only those which exist now, but those who have suffered and died throughout the ages. As the life-giving reign of the kingdom begins, the people of all nations will be, as it were, wounded and bleeding, in a symbolic sense. Only the provisions which the Lord has made will heal their wounds, and restore them to life, peace, and happiness. It is this ultimate condition that will be attained by means of the “river of water of life” and its “tree of life,” provided by the “throne of God and of the Lamb.”

THE NATIONS

Promises and prophecies of the Bible which give assurance of health and life in the kingdom are often misapplied to what it is believed conditions will be like in heaven. For example, Revelation 21:4 assures us of a time when there shall be “no more death,” and when all tears will be wiped away. Many fail to note the wording, “no more death,” which implies that this is a provision of the Lord for people on earth where, for six thousand years, death has been constantly present. There will come a time when death “no more” affects those dwelling on the earth.

Thus, when we read that the nations will be healed, we should remember that the sick nations exist, not in heaven, but on earth. It is here on earth where the refreshing blessings of the river of life will flow out to the people. Nationalism will not exist in the kingdom, but all nationalities of earth will have an opportunity to receive the life-giving blessings of the river of life and its tree of life. This is one of the beautiful, symbolic pictures of the

fulfillment of the promise which God made to Father Abraham when he said to him that through his seed, which is the Christ, all the families, or nations, of the earth shall be blessed.—Gen. 12:3; Gal. 3:16,27-29

Abraham was unable to know when God made this promise to him that, by the time it would be fulfilled, the families and nations of the earth would be scattered to inhabit all its continents and the isles of the sea. Indeed, it is doubtful if Abraham had any idea of the broad expanse of this beautiful planet. It is this Earth, however, which God proposes to transform into a paradise for the eternal joy of all the willing and obedient of mankind who, under the rulership of the Messianic kingdom, will turn to him in obedience and faith, and be among that multitude who will be healed and have their tears wiped away.

THE “BRIDE”

In Revelation 22:17 there is a further reference to the water of life. It reads, “The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely”—that is, “without price.” (*RSV*) Revelation 19:10 informs us that the testimony of Jesus is the “spirit of prophecy.” Hence, it could well be that the reference to the “Spirit and the bride” refers to Jesus and his “bride.”

In Revelation 19:7 we are told of the time when the “marriage of the Lamb is come,” and that “his wife hath made herself ready.” In Revelation 21:2 we have a reference to the “holy city” coming down

from God out of heaven, "prepared as a bride adorned for her husband." In the 9th and 10th verses of this chapter, the Apostle John further writes, "And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife. And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God."

There is abundant testimony in the Scriptures to indicate that this prophetic "bride, the Lamb's wife," will be composed of the complete number of Christ's faithful followers from Pentecost to the end of the Gospel Age. The expression, "hath made herself ready," is vital to every Christian who aspires to be of this special company of favored ones in the kingdom. It reminds us that those who will be of the bride class have yielded themselves to the molding influences of the Holy Spirit in their lives, and by this means have become like Christ, and suitable to be part of his "bride." Much suffering and many tests of faith have been involved in this. As all have finished their preparation, having fully laid down their lives in sacrifice as Jesus did, following the raising of the last members in the "first resurrection," they will become united with him as his bride in that great "holy city" arrangement of the future.—Rev. 20:6

Many have mistakenly supposed that the invitation to "Come . . . take the water of life freely," has been going out to the world ever since the First Advent of Christ. However, this could not be, because during all those centuries there has been

no “bride” of Christ to say “Come.” Rather, this age has been set aside by God as a period in which the bride makes “herself ready.”

The making ready of the bride will not be completed until the last member has finished his course in death. Then the “marriage of the Lamb” will take place. Then there will be a bride. Then the “Spirit and the bride” will say, “Come.” This is a bright prospect for the future. Not only will Christ and his bride say, “Come,” but all “that heareth” this invitation will have the privilege of joining in the blessed work of saying, “Come,” extending it to others, until all the people of the earth are reached.

This will be the work of God’s kingdom, under the rulership of Christ. Satan will then be bound, and no longer able to pollute men’s minds with all sorts of delusions concerning God. (chap. 20:1,2) The one who has deceived all nations will no longer be permitted to deceive. Thus, the “knowledge of the LORD” will quickly fill the earth “as the waters cover the sea.”—Isa. 11:9

This is God’s remedy for all the problems—political, economic, environmental, religious, social, and all other kinds—which have come about because of sin and selfishness, and which now threaten the very existence of the human race. What a wonderful solution it is! When fully activated, it will lead to peace, happiness, and everlasting life among all nations, for they will be healed. The refreshing waters of the river of life will restore the people to that God-provided heritage which, through sin, they lost awhile, but because of God’s love, will have been regained. ■

Safe in God's Love

Key Verse: *“What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?”*
—Romans 8:31

Selected Scripture:
Romans 8:28-39

Gospel Age is to call out a people, referred to here as “the called,” from among mankind.

Knowing this special purpose of God at the present time helps us realize the need to “put off” the fallen fleshly characteristics and desires, and to “put on the new man,” which seeks to be transformed into the image of Jesus. (Col. 3:8-15) Jesus told his disciples, “Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.”—Matt. 6:19-21

Such a course in life will of necessity put us at odds with the world. Peter told us to expect this, saying, “Beloved, think it not strange 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

THE BASIS OF TODAY'S

lesson is given with this precious promise: “We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.” (Rom. 8:28) In these words, we learn that God's purpose during this present

shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.”—I Pet. 4:12,13

Such trials and suffering, however, should only strengthen our devotion to God. The Apostle Paul said he rejoiced in his sufferings and in the “afflictions of Christ,” and we also have the privilege of joining him in fulfilling this “mystery; . . . which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.” (Col. 1:24,27) James, likewise, said our trials are essential: “My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations [trials]; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.”—James 1:2-4

Our difficult trials of faith are tempered with the realization that God has promised he will not permit any experience to come into our life which he sees is more than we can bear—“There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able.” (I Cor. 10:13) We are also reassured that “our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.” (II Cor. 4:17) Indeed, our afflictions, in comparison to the hope of our calling, are inconsequential. Jesus said, “Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”—Matt. 11:29,30

The phrase in our Key Verse, “If God be for us . . . ,” might at first give the impression that there is some question as to the Heavenly Father’s care over us. However, when we consider the subsequent verses of our lesson, we quickly realize that the real import of these words is that “since” God is for us, nothing can successfully work against us. Nothing, Paul concludes, “shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”—Rom. 8:39 ■

Living under God's Mercy

Key Verse: **IN THE EARLIER CHAP-**
“Therefore hath he **ters of Paul’s epistle to the**
mercy on whom he **Romans he explains in detail**
will have mercy, **how Israel failed to keep the**
and whom he will **Law as they had promised they**
he hardeneth.” **would. (Rom. 3:20; Exod. 19:5-8)**
—Romans 9:18 **Justification, or righteousness,**

Selected Scripture: **Paul further says, comes only**
Romans 9:6-18 **by God’s “grace through the**
redemption that is in Christ
Jesus.” (Rom. 3:24) In verse 28 he adds, “Therefore we
conclude that a man is justified by faith without the
deeds of the law.” This transition from the Mosaic Law
into God’s grace through Christ was difficult for many
early Jewish Christians to accept.

Some have interpreted the verses of our lesson to teach that God has permanently rejected Israel in favor of the followers of Christ. However, this “replacement” idea is not at all what Paul was preaching. Our Key Verse is not a rejection of Israel, but it is a statement which shows that the Almighty has favors to dispense. It is a matter purely of his own business to whom he shall give them. God gave natural Israel certain favors and privileges as a nation that carried a corresponding blessing, but they rejected him time and time again. The Lord would in no sense of the word be obligated to continue his preferential blessings to them, and to ignore others no less

worthy. Accordingly, Paul says it would be entirely proper for God to discontinue his special favors to those who would not use them, and to give them to others.

To make his point, Paul turns to Israel's history. He says, "They are not all Israel, which are of Israel: Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called. That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed." (Rom. 9:6-8) God's promise concerning the natural seed of Abraham came to fruition because of the miraculous birth of Isaac, who alone was Abraham's child by promise.

Paul also speaks of Jacob and Esau, the sons of Isaac, saying, "For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth." (vs. 11) Here, Paul makes Jacob and Esau a picture of two classes. Esau was the firstborn. He was successful, but worldly minded, aptly picturing natural Israel. Jacob was the younger. He was not perfect, but had more interest in the promises given to his family, and fitly pictures the church—spiritual Israel. God's choice of Esau to be a picture of natural Israel was nothing to his disadvantage. Indeed, the nation of Israel was given the "oracles of God" and the first opportunity to recognize and embrace the Messiah when he came to them.—Rom. 3:1,2; Gal. 3:21-24

The mention of Pharaoh's heart being hardened would also have resonated with Paul's Jewish audience. (Rom. 9:17) Pharaoh was allowed to harden his own heart by thinking he was above the plagues, not because God forced him to act as he did. In verse 21, we are reminded that "the potter"—God—has "power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour"—that is, less honor. In summary, our Key Verse does not indicate that we forfeit our free will, but reminds us that God's ways are higher than our ways.—Isa. 55:9 ■

God Prunes and Grafts

Key Verse: “Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off.”
—Romans 11:22

Selected Scripture:
Romans 11:11-24

International Version) This plain statement is one of many which points to the fact that Israel will share in God’s blessings to all the families of the earth.—Gen. 12:3; 22:18

Although Paul’s purpose in our lesson is to show the importance of the Gentiles in God’s plan, he still greatly desired that his Jewish brethren would become consecrated followers of Christ. Earlier, Paul spoke of “great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart,” wishing that he could trade places with his kinsmen if they would only accept Christ. (Rom. 9:1-5) However, their lack of faith in God’s promised spiritual blessings caused Israel, as a nation, to be cast away from their favored position.

In our lesson, Paul likens Israel’s casting away to

HAVING SPOKEN TO THE

Roman Jews up to this point, Paul now turns his attention to the Roman Gentiles. Israel, as a nation, had “stumbled” by not accepting their opportunity as a nation to become members of the New Creation. (Rom. 11:9,11) However, Paul says their stumbling is temporary. “I ask then: Did God reject his people? By no means! I am an Israelite myself, a descendant of Abraham, from the tribe of Benjamin. God did not reject his people, whom he foreknew.” (Rom. 11:1,2, *New*

branches being broken off an olive tree. (Rom. 11:17) The Law was a schoolmaster that should have led the Jews to Christ, but when Christ came they rejected him. (Gal. 3:24; Isa. 53:3; Luke 9:22) After being rejected by his own people, Jesus declared that they were cast off from divine favor. (Matt. 23:37,38) The “breaking off” of the branches which followed came to every Jew who refused to accept Jesus as their Messiah. Yet, Paul insists Israel’s fall from God’s favor was more a blessing to the Gentiles than a permanent injury to Israel.—Rom. 11:25-28

Once the natural “branches” had been broken off, there was room for “wild” branches—Gentiles—to be grafted in to take their place. These new branches would immediately partake of the holy root of the tree. (vs. 17) Those thus grafted have become sharers in the original root of divine favor promised in the Abrahamic Covenant, for it is God’s purpose to have a heavenly family drawn from among mankind—Jews and Gentiles alike.—Eph. 1:3-12

As grafted branches, Paul warns us not to “boast against the branches” which were broken off. We are to humbly remember we did not bring into being the “root” of the Abrahamic promise. Rather, the promises made to Abraham have, by faith, allowed us to partake of its “root and fatness.” (Rom. 11:17,18) Furthermore, just as Israel was broken off due to unbelief, we might be treated likewise if we are not faithful to our call. We have the same standard of love to meet that was the basis of the Law. Thus, Paul says, “Be not highminded, but fear.”—vss. 20,21

In our Key Verse, Paul speaks concerning an important transition in God’s plan. Because of Israel’s continual disobedience to God’s Law, which they had promised to keep, they experienced “the severity of God,” when he broke them off from his favor. At the same time, we see “the goodness . . . of God” in giving his favor to new Gentile branches, who will eventually become part of the bride of Christ, to live and reign with him.—Rev. 20:4,6 ■

Love Fulfills the Law

Key Verse: *“Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law.”*
—Romans 13:8

Selected Scriptures:
*Romans 12:1,2;
13:8-10*

redeemer. He showed them faith in Christ was the only way to be freed from their sins and to gain life.—Rom. 3:20-24

In all of his preaching, Paul pointed out that it was God’s plan from the beginning to deal with his people by faith. (Gal. 3:8) Based on the arguments set forth in the first eleven chapters of Romans, he begins the next chapter, saying, “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.”—Rom. 12:1

In these words, we see God’s invitation to us to become members of the body of Christ. By accepting this invitation, and being led by the power of the Holy Spirit, we become “the sons of God.” (Rom. 8:14) If we are “faithful unto death,” we are promised a “crown of life”—immortality, the divine nature. (Rev. 2:10; Rom. 2:7; II Pet. 1:4) We will then judge the world in the next

SOME JEWISH CONVERTS

insisted that keeping various features of the Mosaic Law was a condition of living in Christ. Through arguments from different angles, Paul answered every objection of these disrupters. He pointed out that no Jew received life under the Law, but rather it showed them they were all sinners in need of a

age, the time of Christ's earthly kingdom. (I Cor. 6:2) With such a prospect, the fulfillment of our consecration vow is truly only a "reasonable service."

Paul further instructs us, "Be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God." (Rom. 12:2) Much instruction is implied in the words "be ye transformed." First, we are not to become entangled with the things of this world, for if we "live after the flesh," we will die. (Rom. 8:13) We must develop an attitude in which we "count it all joy, when going through trying experiences. (James 1:2-4) We also are to study God's Word to better understand his plans and purposes, and to be approved of him. (II Tim. 2:15) Finally, it is necessary that we study the character of Jesus and be conformed into his image.—Heb. 12:2-4

In our Key Verse, the instruction to "owe no man anything, but to love one another," suggests an opposite heart condition from one who is viewing his fellow man from strictly an earthly, temporal standpoint. Jesus said we owe each other love. "This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you."—John 15:12-14

The concluding words of our Key Verse, "he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law," brings the contrast of "the law," versus "faith which worketh by love," into harmonious agreement. (Gal. 5:6) Similarly, Jesus said that loving God as well as your neighbor are the two great commandments on which "hang all the law and the prophets." (Matt. 22:36-40) Simply put, Paul says, "If there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. . . . Therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.—Rom. 13:9,10 ■

Our Anointing from God

***“You have an
anointing from
the Holy one; you
all know it.”***

—John 2:20,

Wilson’s Emphatic

Diaglott

IN THE HEBREW LAN-

guage of the Old Testament,

the word *mashach* means

“to anoint,” and is used to

describe the holy anointing

oil as it was utilized in the

Tabernacle arrangement. The

word Messiah, which means “anointed one,” is also

derived from *mashach*. This word corresponds in

the New Testament to the Greek word *chrio*, from which

comes *Christos*—translated “Christ,” likewise mean-

ing “anointed one.” During Old Testament times,

the Israelites, at the Lord’s direction, ceremonially

anointed priests and rulers. This constituted the con-

firmation of their appointment to office with God’s

favor. Aaron was anointed as high priest after his

appointment to that office. (Lev. 8:12) Samuel anointed

Saul as king over Israel after God had designated

him as his choice. (I Sam. 10:1) David was anointed

as king on three different occasions.—I Sam. 16:13;

II Sam. 2:4; 5:3

The sacred anointing oil was also used to anoint

the Tabernacle and its furnishings, indicating that

they were dedicated as holy things. In the Law that God gave to Moses, he prescribed a formula for the anointing oil. It was of special composition, consisting of precise measurements of choice ingredients—myrrh, sweet cinnamon, sweet calamus, cassia, and olive oil. (Exod. 30:22-33) It was a capital offense for anyone to create or use this special compound for any unauthorized purpose. This effectively demonstrated the importance and sacredness of an appointment to office that had been confirmed by an anointing with the holy oil.

The anointing of Israel's priests and kings prefigured God's appointment of Jesus as the long-promised Messiah, or anointed one, who would deliver his people. One of the beautiful prophecies concerning the Messiah is found in these words of Isaiah: "The Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD. . . . With righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked. And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins."—Isa. 11:2-5

JESUS' ANOINTING

Jesus was anointed at the time of his baptism in the river Jordan. He was not anointed with oil, but with what the holy anointing oil represented—the Holy Spirit. John the Baptist confirmed the anointing of Jesus, saying, "I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon him." (John 1:32) At the beginning of his ministry, Jesus quoted a

portion of a prophecy concerning himself: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, To preach the acceptable year of the Lord."—Luke 4:18,19; Isa. 61:1,2

Jesus is the anointed "Christ," and, according to the scriptural testimony, he was faithful unto death in carrying out the Heavenly Father's instructions. Because of this, he was highly exalted. (Phil. 2:5-11; Heb. 5:8-10) However, Jesus was not the completion of the divine arrangement regarding the anointed. The Heavenly Father further purposed that his Son should be the head of an anointed body called "the church." The Apostle Paul states that God "hath put all things under his [Christ's] feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all." "For we are members of his body. . . . For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church."—Eph. 1:22,23; 5:30-32

The fact that "the Christ" was to be composed of many members was a mystery and was not made known until after the First Advent of Jesus. The Apostle John, speaking to a group of the Lord's followers, said, "The anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in

him.” (I John 2:27) The revelation of this mystery could not take place until after Jesus’ death and resurrection, so that the merit of his offering might be made applicable to all who desired to become members of his body. This was necessary to make them an acceptable sacrifice and prospective members of his body.—Eph. 1:3-7; Col. 1:18-22

ANOINTING OF THE CHURCH

There were a number of Jesus’ followers, including the apostles, who believed the testimony of Jesus that if they would take up their cross and follow him, they would also be privileged to share in his glory. (Matt. 16:24) However, they could not receive the anointing or understand its meaning until he had made satisfaction for their sins. “Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.” (Heb. 9:24) Therefore, the Lord instructed his disciples to wait in Jerusalem until the Holy Spirit should come upon them. Ten days after his ascension, on the Day of Pentecost, the promised anointing came from the Father through Christ.—Luke 24:46-49; John 14:26; Acts 1:4,5,8-14; 2:1-36

In the case of the disciples who received the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost, they were given special gifts as outward evidence of their anointing. The Lord deemed this necessary because it was an entirely new arrangement, not previously understood or appreciated even by the disciples. The ability to speak in “other tongues”—or known languages—was a miracle, and was necessary at that time for the dissemination of the Gospel to many nations,

since there was no other media except word of mouth. “Every man heard them speak in his own language.” (Acts 2:6) Also associated with the anointing was an enlightenment of mind to the meaning of many Scriptures. This was wonderfully demonstrated by Peter’s sermon which followed his being filled with the Holy Spirit. Later, other gifts were given to the apostles, such as the ability to heal and cast out devils. These and other powers were given for the purpose of giving evidence that the authority for their ministry came from God, and they also served as illustrations of the wonderful works that would be done in the future kingdom of Christ. These special “gifts” of the Spirit came to an end with the death of the apostles, because the ministry of the Gospel was, by then, well established.

The footstep followers of Jesus down through the Gospel Age have received the same anointing of the Holy Spirit, except that the power to perform miracles has been withheld because there is no longer any need for this demonstration of divine power. Like the disciples, however, they all have experienced the wonderful enlightenment of mind which has led them from the darkness of this world into the marvelous light of the Gospel of Christ.—I Pet. 2:9

ANOINTING VERSUS BEGETTING

The New Testament describes the gift of the Holy Spirit as an “anointing” and also as a “begetting.” The thought of the anointing has to do with office, as was true in the Old Testament types. During the Gospel Age, we are “called in one hope” of our calling. (Eph. 4:4) The apostle further states, concerning himself and all footstep followers of Jesus, that they

are to “press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” (Phil. 3:14) The “prize of the high calling of God” is the “divine nature” and the privilege to live and reign with Christ in his kingdom for a thousand years. (II Pet. 1:4; Matt. 19:28; Rev. 20:4,6) Our anointing to this special office is conditioned upon obedience. “If we be dead with him, we shall also live with him: If we suffer, we shall also reign with him.” (II Tim. 2:11,12) Associated with our anointing is a second work of the Holy Spirit that occurs simultaneously, which is referred to in the Scriptures as a begetting. Both the anointing and begetting of the Holy Spirit are limited to those whom God has called and accepted.

Whereas the anointing has to do with the office to which we have been called, the begetting of the Holy Spirit is the means by which our lives become conformed, day by day, to the example set before us in Christ Jesus. Thus, Spirit begetting makes possible a profound change in our life as a consecrated believer. We cannot describe in words what has taken place, and the change is unobservable to our friends and neighbors, except as it makes itself manifest by our interest in and dedication to the Truth. It is enough for us to recognize, however, that God, by his Holy Spirit, has given our minds the ability to discern spiritual things, enabling us to extract from his Word “the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory.” (I Cor. 2:7-14) The Apostle Paul, in his prayer on behalf of the brethren at Ephesus, prayed that God, through the Holy Spirit, “may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know

what is the hope of his calling.” (Eph. 1:17,18) This is the purpose of our begetting of the Holy Spirit, and those who are favored to know and who truly appreciate their calling will be obedient to its terms.

HOLY ANOINTING OIL

In harmony with the foregoing, let us consider the holy anointing oil used in the typical arrangements of Israel. When a king or a priest was anointed, it pictured his divine authority to occupy that office. Associated with the anointing was the ability to receive instruction from God. Aaron, Israel’s first high priest, was anointed by Moses, who gave him instructions from God as to his service. (Lev. 8:30) Concerning these instructions, God said that he gave them to Moses “mouth to mouth, even apparently [by a vision], and not in dark speeches.” (Num. 12:8) All the instructions given to Moses, to be passed on to various anointed servants, were to enable them to accomplish the work God had for them to do.

This seems to have been especially true of Bezaleel, who was commissioned by God to build the Tabernacle with all of its furnishings. It was necessary that it be built exactly according to God’s instructions, so that in the future it would cast a proper “shadow” or type for the benefit of the Gospel Age church. (Heb. 8:5) Concerning Bezaleel, the account states, “I have filled him with the spirit of God, in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship, To devise cunning works, to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass, And in cutting of stones, to set them, and in carving of timber, to work in all manner of workmanship.” (Exod. 31:3-5) It has been suggested that these qualities—wisdom,

understanding, knowledge, and workmanship—are the same qualities that the begetting of the Holy Spirit imparts to one begotten at the present time. In addition, these four qualities might be well represented by the four ingredients—myrrh, sweet cinnamon, calamus, and cassia—which were added to the olive oil in the making of the holy anointing oil.

In the formula given to Moses for the preparation of the holy anointing oil, recorded in Exodus 30:22-25, we note that the quantities of sweet cinnamon and calamus are the same—two hundred and fifty shekels each. This suggests that these two ingredients might well represent “knowledge” and “understanding.” Knowledge is factual information, and we get this from our study of the Word of God. Then, because of the begetting of the Holy Spirit, our minds are enlightened and we are given spiritual discernment of the will of God, as embodied in the knowledge gained. This spiritual discernment can be likened to understanding with the heart. Thus, knowledge and understanding work hand in hand with each other, and are of corresponding importance.

Next we note that the quantity of myrrh—five hundred shekels—was equal to the combined measures of cinnamon and calamus. Myrrh would seem to represent “wisdom,” which takes the knowledge and understanding we have gained and translates them into decisions concerning the Lord’s will in our life. Spiritual wisdom enables us to see things from God’s point of view, rather than by the “foolish . . . wisdom of this world.” (I Cor. 1:20) The final ingredient of the holy anointing oil was cassia—five hundred shekels—which could well represent the quality of “workmanship.” For consecrated believers,

workmanship has to do with the ability to perform or accomplish that which God would have us to do.—Eph. 2:10

In Isaiah 11:2-5, previously quoted, the prophet states that the Spirit of the Lord would rest upon Jesus, the Messiah, and that he would manifest the qualities of wisdom, knowledge, and understanding. He would also have upon him, Isaiah says, the spirit of “counsel and might,” which conveys the same meaning as workmanship—that is, the knowledge and ability to perform. In another inspired prophecy about the Messiah, the psalmist wrote, “Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness: therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows. All thy garments smell of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia, out of the ivory palaces, whereby they have made thee glad.”—Ps. 45:7,8

THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Apostle Paul, speaking of the work of the Holy Spirit in his epistle to the brethren at Colosse, said, “Because of this also, we, from the day we heard it, do not cease praying on your behalf, that you may be filled, as to the exact knowledge of his will, with all spiritual wisdom and understanding; to walk worthily of the Lord, pleasing him in all things; bringing forth fruit by every good work, and increasing in the exact knowledge of God.” (Col. 1:9,10, *Emphatic Diaglott*) The burden of the apostle’s prayer was the desire that the brethren might completely yield themselves to the power of the Holy Spirit, as it worked in their lives through the Word of God. If this was done, he said, they would walk worthy of the Lord, and please him in all things.

The “good work” spoken of by the apostle is the same type of work that occupied Jesus during his earthly ministry. It consisted of preaching the Gospel, going about doing good to all with whom he came in contact, and laying his life down in serving his disciples. In performing faithfully such works, there is a beneficial outgrowth—the development of the fruits and graces of the Spirit. Of Jesus, the Apostle Paul states, that “though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered.” (Heb. 5:8) His difficult and trying experiences resulted from doing good works. Jesus was a light in a dark place, and he testified that “darkness . . . hateth the light.” (John 3:19,20)

The Apostle Paul described Jesus as one who “endured such contradiction [opposition] of sinners against himself,” and that we should “consider him,” lest we “be wearied and faint” in our minds. (Heb. 12:3) Indeed, opposition and ridicule will also be the lot of all the anointed of God if they faithfully follow in the footsteps of their head, Christ Jesus. They can be more than overcomers, not by their own strength, but only by the power and influence of the Holy Spirit.

Let us have an ever increasing appreciation of the illustrations and instructions God has given in his Word with regard to our anointing. May they help us discern our relationship to him and to some extent understand how the power of the Holy Spirit works in us to bring forth the fruitage he desires, which will ultimately qualify us for a place in his kingdom. What a rich blessing is ours to know, as stated in our opening text, that we have an “anointing from the Holy one”—our loving God and Heavenly Father! ■

Lessons from Jude

“Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.”

—*Jude 21*

JUDE ADDRESSED HIS

epistle to those who are “sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called.”

(vs. 1) We know that we can-

not measure up to the perfect standard that is held before us in the person of Jesus. We are thankful, therefore, as Jude reminds us, that “mercy, . . . peace, and love” are “multiplied” toward us in our imperfections. (vs. 2) This loving provision of divine mercy, however, does not provide an excuse for us to relax in our efforts to know and do God’s will. It rather should give us cause to rejoice in the realization that through Christ our imperfect works are reckoned acceptable. (Eph. 1:6) Thus, God will bless us, not according to how well we succeed, but in proportion to the sincere efforts we make in trying to come as closely as we can to follow Jesus’ example of perfection.

In the third verse of his epistle, Jude admonishes us to “earnestly contend for the faith which was

once delivered unto the saints.” Later, in verse 20, he speaks of “building up” ourselves in this “most holy faith.” Our opening text then follows, in which Jude exhorts us to keep ourselves in the love of God. These verses emphasize the close relationship between the “most holy faith” and divine love. Indeed, it is through this faith, “once delivered unto the saints,” that God has revealed his love to us, and it is by obedience to the glorious truth of his plan that we keep ourselves in divine favor.

Many speak in a general way of the love of God, but it is only through the truth of his plan that one can appreciate the length and breadth, and height and depth of that love. Millions, for example, have read the text that “God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son.” (John 3:16) Yet, many of these believe that the purpose of this gift was to rescue believing sinners from an eternity of torture. Such have certainly not come very far in discerning the fullness of God’s love. Associated with the unscriptural teaching of eternal torture is the distorted idea that, in some inexplicable way, God is his own Son, and the Son is his own Father.

Only those who know the melodious sound of the Scriptures, the “faith which was once delivered unto the saints,” and through it have glimpsed a more accurate vision of God, really understand to any degree divine love, which, so far as its fullness is concerned, is quite beyond human understanding. Therefore, if “the faith” first given to the saints by our Lord and the apostles has been revealed to us, and we have been blessed to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, let us rejoice in this understanding. Let us also be willing at all times to

contend earnestly for this divine revelation, and be diligent in building ourselves up in this blessed Truth.

CONTENDING FOR THE FAITH

To earnestly contend for the faith, as Jude exhorts in verse 3, is by no means limited to upholding it against the attacks of its enemies, or against the errors of false doctrine. To “contend,” in reality, means to engage in our “good fight of faith.” (I Tim. 6:12) This fight is the Christian warfare we each have with the enemies around and within us. In this warfare we have three principal foes with which to contend. These are the world, our own fallen flesh, and the Devil. Each of these enemies is formidable in its attacks against our hearts and minds. When they join forces and work together, which often happens, we would be powerless to defeat them, apart from the marvelous provisions of divine grace by which we are kept from falling.—Eph. 2:8

One of the means by which we “earnestly contend” is the truth itself, which Paul likens to an ancient soldier’s armor, with its helmet, shield, breastplate, girdle, sandals, and sword. Each of these articles, from one standpoint or another, is symbolic of the Truth which is our “shield and buckler.” If we keep this armor on, and girded closely to us, we will be able to withstand all the “fiery darts” of the Adversary.—Eph. 6:11-17; Ps. 91:1-4

Prayer is also a bulwark of strength to those who properly contend for the faith. Moreover, it is cited by Paul as the final element of the Christian’s armor. (Eph. 6:18) In the parable of the importunate widow, Jesus’ lesson is that his disciples “ought always to

pray, and not to faint.” (Luke 18:1) Going “boldly unto the throne of grace” is a sure method by which we may “obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.” (Heb. 4:16) When the way is difficult, the storms are raging, enemies are pressing hard, and we can scarcely see the next step before us, instead of fainting and giving up, let us pray.

If we hold the Truth in our minds and in our hearts, it will manifest itself in our lives. Since the truth reveals the love of God, to be built up in this “most holy faith” implies a development into the character likeness of God, and being “conformed to the image of his Son.” (Rom. 8:29) Thus, every influence exerted to prevent this growth of Christian character is something against which we should contend, whether it be from within our own fallen flesh, or from without, emanating from Satan or the world.

SATAN’S INFLUENCE DEVIOUS

Satan is a devious foe, and is quick to take advantage of every weakness of the flesh in his efforts to destroy us as New Creatures in Christ Jesus. Jude knew this, and in his epistle used various illustrations and examples to help us to be on guard against the “wiles of the devil.” (Eph. 6:11) He wrote, for example, of some in his day who had “gone in the way of Cain,” and of others going “greedily after the error of Balaam for reward.” He writes also of the “gainsaying of Core.” (Jude 11) Perhaps we may feel that there is no danger of our committing such gross sins as Jude has mentioned. However, he has simply presented the ultimate to which various weaknesses of the flesh, with the wrong influence

of Satan, might lead, if their early beginnings are not detected and the proper measures taken to cleanse ourselves from them.

The Prophet David prayed for help from the Lord to keep him from any small beginnings of sin which might lead to calamity in the end. He said to the Lord, "Who can understand his errors? cleanse thou me from secret faults. Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression. Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer."—Ps. 19:12-14

Jude did not write his epistle to unbelievers or the worldly minded. As previously noted from verse 1, he addressed his words to "them that are sanctified by God." Hence, it must have been some of these Jude noted who had followed in the ways of Cain, Balaam, and Core. This suggests the possibility of the Lord's people taking the same wrong courses if they are not diligent in keeping themselves in the love of God.

JEALOUSY—THE "WAY OF CAIN"

The "way of Cain" was the sin of jealousy. In his case it became so deeply rooted that Cain was led to commit murder. Jealousy is, indeed, "cruel as the grave." (Song of Sol. 8:6) Yet jealousy, like every other sin, usually has a small beginning, perhaps nearly imperceptible. "Who can understand his errors?" David asked, as quoted earlier. He then prayed to God to cleanse him from secret faults. We also should pray to be cleansed from secret faults.

In addition to praying, we should probe deeply into our own hearts in order to discover any possible small beginnings of jealousy that may be taking root, in order that we may take action against them.

At the beginning, jealousy may be but a passing thought. Satan, however, is swift to pick up such thoughts and urge us to develop them. Before we know it, the passing thought can become a firm conviction. This can lead to bitterness of heart, and envious attacks upon those who are the objects of our jealousy. Furthermore, the evil roots of jealousy will likely blind us to the real truth, making it impossible for us to reason correctly on any question coming before us in which the recipients of our envy are involved. How timely are the words of the hymn, “My soul, be on thy guard; Ten thousand foes arise; The hosts of sin are pressing hard To draw thee from the prize.”—*Hymns of Dawn*, #183

Prayer and a proper application of the Word of God will cleanse us from the possible beginnings of jealousy. To be jealous means that we consider ourselves more worthy of, and better qualified for certain blessings—even privileges of service—than those to whom they are given. Paul gave us good advice in this connection, writing, “I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.”—Rom. 12:3

Our “amount of faith,” as this phrase is rendered according to the *Weymouth New Testament* translation, most assuredly enters into this matter. If we lack faith, we will fail to have confidence in the fact

that God has set every member in the body “as it hath pleased him.” (I Cor. 12:18) Perhaps God’s purpose in permitting others to have a position, or opportunity of service, which we think we could fill much better, is to test us. King Saul was the Lord’s anointed. Even though he lost God’s favor, David, who had already been anointed to take Saul’s place, patiently waited for the Lord to remove the disobedient Saul. He did not “stretch forth” his hand against “the Lord’s anointed.”—I Sam. 26:11

There is a valuable lesson here for all of God’s consecrated people. It means that we should be content with what God, through his providences and in his own time, sees best for us. If our lot does not seem as favorable as that of others, let us wait on the Lord to change things, rather than hastily take matters into our own hands.

GREEDILY SEEKING REWARD—BALAAM’S ERROR

Continuing our consideration of Jude, verse 11, he spoke of others in his day who “ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward.” The example of Balaam is a very revealing one, and is presented in Numbers chapters 22-24. He was asked by a heathen king—Balak, of the Moabites—to curse the people of God. Balaam was not a worshiper of the God of Israel, but having heard of the many miracles accredited to him on behalf of the Israelites, he refused to curse them unless he could secure the permission of Israel’s God.

Although many details are contained in the account of this experience, the point of the lesson for us is that Balaam really wanted to do the bidding of King Balak in order to get the reward that was

offered. However, Balaam refrained from doing so only because he feared what might happen to him. He “greedily” desired the reward, and cared little or nothing about what the result of his curse might be upon the Israelites. Outwardly he conformed to God’s will and did not curse Israel, but at heart he would have rather received the offered reward.

In our case, various rewards could be suggested to us, either by the world, the flesh, or the Devil, which might lure us away from the love of God. It is well to remember, too, that God did not at first interfere with Balaam’s purpose of cursing the Israelites—hindering him later by means of an angel. We, likewise, might wrongly conclude that because the Lord seemingly does not interfere with what we are doing, it is his will that we continue. In this delay, however, he may be testing us. Those who keep themselves in the love of God are those who in their hearts are so loyal to the principles of righteousness that even the thought of saying or doing anything which might even remotely result to the disadvantage of one of the Lord’s spiritual Israelites, would give them pain.

In this connection it should be helpful to consider what a priceless heritage we have as part of the “Israel of God.” (Gal. 6:16) Most people consider themselves fortunate if in a lifetime they can be assured of having made two or three real friends. Yet, God’s consecrated people have friends—loving, loyal, and understanding associates—the world over. They maintain these friendships because they keep themselves “in the love of God.” The love of God is in them and in their brethren in Christ. It is a genuine and glorious fraternity of love. If we

appreciate this as we should, we will gladly lay down life itself in helping to safeguard the interests of our fellow spiritual Israelites, never entertaining any thought to “despise . . . one of these little ones” for reward.—Matt. 18:10

CORE’S REBELLION—A WARNING

The name Core is a Greek form of Korah. He was one of the Levites who led a rebellion against the leadership of Moses and Aaron. (Num. 16:1-33) The fact that Moses and Aaron had been appointed by the Lord for the service they rendered seemed to escape his reasoning. Korah concluded that he and his associates were just as qualified to share the privileges and honors which, in their false reasoning, they believed Moses and Aaron were selfishly holding for themselves.

We do not know if there were any situations in the Early Church that were similar to this case, which may have prompted Jude to mention those who followed the “gainsaying of Core.” There were “false apostles” and “false teachers” in the Early Church, and these might have been questioning the authority of God’s true apostles and teachers, insisting that they had as much authority to speak for the Lord as anyone else. (II Cor.11:13; II Pet.2:1) It is well to remember also that the Lord’s supervision over his people during the period of the Early Church was not through any one or two teachers or apostles, as it was in the case of Moses and Aaron.

The same principle is even more true today. No apostolic succession was ever authorized by God, nor is the church to be controlled by a few specially

chosen “clergy” members. While it is proper for consecrated believers to elect qualified brethren as elders, deacons, or in other service capacities, it is the Lord only, through the guiding influence of the Holy Spirit, who supervises his people. This is especially true in our own individual affairs. It implies the humbling of ourselves under the mighty hand of God that he may exalt us in due time. It means the thankful acceptance of the Lord’s providences in every aspect of our lives.—I Pet. 5:6; Rom. 8:28; James 4:10

The development of a rebellious attitude toward another person might infect our character in other aspects of life’s affairs. In our work, for example, there may be those who are promoted ahead of us, when we feel that we are equally, or even better qualified. There may be little or nothing that can be done about situations of this kind, but we must guard against any rebellious spirit that might develop in our own hearts. Such a condition could well lead to bitterness which, if allowed to grow and develop, would eventually take us out of the love and favor of God.

We might even become rebellious against God’s providences in which others are not involved at all. Concerning a particularly difficult experience, we may ask, “Why did this have to happen to me?” A spirit of resentment against the Lord’s providences could be harbored, easily leading to bitterness that would hide the smiling face of our Heavenly Father from us, and result in the loss of his favor.

As we have already noted, sinful attitudes of this sort do not take possession of us suddenly. At first, as David said, they may be “secret faults.” It is only

through prayer and the daily searching of our hearts in the light of the principles of righteousness revealed through our “most holy faith,” that we are able to detect these small beginnings of sin. When we do detect them, we should quickly and diligently wield the “sword of the Spirit” to destroy the enemy.—Eph. 6:17

EXERCISING COMPASSION

Keeping ourselves in “the love of God” means that his love fills and controls our hearts, thoughts, words and actions to the greatest extent possible. One aspect of God’s love is his compassion. The psalmist said, “Thou, O Lord, art a God full of compassion, and gracious, longsuffering, and plenteous in mercy and truth.” (Ps. 86:15) How thankful we should be that the Heavenly Father has such compassion for us! In addition, however, he wants us to exercise similar compassion toward others, particularly for our brethren in the Truth, who may have deviated temporarily from the right way, or have stumbled and fallen.

As it has been so often stated, while we are to hate the sin, we are to love the sinner. We should not cease to endeavor to help those who have erred until it becomes unquestionably certain that it is no longer possible for them to be extricated from their sinful condition. Paul said, “Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness.” (Gal. 6:1) The disposition of mind and heart which will prompt us thus to do all we can to help an erring member of the body of Christ is a powerful influence in keeping ourselves in the love of God.

Those who keep themselves in the love of God will, as Jude indicates, hate “even the garment spotted by the flesh.” (Jude 23) Garments often symbolize that by which one is identified. A garment spotted by the flesh would indicate a condition in which professions and habits have arisen out of selfish, fleshly reasonings. Such a case would also give evidence that certain instructions of the Lord designed for correction have been ignored, and that the principles of divine righteousness and love have been set aside or forgotten.

If we are keeping ourselves in the love of God, we will hate any “garment” of this sort, and we will be especially on guard lest we be found wearing such clothing. Fully realizing the imperfections of our fallen flesh, we will diligently endeavor to keep it in subjection to the new mind, and rejoice to wear only the “robe of [Christ’s] righteousness.” This vesture, because of what it means to us, becomes a “garment of praise,” and a “raiment of needlework,” as we embroider upon it the various fruits and graces of the Spirit.—I Cor. 9:27; Isa. 61:3,10; Ps. 45:14

Let us continue to rejoice in the love and favor of God. Let us also “earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints,” through which his love has been revealed to us. May we be more and more emptied of self and filled with divine love, which will spur us on to faithfulness in serving one another. Finally, let us help bear the burdens of our brethren, laying down our lives and “building up” one another in our “most holy faith.” ■

“I Have Set the LORD Always before Me”

***“I have set the
LORD always before
me: because he is at
my right hand, I
shall not be
moved.”***

—Psalm 16:8

Preface: The following article is taken from a discourse given by Brother Edward Fay at the 1976 Bible Students General Convention. We gladly republish it here, with the hope that it will be a blessing to all of our readers, as it was to the brethren who attended the General Convention and heard these words some forty years ago.

THIS PROPHETIC PSALM concerns Jesus, and describes his heart attitude while he walked as a man upon the earth, as expressed centuries before by the Psalmist David: “Preserve me, O God: for in thee do I put my trust.” (Ps. 16:1) Our Lord, throughout his First Advent, knew well that without God’s care, guidance, and protection, he would be unable to resist the snares of the Adversary or to attain his longed-for hope, which was to be part of

God's family on the highest plane of existence. The *Revised Standard Version* states it this way: "I say to the LORD, thou art my Lord; I have no good apart from thee. As for the saints in the land, they are the noble, in whom is all my delight."—vss. 2,3

We know this beautiful psalm is prophetic because the Apostle Peter quoted from it in the second chapter of Acts, verses 25 through 28, and Paul referred to it in one of his sermons. (Acts 13:32-37) In each instance, they showed that David was not speaking of himself, but spoke of the resurrection of Christ Jesus. (Acts 2:29-31) Thus we have the proper and inspired authority to attribute these words to Jesus, and to know that they expressed his hopes and heartfelt feelings.

In our theme text, the word "moved" is translated from the Hebrew word *mot*. This word means to waver, slip, or fall. What it is saying prophetically of Jesus is, paraphrasing, "Because I put God always before me, and because he is at my right hand, I shall not waver, or slip, or fall." This is a very important statement, because it contains information concerning one of the "mysteries"—or sacred secrets—of God's plan. Only the true disciples of Christ, those begotten by God's Holy Spirit, know these mysteries. The sacred secret in our text is that our Lord could have wavered, slipped, or fallen. It was possible that he could have failed his mission. We know that Jesus had to perform perfectly, fulfilling the will of his Heavenly Father completely in every detail, in order, at the end of his course, to receive a resurrection from the dead.

Our theme text explains how our Lord Jesus was able to accomplish his goal during his earthly walk.

It was because he “set” God before him. Jesus was keenly aware of his Father’s plans and purposes as they concerned himself. This awareness came about through his intense study and meditation upon the Holy Scriptures from childhood to manhood, and later, after his baptism, the further illumination provided by the Holy Spirit. To have God at his “right hand” was to have the power of the Almighty immediately accessible for aid, counsel, encouragement, and enlightenment. Jesus had a complete understanding of God’s plan and his relationship to the Father in that plan, and he depended fully upon the Father’s instructions and power to perform his will.

REVELMENT BY THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Scriptures indicate that our Lord Jesus did not know the details of God’s plan for himself until the time of his consecration to God, and acceptance by him, through the administration of the Holy Spirit, at the age of thirty. He was born into the world as a babe and received his first knowledge of God through his natural senses, as we all do. No doubt he was instructed in God’s Word by his mother, Mary, and by his step-father, Joseph, who were faithful and devout Israelites. At the age of twelve, Jesus sat in the Temple at Jerusalem with the Jewish religious leaders, “both hearing them, and asking them questions.” (Luke 2:41-52) Because of his brilliant, perfect mind, he amassed information much more quickly than the average child. However, it was not until after his begettal by the Holy Spirit that he understood the particulars concerning how his Father wished him to carry out his mission to a successful conclusion.

Many Scriptures were prophetic of our Lord and his earthly ministry. In another Psalm, we read, “Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire; mine ears hast thou opened: burnt offering and sin offering hast thou not required.” (Ps. 40:6) To paraphrase these prophetic words, Jesus was saying, “I realize that you, dear Father, were not satisfied with the blood of bulls and goats. They were merely pictures indicating the fact that my perfect life must be poured out and presented to you as a corresponding price in place of Adam, in order that men might gain life.”—Lev. 16; Heb. 10:1-12; Rom. 5:18,19

Evidently it was at this time, also, that Jesus learned about his pre-human existence. (Prov. 8:22-31) He became aware from the Scriptures that he, God’s only begotten Son, had been transferred from the courts of heaven to the womb of Mary for the very purpose of laying down his life in sacrifice. (Luke 1:35; 2:25-35) Not until this point in his earthly existence did Jesus fully realize his relationship to God’s plan, and the fact that he would die as a corresponding “ransom” price for Adam.—Matt. 20:28; I Tim. 2:5,6

With majestic delight, Jesus, as he rose up out of the water after his baptism by John, heard his Father’s voice speaking to him from heaven saying, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” (Matt. 3:16,17) This wonderful assurance of God’s favor and love was perhaps the first audible manifestation he had ever had. What a soul-satisfying and reassuring experience this must have been for Jesus, as he took the first step of his journey in ministering for three and one-half years.

REWARD PROMISED

At the same time, another amazing fact became clear to him. He learned not only that he had to die in Adam's place, but for the first time he realized that, if faithful, he would have a heavenly resurrection as a divine being—raised to the spirit realm on his Heavenly Father's own plane of existence. One Scripture that certainly would have come to Jesus' mind in this regard, which spoke prophetically of both his death and resurrection, were these words of God: "Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: . . . and he bare the sin of many."—Isa. 53:12

Another new thought was introduced to Jesus in these words. It concerned the fact that he was to have "brethren" associated with him in the carrying out of God's plan. (Heb. 2:9-13) They would be "the strong" spoken of in Isaiah's prophecy, with whom he would divide "the spoil." These are figurative expressions which indicate that there would be great rewards attached not only to Jesus' own faithfulness, but to the faithfulness of his consecrated followers, then and throughout the present Gospel Age.

At the point in time when the Lord understood that he must die as the ransom price, he also learned that there were conditions attached to his being resurrected to the divine nature. He must be faithful even until his death upon the cross. Only then would his earthly mission be "finished." (John 19:30) This requirement of complete faithfulness is brought out in a particularly meaningful way by a typical feature of the Mosaic Law, described with these words: "He [Aaron, Israel's high priest] shall put the incense

upon the fire before the LORD, that the cloud of the incense may cover the mercy seat that is upon the testimony, that he die not.”—Lev. 16:13

INCENSE—SYMBOL OF AN ACCEPTABLE OFFERING

This feature of Israel’s typical Day of Atonement points forward to the necessity for Jesus to obey God faithfully in order to receive the promise of divine life. When the high priest went into The Holy of the Tabernacle with “his hands full of sweet incense beaten small,” and sprinkled it over the fire on the golden altar, it represented our Lord’s perfect sacrifice. (vs. 12) Two handfuls of incense was all the priest could hold, and represented Jesus’ offering of his entire being. When the high priest poured it over the coals of fire it caused a cloud of incense to fill the room—a sweet smell or savor—which filtered into the Most Holy in such a way as to cover the mercy seat. Only then could the high priest enter into the Most Holy. If the cloud of incense, indicating God’s acceptance of the Atonement Day offerings, did not precede him, the high priest would die as he tried to enter the Most Holy.

Jesus knew at the time of his enlightenment, through his understanding of God’s plan, that the Father would select all of his experiences, and that he had to meet each one perfectly. If he succeeded in this difficult walk, he would be resurrected not only as a spirit being, but on God’s own divine plane of existence. We can better appreciate how the incense illustrates this point from the words of the Apostle Paul, who must have been thinking of this picture, when he said, “Be ye therefore followers

of God, as dear children; And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savour.”—Eph. 5:1,2

We, who have knowledge of the mysteries of God, must realize that we understand them for only one reason—that we are part of the body of Christ. As such we must lay down our lives in sacrifice as Jesus did. We have been called for this purpose, and our minds have been enlightened by the Holy Spirit. Jesus was on trial, and had to walk perfectly to receive a resurrection and exaltation to the divine nature. We understand the same conditions also apply to us, the only exception being that actual perfection is not required in our case, as it was with Jesus. In all other ways, however, the lessons which Jesus learned and which were necessary for his development, are applicable and necessary also to his consecrated body members. He learned the will of God for himself, and how to perform it, and so must we.

EXPERIENCES WORK TOGETHER FOR GOOD

As he did with Jesus, God also selects our experiences. Each one, if met properly, will develop us further to be an acceptable part of the body of Christ, and to receive a spiritual awakening on the divine plane. Paul stated, “We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son.”—Rom. 8:28,29

The awareness of God’s overruling of each and every situation in our lives, both temporal and

spiritual, should give us an attitude of mind in which we do not fret or worry about our experiences which are unpleasant, trying, or difficult. We should learn to accept them as did our Lord Jesus. He knew he had to suffer and die. Nevertheless, he was ready to yield himself to God's will in every matter in the way which he had been instructed through the Old Testament prophecies and by the power of the Holy Spirit.

JESUS RETURNS TO NAZARETH

Following Jesus' baptism by John in the river Jordan, and after the forty days of temptation in the wilderness had successfully been endured, he "returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee: and there went out a fame of him through all the region round about. And he taught in their synagogues, being glorified of all." (Luke 4:14,15) We read next that he "came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read."—vs. 16

The Scripture reading which Jesus chose to use that day is of particular interest to us, because it contains an implication of another sacred secret of God. As Jesus stood in the center of the synagogue, "There was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written, The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, To preach the

acceptable year of the Lord. And he closed the book.”—Luke 4:17-20; Isa. 61:1,2

The phrase, “To preach the acceptable year of the Lord,” indicates to us that Jesus knew the Messiah was not himself alone. There would be no reason for him to preach such a message if only he comprised the Messiah. Jesus knew, however, that he and his faithful body members would share that distinction and honor, and that it was “the acceptable year of the Lord” to offer this wonderful and noble invitation to those with hearing ears and seeing eyes. (Matt. 13:16) He knew, too, that the anointing he had from God would be passed on to them, as we read in I John 2:27, “The anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you.”

When Jesus “closed the book,” in essence he was saying, “I stopped reading at this point in Isaiah’s prophecy because the utterance which follows is to be fulfilled at a later time during the Gospel Age.” The remaining words of the prophecy which Jesus omitted, were, “To proclaim . . . the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he might be glorified.”—Isa. 61:2,3

By the exclusion of these portions of the prophecy in his statement to the people of Nazareth, Jesus implied that later on, the rest of the prophecy would be fulfilled. Because we are living at the end of the age, when the time has come to proclaim the remainder of the message, we have revealed another

precious truth that is meaningful to us. We are among the anointed whom God has chosen to proclaim a message for our time—during the harvest of the Gospel Age. Let us faithfully perform our mission, as Jesus fulfilled his.

WORKS OF THE MESSIAH

As Jesus continued his ministry, he performed many miracles to attract the attention of those who were to become his disciples, making them realize that the Messiah was in their midst. Following his first recorded miracle, we find these words: “This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory; and his disciples believed on him.” (John 2:11) Jesus, through the various miracles he performed, such as healing the sick and infirmed, casting out devils, and even raising the dead, gave samples of the much more magnificent and all-comprehensive work which will be exhibited by the Messiah when complete, and established in office upon the earth. He did these things to show that he was indeed the Messiah. However, these miracles were merely examples of the greater work of the Messiah, in its entirety, when the church is complete and the Messianic reign begins. This larger work will affect each and every human being on earth, the raising of the dead, and the opportunity to be given every person of restoration to full health, happiness, righteousness, and everlasting life on earth.—Rev. 21:3-5

After Jesus’ resurrection, when he appeared to two of his disciples on the road to Emmaus, he began to speak as a stranger to them about the prophecies of God. He asked them, “Ought not Christ to

have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?” (Luke 24:26) The entire Messiah—or Christ class—must finish its suffering. Then the glory phase in its fullness will follow, which will consummate in the blessing of “all families of the earth” in the most complete and lasting sense.—Gen. 12:3; 22:18

One of the ways in which Jesus “set the LORD always before” him was through his prayer life. We have an account which brings out this point, when he healed many in the city of Capernaum, including Peter’s mother-in-law. (Mark 1:21-33) Verse 34 reads, “He healed many that were sick of divers diseases, and cast out many devils; and suffered not the devils to speak, because they knew him.” The account then says that before daybreak the next morning, while his disciples still slept, Jesus “went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed.” (vs. 35) Undoubtedly he was thanking the Father for the miracles he had performed the day before. He humbly recognized and acknowledged that these were done by the power of God. It was only because God was at his “right hand” that he could carry out these wonderful miracles.

The scriptural account continues, “And they that were with him followed after him. And when they had found him, they said unto him, All men seek for thee. And he said unto them, Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also: for therefore came I forth.” (vss. 36-38) Here Jesus desired to show the disciples that his commission to preach the Gospel, and the miracles he performed, were a foretaste of the glory and work of the Messiah in the next age. It was in this way that he desired

to identify himself—the great “Deliverer” of Israel and all mankind—to those whom God would call to be his disciples.—Rom. 11:26

PROOF GIVEN TO JOHN THE BAPTIST

Proof of Jesus as the long-promised Messiah is brought out in the record concerning his predecessor, John the Baptist, who had been cast into prison by Herod. (Luke 3:19,20) Sensing that he might be soon put to death, John became concerned as to whether Jesus was truly the Messiah. His present circumstances seemed out of keeping with what he expected to happen. The righteous should not be destroyed, John thought, when the Messiah would come to establish God’s kingdom in Israel.

John knew from his father, Zacharias, and his mother, Elisabeth, that Jesus was the Messiah. He knew that the angel, Gabriel, told this wonderful truth to his mother’s cousin, Mary, the mother of Jesus. (Luke 1:26-33,67-79) Now, however, John was in prison, and he perhaps wondered if something had gone wrong. The account states that John called two of his own disciples, and “sent them to Jesus, saying, Art thou he that should come? or look we for another?”—Luke 7:19

Jesus’ response to John’s disciples was immediate and reassuring. “In that same hour he cured many of their infirmities and plagues, and of evil spirits; and unto many that were blind he gave sight. Then Jesus answering said unto them, Go your way, and tell John what things ye have seen and heard; how that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, to the poor the gospel is preached.” (vss. 21,22) The Lord

knew these signs would allay John's uncertainty that he was the Messiah.

RAISING THE "PRISONERS"

A remarkable account is given to us in the Scriptures which gives evidence of our Lord's awareness of his Father's presence, and how fully he realized that all he accomplished was done through the power of God. It is the beautiful story of the raising of Lazarus from the dead. In this account, recorded in the 11th chapter of John, Jesus was informed that his dear friend Lazarus was very sick. At the time, he was some distance from Bethany where Lazarus lived. The messengers who had been sent to Jesus knew he loved Lazarus and his two sisters, Martha and Mary, and were no doubt puzzled about his hesitancy to immediately go back to their home in Bethany. (vss. 1-3) Verse 4 says that when Jesus learned of Lazarus' illness, he said, "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby."

When Jesus finally arrived at the home, Lazarus had already died. The first person he met was Martha. As she came out to meet Jesus, her strong faith was exhibited by her response to him. Jesus said to her, "Thy brother shall rise again. Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day. Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this? She saith unto him, Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ [Hebrew: *Messiah*], the Son of God, which should come into the world."—vss. 23-27

Jesus then met Mary, who was distraught with grief and was in a highly emotional state because of her sorrow. He asked, “Where have ye laid him? They said unto him, Lord, come and see. Jesus wept. Then said the Jews, Behold how he loved him! . . . Jesus therefore again groaning in himself cometh to the grave. It was a cave, and a stone lay upon it. Jesus said, Take ye away the stone. Martha, the sister of him that was dead, saith unto him, Lord, by this time he stinketh: for he hath been dead four days.”—vss. 32-39

“Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. And I knew that thou hearest me always: but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me. And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. And he that was dead came forth.” (vss. 41-44) The mourners standing there saw their family member, friend, and neighbor, come from the grave, “bound hand and foot with graveclothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go.” We cannot begin to fully contemplate what that scene was like, and how Mary, Martha, and Lazarus must have rejoiced together as they returned to their home.

Prior to this incident Jesus had awakened others from the sleep of death. However, this was the first time he had raised from the dead one who had literally been laid in the grave, “bound hand and foot with graveclothes.” Here was an example that could be likened to setting free a prisoner who had been taken “captive” by man’s great enemy—death. In Bible language the term “prison” is used to

symbolically describe the grave—that is, the condition of death. The raising of Lazarus was, in a special sense, a reassuring promise that the time would come when the Messiah would call forth “the prisoners from the prison.” (Isa. 42:6,7; 49:8,9; 61:1) Perhaps the disciples asked Jesus whether others would also be brought back from this “prison,” then remembered his words on a previous occasion, “The hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear [the Son of man’s] voice, And shall come forth.”—John 5:28,29

“I SHALL NOT BE MOVED”

Thus we recognize that Christ Jesus, because of his awareness of the place God had for him in his plan, had set the Father always before him. He knew that everything he did throughout the period of his ministry was done by the clear instructions of God, and by his power. Jesus knew that whatever happened to him, he could accept it as from God. He learned obedience and was made perfect—fully complete—by the things which he suffered.—Heb. 2:10; 5:8

In the hours before his crucifixion, anticipating the severity of what lay ahead of him, Jesus realized that he must pour out the incense of his love and devotion completely and perfectly. As he endured these fiery trials, he recognized that his offering must continue to be a “sweetsmelling savour,” even unto death. (Eph. 5:2) Knowing this, Jesus said to Peter, “the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?”—John 18:11

Obedience and submission to God’s will are also required of Jesus’ footstep followers. As imperfect

beings, we cannot perform perfectly, but must seek to bring our intentions into harmony with our Heavenly Father as fully as possible. By God's grace, we have been permitted to have an understanding of his plan and our relationship to it, and must be determined that we shall "not be moved" from fulfilling our part faithfully, "to the glory of God."—II Cor. 4:15 ■

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 Arthur Ledwinka, Columbus, IN—June 6.

Age, 88

Brother Abel Ihedoro Odini, Ohoba, Nigeria—June

9. Age, 90

Brother Andrew Molnar, Bjorkdale, SK, Canada—

June 21. Age, 85

Brother Tom Brantner, Nanaimo, BC, Canada—

June 22. Age, 71

Sister Connie Campbell, Arad, Israel—June 23.

Age, 84

Sister Evanthia Dossopoulos, New York, NY—June

25. Age, 93

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SPEAKERS' APPOINTMENTS

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

B. Keith

Vernon, BC August 1

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

E. Blicharz

Atlanta, GA August 7

R. Niemczyk

Red Deer, AB August 12-14

O. B. Elbert

Szczyrk, Poland August 2-7

A. Oystryk

Red Deer, AB August 12-14

L. Griehs

Szczyrk, Poland August 2-7

B. Siwak

Red Deer, AB August 12-14

B. Jakubowski

Red Deer, AB August 12-14

B. Sweeney

Red Deer, AB August 12-14

P. Mora

Szczyrk, Poland August 2-7

WEEKLY PRAYER MEETING TEXTS

AUGUST 4—"The servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves."—II Timothy 2:24,25 (Z. '00-14 Hymn 95)

AUGUST 11—"Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."—Revelation 2:10 (Z. '04-63 Hymn 32)

AUGUST 18—"Prove all things; hold fast that which is good."—I Thessalonians 5:21 (Z. '03-26 Hymn 49)

AUGUST 25—"We know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is."—I John 3:2 (Z. '03-151 Hymn 105)

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.

INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION, August 2-7—Orle Gniazdo Conference Center, Szczyrk, Poland. Contact L. Griehs. Phone: (267) 688-8617 or Email: griehs@comcast.net

RED DEER CONVENTION, August 12-14—Pioneer Lodge, 4324 47th Avenue, Red Deer, AB, Canada. Contact J. Neumeier. Phone: (403) 746-5052 or Email: jbnemeier@live.com

JACKSON CONVENTION, September 3,4—FaHoLo Camp and Conference Center, 3000 Mt. Hope Road, Grass Lake, MI 49240. For information, contact B. Davis. Phone: (517) 788-6552 or Email: r2d2lad@comcast.net. For programs, contact V. Lumley. Phone: (517) 782-7252 or Email: raylumley2531@comcast.net

NEW YORK CONVENTION, September 3,4—Double-Tree Hotel Mahwah, 180 Route 17 South, Mahwah, NJ. Contact G. Passios. Phone: (201) 939-3196 or Email: gpassios11@verizon.net

SEATTLE LABOR DAY CONVENTION, September 3-5—Seabeck Conference Center, 13395 Lagoon Drive NW, Seabeck, WA 98380. Contact L. Flinn. Phone: (206) 518-2678 or Email: laurie@flinn.us

HUNTSVILLE CONVENTION, September 10,11—[New Location] Comfort Inn, 4725 University Drive (Hwy. 72), Huntsville, AL 35806. Phone: (256) 562-2525. Mention “Huntsville Bible Students” when making reservations. Contact J. Cothren. Phone: (256) 852-8505 or Email: jimmycothren@att.net

MILWAUKEE CONVENTION, September 24,25—Lake Lodge, 1235 East Howard Avenue, Milwaukee, WI 53207. Contact S. Kuenzli. Phone: (414) 257-2672 or Email: song_of_hope@sbcglobal.net

PITTSBURGH AREA CONVENTION, October 1,2—Sewickley Grange Hall, Route 136, West Newton, PA 15089. Contact G. Balko. Phone (724) 771-0139

AGAWAM CONVENTION, October 2—Agawam Senior Center, 954 Main Street, Agawam, MA. For accommodations, contact M. Wardak. Phone: (413) 789-6198 or Email: mtwardack@verizon.net. For other information, contact A. Gonczewski. Email: aga49@yahoo.com

COLORADO CONVENTION, October 7-9—YMCA of the Rockies, Estes Park, CO. Phone: (888) 613-9622. Mention “Colorado Bible Students 2016” when making reservations. Contact D. Moss. Phone: (303) 238-4936

SAN LUIS OBISPO CONVENTION, October 15,16—Masonic Hall, 859 Marsh Street, San Luis Obispo, CA 93401. Contact M. Allard. Phone: (805) 773-2963 or Email: medlallard@juno.com

ORLANDO CONVENTION, October 29,30—South Seminole Lodge, 122 Triplet Lake Drive, Casselberry, FL 32707. Contact J. Kuenzli. Phone: (407) 831-2098 or Email: jkuenzli@cfl.rr.com

DETROIT/METROPOLITAN DETROIT JOINT CONVENTION, October 30—Pleasant Ridge Community Center, 4 Ridge Road, Pleasant Ridge, MI. Contact G. Zandler. Phone: (248) 399-8843 or Email: ngzandler@wowway.com

“Preach the Word; be instant in season, out of season.”—II Timothy 4:2

This cannot mean that we are to violate the laws of reason and decency by intruding the good tidings upon others at times inconvenient and unseasonable to them; but it does mean that we are to have such a love for the Truth, such an earnest desire to serve it, that we will gladly accept the opportunity to do so, however inconvenient it may be for ourselves.

—Daily Heavenly Manna, August 28