

The DAWN

VOLUME No. LXXXIII, Number 12
(USPS 149-380), December 2015

TABLE OF CONTENTS

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

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

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

BRAZIL: A Aurora, Caixa Postal 50088, Rio de Janeiro, RJ, CEP 20050-971

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

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

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

GERMANY: Tagesanbruch Bibelstudien-Vereinigung, Postfach 11 03, 64368 Ober-Ramstadt

GREECE: He Haravgi (The Dawn), 199 Railroad Avenue, East Rutherford, NJ 07073 USA

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

SPAIN/ITALY: El Alba/Aurora, Associazione Studenti Biblici, Via Ferrara 42, 59100 Prato—Italia

HIGHLIGHTS OF DAWN

2015 Comes to an End 2

INTERNATIONAL BIBLE STUDIES

The Lord's Day 14

Acceptable Offerings 16

Dedication of Firstborn 18

Endowed with Humility 20

CHRISTIAN LIFE AND DOCTRINE

Parables of Jesus—Part 12

Parables of the Vineyard and

the Wedding Garment 22

God's Unspeakable Gift 32

Pride—Its Manifestations 48

Weekly Prayer Meeting Texts 13

TALKING THINGS OVER 61

OBITUARIES 13

SPEAKERS' APPOINTMENTS 63

CONVENTIONS 63

2015 Comes to an End

*“He commandeth,
and raiseth the
stormy wind, which
lifteth up the waves
thereof. They
mount up to the
heaven, they go
down again to the
depths: their soul
is melted because
of trouble.”*

—Psalm 107:25,26

THE CLOSING WEEKS OF

2015 find the world in much the same chaotic condition as it was at the beginning of the year. None of the major problems facing the world at the beginning of 2015 has been solved, and most of them have worsened. In addition, new troubles have cropped up this year, which have added to mankind's dilemma. The situation is well portrayed by the language of the psalmist found in our opening text, in which is described a storm at sea, and how it affects a ship and its sailors.

This might well be considered a symbolic and prophetic description of the present world situation. We are living in a period wherein the old world is crumbling and passing away, to be replaced by the establishment of a new, righteous kingdom. The people do not recognize this as yet, and so it appears

to them to be a period of great storminess, gloom, and uncertainty. Indeed, many of earth's leaders still suppose they can solve the problems of this world. Eventually, however, they will learn that they cannot. When they do, then as the psalmist continues, they will "cry unto the LORD in their trouble," and he will bring them "out of their distresses." He will make "the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still," and he will bring "them unto their desired haven" of peace and security.—vss. 28-30

The Prophet Daniel foretold that "a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation" would mark the period in which we are now living. (Dan. 12:1) His prophecy indicates that this "time of trouble" is brought about by the standing up of Michael—one of the titles ascribed to Jesus since his resurrection as a divine being. One of the Bible's symbols of "the time of trouble" represents Jesus as treading a winepress, and he is said to do this alone.—Isa. 63:1-6; Rev. 19:11-16

What Daniel described as a "time of trouble" Jesus called a time of "great tribulation," or distress, upon the nations, which would lead to the destruction of all flesh except for the divine intervention by God's "elect"—Christ and his faithful body members. (Matt. 24:21,22; Luke 21:25,26) The Prophet Zephaniah foretold that the Lord would "gather the nations" that he might "pour upon them . . . indignation," and that the whole symbolic earth would be "devoured with the fire" of his "jealousy."—Zeph. 3:8

These are but some of the prophecies which point out the reason for the chaotic times in which we are living. There are trouble spots essentially

everywhere on earth, any one of which could erupt into much larger conflicts. While it is true that many of these are political in nature, they also are interwoven with a wide range of religious, social, and economic issues and problems.

Today's world is indeed on "fire," as the prophet indicated would be the case when God would "devour" the present order of things in the earth. This is true in the associations of nations one with the other, and it is true within nations. The angry passions of mankind are expressing themselves in awful and appalling ways. Let us recall some of the world's news highlights during the year 2015.

GLOBAL NEWS—SUMMED UP BY "ISIS"

Aside from economic issues and various disasters, which will be discussed in subsequent portions of this article, the one overriding topic of concern in the world during 2015 has been the growth of ISIS. This acronym, which stands for Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, has struck great fear in the hearts of millions. By way of background, ISIS is an extremist militant group and self-proclaimed Islamic state which is led by and composed mainly of Sunni Arabs from Iraq and Syria. As of March 2015, it controlled territory occupied by 10 million people in those two countries, and has control over small areas of Libya, Nigeria, and Afghanistan.

ISIS claims that it has religious, political, and military authority over all Muslims worldwide, and that the legality of the governments in all the nations or states into which it expands is voided. The United Nations holds ISIS responsible for human rights abuses, war crimes, and countless murders

and executions of innocent men, women, and children. The group has been designated a terrorist organization by many countries, with over sixty nations directly or indirectly waging war against them.

As 2015 has progressed, ISIS has continued to expand its influence. By mid-year, in addition to the countries previously cited, Yemen, Niger, Chad, Cameroon, and Uzbekistan also had an ISIS presence. During 2015 they have engaged in almost nonstop terrorist attacks of all kinds, killing and injuring tens of thousands and destroying property, homes, businesses, and many ancient, historic sites. At the same time, many countries have begun strikes against ISIS strongholds, particularly in Syria and Iraq.

In recent weeks, a Russian passenger jet exploded and crashed into Egypt's Sinai Peninsula shortly after take-off from the resort city of Sharm el-Sheikh on October 31. All 224 people on board were killed. Although investigations are ongoing, it is highly suspected that a bomb was planted on the plane, and that this may have been carried out either directly by ISIS operatives or by those sympathetic to ISIS. On November 13, terrorist attacks in Paris, France left 129 dead and over 350 injured, with ISIS claiming responsibility for these deadly assaults. It is likely that these recent acts of violence are, at least in part, in retaliation for these countries' involvement in the fight against ISIS. Nevertheless, it seems no understatement to say that the war against this terrorist organization will most surely continue to escalate as we enter 2016.

IN THE UNITED STATES

On the home front, the news in 2015 has been dominated by mass killings, a landmark ruling by the Supreme Court, the Pope's visit to this country, and internal politics. In June, a man opened fire at a 199-year-old historic church in Charleston, South Carolina, during a prayer service, killing nine people, including the church's senior pastor. The accused killer, after his arrest, confessed that he committed the killings with the hope of igniting a race war.

Less than four months later, in a quiet area of southwestern Oregon, a gunman opened fire at a community college, killing nine people and wounding seven more, before killing himself. The gunman was said to have had antireligious and white supremacist leanings, along with long-term mental health issues. Such mass killings as these in 2015 have once again raised to the forefront the issues of race relations in the United States, as well as the highly controversial topic of gun control.

In June, the United States Supreme Court ruled in favor of allowing same-sex marriage throughout the country. The ruling stated that same-sex couples have the fundamental right to marry and that individual states or municipalities cannot say that marriage is reserved for male/female couples. It is perhaps with amazement that we realize a country so largely founded on Scripturally-based moral principles 239 years ago has, by the actions of its leaders, abandoned the clear teachings of the Bible on this subject (see Lev. 18:22; 20:13; Rom. 1:26-28).

The leader of the Roman Catholic Church, Pope Francis, visited the United States in September. He was welcomed by President Obama and became

the first Pope to ever speak before Congress. While in Washington, in an intriguing twist to his visit, he met with an openly gay couple one day prior to meeting with a county clerk ardently opposed to homosexuality. He also went to New York, where he addressed the General Assembly of the United Nations, and to Philadelphia, where he visited some of the historical sites related to the country's founding.

Although the United States presidential election is not until November 2016, the political campaigns of hopefuls for that office began in full swing during the summer. The first debate among candidates was held in August, with many more to follow. At one time or another during the year, a total of twenty-three major candidates—six Democrats and seventeen Republicans—were declared as running for the highest office in the land. As of mid-November, that number had been reduced to eighteen—three Democrats and fifteen Republicans. It is certain that politics will continue to top the domestic news headlines throughout the coming year.

U.S. AND GLOBAL ECONOMY

While 2015 did not produce any economic “disasters” such as the world experienced during the financial crisis of 2008 and 2009, many clouds of uncertainty hang over the global economy. Anxieties over a possible slowdown in China, weakening markets in emerging countries, and the effects of the Federal Reserve's “on again, off again” approach toward raising interest rates, have all done nothing to dispel the generally gloomy outlook for the future.

The extremely fragile nature of the economy was illustrated this year, at least in part, by a 12% drop in the major United States equity markets in a matter of only a few days during August. Although nearly all of the decline was recovered during the fall, it continues to leave many “on edge” about investing in the market, especially as they remember the events of seven years ago.

With regard to China, there is good reason to be concerned if an economic slowdown materializes there. Using estimated 2015 Gross Domestic Product (GDP) numbers (excluding purchasing power adjustments), with the sole exception of the United States, China is now the largest economy in the world. Together, these two countries alone comprise 38% of total world GDP, or an estimated \$39 trillion in 2015, more than nine times higher than the next largest economy—Japan. Ten years ago, China’s economy was only 17% as large as that of the United States. As of 2015, it has climbed to be 62% of the U.S. total.

Conflicting statements by so-called experts, both in and out of China, have fueled uncertainty about that country’s future. Some world economists insist that China has begun a shift from investment-led growth to consumption-led growth, and that this will inevitably lead to declines in overall GDP growth. Others, including Chinese policymakers, are just as adamant that the country can continue to grow at a 6-7% annual rate for the foreseeable future.

The Federal Reserve’s decisions, or perhaps it should be said, lack thereof, on raising interest rates may be the most unusual, if not frustrating to many, in U.S. monetary policy history. It is far from

clear, also, that the markets will not overreact once the Fed actually does raise rates. Indeed, uncertainty and worry about the future, with an eye in the rearview mirror toward what has happened in the past, seems to epitomize the sentiments of most when it comes to world economic conditions as 2015 comes to an end.

DISASTERS—NATURAL AND MANMADE

The year 2015 saw its share of natural disasters and other tragedies which took the lives of many, and wreaked havoc in many parts of the world. In March, a German jetliner crashed, with no warning given, into the French Alps, killing all 150 passengers and crew. It was later determined that the copilot had locked the pilot out of the cockpit and then deliberately crashed the plane in order to carry out his own suicide. In April, over 800 emigrants died when a ship carrying them capsized in the Mediterranean Sea off the coast of Libya. It is estimated that more than 2,000 emigrants have died in 2015 trying to cross the Mediterranean to reach Europe.

Two powerful earthquakes occurred during the year in Asia, one in Nepal and the other in South Asia, which claimed the lives of over 4,000 people, injured tens of thousands, and destroyed thousands of structures. During the summer of 2015, a severe heat wave killed more than 2,000 in India. In the United States, an all-time record was set this year for wildfire destruction, with over 11 million acres burned, mostly in six western states.

Warehouse chemical explosions in China's port city of Tianjin in August and again in October took the lives of more than 170 people and destroyed

warehouses, businesses, apartments, and homes. The disaster raised questions about corruption and government efficiency, when it was discovered that the warehouses were located closer to residential areas than permitted by law, and stored much more hazardous material than authorized.

Even religious observances were not without calamitous results during 2015. In September, during one of Islam's holiest events, over 700 people were killed and 800 injured in a stampede while making a pilgrimage near Mecca, Saudi Arabia.

The foregoing represents only what might be considered as major news headlines during the year. For the vast majority of the world, however, the daily struggle to provide clothing, shelter, and food, and the countless battles against disease, both physical and mental, were more than enough to make 2015 another difficult year in the annals of human history. It is enough to make the sincere heart wonder whether the world will ever find real solutions to its problems and experience peace, security, good will, health and happiness. What a prospect this would be if we had reason to believe such a condition is possible!

“HIS SHOULDER”

This month much of the world will again be reminded of the birth of Jesus, The Prince of Peace, although the true anniversary of his birth is about October 1. Only a very few of earth's billions realize that in the birth, death, and resurrection of Jesus we have the true solution to all the world's problems. One of the prophecies of his birth indicates this: “Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and

the government shall be upon his shoulder.” (Isa. 9:6) Today, weak and powerless men and women are endeavoring as best they can to shoulder the responsibilities of keeping the peace, and of bestowing blessings upon the sin-cursed and dying world, and they are miserably failing.

However, there is hope that this will soon change. Now we are living in a time of transition. Satan’s world is gradually, but most assuredly, going down to destruction. Soon, the kingdom of Christ will be established in its place, and the world will learn that Christ is the only one who can and will establish peace on earth and “good will toward men.” (Luke 2:14) “The government shall be upon his shoulder”—what a meaningful expression this is! When Jesus was raised from the dead, he announced to his disciples, “All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.” (Matt. 28:18) With “all power,” how well-equipped he is to shoulder the responsibilities of world peace, and to bring about the resolution of mankind’s many problems.

Isaiah further wrote concerning Jesus, The Prince of Peace, that “of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end.” (Isa. 9:7) This means that eventually, under the rulership of Christ, peace and goodwill shall be just as universal as fear and chaos are today. Christ’s kingdom of peace will spread its beneficent influence over all the continents, and over the isles of the sea. He will easily solve the troubles which plague mankind today, and bring about the fulfillment of the promise that “every man” shall dwell in happiness and peace “under his vine and under his fig tree; and none shall make them afraid.”—Mic. 4:1-4

No problem that confronts the world today will be too great for The Prince of Peace to solve. The largest of mankind's problems, which no human ruler has ever attempted to solve, is the great enemy—death. Today, even if peace could be established in every part of the earth, and economic security could be assured to all the billions of humanity, people would still be dying at the rate of over 150,000 per day, with all the sickness and suffering this implies.

However, in Christ's new world the problems of sickness and death will be solved. The people are dying because they are members of a sin-cursed and dying race, resulting from Adam's transgression. However, Paul assures us that "as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive" by obedience to the righteous laws of the kingdom. Christ shall reign, Paul says, until the great enemy death is destroyed.—I Cor. 15:21,22,26

The restless roaring of the sea and waves is used in the Bible to symbolize the world of mankind in its present state of chaos and distress. One of the prophecies of the kingdom assures us of the time when there shall be "no more sea." It is then, this prophecy continues, that through Christ, God "will dwell" with the people, and "shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away."—Rev. 21:1-4

When God's Word assures us that "there shall be no more death," it means that even those who have died will be restored to life. These all have been ransomed from death by the precious blood of Christ. The Prophet Isaiah wrote, "The ransomed

of the LORD shall return [from death], and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.” (Isa. 35:10) These blessings of peace and life will not reach the world in 2016, but they are near, and in this we can rejoice. ■

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 Bruce Burke, St. Louis, MO—November 2.
Age, 62

WEEKLY PRAYER MEETING TEXTS

DECEMBER 3—“Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.”—Revelation 3:10 (Z. ’01-118 Hymn 310)

DECEMBER 10—“Them that honour me, I will honour.”—I Samuel 2:30 (Z. ’01-318 Hymn 210)

DECEMBER 17—“Beloved, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.”—Philippians 2:12,13 (Z. ’97-147 Hymn 114)

DECEMBER 24—“Thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.”—Matthew 1:21 (Z. ’00-8 Hymn 16)

DECEMBER 31—“What shall I render unto the LORD for all his benefits toward me? I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the LORD. I will pay my vows unto the LORD, now, in the presence of all his people.”—Psalm 116:12-14 (Z. ’99-286 Hymn 336)

The Lord's Day

Key Verse:
***“Remember the
sabbath day, to
keep it holy.”***
—Exodus 20:8

Selected Scripture:
***Exodus 20:8-11;
31:12-17***

TO PROPERLY APPRECIATE the meaning of the Sabbath is to understand its origin as part of God's dealings with Israel. He adopted the Jewish nation as his special possession out of all of the peoples of the world, declaring, “You only have I known of all the families of the earth.”

(Amos 3:2) With them God made the Law Covenant through Moses at Sinai. Later, he sent them his messengers, the prophets, and finally, his Son. No other nation received this special favor from God. When the Jews rejected Jesus, and he took the Law Covenant “out of the way, nailing it to his cross,” it was neither extended to any other nation, nor to the church.—Col. 2:14

Accordingly, it is not for us to demand that leaders of the Christian world should enforce the Jewish Sabbath or any other specific Sabbath observance. We are to remember that the kingdoms of earth are still under the dominion of the “god of this world,” by God's permission. (II Cor. 4:4) He is not, therefore, commanding that mankind observe a special Sabbath day or any other feature of the Mosaic Law. Christian believers are not under the Law Covenant, as the apostle declares, “Ye are not under the law, but under grace.”—Rom. 6:14

Being free from an arrangement which was based upon perfect obedience in the flesh, we should be comforted by the thought that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were

approved of the Lord without the Law. Their faith in God constituted an obligation to do the Divine will to the extent of their knowledge and ability. The same is true with us as the followers of Christ. The Scriptures assure us that we have been adopted into God's family and made partakers of his Spirit. (Rom. 8:15,16) Walking "not after the flesh, but after the Spirit," means our rule of action must henceforth be love, because "love is the fulfilling of the law."—Rom. 8:1; 13:10

Upon this basis we see that God is forming a new group of individuals gathered out from all nations, of whom the apostle says, "Ye are . . . a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people." (I Pet. 2:9) Although we are free from the Mosaic Law, we derive a great blessing by examining it because we recognize that it was just, holy, and good. We should seek to appreciate its inner meaning and its spirit, but with the recognition that we are justified by the precious blood of Christ, and not by the "works of the law."—Rom. 5:8,9; Gal. 2:16

Hence, as we look at the Decalogue we grasp the depth of its significance. With respect to the command, "Remember the sabbath day," as spiritual Israelites we realize that we are not under bondage to a day. Rather, we come to know the intent of this command and seek to be in harmony with its spirit. We find that the real meaning of the Sabbath is the "rest" of faith, based upon acceptance of Jesus as our Redeemer and making a consecration of our will to do God's will. Thus, we begin to enter into this rest. Henceforth, if we are faithful to the Lord and abide in his love, our Sabbath never ends. "We which have believed do enter into rest."—Heb. 4:3

Our "rest" of faith should continue throughout all the days of the week. It is thus that spiritual Israel keeps the Sabbath—each day—resting in the finished work of Christ, ceasing from our own works, and from all endeavors to justify ourselves through the Law. (Heb. 4:10) To us, every day is to be remembered, "to keep it holy." ■

Acceptable Offerings

Key Verse: *“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.”*
—Romans 12:1

Selected Scripture:
Leviticus 22:17-25,
31-33

IN TODAY'S KEY VERSE WE

discover the basis of our relationship with God. In the preceding chapters of his letter to the Romans, Apostle Paul had laid out the relationship which existed between God and Israel under the Law Covenant. He said they had a “zeal of God, but not according to knowledge.” (Rom. 10:2) Paul also explained that “Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.” (vs. 4) Later, he stated that God did not eternally cast off Israel, but because of their

resistance to his commandments, Gentiles also are now permitted to partake of the “root and fatness” of God’s favor. These, Paul says, have been grafted into the “olive tree” that was Israel because those “branches were broken off.”—Rom. 11:17-21

Those “grafted” into the olive tree are consecrated members of the body of Christ—true believers. They have accepted the invitation of our Key Verse, on the basis of full faith in the blood of Jesus as their only means of salvation. Paul later clarifies that the Gospel Age, in which we are now living, is “a day of salvation” for those who accept this invitation to sacrifice. (II Cor. 6:2, *Emphatic Diaglott*) A separate day of salvation awaits Israel and the world after the church class has been

completed.—Rom. 11:25,26

We are to understand that the invitation to sacrifice should be considered a privilege, not a duty or a command. Paul stresses the fact that our sacrifice must be holy to be acceptable to God. In our selected Scriptures from Leviticus, we find that Israel was instructed to offer whole, unblemished offerings, illustrating that God's justice requires perfection for forgiveness of sins. We find this principle also shown in the offerings recorded in the Bible of Cain and Abel. While both offered the best of their possessions, only Abel's was accepted because it included the shedding of blood, which was the only suitable offering to show the picture God intended.

The word "sacrifice" in our Key Verse is translated from the Greek word *thusia*, the root of which means a "slaughter," or an animal slaughtered. Paul explains that we were born as natural—or animal—human beings. (I Cor. 15:44-47) If we, in full consecration, have accepted Jesus as our ransom, our earthly being is not our own, but has been "bought with a price." (I Cor. 6:19,20) If we desire to live and reign with Christ in heaven, we must follow his example in giving up our earthly life with all the rights and privileges promised to the world of mankind in God's coming kingdom on earth. Only Jesus' sacrifice was required to balance the scales of justice with regard to the ransom. (I Cor. 15:21,22) However, we have been invited to lay down our lives by being "buried with him by baptism into death," with the promise that, if faithful, we will be raised "in the likeness of his resurrection."—Rom. 6:3-5

We note that this invitation to present our bodies as living sacrifices is made along high and noble lines. It does not come with any entrapments, but by an appeal to reason. Jesus said, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me." (Luke 9:23) If our sacrifice is faithfully carried out, we will be partakers of the divine nature.—II Pet. 1:4 ■

Dedication of Firstborn

Key Verse: “*When the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were accomplished, they brought him to Jerusalem, to present him to the Lord.*”
—**Luke 2:22**

Selected Scriptures:
Exodus 13:13-15;
Luke 2:22-32

TODAY’S LESSON TEACHES

the difference between Jesus and the church in their standing as firstborns. In our Key Verse we see that every aspect of Jesus’ life was in keeping with the requirements of the Mosaic Law, because he was a Jew and obligated to keep it. He said, “Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.”—Matt. 5:17

We find in the Luke account of our lesson that Jesus’ parents brought him to the Temple when he was forty days old. This was in accordance with the requirements concerning newborn children under the Law. (Lev. 12:1-7) The narrative says there was a devout man named Simeon in Jerusalem who had been assured by the power of the Holy Spirit that before he died he would see the long awaited Messiah. Led by the Spirit to the Temple, and taking this firstborn babe into his arms, he blessed God and declared, “My eyes have seen thy salvation, Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel.”—Luke 2:25-32

John explains that Jesus was this light. (John 1:9) He was the “firstborn from the dead,” the Redeemer and “head of the body, the church,” during this Gospel Age. (Col. 1:18-23) Jesus will also be the Deliverer of Israel and all mankind in his coming earthly kingdom. (Rom. 11:25,26) Paul further explains that Jesus was made a priest “after the similitude of Melchisedec.” He “needeth not daily . . . , to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people’s: for this he did once, when he offered up himself.”—Heb. 7:15,26,27

By contrast to Jesus, who needed no redeemer, the firstborn mentioned in our selected Scriptures were chosen by God to be sanctified for his service. (Exod. 13:2) Later these firstborn ones were represented by the tribe of Levi. (Num. 3:12) Exodus 13:13-15 follows the account in the previous chapter of the original Passover night, during which the angel of death passed through the land of Egypt, killing all the firstborn in the land, both man and beast. In order to protect Israel’s firstborn from this plague, God instructed each household to take an unblemished lamb on the tenth day of the month, kill it on the fourteenth day, and sprinkle its blood on the side posts and upper door posts of the house.—Exod. 12:3-14

We see a beautiful picture in the events of that night as they relate to the firstborn. Unlike Jesus, these firstborn needed to be protected from the certainty of death. The Passover lamb, whose slaying and shed blood provided this protection, was a picture of Jesus, our Redeemer, whom the Apostle Paul clearly identifies: “Christ our passover is sacrificed for us.”—I Cor. 5:7

Thus we see that Jesus “is the head of the body, . . . the firstborn from the dead,” and his footstep followers are “the church of the firstborn.” (Col. 1:18; Heb. 12:23) Finally, Paul states that God’s Son would “be the firstborn among many brethren.” (Rom. 8:29) Let us rejoice to have such a mighty Redeemer and loving God. ■

Endowed with Humility

Key Verse:
“Whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted.”
—Matthew 23:12

Selected Scriptures:
Matthew 23:2-12;
Mark 12:38-44

IN TODAY’S KEY VERSE WE find the characteristic of humility contrasted with the quality of pride. Our selected Scriptures point out the pride and ambition of the scribes and Pharisees, who loved the uppermost rooms and the chief seats. Of these Jesus said, “All therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do; but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not.”—Matt. 23:3

In contrast to the vanity and conceit of these religious rulers, we read consistently of the humble character of our Master. “For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.” “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who . . . made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.”—II Cor. 8:9; Phil. 2:5-8

Here we have an example of the relationship between humility, pride, and being exalted. While the scribes and Pharisees exalted themselves due to pride in their

position, Jesus was exalted by God for his humility and obedience to him. Paul continues by saying that God highly exalted Jesus, and gave him a “name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth; . . . And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”—Phil. 2:9-11

Any, who by pride seek to exalt themselves, do so in a desire for present honor. We should avoid this weakness of the flesh, as Jesus instructed his disciples: “When thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do, . . . that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.” (Matt. 6:2) Our exaltation is not to be expected in this life, but the next—after our sacrifice has been fully consumed. “When the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away. . . . Be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time.”—I Pet. 5:4-6

Jesus gave an important lesson, through the example of a small child, as to how we might receive a heavenly exaltation. “At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven? And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.”—Matt. 18:1-4

A further example of one endowed with humility is provided in our selected Scripture of Mark 12:38-44. In this passage, we find the poor widow’s “two mites” a more generous gift than that of all the wealthy, who gave “of their abundance.” Let us strive to be of the same humble character as illustrated by the poor widow and a little child. ■

Parables of the Vineyard and the Wedding Garment

*“Many are called,
but few are
chosen.”
—Matthew 22:14*

IN THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW, chapters 21 and 22, we have recorded the two parables of our title. As was true with many of Jesus’ parables, they were specifically given for the purpose of enlightening those of Israel who had “hearing ears” to the great privileges they had been given as God’s chosen people. They also contained various reprimands and predictions of punishment upon the nation given by the Lord due to a general lack of faithfulness—especially of their religious leaders. In these two parables, however, we also see lessons for the entire Gospel Age church, summarized in the warning of our opening text.

THE VINEYARD

Jesus’ parable of the vineyard is found in Matthew 21:33-46. It is based upon similar words recorded in Isaiah 5:1-7, in which we are told that

“the vineyard of the LORD of hosts is the house of Israel.” In this Old Testament version of the parable, God “looked for judgment” in Israel, but saw “oppression.” He looked for “righteousness, but behold a cry.” (vs. 7) These few words of explanation by the prophet help us understand the meaning of Jesus’ parable on the same subject.

As Jesus related the parable, he said that there was a certain householder who planted a vineyard and hedged it about, dug a winepress in it, and built a tower. He let out this vineyard to husbandmen, and then went into a far country. When the time drew near for fruit, the householder sent his servants to the husbandmen to receive it. However, the husbandmen beat the servants, and slew some of them. Later, the householder sent his own son, but the husbandmen slew him also.—Matt. 21:33-39

After relating the parable, Jesus asked his listeners what they thought the householder would do to those husbandmen when he returned. They replied that he would “miserably destroy” them, and would let out his vineyard to other husbandmen. (vss. 40,41) As we shall see, Jesus agreed with this, and in his explanation indicated that, just as in Isaiah, the application of this parable was to Israel, and especially to the Pharisees.

This vineyard, as explained by Isaiah, was the house of Israel. The fruit which the Lord looked for was justice and righteousness. Israel, however, as a people, failed to produce this sort of fruit, although through the Law Covenant and its arrangements every provision was made to encourage the growth of righteousness.

SERVANTS PERSECUTED

God's servants, who were sent from time to time to those Pharisees and other religious rulers in charge of the "vineyard," were usually persecuted. Sometimes they were even put to death, just as Jesus indicates in the parable. These servants were the prophets. Finally God, the "householder" of the parable, sent his "only begotten son" to look for the fruit of obedience and righteousness, and the keepers of the vineyard had him killed also.

God's purpose in the choice of Israel as his chosen people—his vineyard—was that they would produce fruits of righteousness. By so doing, they would be qualified to be a people associated with the promised Messiah in the kingdom which he would come to earth to establish. God had promised that, if obedient, they would become a "holy nation," a "kingdom of priests," and a "peculiar treasure," or very special people.—Exod. 19:5,6

The final and most crucial test upon the nation of Israel to qualify them for this high position in God's plan was the coming of Jesus as their King and Messiah. "He came unto his own, and his own received him not," although as individuals some did accept Jesus. These few were invited to sonship and to be associated with Jesus in the heavenly phase of his kingdom.—John 1:11,12

GOD'S "STONE" REJECTED

To illustrate Israel's rejection of the "son" of the parable—that is, the Messiah—whom the "householder" sent to look for fruit in his vineyard, Jesus referred to a prophecy in Psalm 118:22,23 concerning the "stone which the builders refused." Evidently

in this prophecy a pyramid-shaped building is visualized, with Jesus pictured as the topstone. Naturally this “stone” would not fit in any other place in this prophetic temple of the Lord. The religious rulers of Israel could see no place for him in God’s arrangement, especially if he was to be considered a topstone, and above them in authority. Consequently, they rejected him and put him to death.—Matt. 21:42

Israel’s rejection of their Messiah thus was at great peril to themselves. Continuing to use symbolic language, Jesus further explained, “Whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it [the stone] shall fall, it will grind him to powder.” (vs. 44) The record states that when the chief priests and the Pharisees heard Jesus’ parables, and this one in particular, “they perceived that he spake of them.” (vs. 45) They were right, and as symbolically prophesied by Jesus, they were ground to powder later as rulers of God’s people.

Jesus further explained to them that the “kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.” (vs. 43) As we have noted, it was the opportunity of joint rulership with Jesus in his Father’s kingdom that was given to Israel. However, as a nation they did not bring forth the necessary “fruits” to qualify for this, so this special kingdom prospect was taken from them, and as Jesus foretold, given to another “nation” that would bring forth the proper fruitage.

“SPIRITUAL HOUSE” AND “HOLY PRIESTHOOD”

The Apostle Peter identifies this nation for us. To the faithful followers of Jesus during the Gospel

Age, he wrote concerning a “holy nation” to which the kingdom would be given. His words are in harmony with the lesson in Jesus’ parable of the vineyard in which he refers to the “head of the corner,” or topstone in God’s “spiritual house” which Israel rejected.

Peter says, “Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up . . . sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed. But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar [purchased] people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God.”—I Pet. 2:5-10

From this it is clear that the “nation” to which the kingdom was to be given when taken away from the natural house of Israel is comprised of the faithful consecrated followers of Jesus during the Gospel Age. At the beginning of the age, many of these were faithful individuals of the Jewish nation who accepted Jesus and became his footstep followers. However, there were not enough of these to make up the number which God had foreordained.

Therefore, the Gospel call went to the Gentiles also. Subsequently, both Jews and Gentiles have had the glorious opportunity, upon the basis of faith in Jesus as their Redeemer, and consecration to do the Father's will, to run for the prize of joint heirship with the Messiah. To these Jesus said, "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."—Luke 12:32

THE WEDDING GARMENT

The parable of the wedding garment is recorded in Matthew 22:1-14. It immediately follows the verses in the aforementioned lesson. This is another of our Lord's parables in which experiences in connection with a feast are used to illustrate valuable points of truth. The beginning of the parable is similar to the one recorded in Luke 14:16-24, but there are several differences. In the parable recorded by Luke "a certain man" arranges for the feast, whereas in the parable of the wedding garment the arrangements are made by "a certain king" in connection with his son's marriage. In both parables, however, there is the failure on the part of the originally invited guests to appear at the feast, so finally the king's servants are sent into the highways to invite others to the feast.

Although similar in some respects, we believe the parable in Matthew is different from the one in Luke, for other details are given which are not recorded in the Luke parable. The bidden guests in this parable who refuse to attend the feast are again urged by the servants to do so. However, instead of accepting the invitation, they spitefully treat the servants. We are further informed that this results

in their master, the king, sending forth his armies and destroying the murderous guests.—Matt. 22:2-7

It is not difficult to see in these circumstances of the parable that which actually occurred in the outworking of the divine plan beginning with the First Advent of Jesus. The “king” in the parable seems clearly to represent God, and the “son” for whom he made a marriage, his beloved son Christ Jesus. God is indeed the great King of the universe, and we know that in his plan for the redemption and restoration of the human race he has arranged that his beloved son will have a “bride,” and that there will be a “marriage supper of the Lamb”—another name for God’s son.—Rev. 19:7-9; 21:2,9

It is indicated in the parable that it had been predetermined who would be invited to the marriage and have the privilege of participating in it. The Scriptures show that these “guests” were initially the Israelites, particularly those living at the time of Jesus’ First Advent. The record also reveals that the majority of these not only declined the invitation, but evilly entreated those who called it to their attention, bitterly persecuting many of these faithful servants of the Lord, both before and after Pentecost.

GO INTO THE HIGHWAYS

It is also true that only a few decades later the Jewish nation was destroyed, and thousands of Israelites were killed. This was in the A.D. 70-73 time period. This did not interfere, however, with the King’s plan for the marriage of his Son, for invitations have since gone out into the “highways”—that is, to the Gentiles, giving opportunity

for other guests to prepare themselves for the feast and for the marriage.—Matt. 22:7-9

The parable states that in sending out the call to the marriage and feast both the “bad and good” were to be brought in. (vs. 10) This does not imply that the servants were arbitrarily to bring to the supper those whom they knew to be wicked or unworthy. The thought is, rather, that as the Gospel call has gone forth throughout the world, all sorts of people have responded to it. In most instances, no doubt, those who respond are sincere, but many fail later to measure up to all that is required of them.

The closing verse of the parable, which is our opening text, states that “many are called, but few are chosen.” This is one of the important lessons of the parable. It is a point that is emphasized in many Scriptures. The Apostle Peter speaks of making our “calling and election sure.” (II Pet. 1:10) It is not enough simply to be called. If we are to enter into the marriage of the Lamb, and to the marriage supper of the Lamb, we must make our calling “sure” by faithfulness to its terms. The same thought is mentioned by the Revelator when he speaks of those who are with the Lamb as “called, and chosen, and faithful.”—Rev. 17:14

THE WEDDING GARMENT

In this parable, special wedding garments are provided for the guests by the king. After all the guests are present there is an inspection of them, and it is found that one of them is not wearing “a wedding garment.” (Matt. 22:10,11) It seems that the custom of the time was for hosts on such

occasions to provide a special robe for each guest to wear. It is assumed, therefore, that this one individual must have accepted and put on the robe in order to mingle with the guests, but later removed it.

When the king observed this man without a robe, and “speechless” as to a reason, he gave orders to “Bind him hand and foot,” and to “cast him into outer darkness” where there would be “weeping and gnashing of teeth,” denoting a condition of great chagrin and disappointment. (Matt. 22:12,13) It would seem reasonable to conclude that this one man might well represent some who would remove their robes after appearing at the feast, or in the outer chambers of the king’s home, waiting for the marriage and the feast to take place.

A robe is a covering, and in this case, one which made the individual acceptable in appearance to the host. This symbolism is used in many places in the Scriptures. In Revelation 19:7,8, the entire Christ company, spoken of as the “wife” of the Lamb, is shown to be “arrayed in fine linen” robes, “clean and white,” which are further described as “the righteousness of saints.”

GARMENTS OF SALVATION

Every individual who eventually becomes a member of the “bride” class was once a member of the fallen Adamic race. The inherent righteousness of all these has been but as “filthy rags,” and not pleasing to the Lord. (Isa. 64:6) The imperfections of all the guests in the parable must, therefore, be covered by attire which the King provides. The Prophet Isaiah describes this as “garments of

salvation,” and “the robe of righteousness.” (Isa. 61:10) The “salvation” and “righteousness” of the saints are not their own, but that which has been provided by the Lord—the righteousness of Christ.

It seems clear that none could become even a probationary guest at the Lord’s marriage feast who did not accept Christ as their Redeemer, and upon the basis of this make a full consecration to do the Father’s will. Wearing the robe of Christ’s righteousness would, therefore, denote an acceptance and appreciation of the great ransom feature of God’s plan, that “there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved” and made acceptable in the sight of God.—Acts 4:12

Taking off the wedding garment, after having been clothed with it, would therefore imply a loss of appreciation for the ransom. It could be an outright denial of the fact that Christ gave himself as a corresponding price for our sins and for the sins of the whole world. It could also be a gradual cooling of zeal toward our development of Christian character or of service in the interests of God’s plan. The Lord is, of course, the judge as to all that might be implied in this statement. Our privilege and intent in connection with it is to maintain our keen interest in the ransom, as well as our desire to be faithful to our consecration vows. Let us ever remember that apart from the righteousness of Christ, we could have no part in God’s great plan for man’s salvation, and no hope of being at the marriage and the marriage feast of the Lamb. ■

God's Unspeakable Gift

***"Thanks be unto
God for his
unspeakable gift."
—II Corinthians
9:15***

THE APOSTLE PAUL, WHEN writing to the brethren at Corinth concerning their privilege of giving material aid to their less fortunate

brethren of Judea, climaxed his remarks with the statement of thanks contained in our opening text. God is continually bestowing his benefactions upon his human creatures, the worthy and the unworthy. Jesus said concerning his Heavenly Father, "He maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust."—Matt. 5:45

In Jesus, we have the greatest of all God's gifts. No member of the fallen race is worthy of this gift, "for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." (Rom. 3:23) Although unworthy, we do have the privilege of accepting this "unspeakable," or indescribable gift, and being enriched thereby. By accepting this gift, we receive life and all the joys that accompany it. This fact is simply stated in the Bible: "God so loved the world, that he gave his

only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”—John 3:16

As we think of the practice of giving and receiving gifts at this season of the year, it is appropriate to examine a gift received in order to more fully appreciate its value, and the more heartily give thanks to the giver. Should we not also examine God’s greatest gift to us? Indeed, the better we come to know God’s “unspeakable gift,” the more we will cherish him, and the greater effort we will put forth to be like him.

Jesus is prophetically described as the one “altogether lovely.” (Song of Sol. 5:16) Depending upon our own inclinations, we may see and appreciate in Jesus certain praiseworthy traits of character and think of him almost entirely from these limited viewpoints. If we are of a mild, gentle disposition, it is likely that we especially admire in Jesus his kindness and gentleness. If by nature we are combative, we will note with approval Jesus’ encounters with the scribes and Pharisees.

Jesus was indeed gentle and kind. The “gracious words” which fell from his lips must have warmed the hearts of many who heard them. (Luke 4:22) He was also bold in his stand against the false teachings of the “blind guides” of his day. (Matt. 23:16) Being able to read the hearts of those with whom he came in contact, he did not hesitate to expose hypocrisy wherever he found it. Where there was no willful intent, Jesus was also ready to extend mercy to the erring. He was “altogether lovely,” and the more we see of his loveliness the greater should be our appreciation of God’s unspeakable gift.

One of the lovely traits of Jesus' perfection was his unswerving devotion to his Heavenly Father. This always had been true of him, even in his pre-human existence. Speaking through the prophet concerning his Creator and Father, the *Logos* said, "I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him."—Prov. 8:30

When the *Logos* was "made flesh," and while waiting until he reached maturity under the Law, he sought out the doctors of the Law in the Temple at Jerusalem to ask questions and reason with them. Chided by his mother for tarrying at the Temple at the age of twelve, Jesus replied, "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?"—John 1:14; Luke 2:49

He probably learned from the Jewish elders in the Temple that according to the Law he would not be entitled to enter upon any special ministry for God until he was thirty years of age. Obediently, he returned with his parents, "and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them." (Luke 2:51) When he reached the age of thirty, he immediately went to John at Jordan, to be baptized. The sentiment of Jesus' devoted heart at that time was, as expressed by David, "I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart."—Ps. 40:8

"LOVELY" IN PRAYER

Surely, Jesus was "lovely" in prayer, and delighted to commune with his Heavenly Father in this way. In a prayer beside the tomb of Lazarus, Jesus said to his Father, "I knew that thou hearest me always." (John 11:42) Jesus understood that in every situation of his life of sacrifice he needed the

guidance and strength that he could obtain only through communion with his Heavenly Father. Since he was assured that his Father's ear was always attuned to hear his every word of thanks and his every request for help, what delight Jesus must have experienced through prayer.

Too frequently, prayer is looked upon as the need we have of going to God in times of distress and trouble. Indeed, every Christian will seek the Heavenly Father's help and comfort in such times. Actually, however, we need the Lord's assistance as much when the circumstances of life are favorable, as when they are adverse. We should ask ourselves—Is everything going well with us? Are we popular with our friends, and as far as we know, have no enemies? If so, we need to go to the throne of heavenly grace asking our Heavenly Father to help us realize our need of him, lest we become too self-sufficient.

Jesus understood this. Surely he must have placed himself in a very favorable light before the multitude which, by a miracle, he had fed with five loaves and two fishes. Altogether there were about "five thousand men, beside women and children." What did Jesus do? The record says, "When he had sent the multitudes away, he went up into a mountain apart to pray."—Matt. 14:21,23

We do not know the nature of this prayer. At the moment Jesus was riding a wave of popularity. When tempted by Satan to use his God-given power to turn stones into bread to satisfy his own hunger, he refused to do so. Now he had used that power to create food for the multitude. Would their appreciation and praise turn him aside from his own course of sacrifice and cause him to feel self-sufficient in

his miracle-working power? Such thoughts may have gone through his mind, but he immediately realized his need of communing with his Father, who he knew was the source of his power.

FOR GUIDANCE

The prayer life of Jesus is again brought to our attention in connection with the selection of his apostles. We read, "It came to pass in those days, that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God. And when it was day, he called unto him his disciples: and of them he chose twelve, whom also he named apostles."—Luke 6:12,13

Jesus was confident that the Father, in answer to prayer, had guided him in the selection of his apostles. Later, in another prayer, he referred to them as those whom the Father had given him. (John 17:6) This was a lovely example of belief and trust. While it was true that Judas Iscariot, who later betrayed our Lord, was among those whom the Father had given to him, Jesus made no exception in his prayer. At times we may seek God's guidance, and yet, if our experiences are not such as we would prefer or fully understand, we might be inclined to doubt. However, he who was altogether lovely had confidence in his Father's wisdom and in his ability to direct, even in the case of one who later would turn against him.

Jesus said, "I thank thee, O Father, . . . because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight." (Matt. 11:25,26) Here again we find Jesus completely in

harmony with his Father's judgment. From the human standpoint, Jesus might have chosen the friendship and cooperation of the elite of his day—the scribes and Pharisees, the doctors of the Law, and other “wise and prudent” people in Jewish society. However, he knew that the Father had not revealed the Truth to these, and additionally, they were in bitter opposition to him.

Those to whom the Father did reveal the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven were, for the most part, the unlearned, the fishermen, publicans and sinners. (Matt. 13:11; Mark 4:11) It was these, therefore, who became his followers and friends. They were simple people, but honest at heart, and appreciative of the message. He loved these and thanked his Father for choosing them.

Jesus' interest in his apostles, and in those who would believe on him through their ministry, is evidenced in his prayer on their behalf. “I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine. And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them. And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are. While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept. . . . And now come I to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves. I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I pray not that thou shouldest take them

out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil [one]. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.”—John 17:9-16

What depth of interest Jesus thus displayed in those whom the Father had given to him to be his brethren and friends. Through this prayer we can see another aspect of the glorious character of the one who is altogether lovely, the Father’s “unspeakable gift” to us and, by and by, to the whole world. Indeed, the love of Jesus embraced the world, and this is revealed in his prayer life. Even when praying for those whom the Father had given him to be his ambassadors, he did not hide his interest in the world. In praying for them, the Lord added, “That they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.”—John 17:21

In that precious text previously quoted, which tells us of God’s loving gift of his “only begotten Son,” we are informed that “whosoever believeth in him” will not “perish, but have everlasting life.” Thus, when Jesus prayed that the “world may believe,” he was petitioning his Father for the life of the world. This is in keeping with the prayer he taught his disciples: “Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.” (Matt. 6:10) This is a prayer for the blessing of the world. Jesus was interested in the world. He came to give his life that all mankind might have an opportunity to live.

JESUS’ LOYALTY

Just as in his prehuman existence, Jesus, because of his loyalty, was daily the delight of his Father, so he was also during his earthly ministry. Soon after his baptism, Satan attempted to swerve Jesus away

from his course of obedience, but failed. First, it was suggested by Satan that Jesus use his God-given power to turn stones into bread in order to satisfy his hunger. His reply was, "It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."—Matt. 4:4; Deut. 8:3

We will appreciate the absolute obedience of God's "unspeakable gift" a little more by noting his insistence on the need, and importance, of "every word" uttered by his Father. This is in sharp contrast to the attitude of many of Jesus' professed followers who, in their weaknesses, seek out and obey only those instructions of the Bible that harmonize with their own ways of thinking and doing. The perfect Jesus, however, was alert to obey every word regardless of what the cost might be to him. In the circumstance under consideration, the cost of obedience was hunger and the increased antagonism of his "adversary the devil."—I Pet. 5:8

Failing in his first attempt, Satan approached Jesus from another standpoint. He said, referring to the pinnacle of the Temple, "If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone." (Matt. 4:5,6) Here was a temptation to disobedience supported by a misapplication of Scripture. Satan hoped it was an appealing temptation, for it suggested a way of suddenly attaining popularity and notoriety. One who could demonstrate that he enjoyed the protection of angels, even though he defied the laws of nature, would seemingly have the world in his hand.

In less spectacular ways, many since have yielded to this type of temptation. It is, in principle, the temptation to make a display of great and wonderful works as proof of heaven's blessings. (Matt. 7:22) The perfect Jesus, God's unspeakable gift, did not yield to this temptation. His reply was, "It is written again." For Jesus, "every word" that had been written must be brought to bear for the guidance of his life. The words that he here applied were "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God."—Matt. 4:7; Deut. 6:16

Only forty days prior to this, Jesus had heard the voice of his Father in those reassuring words, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." (Matt. 3:17) With this assurance there was no question in Jesus' mind concerning his divine sonship. Therefore, to expect his Father to say or do more to convince him would have evidenced his own lack of faith, hence tempting God to withdraw his favor from him.

Jesus was not concerned as to whether or not the world believed that he was the Son of God, although he probably knew that this issue would eventually lead to persecution and death. That did not matter, however, for the very purpose of his being "made flesh" was that he give his humanity in death for the life of the world. He knew that he was the Son of God, and this was all that mattered. How heart-searching this example should be for us!

Satan's third approach was again different. As "prince of this world," he offered to share his authority with Jesus. (John 12:31) The condition was, "If thou wilt fall down and worship me." (Matt. 4:9) No scripture was used in this case by the Adversary. It was simply a vicious attempt to

lure Jesus into disobedience. Once again, however, “every word” by which Jesus lived was brought to bear by him in resisting the temptation. His reply was, “It is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.”—Matt. 4:10; Deut. 6:13,14

Jesus, God’s “unspeakable gift,” had come into the world to be a king. He knew that in his Father’s due time the uttermost parts of the earth would be brought under his dominion. Jesus also knew that first he must sacrifice his life to redeem mankind from death. His rulership was to be over living subjects, not those condemned to death and dying. There was only one way to obtain this position in his Father’s plan, and that was by humble obedience. He had no desire to take any other course, for this one who was “altogether lovely,” loved God with all his heart, soul, mind, and strength.—Mark 12:30

DIRECTED BY THE WORD

Jesus loved the entire world. His natural desire would have been to bestow blessings or healing upon Jews and Gentiles alike, and proclaim the glad tidings of the kingdom to all. However, in this also he put aside what might have been his own preferences, and served in harmony with every word of his Heavenly Father. When he sent his disciples into the ministry he forbade their going to the Gentiles. “Go rather,” he said, “to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” (Matt. 10:6) Later, when a Gentile woman sought a blessing from him for her daughter, he said, “I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.”—Matt. 15:24

This woman persisted, and Jesus explained further, "It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs." To this the woman replied, "Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table." (Matt. 15:26,27) Jesus' heart of sympathy was touched by this display of humility and faith, and he granted the woman's request. The fact that Jesus made this exception emphasizes the restriction that the Father's word had placed upon his ministry, which he respected and obeyed.

The obedience of Jesus to his Heavenly Father's word is further revealed through his observance of the times and seasons in the divine plan. The enemies of Jesus, who desired to put him to death, were concentrated more particularly in Judea. Knowing this, he was conducting most of his ministry in Galilee. "His brethren therefore said unto him, Depart hence, and go into Judaea, that thy disciples also may see the works that thou doest." Jesus' reply was, "My time is not yet come."—John 7:3-6

Jesus was still in Galilee when Lazarus died. After two days he announced to his disciples that he was returning to Judea. They reminded him of the dangers involved. He replied, "Are there not twelve hours in the day?" indicating his consciousness of time. (John 11:6-9) In Matthew 26:18, we find Jesus saying that his time had come. He did not then hesitate to return to Judea, even though he knew that he would be arrested and put to death. Thus, his observance of the Father's times prevented him from recklessly throwing away his life, and also challenged obedience to his covenant of sacrifice when his hour did come.

JESUS' HUMILITY

Another lovely trait of Jesus' character was his humility. He was glad to testify, "The words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works." (John 14:10) Jesus further testified, "I can of mine own self do nothing," and "my Father is greater than I." (John 5:30; 14:28) Jesus' humility was also displayed in his willingness to leave the glory that he had with the Father in his prehuman existence, to become a man. As a man, he humbled himself still further by becoming a servant and suffering the humiliating death of the cross. Paul's way of expressing it was that Jesus made himself of "no reputation," and that he "humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."—Phil. 2:5-8

Jesus was also humble in his willingness to declare his lack of knowledge with respect to some of the time features of God's plan. When asked about the time of his Second Advent, he humbly acknowledged that he did not know, nor did "the angels of heaven, but my Father only." (Matt. 24:36) How this contrasts with the attitude of some of his followers. Even though they do not know, these would perhaps like to have their brethren think that they know a great deal about the times and seasons which have not yet been revealed to the Lord's people in general.

In this end of the age, when we are living in the *parousia* [Greek for "presence"] of our Lord, all the consecrated are properly concerned as to how long it will be before the last member of the body of Christ passes beyond the veil, and the kingdom is

established. This is a question frequently asked by the Lord's consecrated people. The majority admit, as Jesus did, that they do not know. Others will speculate about it, even to the extent of setting one date or another. How much better it is, we believe, for all to follow the example of Jesus in this respect, and simply state that we do not know. Truly this lovely one, who is God's unspeakable gift to us, is an example in every aspect of true godliness and humility, which we should endeavor to imitate.

JESUS' SUBMISSION

Jesus was submissive to whatever the Father's will was for him. Submission is closely allied to humility. It implies humility in the face of severe trial and suffering. Peter wrote concerning Jesus, "When he was reviled, he reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously."—I Pet. 2:23

Jesus knew that not a single experience, bitter or sweet, could come to him without the Father's permission. He did not, therefore, seek retaliation against those who persecuted him, but simply looked to his Father for wisdom to learn whatever lesson might be involved. He asked for strength to accept the buffeting with that humility which would enable him to look up to his Father and say, "Not my will, but thine, be done."—Luke 22:42

JESUS' COMPASSION

Jesus was sympathetic and compassionate. We read that when he "saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep

having no shepherd.” (Matt. 9:36) An exhibition of the manner in which Jesus’ compassion moved him to sacrifice time and strength on behalf of the multitude is given us in connection with his miracle of feeding the multitude.

This occurred on the same day, and very shortly after, Jesus had said to his disciples, “Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while.” The reason for this invitation is explained thus: “There were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat.” (Mark 6:31) In an attempt to escape from the crowd to be alone and rest, Jesus and his disciples entered into a boat and crossed to the opposite shore of the Sea of Galilee. It was apparently not a great distance, for many, noting what had happened, hurried around the edge of the water reaching the opposite shore in time to greet the Master when he arrived.—vss. 32,33

The attempt to leave the multitude failed. What did Jesus do about it? He could have directed his disciples to sail the boat back into the middle of the sea so that there they could rest. However, he did not do this, and the record explains why. “Jesus, when he came out, saw much people, and was moved with compassion toward them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd: and he began to teach them many things.” (vs. 34) This was at a time when he was tired, needing rest, but his compassion for the multitude would not permit him to rest. After teaching the multitude “many things,” he then performed the marvelous miracle of feeding them by causing the increase of a few loaves and fishes.—vss. 38-44

Let us examine our attitude toward the service of the Lord in comparison to this. Perhaps we are inclined to serve him merely when it is convenient, and when we feel up to it. Rather, let us be willing to forego needed rest, give up our personal plans, and ignore our personal preferences because our compassion for those whom we have the privilege of serving compels us to sacrifice the flesh and its interests. This was Jesus' attitude. He was truly a "man of sorrows," not on account of his own circumstances in life, but because of his sympathy for the sin-sick and dying world.—Isa. 53:3

In the shortest verse in the Bible, but one of the most powerful, we are told that "Jesus wept." (John 11:35) This was when he was standing beside the tomb of his friend Lazarus. Surrounded by mourners, and realizing that the great enemy of death would continue to claim its victims for a long time to come, spreading sorrow and suffering everywhere, the sympathetic and compassionate heart of Jesus was overwhelmed.

ZEALOUS

Jesus was consumed by the zeal of his Father's house. (Ps. 69:9) He said, "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work," and "I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work." (John 4:34; 9:4) Later, within the shadow of the cross, Jesus said in prayer to his Heavenly Father, "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do."—John 17:4

This statement was made by Jesus with the knowledge that his active ministry had been

completed. He was still to be tried. He would still need to bear up under mocking and scourging. Even when hanging on the cross, he witnessed concerning his coming kingdom and the paradise conditions that it would restore worldwide. Finally, when his last bit of human strength was gone, he looked up to his Father, and said, “It is finished.” “Into thy hands I commend my spirit [breath of life].”—John 19:30; Luke 23:46

Faithfully, even unto death, this unspeakable gift of God had exemplified all those commendable aspects of perfection, the sum of which had made him the one “altogether lovely.” By his death came his greatest accomplishment as the man Christ Jesus, for it provided an opportunity of life to all who believe on him. It was for this purpose that the Heavenly Father had sent his Son into the world, and now Jesus had vindicated his Father’s trust in him.

Accordingly, when we think of the birth of Jesus, let us remember that it would have been in vain unless he had been willing to lay down that perfect life. Let us thank God for Jesus’ birth, but also seek mercy, guidance, and help through the merit of his sacrificed life. Rejoicing in the birth of God’s unspeakable gift, let us remember our lifetime privilege of emulating him in obedience and devotion; in prayer; in loyalty to the Word of God; in resisting temptation; in humility; in submission to the Father’s will; and in sympathetic compassion for the entire groaning creation. As with Jesus, may the zeal of our Father’s house continue to consume us until the last ounce of our energy has been devoted to his work and glory. ■

Pride—Its Manifestations

“Pride precedes destruction; an arrogant spirit appears before a fall.”
—***Proverbs 16:18,***
International Standard Version

PRIDE IS A POISONOUS manifestation of selfishness. It is, as someone has well said, “selfishness gone to seed.” Every Christian should be on the alert to resist the encroachment of pride, because to whatever extent

it is permitted to influence our thoughts and actions, it will blight our peace and joy in the Lord, and distort our every outlook in keeping with its own ugly form.

One manifestation of pride is undue regard for self. Paul warns “every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think.” (Rom. 12:3) Self-esteem manifests itself in many and unsuspected ways. It may prevent one from accepting the Truth from a humble source. By the Truth we mean not only the doctrines relating to God’s plan, but the truth on all subjects related to our consecrated walk. It is easy for any of us to be wrong, even in the everyday matters of life, and

we should be willing to be corrected no matter from what source it may come.

If a person hesitates to seek advice for fear that it may reveal his own lack of knowledge, it is a sign of pride. In the world, the men and women who are most successful are those who seek the advice of others, especially in fields with which they are not too well informed. How much more is this applicable to the Christian life. Our understanding of the truth of God's Word is less likely to be complete if we are unwilling to examine and discuss these matters with others of like precious faith. That is the reason it is so essential that we meet together for mutual study and fellowship.

Undue contention in presenting our views may also be a manifestation of pride. The Truth stands on its own as a mighty bulwark of strength against error. We do not need to be contentious in its use. To be overly concerned about a point of detail may indicate that what we are presenting is partly our own view, rather than God's, and our pride is causing us to be contentious in its presentation. If such is the case, then pride will cause us to be very reluctant to change our opinion, even when it may be clearly shown to be in error.

This self-esteem manifestation of pride also may cause us to resent reproof, even though it may have been deserved and necessary. On the other hand, a Christian who is properly humble before the Lord and his brethren, will not resent reproof, even in cases when it may not be merited. Elders of the church should be especially on guard along this line, because pride may ruin their usefulness as servants of the brethren. If an elder resents having his

thoughts called into question by even the humblest member of the ecclesia, it is a sign of undue self-esteem, and he should take the matter to prayer immediately. This is true, even as the Apostle Paul has said, "In lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves."—Phil. 2:3

Elders are servants of the Heavenly Father's people, and it is not fitting for servants to resent questioning by those whom they serve. If there is any doubt in the mind of a brother or sister as to where one of their servants stands with respect to doctrine and practice, it behooves that servant to display the greatest of patience and painstaking care to make his position clear. A refusal to do this may represent a lack of humility before the Lord, and before the brethren.

Self-esteem may also manifest itself by the habit of interrupting others when they are talking. This may not always be the cause for such a practice—sometimes it might just be a case of nervousness. However, if we find ourselves constantly interrupting others in order that we may talk ourselves, it could easily be that inwardly we think that what we have to say is more important than what the other person is saying. Such would indicate undue self-esteem.

A willingness to listen to others is one of the evidences of humility, and is of prime importance to our growth in grace and knowledge. The lowliest saints of God, from the standpoint of human education and ability, may often express thoughts which are golden nuggets of truth. These may be more valuable, perhaps, than a whole discourse by one more talented. If we are not listening

when these thoughts are expressed, we lose them. Hence, we lose the blessings that would accrue from them.

If we are not humble enough to listen to our brethren, we could easily become proud enough not to listen to the Almighty One. God speaks to us through his Word. If we go to his Word merely to find that which will bolster an idea which we have developed in our own minds, it means that we are not truly listening to the Heavenly Father, but misusing his Word to satisfy the desires of our own self-esteem. Let us be on the alert to note the slightest manifestation of pride along this line, and in prayer before the Lord ask him to help us be free from it. As Peter has advised, “Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time.”—I Pet. 5:6

SOCIAL PRIDE

There is a danger that we may develop a tendency toward what might be called “spiritual class distinctions.” That is, we may wish to fellowship with only those whom we consider to be as “well developed” spiritually as we consider ourselves to be. Concern may even be expressed that newly interested brethren coming into the ecclesia may spoil our “deep fellowship.” This is to our shame, and is unlike the spirit manifested by the Master. If we feel that we are well-developed spiritually, let us rejoice in whatever privileges we may have of helping others to the same condition. If we do not rejoice in helping the weak, it is a very good sign that our own development is not as well-rounded as it should be.

While it is true that Jesus seemed to regard some of his apostles more affectionately than others, this does not mean that he did not love them all. He was glad for every opportunity he had of being with, and serving, all of them. In our truth association there will be those to whom we are drawn more than others, but this does not mean that we should ignore any of the brethren. Indeed, we should rejoice in every privilege we have of being with them and enjoying their fellowship. There should be no cliques among God's people. "All ye are brethren."—Matt. 23:8

APPROBATIVENESS

Approbativeness is defined as the desire for honor, approval, applause, and adulation, to such an extent that one strives to always be the center of attention, and tends to display a great sensitivity to both blame and praise. Clearly, it is an insidious danger to the child of God. Too great a desire to be well thought of by the brethren may manifest itself in various, and subtle, ways. One may hesitate to speak, read, or pray in meetings. To onlookers this may seem to be a display of humility. Yet, in some cases, it could be on account of fearing criticism if a mistake is made. For example, we might decide that it is better not to give a testimony than to give one which we believe would give the brethren the thought that we are not very good at giving testimonies. Pride, in a very subtle form, could be ruling our hearts in such a case.

We may have an inordinate desire to lead the brethren. The apostle says that one who desires the office of a bishop, or elder, "desireth a good work."

(I Tim. 3:1) To have a desire to bless others through the service of eldership is not, in itself, an evidence of pride. However, it does expose those desirous of serving in that capacity to the dangers of pride. We can check ourselves in this connection by noting our own attitude when others are speaking or leading meetings. Do we feel like staying away from meetings if we are not leading? Do we not pay attention when others are leading, thinking to ourselves that we could bring out the thoughts in a much better way than is being done? If we ponder such thoughts, let us beware—pride is gaining the ascendancy and, if encouraged, will cause our downfall.

Along this same line, pride will hinder us from rendering faithful service if we feel we should be foremost in ecclesia affairs. One who is truly humble will be just as happy to serve as a deacon as he is to serve as elder. Indeed, he will be happy to serve in every way possible even though the ecclesia does not seem to recognize his service, or confer any office upon him. We may get the idea that if we cannot be foremost in service along this line we are being neglected and ostracized. If we find ourselves feeling that way about the matter, let us beware.

From God's standpoint, the brother or sister who serves in a more obscure way, and who does not, therefore, receive the praise of the brethren, is just as faithful as those who are out at the forefront—perhaps even more so. Indeed, there is less danger that such service is rendered to win expressions of appreciation from fellow workers. Such are truly serving "as to the Lord." (Col. 3:23) If they continue "faithful in that which is least," surely rich blessings from God will ultimately be theirs. (Luke 16:10)

It is appropriate, then, that we show our appreciation for, and accord every encouragement to, all who serve, especially to those who serve humbly.

Another possible manifestation of pride is the disposition to talk too much about one's humility, as if our friends would not know we were humble unless we told them. Humility does not need to be advertised. Like the fragrance of a beautiful rose, its presence is manifested without the necessity of special attention being called to it. The rose does not need to say, "How sweet is my perfume!" nor does a truly humble Christian need to call attention to his humility.

If we discover that we are fearful that no one will recognize our humility, and feel that we have to call their attention to it, it is a sign that we have more approbateness than we thought. No one, of course, would actually say to others: "See how humble I am?" The fallen flesh finds more clever ways of showing feigned humility. An elder might open a discourse by saying that he did not understand why he was there, and begin degrading himself. If the brother truly felt that way about the matter, he would have most likely humbly declined such service in the first place. False humility, we trust, is rare among the consecrated, however the Scriptures remind us that the human heart is "deceitful" and "desperately wicked." (Jer. 17:9) True humility, on the other hand, will cause one to serve as well as possible in whatever position in God's providences he may find himself, without making apologies, excuses, or explanations.

Another habit which might represent the spirit of approbateness is that of constantly using

phrases such as “I said,” “I did,” and “I know.” Such phrases may give indication of a heart attitude we will do well to avoid. Habitually speaking of matters in this way may indicate a desire to let the brethren know that we are very smart, and in such high standing with God that our advice, service, or knowledge in spiritual matters should be highly esteemed. Here also, it is well to be on guard.

Another good test of humility is to note our attitude when others get credit which may properly belong to us. An interesting thought concerning some passage of Scripture may be under discussion. The thought may be based upon a suggestion that initially came from us. Do we “itch” to let the brethren know this, or are we happy simply in the knowledge that others are being blessed as a result of our study? Along this line it is well to scrutinize the motives of our every word and deed.

In our association with the brethren, opportunities constantly arise for rendering a little assistance here and there, by kind words and deeds. If, when we do these things, we look to see whether or not they were noticed, it means that a little bit of pride is still left in our hearts. “Playing to the gallery,” as the thought is expressed in today’s language, will never get us into the kingdom.

Along this line of seeking approval from our friends for what we do, is the test of what our attitude is when someone else is complimented, and we are ignored. Do we resent this, instead of rejoicing in it? This is a heart-searching test, yet by it we are able to measure our growth in humility and to determine whether or not we have reached the point where we are able to esteem others as

better than ourselves, and therefore glad to see them put forward.—Phil. 2:3

MORE OBSCURE EVIDENCES OF PRIDE

The habit of “foolish talking” and “jesting,” as mentioned by the Apostle Paul in Ephesians 5:4, is generally looked upon by the brethren as merely a waste of time. Yet, it could manifest a spirit of pride if one seeks to draw attention to himself through his ability to make the brethren laugh. In such an event, the motive back of the jesting would be much more detrimental to the brother than the jesting itself. A humorous play on words, if wholesome and harmless, may help to relieve nervous tension. However, if prompted by a desire for attention, it can do serious injury to any Christian indulging in it.

Just as one may refrain from giving a testimony for fear of making a mistake and having his pride injured, a Christian might also seek to give a very eloquent testimony in order to display his ability. Here again, pride would be displayed. To make sure that love, zeal, thankfulness, and sincerity are the motives that prompt us in speaking, it is well to ask ourselves questions. “Is it my desire to speak only to praise the Heavenly Father? Am I truly seeking to be clothed in humility? Am I depending wholly on the Lord’s strength to help me speak? Do I truly sense my own weakness?”

Pride may also be manifested in our characters by a reluctance to distribute the message of the kingdom, for fear our friends and neighbors might see us, and on account of it not think so well of us. Then again, does pride in any way hinder us from firmly, freely, and gladly acknowledging our belief

in God's plan, no matter who may ask us? Are we at times, perhaps, just a little ashamed of being a Bible student? Are we reluctant about being seen associating with God's people, or do we rather own them as our friends wherever and whenever we may be seen with them? In these ways, also, let us determine the degree to which pride may rule our hearts.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Success in life, whether connected directly or indirectly with the Lord's service, provides a test of our humility. If we have, by God's grace, learned to do something well, we may be anxious to display our ability. If such an opportunity is not afforded us, we might become fretful, and assume someone is holding us back. If so, it is well to realize that it is probably God who is keeping hold of us until we have learned well the lesson of humility. If our ambitions or plans seem to be frustrated, let us not blame our brethren, but realize that no one can keep from us that which the Heavenly Father wishes us to enjoy.

When we maintain this proper viewpoint of our relationship to God, and of his watchcare over our highest spiritual interest, we will be greatly helped along the road to true humility. If our ambitions are checked we will search our hearts, and inquire of the Lord the reason, instead of blaming others, especially the brethren. At times, the brethren may be wrong in their dealings with us. If so, that is something with which God must deal. Of this we can be sure, that our position in the matter could only be possible through the Lord's permission. Our faith in his watchcare should enable us to believe

that he will permit nothing to happen in our lives but what will be for our highest spiritual welfare. In this let us rejoice.

The same viewpoint holds true when our brethren in Christ are not involved. In the business world, at our workplace, or in the office, we may seem to be held back from doing things which we aspire to do, and which we believe we have the ability to do. If this be the case, let us not blame our employer, supervisor, office manager, or fellow worker. Let us, rather, as in our association with our brethren, seek to ascertain what lessons the Lord may have for us in our experiences. If they accomplish nothing more than to keep us humble before God, they are very valuable, indeed. If, however, we become embittered toward those whom we imagine to be responsible, we have failed in this test.

Some of us may have imaginary accomplishments, and these cause more trouble than real accomplishments. Real accomplishments often represent years of patient toil in the school of Christ. Hence, the cost of attainment should be a counterbalance to keep the Christian humble who has thus attained. On the other hand, rapid, "overnight" attainment of ability, real or imagined, which is unaccompanied by development along other lines, is a truly great danger signal along the lines of pride. We should be on guard, not only against such a condition in ourselves, but also as we might see it in one of our brethren. Let us not encourage such pride in any way, thus making it harder to overcome. Paul said, "Let nothing be done through . . . vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things

[accomplishments], but every man also on the things [accomplishments] of others.”—Phil. 2:3,4

In all of what may seem to be our accomplishments, we should check the attitude of our hearts by carefully scrutinizing the motive of everything we say and do. This is true even when quoting Scripture. For example, it is always commendable to quote from the Bible in proof of what we believe. However, there is a possibility of quoting long passages of Scripture merely for the purpose of displaying our knowledge before others. Let us watch ourselves along this line, and be sure all we say and do is with the motive of glorifying the Lord, and not to flaunt self.

SPIRITUAL EXAMINATION

It is well to examine ourselves to discover what progress we have made in overcoming pride. Along this line, here are some questions for our prayerful consideration:

Are we truly glad to express approval of any grace of the Spirit we see manifested in others, feeling, at the same time, that we have not reached such a high attainment ourselves?

Are we always looking for superior qualities in others, and happy to acknowledge them when suitable opportunity offers?

Have we learned to measure ourselves, not by our own yardstick, but by the perfect standard, Christ Jesus?—II Cor. 10:12

Are we humble enough not to fear what others will think of our Christian character?

Are we glad to take a back seat while others are taking a leading part in God’s service?

Are we patient and gentle in defending the truth?

Do we rejoice when various doctrines of the Truth are repeated for the benefit of learners, even though we know them ourselves?

Are we able to enter wholeheartedly into the comments and prayers of others, even of the least talented, and not permit them to rankle us with the feeling that we could do so much better ourselves?

Have we developed to the point where we are not resting on the laurels of past service, but instead, are rejoicing in the golden opportunities of the present?

In this lesson on pride, Jesus is our pattern. He had all knowledge, all ability—earthly and heavenly—yet he said that his teachings were not his, but his Father's. He said that he could do nothing of himself, but only as the Father helped him. His words, Jesus claimed, were not his own, but the Father's. In view of this wonderful example of humility, how should we walk, who once were sinners, enemies of God, and without any spiritual knowledge, wisdom, or ability?

May we, indeed, remember that “before honour is humility.” (Prov. 15:33; 18:12) Let us also keep in mind the warning of our opening text—that “pride precedes destruction.” It is so displeasing to God that it is first on a list that includes murder, bearing false witness, lying, and other things which he hates. (Prov. 6:16-19) Let us, rather, endeavor to be clothed with humility and, being adorned with this and other graces of the Spirit, be truly “meet for the master's use.”—II Tim. 2:21 ■

*“By love serve one another.”
—Galatians 5:13*

“I Wish I Knew What To Do!”

HOW OFTEN WE hear this statement made by those who are zealous for making known the glad tidings of the kingdom. May we suggest one thing that practically all can do is to send one or more *Dawn* gift subscriptions to their friends. Just think, one gift subscription means that *The Dawn* magazine enters the home twelve times during the year as your messenger of Truth. Isn't this something worthwhile doing? Each subscription is only \$12.00, and you can have three names entered for just \$30.00! It is simple to do when you use the coupon(s) below, and on the next page.

DAWN BIBLE STUDENTS ASSOCIATION

199 Railroad Avenue, East Rutherford, New Jersey 07073

Dear Friends: I appreciate the privilege of proclaiming the Truth through *The Dawn* magazine. Please enter the following subscription, to begin with the January issue:

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

☐ New Subscription

☐ Renewal

DAWN BIBLE STUDENTS ASSOCIATION

199 Railroad Avenue, East Rutherford, New Jersey 07073

Dear Friends: I appreciate the privilege of proclaiming the Truth through *The Dawn* magazine. Please enter the following subscription, to begin with the January issue:

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

☐ New Subscription

☐ Renewal

DAWN BIBLE STUDENTS ASSOCIATION

199 Railroad Avenue, East Rutherford, New Jersey 07073

Dear Friends: I appreciate the privilege of proclaiming the Truth through *The Dawn* magazine. Please enter the following subscription, to begin with the January issue:

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

☐ New Subscription

☐ Renewal

DAWN BIBLE STUDENTS ASSOCIATION

199 Railroad Avenue, East Rutherford, New Jersey 07073

Dear Friends: I appreciate the privilege of proclaiming the Truth through *The Dawn* magazine. Please enter the following subscription, to begin with the January issue:

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

☐ New Subscription

☐ Renewal

SPEAKERS' APPOINTMENTS

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

E. Blicharz

Jacksonville, FL December 6

J. Trzeciak

Metro Detroit, MI December 6

CONVENTIONS

These conventions are listed by request of classes who sponsor them. So your convention can be placed in these columns in time, make your request in writing three months before the date of the convention to Dawn Magazine, 199 Railroad Avenue, East Rutherford, NJ 07073.

CHICAGO CONVENTION, January 1-3, 2016—Prisco Community Center, 150 W. Illinois Avenue, Aurora, IL 60506. Contact A. Schneider. Phone: (847) 533-1874 or Email: secretary@chicagobible.org

PHOENIX CONVENTION, January 16-18, 2016—Drury Inn - Happy Valley, 2335 W. Pinnacle Peak Road, Phoenix, AZ 85027. Contact C. Humphreys. Phone: (480) 226-9076 or Email: christyscastles@gmail.com

LOS ANGELES CONVENTION, January 31, 2016—Burbank Auditorium, 406 Irving Drive, Burbank, CA 91605. Contact J. Wojcik. Phone: (818) 438-1086 or E-mail: jrbwojcik@yahoo.com

SACRAMENTO CONVENTION, February 12-14, 2016—Holiday Inn Express, 2224 Auburn Boulevard, Sacramento, CA 95821. Contact K. Freer, 8012 Vintage Way, Fair Oaks, CA 95628. Phone: (916) 967-0635 or Email: winnerwear@aol.com

FLORIDA CONVENTION, March 5-7, 2016—Holiday Inn Orlando International, 5750 T. G. Lee Boulevard, Orlando, FL 32822. Phone: (407) 851-6400. Specify "Florida Bible Students" to receive special rate through

February 25. Other information, contact R. Sconyers. Phone: (407) 923-8067 or Email: rsguitarman59@gmail.com

ALBUQUERQUE CONVENTION, March 25-27, 2016—Sheraton Albuquerque Airport Hotel, 2910 Yale Boulevard SE, Albuquerque, NM 87106. Contact S. Thomassen. Phone: (505) 268-8170 or Email: srbt@juno.com

DETROIT PRE-MEMORIAL CONVENTION, April 16,17, 2016—Quality Inn of Troy, 2537 Rochester Court, Troy, MI 48003. Contact P. Nemesh. Phone: (248) 649-6588 or Email: nemeshfp@aol.com

METRO DETROIT CONVENTION, April 30-May 1, 2016—Brighton Community Center, 555 Brighton Street, Brighton, MI 48114. Contact J. Kienast. Phone: (248) 496-5611 or Email: jenkienast@gmail.com

LOS ANGELES CONVENTION, May 28,29—Burbank Auditorium, 406 Irving Drive, Burbank, CA 91605. Contact J. Wojcik. Phone: (818) 438-1086 or Email: jrbwojcik@yahoo.com

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

*O Saviour, precious Saviour, whom yet unseen we love;
O name of might and favor, all other names above!
We worship thee! We bless thee! To thee alone we sing!
We praise thee and confess thee
our Saviour and our King.*

*In thee all fulness dwelleth, all grace and pow'r divine:
The glory that excelleth, O Son of God is thine.
We worship thee! We bless thee! To thee alone we sing!
We praise thee and confess thee
our Saviour and our King.*