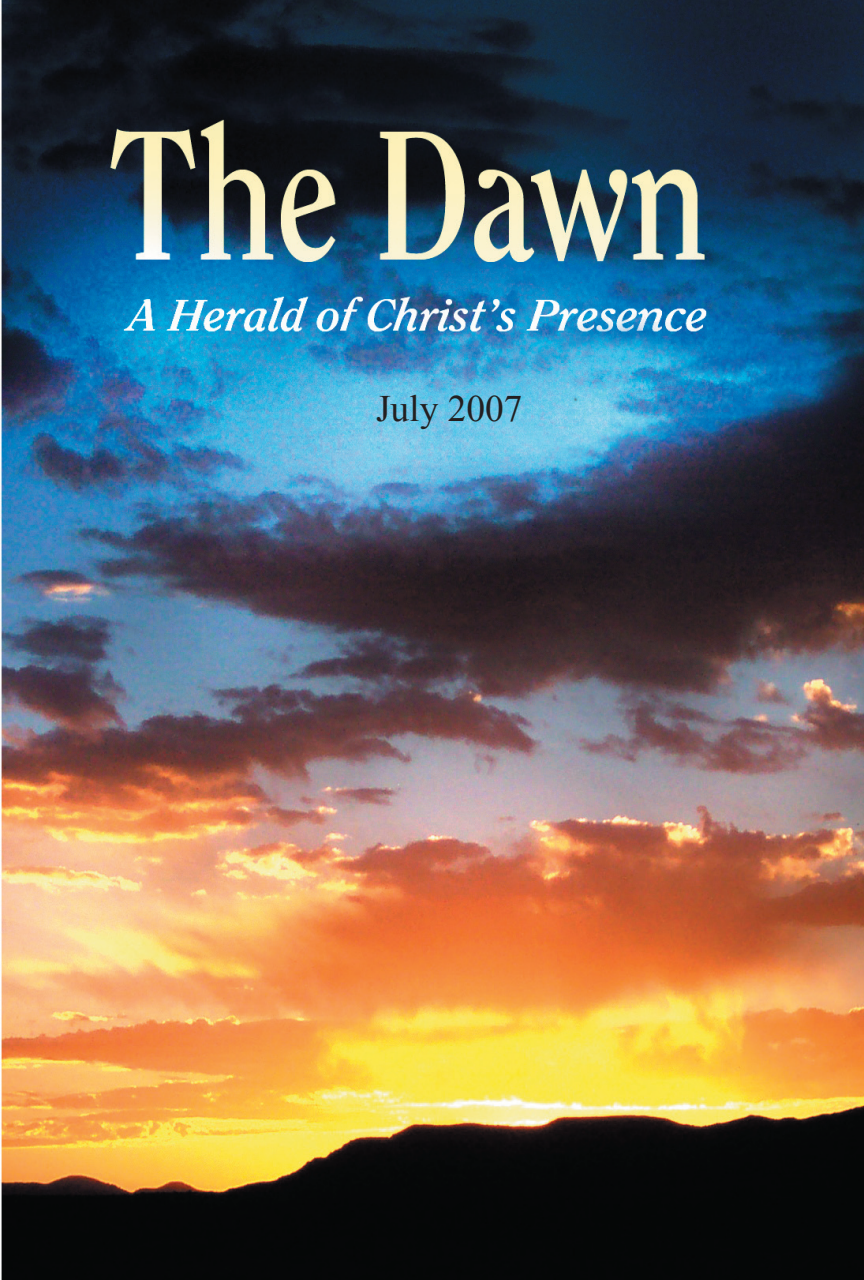


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Tainted Pet Foods: and the Lost Dominion

*“A righteous man
regardeth the life
of his beast: but
the tender mercies
of the wicked are
cruel.”*

—Proverbs 12:10

FROM THIS SCRIPTURE WE

learn that the tender mercies of an upright man are marked by the degree of compassionate care that he extends toward the animal creation, as well as to those of the human family. The mark of the unrighteous, in contrast, is manifest by cruelty.

The collection of wise sayings from which this text has been selected were written many centuries ago by Solomon, who was renowned for his great wisdom and understanding. “The proverbs of Solomon the son of David, king of Israel; To know wisdom and instruction; to perceive the words of understanding; To receive the instruction of wisdom, justice, and judgment, and equity; To give

subtily to the simple, to the young man knowledge and discretion.”—Prov. 1:1-4

Wisdom and understanding are valuable traits that should be sought by the consecrated child of God. “A wise man will hear, and will increase learning; and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels: To understand a proverb, and the interpretation; the words of the wise, and their dark sayings.” (vss. 5,6) Heeding these instructions and admonitions are true features of a mature Christian. “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction.”—vs. 7

LAWS PERTAINING TO ANIMALS

God’s righteous laws were extended to man’s care as a shepherd over the lower creation. When domestic animals were found straying they were to be returned safely to their rightful owner. (Exod. 23:4) If they were laden too heavily they were to be relieved. (vs. 5) They were not to be overworked, but to be treated humanely (Deut. 22:10; 25:4), and were also provided under the Sabbath laws with a time for rest.—Exod. 23:12

MAN’S DOMINION

When the earth was being prepared for man’s habitation, the animal kingdom was completed first, and Adam was given the privilege of naming them all (Gen. 2:19,20); and God proclaimed that it was good. (chap. 1:25) Then, when the creation of man had been finished, God said, “Let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the

earth.” (vs. 26) The subject of man’s dominion over the lower creation and his responsibility as a God-given shepherd was clearly shown.

Later, when speaking of God’s human creation and its relationship to the lower animal creation the Psalmist David said, “Thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour. Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet: All sheep and oxen, yea, and the beasts of the field; The fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas. O LORD our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth.”—Ps. 8:5-9

THE TREE OF LIFE

This beautiful and harmonious scene was soon marred when Adam disobeyed God’s righteous laws, thereby plunging himself and the future human family into sin and its penalty death. The animal kingdom began to fear man and to dread his superiority. (Gen. 9:2) As an illustration of the destruction of man’s dominion over the animal creation, the Prophet Daniel records a remarkable dream in which King Nebuchadnezzar recalled the tree which he saw. “Thus were the visions of mine head in my bed; I saw, and behold a tree in the midst of the earth, and the height thereof was great.”—Dan. 4:10

Nebuchadnezzar then proceeded to describe the tree in more detail. “The tree grew, and was strong, and the height thereof reached unto heaven, and the sight thereof to the end of all the earth: The leaves thereof were fair, and the fruit thereof much,

and in it was meat for all: the beasts of the field had shadow under it, and the fowls of the heaven dwelt in the boughs thereof, and all flesh was fed of it.” (vss. 11,12) The king saw in symbolic vision God’s wonderful gift of life to his human family, and man’s position in relation to the animal creation.

The king was unable, however, to understand what he saw next. “I saw in the visions of my head upon my bed, and, behold, a watcher and an holy one came down from heaven; He cried aloud, and said thus, Hew down the tree, and cut off his branches, shake off his leaves, and scatter his fruit: let the beasts get away from under it, and the fowls from his branches.” (vss. 13,14) Thus is described in the king’s own words the destruction of the tree of life and its effects upon the whole earthly creation that had been put in place by the Heavenly Father and his beloved Son.

MAN A POOR SHEPHERD

Man continues until now to be alienated from his Creator and the animal creation. This condition will not be rectified until Christ’s future kingdom of truth and righteousness will be ushered in, and bring an end to all injustice and unrighteousness in our evil and sin-sick world. At that time, the human family will come to know and love their loving Heavenly Father, and they will also come to love and appreciate his wonderful and diverse animal creation.

In recent years, attempts have been made through certain ‘animal rights’ groups to help alleviate some of the suffering that man as a poor shepherd has heaped upon the lower creation which can

neither defend nor speak for themselves. Injustice has come about through exploitation in many forms, as animals are brutally victimized through inhumane treatment, cruelty, and neglect. Others have suffered barbarous treatment as beasts of burden or engines of war. Innocent animals have given their lives through lab testing, ongoing medical research projects, and testing for cosmetic and other industries.

There is also the cruel aspect of ‘sport hunting,’ especially in wilderness areas of the world. In some cases, this has led to the near extinction of certain species, such as the American bison which was slaughtered indiscriminately in great numbers for sport.

ANIMAL RIGHTS GROUPS

A slogan that is used among some enlightened groups is to ‘shoot with a camera instead of a gun.’ One of the animal rights groups in the United States conducted an interesting National Pet Owners Survey during the years 2005-2006. This was done under the direction of the American Pet Products Manufacturing Association (APPMA). The report, which includes important statistics, indicates the huge numbers of American households that have a dog or cat in their home, and in many cases several pets. The survey shows that at the present time there are approximately 73 million dogs owned by American families. This represents 39% of all homes in the United States that have at least one dog. Owners spend in excess of \$200 annually for veterinary care, and 70% of the animals have been either spayed or neutered.

The APPMA survey also showed that there are about 90 million pet cats in American households, representing 34% of all homes in the United States. Cat owners spend \$180 for veterinary care every year, and 84% have been spayed or neutered. These figures do not take into account the many stray animals that are forced to look after themselves.

This study shows that dogs and cats are truly an extension of a large proportion of American households. It also indicates the level of professional care that pet owners are willing to provide for their animals. It is evident that a large percentage of Americans include domesticated pets such as dogs and cats as an extended part of their family environment. Many other types of animals are also kept as pets including rabbits, guinea pigs, hamsters, goldfish, and many others, but this report focuses on domesticated dogs and cats as the most popular of all animal species.

PET INTERACTION

The Delta Society, which is an organization devoted to the study of pets, and their various contributions to mankind, has done research relative to the importance of animals in the lives and well-being of the human family. The report references a recent study conducted by New York State University at Buffalo, NY that has come to the conclusion that senior citizens who own pets do not need to see their family doctor as often as those who do not. The study showed that even among the most highly stressed dog owners, a very large percentage of them required fewer physician visits than did those who did not own dogs. Researchers also studied the

medical records for both male and female employees who worked in very highly stressed positions. They found that those who were pet owners experienced a greatly reduced increase in blood pressure than those who did not own a pet. The leading doctor who was conducting the study announced that the results were “dramatic and significant.” It was acknowledged that while medication can lower blood pressure, it cannot relieve stress which may force blood pressure back up. The research team chose either a dog or a cat for each participant in their study and at the conclusion of the program nearly all said that they had become very attached to their pets and intended to obtain one for themselves.

Among the many other factors studied, the report determined that the companionship of a pet, especially a dog, helps children in families adjust better to a serious illness or the death of a parent. Pet owners feel less afraid of being a victim of crime when walking with a dog, or sharing a residence with someone who owns one. Having a pet develops nurturing behavior in children who tend to be more nurturing as adults. Positive self-esteem of children is enhanced by owning a pet. As well, the study showed that pets decrease the feeling of loneliness and isolation. Nearly three quarters of those families who were surveyed reported an increase in their overall happiness and general well-being after acquiring a pet.

PET THERAPY

Using pets for therapeutic purposes has gained increasing attention in recent years for a wide variety of situations. As companions, they are often a comfort to people suffering from AIDS, cancer, or other

serious illnesses. Pets have been found to boost the morale of the elderly living in nursing homes or with mentally ill patients. They also are a benefit to inmates in prisons that have pet therapy programs.

Unlike people who often speak or act unpredictably, animals usually provide a constant and stable source of comfort. Animals tend to bring out the nurturing habits in people, and make them feel unconditionally accepted. They can simply be themselves around their pets.

TAINTED FOOD SCANDAL

It is against this profound sense of compassion amongst American families who have pets that the widespread 'tainted pet food' scandal was recently announced. It has aroused indignation from pet owners across the United States and Canada. A deadly form of contamination was discovered, and businesses that sold pet foods were informed to remove certain brands of food from their shelves until government officials could declare that the situation had returned to normal.

At first, no one seemed able to determine exactly how wheat gluten, which is used to thicken pet food gravy, had become contaminated. Many people were surprised when they learned that the source of the problem was traced to China. As a result, the food trade industry with China has been brought under closer scrutiny and with increasing fears that tainted products could also find their way into the human food chain.

Although there has been no official announcement from the United States Food and Drug Administration, it was thought initially that the

contamination was caused by melamine, which is a plastic derivative used for fertilizer. This was somehow mixed in with the wheat gluten that was imported from China. The FDA only inspects a very small amount of the food that is imported from China, but shipments have recently been rejected.

Because of the seriousness of the situation, pet owners have been advised to feed their animals either dry food, or natural brands that do not contain gluten. Petco, which is a natural brands outlet has about 850 stores nationwide, and had no problems due to contamination of their products. The online Natural Pet Store was also not subject to the recall of around 100 varieties of pet foods. Both of these suppliers realized a huge increase in sales as a result of the tainted pet food scandal. There has also been a rush on the sale of all kinds of cookbooks for pets in an effort to avoid poisoning the family pet.

DETERMINING THE FACTS

Efforts are being made to learn the approximate number of deaths that have actually occurred due to pet food poisoning. The FDA has been slow in keeping up with the situation, but has continued to proclaim a very low and unrealistic number. Meanwhile the American Veterinary Medical Association is in the process of surveying its 30,000 members to help determine how many animals have become sick, and how many of them have died.

One veterinarian said that the crises in the pet food industry was not just an unfortunate accident, but part of a mounting evidence of a systemic breakdown. Menu Foods, which is based in Ontario, Canada, is the company which is at the center of the

scandal, and has expanded their recall of tainted products several times. Their reasons were that they had discovered that the suspected wheat gluten had been shipped to many other plants. Menu Foods' announcement has led American FDA officials to doubt whether or not there could still be contaminated products on store shelves.

THE SOURCE

In the light of the growing problem, the American FDA has recently issued a "detention without examination" order concerning wheat gluten. The order focuses on products derived from a Chinese company—Xuzhou Anying Biologic Technology Development Co. Ltd.—which is based in Peixian, China. The company's spokesman Mao Liju has denied any involvement in the scandal but says that they will investigate the possibility of their wheat gluten containing melamine. An American FDA official has stated that all samples of the company's products have tested positive for melamine.

THE HUMAN FOOD CHAIN

The question has now been raised as to whether or not the human food supply is safe. Because of the increasing likelihood of such a catastrophe, the Del Monte Company has voluntarily withdrawn some of its products that could possibly be suspect. The company's spokesperson has said that wheat gluten has been supplied as a 'food grade' additive, which is a grade considered safe for human consumption. However, the company has issued a voluntary recall for several products under the Gravy Train, Jerky Treats, Pounce, Ol' Roy, Dollar General and Happy Trails brands.

Wheat gluten is sold in both 'food grade' and 'feed grade' varieties. Either may be used in pet foods, but only food grade gluten may be used in the manufacture of products meant for human consumption. The scandal is focused on poisoned pet food, but there is the question concerning the human food supply through its many processors and distributors. The director of the Food and Drug Administration's Center for Veterinary Medicine said the FDA is not aware of any contamination of human food products, but that it cannot be definitively ruled out.

The problem remains that wheat gluten is a common food additive that is used as a thickener, dough conditioner, and meat substitute. It is widely used as an additive in commercial bakery products and for special purpose flours. The FDA has traced the problem to the processor in China but has not released the name of the distributor in the United States who supplied the product to Del Monte, Nestle, Purina, Hills Nutritional, and Menu Foods. At the time of this writing, there have been more than 70 brands and over 60 million cans and pouches of dog and cat food that are part of the massive recall. It is not yet known whether Xuzhou Anying sells direct to manufacturers in the United States or in other countries. FDA testing is being extended to also include corn gluten, cornmeal, rice bran, and rice protein in both feed grade and food grade products.

A SIGN OF SELFISHNESS

Selfishness, greed, and the desire to make larger profits is responsible in great measure for the unfortunate plight of the family pet and all affected animals. We appreciate the concern and compassionate

efforts of the animal rights groups. They promote awareness relating to action and controls toward the treatment of animals, but it will not be possible to bring about humane treatment for all animals that have been left in the care of man during this present reign of sin and death. Since sin was introduced to the world, animals have been exploited and pets have often been abandoned, neglected, abused, and left to fend for themselves.

GOD'S PROMISES COME TRUE

We know that the answer to all of the world's problems will be rectified during the administration of Christ's future kingdom. At that time, the fair and equitable laws of God concerning mankind and the lower creation will once again bring blessings for all. This wonderful hope is revealed in the marvelous promises of God.

The Prophet Isaiah describes the harmonious scene in the animal creation in the future perfected earth. "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. . . . and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' [adder's, *Marginal Translation*] den. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea."—Isa. 11:6-9

Further to Isaiah's wonderful prophecy, we recall the previous scripture text in which King

Nebuchadnezzar saw a vision of the tree that provided fruit and meat for all of God's earthly creation and that was subsequently hewn down. (Dan. 4:10-14) By God's powerful and overruling hand, Daniel was able to interpret the true meaning of the king's dream. The tree had been cut down, but God had revealed his ultimate purpose for restoring it.

THE TREE RESTORED

Daniel thus wrote, "Nevertheless leave the stump of his roots in the earth, even with a band of iron and brass, in the tender grass of the field; and let it be wet with the dew of heaven." (Dan. 4:15) The roots of the symbolic tree that had been hewn down were to be preserved for a future time in fulfillment of the promises of God. The prophet looked forward in time to the day when God's plan of reconciliation, and his promises to restore his earthly creation to life, would become a reality.

In relation to this promise spoken by the Prophet Daniel, we note the writings of Job, who was another of God's servants of old. He also wrote concerning the tree that had been destroyed. It would be restored at a future time to bring life and blessings for all the earthly creation. "There is hope of a tree, if it be cut down, that it will sprout again, and that the tender branch thereof will not cease. Though the root thereof wax old in the earth, and the stock thereof die in the ground; Yet through the scent of water it will bud, and bring forth boughs like a plant."—Job 14:7-9

THE WATERS OF LIFE

Water is a powerful symbol that is used in the Word of God to portray the restoration process that

will give life in fulfillment of God's long-standing promises. The waters of life and blessing will be offered to all of the obedient of mankind by the faithful members of the church who will have been called, tested, and elevated for that purpose.

The Psalmist wrote, "He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper." (Ps. 1:3) Again he said, "He shall come down like rain upon the mown grass: as showers that water the earth. In his days shall the righteous flourish; and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth. He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth."—Ps. 72:6-8

HEALING OF THE NATIONS

The Revelator described the encompassing scene when all will be restored to beauty and harmony. "He shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations."—Rev. 22:1,2

We look forward to the kingdom of righteousness when the whole earthly creation will be blessed in God's wonderful world of tomorrow. At that time, the words of the Psalmist will become a reality, "Let every thing that hath breath praise the LORD. Praise ye the LORD."—Ps. 150:6 ■

Doing the Right Thing

Key Verse: *“He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?”*
—Micah 6:8

Selected Scripture:
Micah 2:1-4; 3:1-5, 8-12; 6:6-8

DURING THE TIME OF MICAH, Israel’s appreciation of the Law had diminished to the point where they viewed the offerings prescribed under the Law to be no more than a mechanism to atone for their transgressions. Micah is questioning whether the Heavenly Father requires burnt offerings, or rivers of oil. Our Key Verse answers this question. Three of the things that the Heavenly Father does require are: ‘to do justly,’ ‘love mercy’ and ‘to walk humbly.’

The first requirement Micah pointed out, was to do justly. Do unto others as you would that they should do unto you. Deal justly with others, if you would expect them to deal justly with you. Be merciful to others, if you would expect them to be merciful toward you. The prophet was encouraging the Jews to do their best to fulfill the Law’s requirements. Justice is a quality that we should not expect fully from others, but one that we should strive to accomplish in our hearts, minds, and words. We must remember that the whole human family is imperfect. If, by the grace of God, we are able to be more just or more merciful than the average, it is through God’s Spirit.

The second requirement was to love mercy. Mercy is

kindness, and only those who show mercy to others will themselves receive mercy at the Lord's hands. "Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy." (Matt. 5:7) We should be happy to give up our personal rights and privileges so that others might benefit from them, except in the case where truth or principle are involved. Many people try to practice mercy in their lives, but do not love it. Instead, they love vengeance and only show mercy because of the law of the land, public sentiment, and the Word of God. Love requires that we deal justly with all, and that we learn to appreciate the rights of others—their physical rights, their moral and intellectual rights, and their liberties. If we understand these rights, we will not try to lessen or deny them.

Micah's final point was to walk humbly [humble thyself to walk, *Marginal Translation*]. The common people of the time walked wherever they had to go, so walking was a humbling experience. This point also implies that we should be in a condition of mind in which we can be taught, and in which we can appreciate his goodness and our own insignificance. God made our race in his image, but we have largely lost that image. Therefore, we should be very humble and teachable in all things. However, because of our fallen nature, those who are most able and willing to be just and merciful often struggle with being humble. The just and merciful are often filled with a spirit of pride, and a feeling of superiority to their brethren. Those most humble toward the Almighty are often those who have had great sins and great weaknesses which have helped to humble them. The Apostle Paul is an excellent example because he was struck down on the road to Damascus and left blind. God restored his sight partially, leaving his disability as a constant reminder to keep him humble as he attended to the great work that God had for him. The Divine message was, "My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness."—II Cor. 12:9 ■

Getting Ready for Judgment

Key Verse: *“Wait ye upon me, saith the LORD, until the day that I rise up to the prey: for my determination is to gather the nations, that I may assemble the kingdoms, to pour upon them mine indignation, even all my fierce anger: for all the earth shall be devoured with the fire of my jealousy.”*
—Zephaniah 3:8

Selected Scripture:
Zephaniah 3:1-13;
II Chronicles 34:1-3

interfered with his loyalty and patriotic zeal to serve God and his people. He took the selfish course and looked to his own interests. As a direct result, he ended up leading the nation into idolatry. Thus a man of great opportunities and of great natural ability for serving his God and

GOD WANTS US TO WAIT

patiently in all things in our lives. “Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waited for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain.”—James 5:7

An example of the value of waiting on the Lord is found in the lives and experiences of Jeroboam and David. Jeroboam as a young man of large natural ability attracted the attention of King Solomon, who could see that he possessed great executive and leadership talents. He had more confidence in himself than he had trust in God. He was also very impatient to become a king. All of these things

his people dishonored one and led the other astray.

David was anointed king of Israel several years before the death of King Saul. He was content to wait for God's time to bring him to the throne. God had indicated that he would be king, but he did not indicate that the time had yet come. So David waited on the Lord and meantime learned valuable lessons of self-control and trust in Divine providence. These lessons served him well during his reign. If we have confidence in God as David did, we will also have faith that he will put all things right in due time, regardless of how bad they may become in our lives and in the world. "Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord."—Rom. 12:19

God's people are forewarned not to interfere with the powers that be. Our trust should never be placed in carnal weapons but rather in the Lord. It is not our duty to pass judgment on public officials or governments, always keeping in mind that we live in a country with one of the best governments in the world. We should never demand justice from others, but always being sympathetic and keeping in mind our own fallen condition.

God has a plan and it is allowing all nations to explore all the selfish avenues that are possible. Rapid communication and travel systems made possible by technology are breaking down barriers of language and bringing the world of mankind into closer contact. Along with this is a great increase of knowledge which is bringing on the restless social conditions. Many nations are being brought together in common interest and activity, but not in brotherly love. Injustice, war, and evil continue to reign in the world, and the only solution to these problems is God's promised kingdom which will only come when the present political, financial, social, and religious structures of the world are done away with, and earth's dominion will be transferred to him. "I will overturn, overturn, overturn, it: and it shall be no more, until he come whose right it is; and I will give it him."—Ezek. 21:27 ■

A Reason to Hope

Key Verse: “*The earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.*”
—**Habakkuk 2:14**

Selected Scripture:
Habakkuk 2:6-14

(New American Standard Bible) In this picture, we see Habakkuk, representative of all who love righteousness, asking ‘how long’ it will be until the present evil world will give place to the world to come “wherein dwelleth righteousness.” (II Pet. 3:13) The Heavenly Father’s response to Habakkuk in our selected scripture are pronouncements of woe, indicating that the unjust will not remain unpunished for their iniquities; and the assurance is given that even though there might seem to be a delay, this present Gospel Age under the rulership of Satan, the “god of this world” (II Cor. 4:4), must run its course and move steadily on toward its prophetic fulfillment.

The promise of a new day proclaiming the restoration of all things lost due to the fall of father Adam had been a constant theme amongst God’s “holy prophets since the world began.” (Acts 3:21) Our Key Verse indicates that in that day ‘The earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover

THE NATION OF ISRAEL

had been under Chaldean oppression for many years, and the Prophet Habakkuk possessed a strong impression of Israel’s despairing need. We witness his sorrowful lament, “How long, O LORD, will I call for help, And You will not hear? I cry out to You, “Violence!” Yet You do not save?” (Hab. 1:2, *New American*

the sea.' In that day, pride and wickedness will not flourish. They shall not remain to germinate, take root and grow; but in their place, blessings will come upon all by the enthronement of reverential truths in their hearts and lives. The Prophet Isaiah assures us that, "When thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness." (Isa. 26:9) Truth, then abundant, is promised to change the stony, selfish hearts of men to hearts of "flesh." (Ezek. 36:26) Man will become compassionate and loving one toward another as a result of God's love toward them. The brightness of this new day will bring to light every hidden thing of secrecy and darkness; it shall clarify every truth; and expose every false belief and practice.—I Cor. 4:5; Luke 12:2

Before each sunrise is a night. The night of darkness pictures the night of sin—this present evil world—when darkness covers the earth and "gross darkness the people." (Isa. 60:2) The experiences of this life provide each person with an individual lesson on the exceeding sinfulness of sin. When the offer of life is extended on terms of justice, love, and fidelity to truth, mankind will knowledgeably and eagerly choose that great blessing in the healing day. "His anger endureth but a moment; in his favour is life: weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning."—Ps. 30:5

What a blessing this sun will bring. The Sun of righteousness shall arise and will bring the blessing to "all the nations of the earth." (Gen. 22:17,18) "Then will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the LORD, to serve him with one consent" (Zeph. 3:9), and "He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth: for the LORD hath spoken it. And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the LORD; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation."—Isa. 25:8,9 ■

Your Actions, Your Consequences

Key Verse: “Now, because ye have done all these works, saith the LORD, and I spake unto you, rising up early and speaking, but ye heard not; and I called you, but ye answered not; . . . I will cast you out of my sight, as I have cast out all your brethren, even the whole seed of Ephraim.”
—**Jeremiah 7:13,15**

Selected Scripture:
Jeremiah 7:11-15,
II Kings 23:36,37
the temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD.”—vss. 2-4, *New American Standard Bible*

IN THE YEAR 609 BC, THE

Prophet Jeremiah rebuked the people of Israel in Jerusalem for their misplaced sense of confidence that the merit of the Temple would somehow prevent God’s wrath against their unacceptable behavior. Jeremiah was commanded by God to speak these words, “Stand in the gate of the LORD’S house and proclaim there this word and say, Hear the word of the LORD, all you of Judah, who enter by these gates to worship the LORD! Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, Amend your ways and your deeds, and I will let you dwell in this place. Do not trust in deceptive words, saying, This is

the temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD, the temple of the LORD.”—vss. 2-4, *New American Standard Bible*

The audience that Jeremiah addressed was skeptical about the prophet’s warnings of the coming destruction of Jerusalem. They believed that the Temple could be

counted on as a source of forgiveness and restoration, but because of their trust in deceptive words and their idolatry, God would destroy the Temple and cast the nation of Israel from his sight and out of his favor.

In our Key Verse, we are given a beautiful picture of our Heavenly Father's love for his people. The people had rejected his leadings and followed the evil imaginations of their hearts (Gen. 6:5), but God still cared for them.

For the Christian, this passage carries a stern warning! Knowledge or profession of the Truth does not guarantee God's ever-present watchcare and guidance. If they come to prefer their own erroneous theories, the Apostle Paul explains that God will give them over to a "strong delusion," and let them believe the "lie" which they prefer, and let them suffer for not believing the Truth which they did not love.—II Thess. 2:11

If, in pride of heart or unholy ambition, any go about to establish their own ways, inevitably they may become self-deceived and may consequently be carried away by the error they embrace. God will give them over to the error they prefer, and this might even end in complete alienation from him. All that remains is the reward of the self-serving hypocrite—"Verily I say unto you, They have their reward."—Matt. 6:16

Those who have committed their way unto the Lord have a great advantage in every way. Their hearts should continually rejoice, and the more clearly they discern and the better they understand the Divine plan, the more they will be glad that the Father in his gracious love and providence does not give them over to their weakness nor permit them to lapse totally into sin. He holds them by his own right hand and chastens them that they may not be condemned with the world. Far more glorious and happy is the course of those who faithfully walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit. They will not need the chastenings of the Lord, but judge themselves and continually have the Father's smile. ■

Getting through the Pain

Key Verse: *“I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.”*
—Jeremiah 29:11

Selected Scripture:
Jeremiah 29:1-14

OUR SELECTED PASSAGE

of scripture records Jeremiah's prophetic letter of encouragement to the nation of Israel, which had been taken into captivity in Babylon when Jehoiachin was king. Even though this captivity was a result of their trust in deceptive words and their idolatry, God had not forsaken them. He still loved them and provided guidance and instructions for their comfort. His instructions were to settle there, build houses, plant gardens, raise families, and that their numbers were to increase and not to diminish. If they were to live in a manner pleasing to God, they would live comfortably in Babylon. They were directed to pray for the good of the country where they were captives. While the king of Babylon protected them, they could live quiet and peaceable lives under him in all godliness and honesty; patiently leaving it to God to work deliverance for them in due time. God had said that their period of captivity was to last for seventy years, and then he would bring them back to their beloved Jerusalem. “Thus saith the LORD, That after seventy years be accomplished at Babylon I will visit you, and perform my good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place.”—vs. 10

Our Key Verse very clearly shows God's great love for, and interest in, the welfare of his children. What a wonderful reassurance this must have been to the captive nation of Israel, to know that the great God of heaven did not desire hardship and despair to come upon his people, but rather he had their best interests at heart. They were to remain patient and composed, and trusting in God's wonderful providence.

Our human weakness sometimes causes us to fear that God's designs are all against us; but even that which to us might seem evil, is for good. The Apostle Paul so beautifully stated that God causes "all things [to] work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." (Rom. 8:28) The Prophet Isaiah declares God's great wisdom and foreknowledge, who is able to declare "the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure."—Isa. 46:10

As it was with the nation of Israel, many people today are often very uncertain regarding their circumstances. They may feel alone and abandoned, but with the Lord there is no variability, he is steadfast in his purpose because he knows the consequences of every action. With God there is total consistency, and we read that with "the Father of lights" there "is no variableness, neither shadow of turning."—James 1:17

As this letter from Jeremiah was a source of encouragement to Israel in their captivity, it is encouraging for us as well to know that this welfare and hope stated is guaranteed to us by his Word of promise. We are assured that he is with us and will continue with us if we heed his counsel. God knows the end from the beginning. He knows, therefore, how to direct the affairs of his people. How wonderful is the thought that the Almighty has promised to guide his people through the difficulties of the present life. As David has expressed it, "Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory."—Ps. 73:24 ■

Men Moved by the Holy Spirit of God

“No prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.”

—II Peter 1:21, New American Standard Bible

THE WONDERFUL WORD OF

God has been very carefully and beautifully recorded by men who had been especially chosen for the task many centuries ago. The earliest chapters of the Bible include accounts that were written

during the very dawning of human creation. Men of faith wrote as they were being moved by the Holy Spirit of God. They often wrote about the plans and purposes of God that were meant to be hidden from the worldly-wise. Types and symbols were thus used to conceal what would otherwise be the more apparent features, as well as future events that were prophesied concerning the long-term plans and purposes of our loving Heavenly Father.

The Bible records certain events that spanned long centuries of time, yet they were often concentrated into a few brief verses or chapters. If this practice had not been followed the Bible would be

so voluminous and unwieldy that because of its sheer size and weight, interested Christian men and women might be reluctant to delve into its accounts and prophecies in an effort to obtain meaning and understanding of its teachings.

THE SPIRIT OF GOD

The Bible, in itself, is a difficult book for the casual reader to understand, and it was meant to be written in this manner as revealed by the Apostle Paul in his epistle to the brethren at Rome. In his letter, he referred to the inspired words of the prophet which had been written many years before, saying, “(According as it is written [Isa. 6:9], God hath given them the spirit of slumber [remorse, *Marginal Translation*], eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear;) unto this day.” (Rom. 11:8) Among the household of faith, and particularly with those who will be faithful members of the body of Christ, however, God’s Word has not been kept secret. These consecrated Christians have partaken of the same Holy Spirit that was used to enlighten those who long ago wrote as they were also being moved by the marvelous Spirit of God.

Our minds may thus become in harmony and in tune with theirs, and our thoughts may also run along the same lines of Truth. Our eyes see, our ears hear spiritual things, and we are thereby given the blessing to catch a glimpse of the Divine plans and purposes of God. When the Lord’s people read and meditate upon the Scriptures, they become enlightened by the same Truth and the same thought process that has been set in motion and in which marvelous truths are revealed. Our mentalities respond

and are likewise quickened and illuminated by the same Holy Spirit which inspired those who recorded the original written Word of God.

With the Holy Spirit of God, the scriptural record that may be under consideration has taken on new beauty, detail, and dimension. The account becomes more clear, alive, and meaningful to us, and the gaps of understanding are often filled in. The procedure may be likened to a small and compact flower bud, although exquisite in its original beauty, may before our very eyes open and expand into a more magnificent and fragrant blossom with outstanding dimensions of perfection and beauty.

It is therefore possible that a single verse of scripture that is already eloquent in its own simplicity may, when it is meditated upon with the Holy Spirit of Truth, assume new and inspiring dimensions and proportions of marvelous understanding. This becomes a never-ending process as we devote our lives to the study and meditation of the wonderful Word of God. There appears to be no limit to the treasures and gems of the Scriptures with their many and various levels of understanding and depth of meaning. Long ago someone wrote the familiar words of a hymn that well express this inspiring thought, "Tis a mine aye deeper too, than can mortal ever go. Search we may for many years, still some new, rich gem appears."

BAPTISM OF THE SPIRIT

The Holy Spirit of God was manifest in a wonderful way when our dear Lord Jesus was baptized with the Holy Spirit at the Jordan River. John the Baptist was used of God to perform the physical

lowering of Jesus into the water, and then raising him up again. The Holy Spirit of the Heavenly Father then came upon him when he was lifted up out of the waters. In his Gospel record, Matthew records the inspiring scene. “Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness. Then he suffered him. And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.” (Matt. 3:13-17) This account is also recorded in Mark 1:9-11, Luke 3:21-23, and John also bore record in John 1:32-34. John the Baptist was a witness to this powerful event, but Jesus had received the Holy Spirit of baptism and Truth from his Heavenly Father.

CHURCH RECEIVES THE SPIRIT

We learn that Jesus’ followers would also be baptized with the Spirit of God. “John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.” (Acts 1:5, *New American Standard Bible*) He promised this blessing shortly before he ascended to the Father after his resurrection, and it was fulfilled at Pentecost. “Therefore having been exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He has poured forth this which you

both see and hear.” (chap. 2:33, *NASB*) The disciples merely saw and heard an outward indication of that which had occurred inwardly.

GENTILES RECEIVE THE SPIRIT

Cornelius became the first Gentile believer to receive the Holy Spirit. This took place later when Peter was preaching the Word of God and speaking about Jesus’ baptism. “While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who were listening to the message. All the circumcised believers who came with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also.”—chap. 10:44,45, *NASB*

The outpouring of the Holy Spirit that came upon the little group of Gentile believers gave assurance to all who were not Jewish that they, too, had received the special blessing which was promised to be given to all who follow our Lord Jesus. This is an important factor associated with the bringing forth of the New Creation in Christ Jesus. As further evidence to this fact, the Apostle Paul said, “By one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many.”—I Cor. 12:13,14

INCLINING UNTO WISDOM

Solomon, who was the author of the Bible’s marvelous collection of proverbs, has addressed the reality of this most enlightening and blessed position before God. He writes, “My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee; So that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and

apply thine heart to understanding; Yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice [givest thy voice, *Marginal Translation*] for understanding; If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; Then shalt thou understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of God.”—Prov. 2:1-5

In these wonderful verses of scripture are found the meaningful purpose for meditation, understanding, and spiritual direction that can be found nowhere else in recorded history. For this assurance, we praise our loving and eternal Heavenly Father who has promised to give his children the Holy Spirit of understanding and peace concerning his everlasting plans and purposes for his human creation.

SERVANTS OF GOD

The Apostle Paul has also provided us with valuable information concerning those of the fallen race of mankind whom the Lord has raised up for the very purpose of strengthening and uplifting the body of Christ. He explains that this is given for their meditation and understanding in the Word of the most high God.

Those who are responding to this very special High Calling in Christ Jesus during this present Gospel Age have been given much help in the way of wisdom and understanding. In this connection the apostle wrote, “He gave some apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge (Continued on page 35)

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(Continued from page 31) of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature [age, *Marginal Translation*] of the fulness of Christ.”—Eph. 4:11-13

SPIRITUAL GROWTH

It is evident that Paul was writing about God’s design for the encouragement and spiritual development of his people. There is also a further and most important purpose as Paul indicates. “That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ.” (vss. 14, 15) The importance of pure doctrines that have been given especially to the household of faith is clearly stressed.

The child of God is strengthened and enlightened by the Holy Spirit that comes from on high. They will thereby experience Christian growth and development by the wonderful workings of the Spirit of God. We read further, “From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.”—vs. 16

A CALLED-OUT CLASS

During this present Gospel Age our loving Heavenly Father has been calling out from the world of mankind a very special class of Christian people, and for a very specific purpose. Jesus explained to

his followers, "If you were of the world, the world would love its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, because of this the world hates you." (John 15:19, *NASB*) All of Jesus' true disciples are of this chosen class. These constitute the true church of Christ.

Mankind in general possess a different heart attitude than do those who are presently being drawn and separated from the world by God into his church class. In God's great wisdom and purpose, the High Calling in Christ Jesus is therefore limited to those who hunger and thirst for truth and righteousness. "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets [Isa. 54:13], And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me."—John 6:44,45

CALLED TO BE SAINTS

The Apostle Paul addressed the brethren at Corinth in a very special way. He wrote, "To the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who have been sanctified in Christ Jesus, saints [holy ones, *Marginal Translation*] by calling, with all who in every place call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, their Lord and ours."—I Cor. 1:2, *NASB*

The apostle here wrote that these brethren were called 'saints.' This is indeed a very special calling, and it continues to go out to the Lord's people during this entire Gospel Age. The word saint, as it is used in this scripture, means that which is sacred, pure, or blameless. The margin thus translates saints

as the ‘holy ones.’ The consecrated New Creature in Christ is walking in a new way of holiness. (Rom. 6:4) Also, the word holy has the significance of being whole, entire, and lacking nothing. We thus appreciate the deeper meaning and beauty of the Apostle Peter’s words. “As he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written [Lev. 11:44], Be ye holy; for I am holy.”—I Pet. 1:15,16

BEING MADE RIGHT

As members of the fallen human race, we are not holy and we need to be cleansed of sin. However, God has arranged that special provisions be made for the Lord’s people to be made right during this Gospel Age. It is accomplished through their faith in the merit of Jesus’ sacrifice that was given on their behalf. During Christ’s future kingdom of righteousness and peace, Jesus’ sacrificial blood will also be applied on behalf of the whole world of mankind.

Only those who have been called out from the present world of sin and death may be justified because of their faith. The apostle explains, “Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.”—Rom. 5:1,2

God has been very loving and sympathetic toward his people. He has provided us with a Redeemer, and has covered our many blemishes with the robe of Christ’s righteousness. We are continually surrounded by the spirit of the world and we must keep very close to the Lord to counteract its degrading spirit.

THE SPIRIT'S WITNESS

The Holy Spirit of God is a witness that we are his children, and in his letter to the brethren at Rome, Paul said, "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together."—Rom. 8:16,17

Nothing could be more important to the Lord's people during this Gospel Age calling in Christ than to be assured of their sonship. Furthermore, that God has truly begotten us through the Holy Spirit of his Word of Truth to be of his house of sons. It is not unusual for the Lord's people to desire his approval. If doubts do arise, it is likely due to some misunderstanding of the manner in which the Holy Spirit witnesses to us concerning our relationship as sons.

The witness of the Holy Spirit comes to us through God's Holy Word, and it is the Spirit-inspired Word of Truth. This reveals to Jesus' followers what their true course should be during their Christian walk. It is essential that we examine ourselves to see that we have taken the proper steps of consecration in order to have the Lord accept and bless us. If we have done this, by presenting ourselves to him, then we have this very important evidence and witness of the Spirit in our lives.

SEALED BY THE SPIRIT

The Apostle Paul, when writing to the brethren at Ephesus about the followers of our Lord being sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, said, "In whom

ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.”—Eph. 1:13,14

The sealing has thus guaranteed the fulfillment of what has been agreed upon until the full inheritance is realized. Those who have been called out from the world and have come under the baptism of the Holy Spirit constitute the purchased possession.

In addressing this inheritance of the faithful followers of Christ, the Apostle Peter further described this wonderful inheritance—“An inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you [for us, *Marginal Translation*], Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.” (I Pet. 1:4,5) This promise has been secured by the Holy Spirit and power of God.

GRIEVE NOT THE SPIRIT

Therefore, the child of God is admonished, “Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.” (Acts 20:28, *NASB*) The Lord’s people must be alert and continue to keep their fallen human nature under control.

Paul says, “Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers. And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.

Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you." (Eph. 4:29-32) We praise our loving Heavenly Father for his wonderful grace, and that he has forgiven our inherited sins, weaknesses, and imperfections.

THE SPIRIT NOT BY MEASURE

Jesus was filled with the Holy Spirit of God, and it completely controlled his every thought, word, and deed throughout the course of his earthly ministry. Everything that he said and every act of his consecrated, spirit-filled life expressed the mind and disposition of his Heavenly Father whose perfect will he had been sent to accomplish. As the Apostle John expressed, "He whom God has sent speaks the words of God; for He gives the Spirit without measure."—John 3:34, *NASB*

Those who are of the called-out class during this Gospel Age are also admonished to be filled with the wonderful Spirit of God. "Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is. And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ."—Eph. 5:17-20

ALL THINGS WORK TOGETHER

God's spirit-inspired Word is a mighty power in the lives of those who consider its wonderful

teachings and working. He alone through the instructions of his Word, and in whatever other ways his wisdom may direct, is able to cause all things to work together for the highest spiritual interests and growth in his people. As Paul wrote, “We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.”—Rom. 8:28

God’s ability and mercy is limitless, and it will carry us to greater heights of faithfulness and trust in his everlasting purpose. He has given us the Spirit of a sound mind. With this blessing, we witness the power of the Holy Spirit of God guiding our thoughts, which are in reality the very thoughts of his own mind. As we gradually learn to give up our own will and actions, we will be directed by the holy thoughts of God as he has miraculously caused them to be recorded in his precious Word of Truth for our everlasting blessing. Let us strive more diligently to be faithful to our High Calling in Christ Jesus, that we may share with him in the wonderful work of his kingdom which we believe is near at hand. ■

*Abide, sweet Spirit, heavenly Dove,
With light and comfort from above;
Be thou our Guardian, thou our Guide;
O’er every thought and step preside.*

*To us the light of truth display,
And make us know and choose thy way;
Plant holy fear in every heart,
That we from God may ne’er depart.*

—Hymns of Dawn

The Spiritual Seed

“There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.”

—*Galatians 3:28,29*

PAUL IS WRITING TO THE

true believers, to those who are Christ’s, who have put on Christ by immersion into his death through consecration, and the begetting of the Holy Spirit. They have put on the spirit or disposition of the Master and desire to be more and more conformed to his likeness. The selection of the church is along the lines of severe testing: for God has determined as to the quali-

cations of character, that all who will constitute members of the seed must “be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. . . . Them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified.” (Rom. 8:29,30) To reach this condition of glory requires that we be brought into full accord with the Father.

A SPECIAL CLASS

In the Abrahamic Covenant, as recorded in Genesis 12:3, God declared his purpose to have the seed of Abraham bring blessings to all of the earth. Part of this seed would be a special class that was foreknown from before the foundation of the world. "He hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love." (Eph. 1:4) This also points to the strict qualifications necessary to be part of this class, which we shall elaborate on later in our lesson. So we see that, according to the original Divine plan, a multitudinous 'seed' was contemplated from the beginning—the fullness, power, and authority of which should always reside in Christ Jesus, our Lord and Redeemer.

The next step in the Divine arrangement has been the selection from among men of this special class, called the "church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven" (Heb. 12:23), of which Jesus is the Lord and "head." (Eph. 1:22,23) They are also called his "brethren" (Heb. 2:12), "a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people." (I Pet. 2:9) Under him as the High Priest, or chief priest, they are sharers of glory, honor, and immortality. As joint-heirs in his kingdom they share in his inheritance in the Abrahamic Covenant as the seed to whom belongs the heavenly promise. They shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years. (Rev. 20:4) The millennial reign of Messiah will be a time of blessing and for uplifting mankind. The time when the church will be reigning with Christ in his kingdom glory will be the time of the world's regeneration, the thousand

years in which Satan will be bound. It will be a time when knowledge shall fill the whole earth, and in which the earth shall be brought to a paradise condition.

OUR PREPARATION

The present mission of the church is the perfecting of the saints for the future work of service, and to prepare to be priests and kings in the next age. Those who would be prepared to teach the world lessons of meekness, patience, brotherly kindness, long-suffering, and love must first develop these qualities of character in themselves. (Gal. 5:22,23) To develop these fruits of the Spirit requires much from the footstep followers of the Lord. The selection of the church is along the lines of severe testing, and these, who are "called according to his purpose" (Rom. 8:28), must be conformed to the image of his Son. Only then can they share in the glory which will follow. None will receive this high honor except the justified, and none will be justified except "by faith."—Rom. 5:1

The vast majority of the world has been blinded by the prince "of this world," and they cannot believe and serve the living God at this time. (II Cor. 4:4) This elect church, when completed, perfected, and glorified at the end of the narrow way (Matt. 7:14), will indeed be a little flock containing not many "wise men," "mighty," or "noble" after the flesh according to the estimate of the world. (I Cor. 1:26,28) For he "hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty." (vs. 27) The reason for

this is given, “that no flesh should glory in his presence.” (vs. 29) The true child of God desires then to do, as it says, “He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.” (vs. 31) “Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?”—James 2:5

The reward that is in store for these called, chosen, and faithful shall be as priests, kings, rulers, and instructors. We recall that in typical Israel the priestly office was kept distinctly separate from the kingly office. But in Christ, the two offices combine, as illustrated in the double office of Melchisedec. They are both a royal priesthood after the order of Melchisedec, and as kings they shall reign and judge the world in conjunction with their Lord. (Rev. 5:10) He is their head, and the church his body are the royal priests of the future. We must strive to be among the priests now, during the time of consecration and we must not fail. It is our desire to then, if faithful as priests, have the title of king added, and then rule with him and bless the nations. “The anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you.” (I John 2:27) The oil began to reach the body on the Day of Pentecost, and flowed on down through the Gospel Age. When the elect number has been selected, and glorified with their head, Christ Jesus, this Gospel Age will end. Then will the Messianic Age begin, and the church will reign as associates and joint-heirs with Christ in his millennial kingdom.

NEITHER JEW NOR GREEK

Going back to the words from our text, ‘there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor

free, there is neither male nor female.’ What does the apostle mean? He states in Romans 10:12, “There is no difference between the Jew and the Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him.” We realize that there was misunderstanding amongst many who were Jews and who had now accepted Christ, and what they expected of others, especially Gentiles. As Romans 9:4 points out, the Jews were a people who had received the oracles of God, and had been given the Law Covenant. One of the main points of contention was circumcision, but Paul pointed out to them that literal circumcision was not a requirement of one who was pleasing to God. “In Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision.” (Gal. 5:6) It was more of a benefit to have a circumcision of the heart, to have the Law written “in fleshy tables of the heart.” (II Cor. 3:3) This is an important requirement to make all one as the body of Christ. It was a hard lesson for them to overcome and it really involved more.

The teaching is that God accepts all those who come to him through Christ without distinctions as to race, wealth, servitude, or honor amongst men, or distinctions of gender. All of these things have been used by the world to gain advantage over others but, in Christ, we are all one from God’s standpoint. He treats all of us as one, and in turn he has blessings for each in the Divine arrangement. Consider the remainder of the apostle’s statement, ‘there is neither bond nor free’ in Christ Jesus. The apostle says, “Were you a slave when you were called? Don’t let it trouble you.” (I Cor. 7:21, *New International Version*) That is to say, do not consider that freedom

is necessary to your spiritual welfare. The Lord is able to bless you and to bring you off as an overcomer as though you were the master and wealthy. These qualities are not to be considered as making them inferior in God's sight. "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."—Rom. 10:13

FREE TO ALL

It points out another important aspect of our lesson, that the Gospel is free. (Rom. 5:15; Col. 1:23) We are told that it will continue to be so in the future. "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." (Rev. 22:17) We realize that under the Law there were distinctions made between bond and free, male and female. No matter how much preference was shown to the Jew under the Law there is no difference under the Gospel, for all are appointed to preach. "The spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound." (Isa. 61:1) This scripture is not pointing out only public preaching, but is looking at every effort that is made by the Christ in sending out a message of hope and encouragement. It involves a commission to each member to use their talents in service to the Lord, the Truth, and the brethren. "Let every man abide in the same calling [vocation] wherein he was called." (I Cor. 7:20) All service, in whatever capacity, is pleasing to the Father, and should be rendered unto the Lord with the single desire and effort to please him.

WITH ONE ACCORD

The importance of this is further illustrated by Paul when he tells us, “These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brethren.” (Acts 1:14) The apostle shows his high regard for women and this is seen in his mention of several faithful colaborers and helpers among them. They were ready to search the Scriptures, proving their readiness to begin their mission to show their living and growing faith. They met to join in public assembly to offer prayer for the benefit of all the body as a whole.

Prayer is absolutely necessary and indispensable to the Christian life as it compels us to further service. By our words and by our actions we can convey the good news of the kingdom, and its important features of restitution and resurrection. Those in the household of faith share the joy of running for the prize of the High Calling in Christ Jesus. These are the meek, those willing and able to hear, for they can see present Truth through the Holy Spirit of understanding. They are lovers of righteousness, not satisfied with the things of this world, and are teachable—workmen “that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.” (II Tim. 2:15) “The meek will he guide in judgment: and the meek will he teach his way.” (Ps. 25:9) The message from the Lord at the present time is an invitation to rest. “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”—Matt. 11:28

A YOKE

There are two classes of laborers, the world laboring for things of the present life, and the followers

of the Lord who “labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life.” (John 6:27) There are also those who feel the yoke of the Law Covenant as believing Jews, or those who are heavy laden from the yoke of Satan as believing Gentiles. The Jews were under the yoke of the nation of Rome during Paul’s time, but the yoke referred to here is a religious yoke, the yoke of the Law. “By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.”—Rom. 3:20

Through God’s grace he will give a special blessing of justification by faith to those whom he calls. This is to prepare them to take the yoke and become a colaborer with the Lord in the Father’s service. In his service, there is no rest for the weary at heart except in their union with Christ. We have been promised that the Lord is nigh unto them that are of a contrite heart—a sincere sorrow for sin. The people of God have a peace and rest of mind through a knowledge of his plan and character. It involves the full assurance that Jesus has ‘paid it all’ for both the Jew and the Gentile. The present rest of faith will one day be superseded by the actual rest of the kingdom. Then the body members will have been thoroughly prepared to enter into the heavenly rest as joint-heirs with Christ. Jesus invited as many as would, first to the Jews, then to the Gentiles, those who were in the proper attitude of heart to consecrate their time, influence, means, and opportunities in the Lord’s service. It is an invitation, not a command, but it does involve obedience to the Divine will. He invites us to come, make a full consecration of ourselves to him, and take Christ’s yoke

instead of the yoke of the Law Covenant or the yoke of Satan with which all previously had been bound. "Know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."—John 8:32

We are made free from the errors of the past, free to love God, to believe his Word, to trust in and understand how Jesus tasted death for every man. He grants us freedom from the bondage of fear concerning the future. By daily submitting ourselves to Christ, we are more and more released from the bondage of sin. Our Lord invites us to be his partner, a true yokefellow together with him to learn the lessons that will help us to grow and develop in a way pleasing to the Father. We must be teachable as he was, for even in his perfection there were things to be learned. Because our Lord was meek and lowly in heart, he could ignore his own will, cease to do it and take upon him the yoke of his Father's will.

ONE BODY

Our Lord Jesus was, and still is, the great teacher of men by the appointment of the Heavenly Father, the great master teacher above all. We have bound ourselves unto the Lord by a covenant of sacrifice, even a sacrifice unto death. It is then our heart's desire to learn the good lessons that we may be prepared for future glory. Each of us should rejoice in the wonderful privilege of proclaiming the good tidings of what God has in store for those who truly love him and are called according to his purpose. We are all one in Christ Jesus. "He is our peace, who hath made both one [Jew and Gentile], and hath broken down the middle wall of partition

[enclosure]” which separated Jew and Gentile.—
Eph. 2:14

For eighteen centuries, God’s exclusive favor was to the Jew only. There were two classes of people, namely Israelites who were God’s covenanted people, and all others who were not in covenant relationship with him. “Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace.” (Eph. 2:15) The time had come when the message of Divine favor would go to the Gentiles, not as an individual believer but as the body of Christ. (Eph. 1:22) We know these as spiritual Israel, a new nation, and a people who were before not a people, but now having obtained peace. “[Jesus] came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh.”—Eph. 2:17

FELLOW CITIZENS

Jesus made it possible for us to no longer be strangers or foreigners but fellow citizens, having begotten us with the Holy Spirit. Now, being in Christ, we can eventually have our citizenship in heaven as the bride of Christ, as a complete body. “We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain.” (II Cor. 6:1) Our vital union with our Lord as members of his body is explained here by Paul. We are invited to become coworkers with God in carrying out his plan. In so doing, we are counted with Christ Jesus as filling up the measure of the sufferings necessary to its accomplishment. It is the great transforming work, “Be not conformed to this world:

but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.” (Rom. 12:2) This is all possible by the grace of God through consecration and justification. “Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you.”—Col. 1:24

This can be accomplished through self-sacrifice, self-denial, and cross-bearing. We know that if “we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.” (Rom. 8:17) The great High Priest then accepts us as members of his body. He counts our sufferings, which includes the sacrifice of earthly interests and rights for righteousness sake, as part of his own sufferings. The true believer, being accepted of the Father, then has the opportunity to finish his share in the sacrifice of Christ through faithfulness to his covenant. We also are to rejoice that we are counted worthy to suffer some of the reproaches of Christ. If you have been baptized into Christ, put on Christ, you have become members of his body.

JOINT-HEIRS

We are then thought of as joint-heirs which brings us to the 29th verse of our lesson, ‘and heirs according to the promise.’ We are inheritors with Christ of this high honor which includes glory and immortality. We are not like our Lord, who was ‘holy, harmless, undefiled,’ and as a Jew a natural heir of the covenant blessings, but only by our union with him do we have a standing before our Father. “Know ye not that . . . ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price.”—I Cor. 6:19,20

This was done in order to fulfill the promise made to Abraham, and according to the highest feature of that promise—the spiritual feature. As a whole, the glorious Christ, head and body, will be the promised seed of Abraham. “The trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, . . . might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.” (I Peter 1:7) The literal seed of Abraham, Isaac, did not fulfill the promise but he did picture the Christ who is God’s selection as the spiritual seed. Jesus is the Head, and the church are his members. Together, Jesus and his bride constitute the spiritual seed of Abraham. We are reminded how the Abrahamic Covenant applies to the church “as the stars of the heaven,” and to the earthly seed as “the sand which is upon the sea shore.” (Gen. 22:17) Two seeds are referred to, one developed under faith, the other under the Law and works. Both require obedience and a sincere love for the Father and his Son.

It will be necessary for the people of all nations to become as Israelites, children of Abraham and thus children of God. The faith class must first be completed and perfected in the first resurrection. They will be glorified in kingdom power before the Ancient Worthies can receive their blessing on the earthly plane, and before natural Israel can be gathered to them as the nucleus of the kingdom of God on earth. Ultimately all nations, and peoples, shall share in Israel’s New Covenant blessings. “To the Jew first, and also to the Gentile.” (Rom. 2:10) The promise to bless all the families of the earth made in Genesis 22:17,18 will be fulfilled not only to Christ and the church but to Abraham personally,

and his natural seed who come in harmony with the Divine plan. The spiritual seed is developed during the Gospel Age according to grace and favor.

We also know that this spiritual seed was hidden until God's due time, "The secret of the LORD is with them that fear [reverence] him; and he will shew them his covenant." (Ps. 25:14) Remember the words, "It is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven." (Matt. 13:11) To all outsiders, these things were spoken in parables and dark sayings, that "hearing they hear not, neither do they understand." (vs. 13) Truly blessed are your eyes if they can see this mystery, and blessed is your heart if you appreciate this privilege that only the consecrated can enjoy.

GEMS OF GOD

During this present time, we share in the sufferings of Christ by 'drinking' of his cup and being immersed into his sacrificial death. These more than overcomers—the 'church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven'—are to be God's jewels on the spirit plane, as the faithful Ancient Worthies of the past are to be the jewels on the earthly plane, marked for distinguished honor in connection with Messiah's kingdom. The lesson of a future reward is brought forward by the words: "They that feared the LORD spake often one to another: and the LORD hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon his name. And they shall be mine, saith the LORD of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels."—Mal. 3:16,17

The first of these jewels was our Lord Jesus, and the other jewels of different sizes are being cut and polished during this Gospel Age. These gems must first be called by God, but he appointed our Lord to be the master workman in their preparation. Being patterned after the Master, and walking in his footsteps, these jewels will be mounted. “Gather my saints together unto me” (Ps. 50:5)—my covenant-keeping sacrificers who endured—and as diamonds, when tried, were found to be firm in character. Through patient endurance they have developed the fruits and graces of the Holy Spirit—the qualities of character necessary to be set in gold as the true Israel, the saints of God.

Only those who suffer with the Lord sacrificially as members of his body will be granted a share with him in glory as his joint-heirs, as members of the great prophet, priest, king, mediator, and judge of the world. The members of his body will soon be raised up, and become sharers in his resurrection following their Advocate who, when he ascended on high, appeared for the church, the household of faith, as their High Priest. He brings them to himself to become partakers in his glories. Having been faithful unto death they will be heirs to the heavenly inheritance, and will help to fulfill the petition of our Lord’s prayer—“Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. . . . Amen.”—Matt. 6:10-13 ■

“Here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come.”—Hebrews 13:14

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

QUESTION: Is it true that paradise is part of *hades*, or *sheol*, where the righteous waited till Jesus came and preached to them while his body lay in the tomb?

ANSWER: No, this is not true! The word ‘paradise’ means a garden, and its first application in the Bible is to the original Garden of Eden, the garden which God prepared for our first parents “eastward in Eden.” (Gen. 2:8) Man was driven out of that paradise, but God’s plan is to restore him to his lost home; and the outworking of his plan will lead to a worldwide paradise. This is the paradise in which the thief, crucified with Jesus, will receive the Lord’s blessings of joy and life. This is the paradise into which, in vision—not in reality—Paul was privileged to look.—II Cor. 12:4

The belief that Jesus’ ‘spirit’ or ‘soul’ took a journey to paradise, and preached to the righteous while his body lay in the tomb is unscriptural. It is based on a fantastic combination of texts which in reality bear no relationship whatever to each other. Those who have deduced this idea from the Bible first take Psalm 16:10 which refers to Jesus’ “soul” being in hell, or *sheol*, as the word is in the Hebrew text. To this, they add Jesus’ statement to the thief on the cross about being with him in paradise. Then, in I Peter 3:19, they read concerning Jesus, “Also he went and preached to the spirits in prison.”

From these texts, it is erroneously reasoned that paradise and *sheol*—*hades* in the Greek—must either be the same place, or at least adjacent to each other; and that either one, or both, of these places must be the ‘prison’ in which the ‘spirits’ are incarcerated

to whom Jesus preached. This interpretation is just another example of the misleading philosophies which result from not accepting the basic truth of the Bible that the dead are dead, that they cannot go anywhere, or do anything, while they are dead.

Jesus “poured out his soul unto death.” (Isa. 53:12) Jesus’ soul, his being, was in death. That is why he is spoken of in Psalm 16:10 as being in “hell.” The Bible hell is the condition of death, Jesus went nowhere when he died, except into death, and there he could not preach.

How then did he preach to the ‘spirits in prison’? Peter explains that Jesus was put to death in the flesh, and quickened, made alive, by the Spirit, and then adds, “By which also he went and preached to the spirits in prison.” The *Wilson’s Emphatic Diaglott* translation reads, ‘By which also he preached to the spirits in prison.’—I Pet. 3:18,19

There is nothing in this text to indicate that Jesus went on a journey during the time he was dead. Peter’s use of the expression, ‘by which he preached,’ refers to Jesus’ resurrection as well as his death. If we must have Jesus going to preach to the ‘spirits in prison’ we may as well emphasize his resurrection as well as his death, and conclude that it was after he was raised from the dead that he went on this mission.

The point of Peter’s lesson is that it was by Jesus’ faithfulness unto death, and by the fact that God raised him from the dead, that the sermon was preached to the ‘spirits in prison.’ It was an object lesson based on Jesus’ faithfulness, and his Heavenly Father’s favor toward him as manifested in the resurrection.

Who then are these spirits in prison? Are they the departed spirits of the righteous? No, Peter identifies them as spirits in prison; "Which sometime were disobedient, when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah." (I Pet. 3:20) In II Peter 2:4, he refers to them as the "angels that sinned," and who were delivered "into chains of darkness." These fallen angels were not at once destroyed, but have been held in restraint ever since the Flood. Thus they are properly said to be in prison. It is to these that Jesus, by his faithfulness, presented such a powerful object lesson. They sinned, and were being punished. He was faithful, and was raised from the dead to "glory and honour and immortality."—Rom. 2:7

Nor did Jesus go to paradise the day he died. It was simply that on that dark day he promised the thief that he would bless him in paradise. With the punctuation properly placed, what Jesus said was, "Verily I say unto you today, Shalt thou be with me in paradise."—Luke 23:43 ■

"The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."—James 5:16

Communion with the Lord in prayer brings increased confidence in the Lord's supervision of our affairs; increased faith in all the precious promises of His Word; increased realization of His leadings; increased love for all the brethren of Christ, and increased solicitude for their welfare and spiritual progress. Prayer is thus closely and actively identified with progress in spiritual things, in the fruits of the Spirit, toward God, the brethren, and all men.
—Daily Heavenly Manna

ENCOURAGING LETTERS

REFRESHING THE SOUL

Dawn Bible: My contact with the Dawn dates as far back as the year 2000, and I have never been disappointed. The materials provided are very deep and refreshing to the soul.

Every time I read the books I never get tired, since I am always learning new things and receiving new revelations. God bless you all for your wonderful works.—
GHANA

RADIO PROGRAM

Dear Dawn: I heard your radio program. It went so fast, I wanted to listen all day.

Those few minutes I heard, changed the way I was thinking about life and death. Please send me the booklet.

I remember my parents listening to it when I was young and did not care, and now it is a new

revelation to me. Waiting for the booklet. Hurry.—
MI

DESIRES BOOKLETS

Hello Dawn: Who are you? I never heard anything like this in my life. Could I get your booklets and do you have a catalogue?

I'm 70 and read the Bible, but could not understand. I got the booklet, *Hope for a Fear-filled World*. Thanks to whoever sent it.

I want to know more. Are there any people like you in my area?—
UNKNOWN

GREAT WEBSITE

Brothers: Thanks for the great website. Being in isolated territory it gives me great encouragement reading the articles on your site.

I received my volumes from the brothers from the Berean Bible Institute in Victoria, another

state in Australia, and I'm reading the works of Pastor Russell.

I was a JW, but not for three years now. The guys at christianquestions.net are so helpful also.—AUSTRALIA

BOOKLET FOUND

Dear Dawn: I have received a couple of your booklets and have enjoyed them. So far I have read: *Hope for a Fear-Filled World*, *Christ's Thousand-Year Kingdom*, and *Jesus, the World's Savior*.

I'm also enclosing a list of all the tracts that I would love to read, and would like to get *Peace Through Christ's Kingdom*. Also enclose a free booklet for my mom to read.

My brother had the Dawn publication *Hope for a Fear-Filled World* among his belongings when I had to go through his belongings when he passed away last year at

the age of 26.

I found it to be so interesting that I want to know more about our Savior.

Thanks Dawn for changing my life. Hope to hear from you soon. Thank you.—CT

RADIO AFRICA

Dawn: Each time I listen to the programme, *Frank and Ernest*, I am truly blessed, and Radio Africa Two has become my favourite station.

I have also invited a number of my friends to listen because of the valued message of this programme.

May God bless you to continue spreading the word to the ends of the world. Yours faithfully.—ZIMBABWE

HEART IS OPENED

Brethren: I have been a "main stream" Christian for more than 30 years and finally came across the Dawn Bible Students website.

I must admit that although God did a powerful work in my life in 1974, delivered me from drug addiction in a single night, changed and healed my family relationships, and gave me a love for his Son and his Word, I have been in great darkness from the teachings and baggage that the Protestants brought with them from the Catholic Church.

I have now been en-

lightened so much from the Dawn Bible site that I have little desire to stay in the church.

I feel I have more real hope (the real blessed hope) than I ever had in my walk with God. Since opening my heart to the teachings of the Bible Students, I feel that in my 30 years of Bible study I never really understood the truth at all. Thanks again for your help.—MI

WEEKLY PRAYER MEETING TEXTS

JULY 5—"The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds; casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth,...and bringeth into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ."—II Corinthians 10:4,5 (Z. '99-11 Hymn 44)

JULY 12—"If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed."—John 8:36 (Z. '99-57 Hymn 297)

JULY 19—"The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?"—John 18:11 (Z. '99-118; '01-91 Hymn 299)

JULY 26—"To him that overcometh will I give...a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it."—Revelation 2:17 (Z. '99-140 Hymn 32)

SPEAKERS' APPOINTMENTS

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

K. Fernets

Prince Albert-Saskatoon

July 1,2

The speakers listed below, in cooperation with the Dawn, are invited by individual classes, or their services have been arranged by their home classes:

R. Goodman

Atlanta, GA

July 8

G. Tabac

Prince Albert, SK

July 1,2

E. Kalinski

Prince Albert, SK

July 1,2

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.

Sister Rosecollect Oyibo Uche, Agwa, Nigeria—
April 12. Age, 40

Sister Jane Wesley, Bangalore, India—April 26.
Age, 66

Sister Louise Ward, Manahawkin, NJ—May 4.
Age, 89

Brother Harold Rogers, Layton, UT—May 14. Age,
82

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www.live365.com/stations/dawn_radio

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.

PRINCE ALBERT-SASKATOON CONVENTION, June 30-July 2—Siwak Farm. Contact A. Siwak. Phone: (306) 764-7692

BIBLE STUDENTS GENERAL CONVENTION, July 14-19—University of Pittsburgh, Johnstown, PA. Contact M. Nekora, 1425 Lachman Lane, Pacific Palisades, CA 90272. Phone: (310) 454-5248

CANADIAN CONVENTION, August 10-12—Best Western Parkland Inn, Yorkton, SK. Phone: (800) 667-1585 (Ask for group #46 when booking rooms.) Contact B. Sweeney, 110 Circlebrook Drive, Yorkton, SK S3N 2S4. Phone: (306) 782-0436

NIGERIAN GENERAL CONVENTION, August 15-19—Emmanuel College Owerri, Imo State, Nigeria. Contact C. Egbu, #2 Darlington Street Mokola Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria. Phone: 2348033339949 or 2348082146621

MILWAUKEE CONVENTION, August 18,19—Lake Lodge, 1235 East Howard Avenue, Milwaukee, WI 53207. Contact D. Moore, 2176 South 71st Street, West Allis, WI 53219. Phone: (414) 541-8937

PORTLAND AREA CONVENTION, August 24-26—Collins Retreat Center, 32867 SE Highway 211, Eagle Creek, OR. For information, contact T. Krupa. Phone: (503) 436-2296. For reservations, contact C. Grigalunus. Phone: (503) 667-2797

JACKSON LABOR DAY CONVENTION, September 1,2—Fa-Ho-Lo Camp and Conference Center, 3000

Mt. Hope Road, Unit 1, Grass Lake, MI 49240. Contact R. Lumley. Phone: (517) 782-7252

NEW YORK LABOR DAY CONVENTION, September 1,2—Doubletree Hotel Mahwah, 180 Route 17 South, Mahwah, NJ 07430. Phone: (201) 529-5880. Contact D. Szybinski, 250 West 102 Street, 1A, New York, NY 10025. Phone: (212) 998-2095

SEATTLE LABOR DAY CONVENTION, September 1-3—Seabeck Christian Conference Center, Seabeck, WA. Contact L. Flinn, PO Box 67, Pacific, WA 98047-0067. Phone: (253) 939-9838

CLAY CITY CONVENTION, September 28-30—McCormicks Creek State Park, Clay City, IN 46240. Contact C. Clark, 7861 Clearwater Highway, Indianapolis, IN 46240

PITTSBURGH AREA CONVENTION, October 6,7—Sewicky Grange Hall, Route 136, West Newton, PA. Contact G. Balko, Jr., 1300 High Street, West Newton, PA 15089. Phone: (724) 872-6418

GRAND RAPIDS CONVENTION, October 13,14—Kenowa Hills Middle School, 3950 Hendershot Avenue, Grand Rapids, MI 49544. Contact J. Houlmont, 6825 Clubhouse Drive West, Canadian Lakes, MI 49346. Phone: (231) 972-4259

ORLANDO CONVENTION, October 27,28—Garden Club of Sanford, 200 Fairmont Drive (Corner of Hwy. 17-92), Sanford, FL. Contact J. Kuenzli, 330 Jasmine Road, Casselberry, FL 32707. Phone: (407) 831-2098



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To us the Scriptures clearly teach:

THAT THE CHURCH IS “THE TEMPLE” OF THE LIVING GOD —peculiarly “his workmanship;” that its construction has been in progress throughout the Gospel Age—ever since Christ became the world’s Redeemer and the chief “corner stone” of this temple, through which, when finished, God’s blessings shall come “to all people,” and they find access to him.—I Cor. 3:16,17; Eph. 2:20-22; Gen. 28:14; Gal. 3:29

THAT MEANTIME THE CHISELING, SHAPING, AND POLISHING of the consecrated believers in Christ’s atonement for sin progresses, and when the last of these “living stones,” “elect and precious,” shall have been made ready, the great Master Workman will bring all together in the first resurrection; and the temple shall be filled with his glory, and be the meeting place between God and men throughout the Millennium.—Rev. 15:5-8

THAT THE BASIS OF HOPE FOR THE CHURCH AND THE WORLD lies in the fact that Jesus Christ, by the grace of God “tasted death for every man,” “a ransom for all,” and will be “the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world,” “in due time.”—Heb. 2:9; John 1:9; I Tim. 2:5,6

THAT THE HOPE OF THE CHURCH is that she may be like her Lord, “see him as he is,” be a “partaker of the divine nature,” and share his glory as his joint-heir.—I John 3:2; John 17:24; Rom. 8:17; II Pet. 1:4

THAT THE PRESENT MISSION OF THE CHURCH is the perfecting of the saints for the future work of service; to develop in herself every grace; to be God’s witness to the world; and to prepare to be the kings and priests in the next age.—Eph. 4:12; Matt. 24:14; Rev. 1:6, 20:6

THAT THE HOPE FOR THE WORLD lies in the blessings of knowledge and opportunity to be brought to all by Christ’s millennial kingdom—the restitution of all that was lost in Adam, to all the willing and obedient, at the hands of their Redeemer and his glorified church—when all the willfully wicked will be destroyed.—Acts 3:19-23; Isa. 35