

The background of the entire page is a photograph of a mountain valley at dawn. The sky is filled with soft, grey clouds, and a bright sun is rising on the right side, casting a warm glow. The mountains are covered in green vegetation, and the valley floor is shrouded in a light mist.

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August 2005

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“There Shall Be No More Death”

Is This an Impossible Dream?

“I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.”
—Revelation 21:3,4

AFTER JESUS’ DEATH AND

resurrection, shortly after the Day of Pentecost, we read of the healing of a man lame from birth, by Peter and John, as recorded in Acts 3:1-8. After this miracle, the account says concerning the people who were witnessing this that “they were filled with wonder and amazement at that which had happened unto him. And as the lame man which was healed held Peter and John, all the people ran together unto them in the porch that is called Solomon’s, greatly wondering.” (Acts 3:10-11) Although the people wondered

at the miracle, Peter was glad to explain how it had come about. In verses 13-18, he states that it was none other than the power of God that had accomplished this, the same power that had raised Jesus from the dead, even though they [Israel] as a nation had denied the “Holy One” (verse 14), and delivered him to be crucified. Peter explained that none of this was by chance, that it was not a miscarriage of God’s plan. In verses 15 and 18, he says concerning Jesus, “whom God hath raised from the dead; whereof we are witnesses. . . . those things, which God before had shewed by the mouth of all his prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled.” This was all part of God’s master plan.

Peter continues in this scriptural account and speaks of the time when Jesus would return. “He shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.” (Acts 3:20-21) What Peter says here concerned a future time of restitution, or restoration, and had just been illustrated by the miracle of healing the lame man. Indeed, one of the Old Testament promises of these ‘times of restitution,’ to be brought about by Christ’s return and the subsequent establishment of his kingdom, is Isaiah 35:5,6, which states, “Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart.” Continuing, Peter says, “Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days. Ye are the children of the prophets, and

of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed.” (Acts 3:24,25) Here we see repeated once again the same Biblical theme of a ‘seed’ through whom all would be blessed. The essence of Peter’s message in Acts 3 is this: the Gospel that was preached to Abraham is centered in Jesus—his death, resurrection, and the promise of a future restitution of all things, illustrated by this miracle of healing. This is the Gospel that was preached to Abraham!

THE PROMISED SEED

Jesus was the promised seed spoken of to Abraham, and to which Peter referred. The Apostle Paul in Galatians 3:16 states, “Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ.” Later, in this same chapter, verse 29, Paul adds, “And if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.” In other words, if you belong to Christ—the seed—if you are true Christians, then you are also counted as additional members of ‘Abraham’s seed’ and inheritors of the same promise, ‘In thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed.’

Why did Paul in Galatians 3:16 say there was but one seed, Christ, but in verse 29 state that all true Christians are part of Abraham’s seed? Paul in another place uses the illustration of a human body to help answer this question. “As the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so

also is Christ.” (I Cor. 12:12) Here Christ is likened to the human body, with Jesus as its head, and the church, all true Christians, as the other body members. The one body—head and other members—constitutes the ‘Christ.’ This Christ class, head and body together, is the one seed which Paul speaks of and which the Bible, in both the Old and New Testaments, states will eventually bless all people. These facts help to explain why the blessings of restitution could not start immediately after Jesus’ death and resurrection, and why his kingdom could not then be established. The intervening work of this present Gospel Age has been to select and develop the body—the seed class, the members of the Christ—as they are to be the ones to share in the future work of blessing mankind with their head, Jesus. Those prospective members of this special class must be proven; they must take up their cross; they must be baptized into Jesus’ death. “Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?” (Rom. 6:3) These must be beheaded, figuratively speaking, having only Jesus as their head, and must follow the Lamb, whithersoever he goeth. Truly, as Paul said, “If we suffer, we shall also reign with him.”—II Tim. 2:12

THE REWARD OF THE CHURCH—IMMORTALITY

Jesus, the night before his crucifixion, made a wonderful promise to his disciples, those who would be true Christians. “In my Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive

you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.” (John 14:2,3) There are many spheres of life which exist in God’s universe—the lower animals, humans, angels, principalities, powers, many different planes of life—many ‘mansions.’ However, Jesus here is saying that none of these mansions will be the dwelling place of his church, his bride. Notice, he says, ‘I go to prepare a place for you,’ a new place that never existed before. Apostle John states further, “It doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.” (I John 3:2) Jesus, when he was resurrected, was highly exalted. “God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name.” (Phil. 2:9) The church—his body members—will also receive a similar glorious resurrection, and be with him. They are spoken of by the Apostle Paul as those who “seek for glory and honour and immortality.”—Rom. 2:7

Recalling the verse quoted in Part One of this lesson, that Jesus brought “life and immortality to light through the gospel” (II Tim. 1:10), we now can see that the ‘life’ herein mentioned is the future hope of the world here on earth in the times of restitution, whereas ‘immortality’ is the reward of faithfulness for those who truly follow Jesus even unto death, his faithful body members. “Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.” “To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.” (Rev. 2:10, 3:21) The difference between life and immortality in the above verse is that life is dependent on

outside sustenance for its continuance, but immortality has no such requirement. Immortality was first possessed only by God. He exalted his son Jesus to this high position upon his faithfulness as man's Redeemer. The faithful church, Jesus' body members, the remainder of the seed class, will also be exalted to this same Divine, immortal nature possessed by God and Jesus. "Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature."—II Pet. 1:4

The purpose of the present Gospel Age has been to search out those truly willing to follow in Jesus' footsteps, to lay down their lives in sacrifice as he did. Even among professed Christians, relatively few have been willing to live a life of complete consecration to God. "Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto [this immortal] life, and few there be that find it." (Matt. 7:14) "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." (Luke 12:32) Nearly twenty centuries have passed and the selection of this faithful class is not yet complete, but ere long it shall be finished. Then the blessings of life and restitution will flow to mankind, blessings to 'all the families of the earth,' through the promised kingdom of the Christ, the promised seed.

DEATH TO BE SWALLOWED UP IN VICTORY

The Apostle Paul speaks concerning the kingdom that will be established by Christ, the seed, to bless all mankind. He says, "He [Christ] must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death."

(I Cor. 15:25,26) Later, in this chapter, a sequential order is given to the entire matter. “As we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.” (vs. 49) That is, there is to be a change of nature for the church, from the earthly to the heavenly. In verse 54, Paul continues, “When this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.” This verse reminds us that humans are not immortal, because one cannot have immortality ‘put on’ if they already possess it. The faithful church will have immortality put on by the power of God! The phrase in this verse ‘Death is swallowed up in victory’ is speaking of the result of the sequence of events talked about earlier in the verse, ‘when this corruptible . . . , then shall be brought to pass . . .’ In other words, once the faithful church is complete and receives its reward, the sum total of all the other promises of the Bible concerning the coming earthly kingdom, restitution, and the time of the blessing of all the families of the earth, will be found to be fulfilled in the statement, ‘Death is swallowed up in victory.’

This statement is a quotation from Isaiah 25. In that prophecy, Christ’s kingdom is pictured as a mountain, the mountain of the LORD. The Israelites could relate to this, because God ruled over them as their Almighty King. Their seat of religious authority was in the city of Jerusalem, specifically the Temple, which was located on Mount Zion, picturing God’s Divine authority over them. “In this mountain shall the LORD of hosts make

unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined. . . . He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from off all faces; . . . 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. 25:6,8,9

Paul says that as soon as the work of gathering the true church is complete, when they have put on immortality, it will then be time for this prophecy, and so many others like it, to be fulfilled here upon the earth.—I Cor. 15:54

CHRIST'S EARTHLY KINGDOM

Christ's kingdom will be a time of peace, not war. Notice the words of the prophets concerning this time. “I will break the bow and the sword and the battle out of the earth, and will make them to lie down safely.” (Hos. 2:18) “I will cut off the chariot . . . and the battle bow shall be cut off: and he shall speak peace unto the heathen: and his dominion shall be from sea even to sea, and from the river even to the ends of the earth.” (Zech. 9:10) “The desire of all nations shall come. . . . And in this place will I give peace, saith the LORD of hosts.” (Hag. 2:7,9) “My people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places.” (Isa. 32:18) Will there always be war and unrest? No, according to the Bible. It was the psalmist who wrote, “He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth; he breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder; he burneth the chariot

in the fire. Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth.” (Ps. 46:9,10) These are staggering promises!

Many things will change in Christ’s kingdom on earth. Perhaps even a new dictionary will be needed. Today we often ask others, “How are you?” The response is many times, “Oh, so-so. I’ve got this or that ache or pain.” These are common topics of conversation in today’s world. Notice, though, what the prophet says concerning the coming kingdom, “The inhabitant shall not say, I am sick” (Isa. 33:24) Man will no longer need to ask ‘how are you,’ because all will be well—none will be sick. This is what the times of restitution will bring. Everyone who obeys the righteous laws of that kingdom will be able to live, not having their life cut off by war, disease, killing, or any other malady, for these will be things of the past. Life will not be to merely the age of 70, 80, or 150 years as the scientists predict, but forever, to all who obey the kingdom’s righteous laws.

GOD’S WORD IS SURE

The Apostle John, in Revelation 20-22, gives many beautiful pictures of the coming kingdom. Among these are the words of this article’s opening text, “I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more

pain: for the former things are passed away.” (Rev. 21:3,4) If, as these verses say, there shall be no more death, it means that the people will be living forever. Truly they ‘shall not say, I am sick.’

Many of the statements of Revelation were given to John through various angels, or messengers, but the message of Revelation 21:5 is so important, so awesome and colossal, that God did not even allow an angel to deliver it. He says, as it were, “Step aside, I want to tell this to John myself, it is so important!” This verse says, “He that sat upon the throne [God himself] said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me Write: for these words are true and faithful.” (Rev. 21:5) What words are ‘true and faithful’? Those of the previous verse—‘There shall be no more death.’ We have the guarantee of this by God’s own sure word.

NOT AN IMPOSSIBLE DREAM

As to the armaments of war and killing, what will happen to them, and what will happen to war itself when Christ’s kingdom is set up? Micah 4:3,4 says, “They shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree; and none shall make them afraid: for the mouth of the LORD of hosts hath spoken it.” The same being spoke these words as he who spoke in Revelation 21:5, the LORD of hosts, the Creator of the universe, our loving and all-powerful God. Man shall live—there will be no more death—wars and killing shall cease—disease and sickness will end. We can truly

thank God for the promises of life and peace contained in his Word. Some may say that such a hope is too good to be true. We answer, nay, it is too good not to be true, and is just what we should expect from a loving God. There shall be no more death. This is not an impossible dream. ■

Close your eyes for a moment to the scenes of misery and woe, degradation and sorrow that yet prevail on account of sin, and picture before your mental vision the glory of the perfect earth.

Not a stain of sin mars the harmony and peace of a perfect society; not a bitter thought, not an unkind look or word; love, welling up from every heart, meets a kindred response in every other heart, and benevolence marks every act. There sickness shall be no more; not an ache nor a pain, nor any evidence of decay—not even the fear of such things.

Think of all the pictures of comparative health and beauty of human form and feature that you have ever seen, and know that perfect humanity will be of still surpassing loveliness. The inward purity and mental and moral perfection will stamp and glorify every radiant countenance.

Such will earth's society be; and weeping bereaved ones will have their tears all wiped away, when thus they realize the resurrection work complete.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

QUESTION: Jesus said, “In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.” (John 16:33) How did Jesus overcome the world?

ANSWER: Certainly Jesus did not overcome the world by conquering it with a mighty army. His thought evidently is that he overcame the spirit of selfishness which motivates so much that the world does—that is, he walked contrary to it. There are two basic principles, one or the other of which is manifest in all human behavior. One of these is selfishness. The other is selflessness, or love.

The spirit of the world is, generally speaking, self first. It is the law of self-preservation, and oftentimes operates without regard to justice or the welfare of others. This spirit of selfishness has been responsible, directly or indirectly, for all human suffering. Its cruelest expressions are in crime, war, and the other evils which plague the sin-cursed and dying race.

Jesus did not conform to the world's spirit of selfishness. He did not view life from the standpoint of what he could get from it for himself. Instead he denied self, and sacrificed his life in the interests of others. Throughout his entire ministry he exhibited the spirit of selflessness, and of love for others. He gave his time, his strength, his all, that others might be blessed.

The supreme manifestation of love by Jesus came at the close of his ministry when he gave up life itself in order that mankind might have an opportunity to live. Thus he met the challenge of human selfishness, and won. ■

What Is My Calling?

Key Verse: *"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised."*
—Luke 4:18

Selected Scripture:
Luke 4:14-30

THIS LESSON'S KEY VERSE

is part of the proclamation that was read by our Lord Jesus at Nazareth when he arose to speak in the synagogue on that eventful Sabbath Day. It was written by the Prophet Isaiah (Isa. 61:1-3) approximately seven hundred years before Jesus was born, and now the time had come for its fulfillment.

The Heavenly Father pledged to give Jesus the Holy Spirit that would positively legitimize his earthly ministry for the great work of redemption and reconciliation that he was about to enter. The scriptural account records the events of his baptism in the waters of Jordan, and the wonderful manner in

which the promised Holy Spirit of God had indeed come upon him. In Matthew's Gospel we read, "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. 3:16,17

In the Key Verse, Jesus applies Isaiah's prophecy to himself as an introduction to his earthly ministry. He

made this matter clear to the people when he had finished reading from the scroll. "He closed the book, and he gave it again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him. And he began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears. And all bare him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth. And they said, Is not this Joseph's son?" (Luke 4:20-22) This promise would ultimately be fulfilled when his greater work of restitution and recovery would be made available for the whole groaning Creation.

This wonderful prophecy, we note, was not addressed to the proud, or the hard-hearted, who heard his words that Sabbath Day, but to the poor and meek in spirit. He knew that it would be the humble ones who would receive his ministry and respond to it with a pure and contrite conscience. The brokenhearted ones would have been humbled by the difficulties, adversities, and perplexities of life. His ministry would thus proclaim blessings to those who heard him on that day, as well as all mankind in due time.

The whole human family, suffering under the bondage of death, has been blinded by sin that has corrupted the mental and moral faculties of all. Further, as Isaiah's prophecy confirms, deliverance will also be made available for all who are captives of death. Jesus' kingdom work of restitution will free, and set at liberty, all who are sleeping in the grave. All have been bruised by the effects of the curse, and all are promised a recovery.

The people at Nazareth bare witness to the beginning of our Lord Jesus' wonderful ministry nearly two thousand years ago. The miracles he performed, such as healing the sick and raising the dead to life, were but illustrations of the grander power that will be exercised on behalf of all mankind during the future time of his kingdom. ■

Hope for Healing

Key Verse: *“He said unto her, Daughter, be of good comfort: thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace.”*
—Luke 8:48

Selected Scripture:
Luke 8:40-56

THIS LESSON CENTERS

around two of the many wonderful miracles that our Lord Jesus performed during his earthly ministry. In the first miracle, he healed the woman who had been hemorrhaging for many years. She had touched his garment, and was immediately cured. The second mani-

festation of his mighty power was exercised in the raising to life again the daughter of Jairus, who had died.

Jesus' blessed ministry of healing the sick, casting out devils, raising the dead to life, and many other remarkable things, was conducted mostly from the city of Capernaum, which was in Galilee.

Luke records the great anticipation that was being manifested among the people when our Lord Jesus approached Capernaum. “It came to pass, that, when Jesus was returned, the people gladly received him” (Luke 8:40), because of the mighty works that he had performed there. He was engaged in the work that his Heavenly Father had sent him to accomplish. He explained, “I have greater witness than that of John: for the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me.”—John 5:36

The woman who had suffered with the issue of blood for twelve years, without receiving help from her

physicians, sought to make her way through the throng of people, and to touch Jesus' clothing. She had faith to believe that he had the power to heal her infirmities if she could just touch the hem of his garment. "Jesus said, Who touched me?" (Luke 8:45) Peter, and the others who were with Jesus, could hardly believe that he knew that someone in the crowd had touched him. "Jesus, said, Somebody hath touched me: for I perceive that virtue is gone out of me." (vs. 46) "When the woman saw that she was not hid, she came trembling, and falling down before him, she declared unto him before all the people for what cause she had touched him, and how she was healed immediately. And he said unto her, Daughter, be of good comfort: thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace."—vss. 47,48

The second miracle of this lesson was performed when Jesus raised to life again the daughter of Jairus. She was only twelve years old, and was sick unto death. When Jesus was informed of her death, he said, "Fear not: believe only, and she shall be made whole." (vs. 50) He then instructed that no one should accompany him into the house where she lay dead, except Peter, James, and John, as well as the girl's parents. "He put them all out, and took her by the hand, and called, saying, Maid, arise. And her spirit came again, and she arose straightway: and he commanded to give her meat."—vss. 54,55

These mighty works were not meant to inaugurate Jesus' kingdom at his First Advent, but were done to establish his identity as the Savior of the world. He left his spiritual abode as the *Logos* of God, and had come to earth for that purpose. His earthly ministry, which included these two wonderful miracles, illustrated a grander power that would be exercised on behalf of the whole groaning creation during the future times of restitution. Under control of our Lord, and his faithful bride, all mankind will have opportunity to receive not only physical healing, but mental and moral healing as well. ■

Stretching Our Love

Key Verse: *“He answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself.”*
—**Luke 10:27**

Selected Scripture:
Luke 10:25-37

the question: “Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?” (Luke 10:25) Jesus, knowing the man’s apparent understanding of the Law, directed him in his answer to the Law of God, as it had been given to Moses.—Deut. 6:4-6

The lawyer responded very cleverly to Jesus by avoiding any mention of the first commandment respecting the standard of love that must be our primary obligation toward God. However, he challenged the meaning of the Law concerning his neighbor, perhaps making a distinction between Jews and Gentiles. “Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live. But he, willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbour?” (Luke 10:28,29) The fact that the man questioned

THE COMMANDMENTS

that God gave to his human family may be divided into two separate categories. The first and foremost group relates to those duties, obligations, and responsibilities that man has toward God. The second part teaches what man’s responsibilities are toward his neighbor.

The Key Verse in this lesson records the words which were spoken by our Lord in response to one of the doctors of the Law who had tried to trap him with

whether or not God's law might not include everyone indicates his unwillingness to accept those he thought were less acceptable than others, those he regarded as publicans and sinners.

Jesus proceeded to teach a profound lesson on the subject, 'Who is my neighbour?' In the parable of the good Samaritan a certain priest, a servant of God and the highest representative of the Law, came upon a man who had been robbed and beaten, and left for dead alongside the road. Instead of stopping and offering help to his fellow man, the priest crossed over to the other side of the road while ignoring him, and continued on his way.

In the next instance in the parable, a Levite, who is not as high in rank as a priest, but one who is also dedicated to serving God as an instructor of the people, also came upon the man who was laying near death on the ground. He stopped briefly to look upon the poor man, but went on his way without offering any help.

The parable's third reference was a Gentile, one who was despised by the Jews and had no relationship with God. He found the destitute and dying man and lovingly responded to his need for assistance. "A certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him, And went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee."—Luke 10:33-35

The contrast between the three characters in the parable teaches a powerful lesson. "Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves? And he said, He that shewed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise."—vss. 36,37 ■

Building Community

Key Verse: *“The lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled.”*
—**Luke 14:23**

Selected Scripture:
Luke 14:7-24

THE MARRIAGE SUPPER

and the great banquet, are the allegorical subjects of this lesson. The initial and exclusive invitation from God to be part of the wedding feast was first given to the children of Israel. The Key Verse, as recorded by Luke, teaches in symbolic language how God’s house would ultimately be completed. Gentiles were thus called upon to make up this number because

the Jews were careless in their appreciation of the invitation that had been extended to them.

When guests are bidden to a wedding feast it would be appropriate for them to take inconspicuous places in which to sit, realizing that the host might have others who, in his estimation, might be more worthy of being seated in one of the more prominent places at his table. It would be the host’s prerogative to reseat them to a more honored position according to his own plan and desire. (Luke 14:7-10) “Whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.” (vs. 11) “God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.”—James 4:6

Another lesson to be learned by our Lord’s teachings concerns those who should receive an invitation. “Then said he also to him that bade him, When thou makest a

dinner or a supper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen, nor thy rich neighbours; lest they also bid thee again, and a recompence be made thee. But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind: And thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just.” (vss. 12-14) Rendering kindness to those who are unable to return the favor will be more blessed now, and in the future kingdom.

When one of the guests who was seated at the table heard these great truths, he said, “Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God.” (vs. 15) Jesus took the opportunity of the guest’s remarks to continue with his teachings. He spoke of a man who made a feast and invited many to attend. But those who had been invited began to make excuses as to why they would not be able to come. The children of Israel, also, had been given advance notice through their prophets concerning the great blessings of the kingdom that would be offered to them. However, when Jesus came unto his own, the Jewish religious teachers rejected him and his message. “That servant came, and shewed his lord these things. Then the master of the house being angry said to his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind.” (vs. 21) The majority of our Lord’s later ministry was preached to the poor from among his own people, the publicans and sinners of Israel.

“The lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled. For I say unto you, That none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper.” (vss. 23,24) This is applied to those Gentile believers who respond to the spiritual calling of the kingdom of heaven throughout the present Gospel Age. Ultimately the number will be completed, and those who are found worthy will be granted a place at the table of God’s great feast. ■

The Witness of the Spirit

***“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.”***

—Romans 8:16,17

the LORD and sincerely desire to serve and please him are often in doubt as to whether or not they have the Divine approval. These doubts are expressed in the lines: “Tis a point I long to know, oft it causes anxious thought; Do I love the Lord, or no, am I his, or am I not?”

There is no occasion for these doubts ever arising in the mind of one who is wholly devoted to the

THE ‘WITNESS’ OF THE

Spirit is vitally important to every disciple of Christ, for the Spirit witnesses that we are ‘the children of God.’ Nothing could be more important than to be assured of sonship, that God has accepted and begotten us through his Word to be one of his reigning house of sons, one of his heirs, and a joint-heir, with Christ. Strange to say, though, many who love

LORD. Paul says the 'Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.' The doubts that do arise are due to a misunderstanding of the manner in which the Holy Spirit witnesses to the LORD's people concerning their sonship. The Spirit's witness is not a matter of feelings. Every consecrated child of God will have days of joy and also days of sorrow. One's physical condition, as well as the circumstances of life, has much to do with feelings, so they are most unreliable as a test of our relationship with the Heavenly Father.

The witness of the Holy Spirit reaches us through the Word of Truth, that Spirit-inspired Word which outlines all the terms and conditions of the narrow way of sacrifice, and reveals the sort of experiences the faithful followers of Jesus should expect. If we find that we are having the experiences which the Holy Spirit, through the written Word, has testified will come to all the children of God during the present Gospel Age, then we can be assured of our standing before the LORD and know that we are his children.

It is essential that we examine ourselves to make sure that we have taken the proper steps in order to have the LORD accept and bless us. Have we repented of our sin, and through faith in Christ presented ourselves in full consecration to do God's will? If we have, then a very important witness of the Spirit is already ours.

Jesus said that no one could come to him, unless drawn by the Father. (John 6:44) If we have been drawn to Christ we can, therefore, be assured that it was through the drawing power of the Heavenly

Father. This means that the Heavenly Father desired that we become his children. Jesus, speaking further under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, said that he would not cast out those who came to him. (John 6:37) Thus the Spirit witnesses that the Heavenly Father wanted us, and that Jesus accepted us; that is, if we have truly surrendered ourselves to do the Divine will.

“IF SO BE”

In our text, Paul states that the Holy Spirit witnesses that we are the children of God ‘if so be that we suffer with him [Christ], that we may be also glorified together.’ This implies clearly that if we are not suffering with Christ, then the Holy Spirit is not witnessing to us that we are the children of God. Why is Paul so emphatic on this point? It would seem that he based this statement on a great truth set forth by the Apostle Peter. Whether he learned it from Peter, or by direct revelation from God, as to the meaning of the Old Testament scriptures is not important. Peter expressed it this way: he said that the Spirit of God in the prophets of the Old Testament testified concerning “the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.”—I Pet. 1:11

The Holy Spirit testified in advance concerning the ‘sufferings of Christ.’ In the following verse, he further explains that the prophets did not minister to themselves, but to “us” of the Gospel Age. The testimony of the Spirit concerning the sufferings of Christ was intended to outline the way in which we should walk, and the experiences we should expect to have as the disciples of Christ. If we are walking

in that way, and having the experiences foretold through the prophets by the Holy Spirit, then the Spirit is witnessing to us that we are in God's favor and are therefore his children.

The force of this presentation by Paul and Peter is largely lost unless we recognize that the true disciples of Jesus are a part of the Christ; that if we have been baptized into Christ, and have come under the baptism of the Spirit, it means that we are members of the body of Christ. If, then, we are a part of the body of Christ, the Spirit's testimony concerning the sufferings of Christ applies to us as well as it did to Jesus. How plain it is, then, that if we are suffering with Christ, the Spirit is witnessing to us concerning our position in the body of Christ, and that we have, through begetting, received the Spirit of sonship! If we are not suffering with Christ, the reverse is true. It means that we have not taken the necessary steps of repentance and consecration, or else have become lax in our devotion so that we are more pleasing to the world than to the LORD.

The strength of this witness of the Spirit concerning our share in the sufferings of Christ is often lost through a wrong conception of what is meant by suffering with Christ. We think of the cruelties that were heaped upon Jesus, leading finally to his being nailed to a cross until he died. We think of the bitter experiences of Peter and Paul, and others in the Early Church. We compare these examples of suffering with the more or less tranquil lives which the LORD's people lead today and wonder, perhaps, whether or not we are doing very much suffering with Christ.

We believe that the answer to this problem lies in the fact that suffering does not always have to be of a physical nature. If the truth were known, we would probably find that only a small minority of the Gospel Age sons of God has had physical cruelties inflicted upon them. Jesus was despised and hated by the religious rulers of his time almost from the first day of his ministry, but they did not inflict bodily suffering upon him until the last twenty-four hours of his earthly life.

Up until the final day of Jesus' ministry any physical suffering he experienced was self-imposed in that he gave of his strength, his vitality, as he went about doing good. Herein we have one of the most vital and important aspects of his loving example to us. We should not become concerned as to whether or not we are suffering with Christ until we have plunged wholeheartedly into his service, and are so selfless in going about doing good, that we will feel at least some twinges of painful fatigue, some loss of vitality as a direct result of our membership in the body of Christ.

Suffering with Christ does not always involve persecution by enemies of the cross. We have a notable example of this brought to our attention by the Apostle Paul in Philippians 2:25-30. The facts are these: Paul was in prison in Rome. He was greatly loved by the brethren in Philippi. To express their love, and to render a service to him, they sent one of their number, Epaphroditus, to visit him and to take him a gift, perhaps of clothing, or of food, the record does not indicate. It was a difficult undertaking. Epaphroditus became ill, very ill, "nigh unto death." Paul explains that it was "for the

work of Christ” this zealous brother was “nigh unto death, not regarding his life.”

Epaphroditus surely had the witness of the Holy Spirit, for he partook of the sufferings of Christ. He was not made a prisoner in Rome. So far as we know, the enemies of Christ did not inflict suffering upon him. But by his own intrepid zeal to serve a beloved brother in Christ, which lifted him above regarding his own life, he almost died. Paul did not caution Epaphroditus to be less zealous in the future, and to take better care of himself. He commended him to the brethren in Philippi, to “receive him . . . in the Lord with all gladness,” and to “hold such in reputation.”

Opportunities comparable to the one enjoyed by Epaphroditus do not come to many of the LORD’s people, but we can all profit by his example of faithfulness. How are we facing up to the opportunities of service that, in the LORD’s providence, are presented to us? Are we backing away from sacrifice when the only reason is that it appears to be too difficult, or too costly in terms of weariness or loss of earthly comforts and ease? If laying down our lives for the brethren, as Epaphroditus was doing in taking a gift to Paul, is suffering with Christ, let us not be concerned as to whether or not we have this witness of the Spirit. Let us, rather, bestir ourselves to greater diligence in manifesting our love for the LORD and for his people to the point where we will realize that it is really costing us something.

HEART SUFFERING

Physical suffering is not always the most difficult to bear. We knew a brother who, from a certain

ailment, suffered physical pain almost constantly. This brother's family was not Christian, and was very much opposed to him, ridiculing him on occasion, and making the atmosphere of the home very uncongenial for him. He testified that his physical suffering was as nothing compared with the heart pangs that were inflicted upon him by his family. This brother was suffering with Christ even though he was not imprisoned, not burned at the stake, and not thrown to the lions, nor crucified.

Many times, as Jesus foretold, the Christian's foes are principally those of his own household. The Truth turns one member of the family against another. This causes suffering where it hurts most. Yet those who are loyal to the LORD and to the Truth will not permit even those who are dearest to them according to the ties of the flesh to turn them aside from loyalty to the LORD and their vows of consecration. Because of their faithfulness under such adverse circumstances they surely are suffering with Christ, and therefore have this witness of the Spirit that they are the children of God.

SEPARATE FROM THE WORLD

Another witness, or testimony, of the Holy Spirit that we are the children of God is found in John 15:19. Jesus said, "If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you." There are few indeed of the human race who do not esteem the goodwill and friendship of others. However small or large our 'world' may be, it is natural to desire its approbation. People like to be thought of as

accomplished and important. This is the normal viewpoint of the world. It is not in itself sinful, except as fraud and deceit are employed in order to gain a high position in the eyes of others.

But when we accept the Truth and faithfully bear witness to it within the circle of our acquaintances, our world begins to lose esteem for us. Not that all our friends distrust us. They may even admit that our ethical standards are higher than before. What they do not like is our religion, and we find that more and more they hold aloof from us. Depending on how deeply we were entrenched in the ways of the world, this estrangement will hurt. This, however, we can, and should, accept as part of the Spirit's witness. It is a part of our suffering with Christ.

The enmity of the world may not lead to physical persecution, especially in the free world. In some countries, however, loyalty to the Truth still leads to imprisonment and other forms of physical punishment. Our love for the LORD and for the Truth should be so great that we would not hesitate to let our light shine regardless of what the consequences may be in terms of mental or physical suffering. This is what is involved in overcoming the world. We cannot conquer the world while in the flesh, but we can refuse to permit the selfish spirit of the world, with its jeers and threats, to stand in the way of our full loyalty to the LORD. If this is our attitude, then we have a further witness of the Spirit that we are the children of God, for John wrote, "Whatsoever is born [begotten] of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith."—I John 5:4

WILL NOT WILLFULLY SIN

John mentions another witness of the Spirit to confirm that we are among the Spirit-begotten children of God. He writes, "Whosoever is born [begotten] of God sinneth not." (I John 5:18) As New Creatures we still have a body of flesh, and a very imperfect body it is. John did not mean that our new minds would always be able to control the flesh and make it live up to the perfect standard of righteousness that the LORD sets before us in his Word. But the new mind will not consent to sin, and when, through weakness of the flesh a sin is committed, we "have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous."—I John 2:1

John writes further on this point, saying, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (I John 1:8,9) This explanation is no excuse for relaxing our efforts to keep the body "under." (I Cor. 9:27) It does mean, however, that if at heart we find that we are thoroughly out of harmony with all unrighteousness, we can claim the witness of the Spirit which John mentions; namely, that those who are begotten as the children of God do not willfully sin. Thus we have this further proof that we are the children of God.

ABOUNDING IN GRACE

Peter wrote, "Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature." (II Pet. 1:4) It is the Spirit-begotten children of God to whom these 'exceeding great and precious promises'

belong. But in order to attain the Divine nature we must develop as New Creatures. Peter outlines what is involved in this, saying that we should give diligence to add to our faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance [self-control], patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and love.

Peter further explains that if these evidences of spiritual growth are in us and “abound,” we will “neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.”—II Pet. 1:5-11

Whether we have been the Lord’s disciples for only a short time, or for many years, can we, upon looking back over the way, see some evidence of growth in the spiritual graces? Have we become better acquainted with the Lord through the precious truth of his Word, and thus increased in knowledge? Are we more patient, more kind, more self-sacrificing in our service for others? Are these evidences of the Spirit’s power within us abounding, in the sense that holy things of the Lord are the most important consideration of our consecrated lives? If so, then we have this as another testimony that we are the children of God, members of his royal house of sons who are to live and reign with Christ in his kingdom, and as Peter affirms, we will have an ‘abundant’ entrance into that kingdom.

LED BY THE SPIRIT

Paul wrote, “As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.” (Rom. 8:14) Are we being ‘led’ by the Holy Spirit of Truth? If so, then we have an additional witness that we are the children of God. What does Paul mean by being led by the Spirit? This is a most important consideration. Again, let us emphasize that God’s Holy Spirit does not lead us by impressions or feelings. The leadings of the Spirit are by means of the Spirit-inspired directives of the written Word.

We have in Jesus a perfect example of a Spirit-led life, for he followed exactly the instructions contained for him in the ‘volume of the book’—the Old Testament scriptures—and these same instructions are for our guidance. If ever in doubt as to how the Spirit might lead in certain circumstances, we need but ask what Jesus would have done in similar situations. Of course, we will not find in his experiences a criterion for every detail of our lives; but the principles that he followed should, and do, constitute a wonderfully accurate guide for all who are endeavoring to walk in his steps.

Primarily, the Spirit led Jesus in the way of sacrifice—a sacrifice so all consuming and complete that it ended in death. Through the Prophet Isaiah, the Spirit testified that Jesus would be “brought as a lamb to the slaughter.” (Isa. 53:7) He was ‘brought,’ not by the religious rulers of his time, not by Roman soldiers, but by the ‘Spirit of God.’ We, too, are being similarly led by the Spirit. “As it is written,” Paul testified, concerning one of the Spirit-inspired instructions found in the the volume of the book, “For thy sake we are killed all the

day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.”—Rom. 8:36

The slain lamb symbolism epitomizes one of the results of the Spirit’s leadings in Jesus’ life. It led him to death. In Revelation 14:1, we find the “Lamb” on Mount Sion, and “with him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father’s name written in their foreheads.” These are the children of God who had been led by his Holy Spirit. Verse four informs us that these followed the Lamb “whithersoever he goeth.” As Jesus was led by the Spirit, so these were led by the Spirit. As we have seen, the Spirit led Jesus into death, and so it leads all who truly walk in his steps. There is no way to continue being the sons of God except by thus being led by the Spirit of God.

Here, then, is another important testimony of the Holy Spirit to assure us of our sonship. Are we allowing the Spirit of the Truth, through the written Word, to lead us in the way of self-sacrifice, contrary to the desires of the flesh, and in opposition to the spirit of the world? It is not a complex question to answer. However, if for any reason we have been resisting the Spirit’s leadings, the decision to change our ways and live up to our consecration vows may be a difficult one. But it is an important decision, and blessed are all they whose hearts are responding in loyal obedience to the leading of God’s Holy Spirit, for it means that they are indeed the children of God.

DIVINE PROVIDENCE

The providence of God, under the direction of his Holy Spirit, supplements the directives of the

written Word. But we have the responsibility of interpreting his providence correctly. It should never be given meanings contrary to the testimony of the written Word. God's Word points out a certain definite course for all the consecrated to follow. It includes the development of the Christian graces, associating with the LORD's people whenever possible, bearing witness to the Truth, and laying down our lives for the brethren. The providence of God should never be interpreted contrary to this general course.

For example, we might make an effort to bear witness to the Truth and obtain no results. As far as we can determine all the "seed" which we "sowed" fell by the "way side." (Luke 8:5) We might be inclined to interpret this as meaning that the harvest work is all done, that the LORD does not want us to continue bearing witness to the Truth; otherwise he would bless our efforts. But this would be wrong, because it would be contrary to the written Word. The LORD has made it plain that he wants his people to continue to proclaim the Truth as long as they possibly can. Nothing is said in the Bible about ceasing to bear witness to the Truth when it appears there are few, or no, results.

The proper way to interpret such an experience would be to conclude that perhaps God wants us to examine our methods of witnessing, or our motive in serving him. Often he withholds the increase until our hearts are right before him. The LORD may withhold his blessing from the witness work of an ecclesia until the spiritual health of the ecclesia is better. There are many possible reasons why he might not bless our efforts to witness for the

Truth, but never does the lack of results mean that he does not want us to try again. If our love for the LORD is so great that we find ourselves interpreting our experiences in full harmony with his written Word, determined to continue in the way he has directed, regardless of the difficulties and discouragements that may be involved, then we have a further testimony of the Spirit that we are the children of God.

Interesting and revealing examples of the leadings of God's providence are given us in the Book of Acts, which records much of the activity of the Early Church. In those apostolic days, the gifts of the Spirit were operative, and in many instances the believers were blessed with miraculous demonstrations of the Holy Spirit's leadings in their experiences. Even so, the principles involved in those leadings are the same today as they were then.

In Acts 8:29 we read, "The Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot." This was the 'chariot' in which the Ethiopian eunuch was riding, and reading the prophecy of Isaiah. Previously, Philip had been directed to go into the territory where the Lord knew this eunuch would be traveling. "The angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise, and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert."—vs. 26

Just how the Holy Spirit directed Philip to approach the chariot and engage the eunuch in conversation the account does not indicate, nor is this important for us to know. The point is that circumstances were shaped in a manner to direct him to an opportunity of service. Philip knew he had been anointed to

proclaim the glad tidings, and he interpreted circumstances bearing upon his life from this standpoint. He knew that the Holy Spirit of Truth would not lead him contrary to the Word of Truth.

By means of the Spirit, or power of God, there was a miraculous shaping of circumstances in connection with the conversion of Cornelius, the first Gentile accepted in the body of Christ. Cornelius was given a vision in which an angel of the Lord spoke to him, and Peter had that remarkable dream in which he saw a sheet let down from heaven filled with the unclean animals. This was on the roof of Simon the tanner's house. When Peter awoke from his dream, "the Spirit said unto him, Behold, three men seek thee."—Acts 10:19

These 'three men' had been sent by Cornelius to seek Peter, as the angel of the Lord had directed. Again, we do not know how the Spirit informed Peter about the three men. Since it was in the days of miracles, perhaps an angel spoke to him, as an angel had spoken to Cornelius. The main point is that the Spirit, or power of God, directed in connection with another aspect of the Divine plan, not contrary to it. The time had come for the Gospel to go to the Gentiles. There was service to be rendered in connection with it, and the Spirit of God directed in harmony therewith.

We read in Acts 16:6 that Paul and Timothy were "forbidden of the Holy Spirit to preach the word in Asia." Taken by itself this statement might indicate that at times the Holy Spirit leads God's people away from service, but the context reveals otherwise. Here is a case where another field of service was opening in Macedonia. Circumstances were

such as to hinder the ministry in Asia so that Paul and Timothy would be alerted to the call, "Come over into Macedonia, and help us." (vs. 9) Sometimes the Lord's people have to decide as to where and how they will serve, and should watch carefully for the leadings of the Holy Spirit in all such cases, but never should our experiences be interpreted to mean that the Lord wants us to give up bearing witness to the Truth. So, if we are following the Spirit's leadings in keeping with the commission, "Ye are the light of the world," (Matt. 5:14) then we bore this witness that we are the children of God.

THE JOY OF THE LORD

Not all of the Spirit's witnessing is related to sacrifice and suffering. This was not the case with Jesus, nor will it be with us if we are enjoying the fullness of Divine favor. In the volume of the book, it is written prophetically of Jesus, "The LORD is the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup: thou maintainest my lot. The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage." (Ps. 16:5,6) The 'lines' here mentioned were those used to mark out a piece of land, or a field, for one who had inherited it. Thus, symbolically, Jesus received a 'goodly heritage;' the lines had fallen for him in 'pleasant places.'

There was a wonderful future joy set before Jesus that enabled him to endure the cross, and despise the shame that was heaped upon him. (Heb. 12:2) He knew that in his Father's actual presence there would be "fulness of joy." (Ps. 16:11) But, in addition to this, Jesus possessed a great

inward peace and joy of heart even while he was laying down his life as the world's Redeemer. This joy of the Lord was his strength. It stemmed from his full confidence in the victorious outcome of every feature of his Father's plan for the redemption and recovery of the fallen race from sin and death.

Near the close of his ministry Jesus bequeathed this peace and joy to his disciples. He said, "If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love. These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full." (John 15:10,11) Are we keeping the LORD's commandments, and experiencing the joy that Jesus said would be ours as a result? If so, then we have this most reassuring witness of the Spirit that we are the children of God, that we are abiding in Jesus' love and in the love of our Heavenly Father.

Jesus bequeathed to his disciples another blessed portion of the inheritance he enjoyed while laying down his life as the world's Redeemer. He said to them, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." (John 14:27) This is the "peace of God" (Phil. 4:7) which passeth all human comprehension, yet it is ours to enjoy if our faith can only lay hold firmly upon the promises of God.

Are we enjoying this peace? Daily there are situations in life that tend to distract, and to fill the heart with anxious forebodings. The world around us is disturbed and fearful, and their fears can easily become ours unless we keep in mind the precious

promises of God, our Heavenly Father, who is almighty in his power to help, too wise to err, and too good to be unkind. God knows the outcome of his plan, and Jesus had full confidence in it. That is why Jesus had the peace of God. If we have the same confidence, we will have the same peace, for we will know that God's design for us, and his plan for the world, will triumph gloriously. Do we have this peace of God? If so, it is another witness that we are the children of God.

Truly the present inheritance of the Spirit-begotten children of God is a blessed and a rich one! As with Jesus, so with us, we can testify that our 'lines are fallen unto us in pleasant places.' And the rejoicing in the LORD that is our happy lot while still in the flesh will expand into 'fulness of joy' as it did with Jesus, when, being faithful unto death, we enter into the promised glory to follow, and become associate kings and priests with Jesus for the blessing of all mankind with health and life. ■

WEEKLY PRAYER MEETING TEXTS

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

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

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

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

“All Things New”

“He that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful.”

—*Revelation 21:5*

HOW NATURAL FOR US TO

like to have things ‘new’—to have new things. But alas, how soon they become old! True are the words, “Change and decay in all around I see,” as we view and apply them to the works of fallen man.

How different will be the case when the promise of our text is fulfilled. Speaking of God’s ‘new things,’ Isaiah, in chapter 66:22, says, they “shall remain before me, saith the LORD.”

What then is the significance of this newness as promised by God? In our present experience and order of things, newness does not always indicate perfection, but our Heavenly Father is the Creator and Maker of new and perfect works; nothing less, or short of this, can be attributed to him. It is recorded in Deuteronomy 32:3,4: “Ascribe ye greatness unto our God, . . . his work is perfect: for all his ways are . . . just and right.”

A RENEWING

We should also notice that our text does not say, “Behold I make all NEW THINGS,” for that is not God’s intention. The process of renewing, as

concerns mankind in particular, is by resurrection; and, of course, this implies preexistence. So we learn from the Scriptures that the whole race of Adam, condemned through his transgression, will, if they render the required obedience to their Redeemer in the judgment day, experience a renewing of body and mind, which shall fit them for their perfect earthly home.—Acts 17:31

How good it is to know that, unlike the promises of fallen men, God's promises are sure! (Josh. 21:45; 23:14; I Kings 8:36) What assurance these scriptures give us that every promise of God will be fulfilled!

SYMBOLIC HEAVENS AND EARTH

The things to be made new, according to our text, all come within the scope of the "new heavens" and the "new earth." (Isa. 65:17; 66:22; Rev. 21:1; see also II Pet. 3:13) Here we must be careful to distinguish between the literal and symbolical application of these expressions. The heavens in these scriptures clearly do not refer to God's dwelling place or throne; nor does the earth refer to this terrestrial planet, which is to abide forever, and eventually is to be made glorious.—Eccles. 1:4; Isa. 60:13; 66:1

We should understand the heavens and earth of Revelation twenty-one and II Peter three to apply in a symbolical sense to the rulers or governments of the present arrangement, and the society over which they rule. This is the sense in which they are referred to in Isaiah 1:2,10 and Psalm 96:11. By considering present conditions in the world, we shall appreciate more clearly the need for the establishment of the new heavens and earth. If we could see at close view the conditions prevailing over the

whole earth—the state of humanity spread out before us—what a deplorable, terrible picture it would present, with its turmoil, vice, unrest, distress, pain, sorrow, and death!

THE PRINCE OF DARKNESS

As we travel about in our small circles we see abundant evidence of the result of the rule of the present heavens, whose prince and chief ruler is Satan. (Eph. 2:2) All the depravity, wickedness, and injustice with which mankind is afflicted are traceable to the great Adversary, the “god of this world,” and are perpetuated by those in authority, who have been largely influenced and blinded by him. (II Cor. 4:4; John 14:30) The Apostle Paul says in Romans 8:22, “The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together”—a very apt description of earth’s inhabitants, especially at this end of the age in which we are living.

What a contrast this is to the new earth conditions described by the Apostle John in Revelation 21:4, where he declares that “God shall wipe away all tears . . . ; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.” This will be the grand result when he [Christ] shall have put down [overthrown and destroyed] all opposing rule and authority, including both sin and death. (I Cor. 15:24-26) The Prophet Isaiah gives a very remarkable but true picture of the new earth society in chapter 65:17-25.

MANKIND LEARNS RIGHTEOUSNESS

The same prophet says in chapter 26:9, “When thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the

world will learn righteousness.” It will be only those who do learn righteousness, by willing obedience to the requirements of earth’s new king, which will reap the benefit and blessings, and eventually become sharers in the new earth. (Acts. 3:19-23) The Scriptures reveal that it will require the whole of the thousand-year reign of Christ to complete the new earth ‘wherein dwelleth righteousness.’ It will be composed of resurrected members of Adam’s race, who will have been individually regenerated by the “age-lasting Father” [Christ Jesus] and individually made new [perfect].—Isa. 9:6,7; Ezek. 36:25-28

A NEW COVENANT

How will this great work of renewing the earth be accomplished? We are not given in the Bible all the details concerning this immense work, but we are provided with much information, which helps us to some extent. We learn from the Scriptures that the new earth conditions will come into existence by means of the operation of the New Covenant which will be made with the house of Israel and Judah; and the blessings of the New Covenant will become available to whomsoever will of all the families of the earth. This covenant is described by the Prophet Jeremiah. (chap. 31:31-34) When that covenant has accomplished its purpose, Isaiah the prophet tells us that nothing [that has hitherto been a curse] shall “hurt nor destroy in all my [God’s] holy mountain [kingdom].” (Isa. 65:25) A still fuller prophetic description of the blessed and enduring condition of the new earth is to be found in Psalm 145.

Having considered the wondrous prospect of the new earth, what does the Bible teach concerning

the new heavens? As mentioned earlier, the present heavens, or ruling powers, are made up of the 'god of this world,' the Adversary, together with those who have come under his power and influence. So the new heavens will consist of our glorified Lord Jesus, upon whose shoulders the government of the earth will rest (Isa. 9:6); and, also, the Scriptures tell us that those of his disciples who having faithfully followed his example of obedience to the Father's will, even unto death, will be granted joint-heirship with him in his reign and rule.—Rev. 3:21; Rev. 20:6; Rom. 8:17

As the original curse pronounced upon Adam has been perpetrated through the rule of the Adversary, Satan, the usurper of the present old heavens, so the blessings of life promised under the New Covenant will be realized through the righteous rule and power of the new heavens. This authority and power to rule and bless is the distinguishing feature of the new heavens.

How aptly the relationship of the literal heavens and earth illustrates this principle! We all know that our planet and everything upon it depends absolutely upon the influence and power of the solar system for its very life and existence. But, we may inquire, how are these future heavens, consisting of Christ and his followers, to be made new? They will be made new in the sense that perfect Divine beings will be in control of earth's affairs.

THE PRINCE OF SALVATION

In Hebrews 2:9,10, we are told that our blessed Lord Jesus was crowned with the glory and honor of perfect manhood for the purpose of suffering

and death as man's Redeemer, and also that to become the captain [or Prince, leader] of our salvation he was to be made perfect through suffering. (See also Heb. 5:8,9) The preparation of Jesus as the Sun of Righteousness in the new heavens is described prophetically by Isaiah in chapter 11:1-5.

It was after this great and important work of perfecting him that Jesus declared "all power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." (Matt. 28:18) How glad we are to know in these perilous days this claim is still true! We know from God's Word that our glorified Master is even now King of kings and Lord of lords, seated at the Father's right hand of authority and power.—Ps. 110:1; Phil. 2:8-11

This, then, is the explanation as to our Lord's being made perfect. What is the process by which those who have been invited to become his joint-heirs in these new heavens are made perfect? We who have been thus favored know only too well—and the Scriptures repeatedly admonish—that we must be renewed, transformed. Paul, in II Corinthians 5:17, says that being in Christ, the Anointed, constitutes us New Creatures.—See also Gal. 6:15; Eph. 4:22-24; Rom. 12:2

A WORK OF TRANSFORMATION

Our Lord never needed to put off the works of evil, as we have to do, for he was never contaminated by the weakness with which we and all men are beset; but he, by virtue of his sacrifice and High Priest's work on our behalf, has made it possible for us, by faith, to put off the old disposition, and to be renewed in the spirit of our minds. If, then, we would seek for a place in the new heavens, it is of the

utmost importance that this process of being made new is accomplished in our lives. This great work of transformation is only possible through the power of God's Holy Spirit working in us as the apostle indicates. "We all beholding the glory of the Lord in a face unveiled, are transformed into the same likeness, from glory to glory, as from the Lord, the Spirit." (II Cor. 3:18, *Wilson's Emphatic Diaglott*) All such changed ones will receive the "new name" (Rev. 3:12) and be able to sing the "new song," which only the little flock can sing.—Rev. 14:3

A NEW SOCIETY

When these new heavens are complete, then will come the time for the establishment of the new earth society. But before this great event, the present heavens and earth, the present evil order, must be removed as is described by the Apostle Peter in II Peter 3:7-14. The evidence of the fulfillment of this prophecy is to be seen all around us in this our day: the dire distress of nations, bitterness, animosity and strife, social unrest, and contentions of race and religion are all indications that we are indeed in the Day of the Lord, during which he is shaking all nations in preparation for the kingdom of righteousness which shall abide forever.—Heb. 12:26-29

The Prophet Joel also refers to this same time of trouble to precede the new day, and his descriptions of the signs which are to accompany this great distress of nations are very remarkable and significant.—Joel 2:30

"Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness!"—II Pet. 3:11 ■

The Rest of Faith

THE REST OF faith is of particular interest to the Christian of this Gospel Age. The subject, as we wish to approach it, is developed by the Apostle Paul in the third and fourth chapter of Hebrews. He asks us to consider the “Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus.” (vs. 1) Then he contrasts Jesus and his house, with Moses and his house.—vss. 2-6

HOUSE OF SERVANTS

Moses’ faithfulness as a servant is vouched for in verse five. We think of the great care that he took to see that every feature in the building of the Tabernacle was carried out to the letter. We remember, too, that Moses testified that a greater prophet than he would arise to teach the people. (Deut. 18:15) This testimony, augmented by pictures and types, was for our benefit.—Rom. 15:4

Moses was a servant in the house of his God. How much more honor to be a son and share in the possession of the house as an heir! Christ is a Son over his own house, and Paul hastens to assure us that we are of his house—“if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.”—vs. 6

Most of verse seven, and on through verse eleven, is a parenthesis dealing with Israel's rebellion against the LORD that barred them from Canaan. Without this parenthesis our text reads like this: "Wherefore, . . . take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end."

STEADFASTNESS

Paul here reiterates the very pointed admonition that being partakers of Christ is conditional upon our steadfastness 'unto the end.' He tells us plainly that it is possible to lose our confidence and hope of being included in the house of Christ. This can come about through lack of faith. Lack of faith leads to a coldness and a hardening of the heart that resists the providence and disciplines of God that are shaping us into the character likeness of Christ.

Paul bases his admonition on the example of unbelief on the part of the children of Israel in the wilderness. In verses fifteen through nineteen, he rehearses briefly their provocation of the LORD during those forty years, and its disastrous effect on those who sinned and thus failed to enter into the promised land. Did not Israel provoke the LORD? Let us consider briefly some of the many incidents during those momentous forty years in the wilderness when the children of Israel provoked the LORD, and that continuously.

MURMURING AGAINST GOD

With the miraculous crossing of the Red Sea still vividly imprinted upon their minds, we find a murmuring arising from this great throng of people. After journeying three days into the wilderness they came to water, but it was unfit to drink. It was only natural that they should be very thirsty and desirous of water to quench their thirst. It was natural also that their disappointment should be keen when finding the water to be bitter. However, it was not the natural thing to commence complaining to Moses against the LORD. Had not the LORD just delivered them from the armed might and vengeance of the despotic army of Egypt? Could he not easily supply their temporal needs, having brought them thus far? They had no faith!

God supplied their needs by instructing Moses to cast the branches of a certain tree into the bitter waters to make them sweet. Later they came to Elim where they were refreshed from twelve wells of water, and rested under the shade of seventy palms.—Exod. 15:23-27

Following this we find Israel longing for the fleshpots of Egypt, and manifesting a lack of faith in the ability of God to supply them with food. In Exodus 16:4,5, the LORD instructs Moses in the use of the manna which he planned to send to feed the Israelites. But they complained about the manna and wanted something more substantial to eat. The LORD provided them with an abundance of meat, even to Moses' surprise, by sending droves of quail that fell in the camp. (Exod. 16:13) God's displeasure is manifested by the plague which came upon Israel when they were eating the flesh, and many of them died.—Num. 11:31-33

FAITH IN GOD

Undoubtedly it was a difficult situation, one that required the exercise of faith in God to look beyond their immediate difficulties and be assured that God would bring them safely through this wilderness to the land he had promised. But their lack of faith again caused them to doubt, and to complain bitterly to Moses that they had no water.—Exod. 17:3-7

Three months after their deliverance from Egypt, we find the Israelites encamped round about Mount Sinai. Moses was absent, being in the mount receiving instructions from God. After many days they began to wonder what had become of their leader. They desired something tangible to worship. So they induced Aaron to make them a golden calf, which they acclaimed as the god that had brought them out of Egypt.

The narrative, in Exodus chapter thirty-two, tells us that God would have blotted out the entire nation, but Moses interceded. Nevertheless, they were punished by God and many of those idolaters were slain.

REBELLION

In the twelfth chapter of Numbers, we read of the rebellion of Miriam and Aaron against the leadership of Moses. God's displeasure at their presumption was evidenced in Miriam's turning leprous. Moses' greatness is evidenced in his petition for mercy that was granted, although Miriam was forced to remain outside the camp for seven days before she was clean.

Then, in the thirteenth chapter of Numbers, are recounted the details of the LORD's plan to send

out spies, one from each tribe, preparatory to entering the land. The LORD was letting them do all they could by themselves, but he was also seeking to prove their faith.

This proved too great a test for the faith of ten of the spies. They all reported that it was indeed a land flowing with milk and honey and a wonderful inheritance. However, the ten reported that it would be impossible for them to conquer the people of this land. In fact, they went so far as to report that the people were “giants.” (vs. 33) The meaning of this word, *Nephiyl*, translated ‘giants’ (*Revised Standard Version*, *Nephilim*) suggests great warriors, tyrants, bullies. It comes from a root meaning ‘to fall.’ *Young’s Analytical Concordance to the Bible* gives the meaning as ‘fallen ones, fellers from Nephilim.’ This undoubtedly caused great fear in the camp, for they would have been quite familiar with the account of the fallen angels and the tyranny of their monstrous offspring who were drowned in the flood.

PROVOKING

In Numbers 14:11, God asks the question: “How long will this people provoke me? and how long will it be ere they believe me, for all the signs which I have shewed among them?” This episode not only showed a lack of faith in God’s ability to give them back the land, but an utter lack of appreciation of God’s motives and purposes in bringing them out of Egypt. For this breach they were to be punished by remaining in the wilderness for forty years—a year for each day that they spied out the land. And the males of twenty years and over were to die in

the wilderness and not be allowed to enter Canaan. (vs. 23) “Surely,” the LORD said, “they shall not see the land which I swear unto their fathers, neither shall any of them that provoked me see it.”

Strangely enough, the very next day this rebellious people had overcome their objections sufficiently to decide that they would go into the land, but it was too late. Their effort to conquer the people proved how foolish it was to attempt such a thing in their own strength. The LORD was not with them, and they were routed with heavy loss of life.

CANAAN OF REST

Canaan was to have been their place of rest, but they were not then permitted to enter into that rest. “Ye are not as yet come to the rest and to the inheritance, which the LORD your God giveth you. But when ye go over Jordan, and dwell in the land which the LORD your God giveth you to inherit, and when he giveth you rest from all your enemies round about.”—Deut. 12:9,10

Some five hundred years after Israel had actually entered their promised land we hear David saying in Psalm 95:7-11, “To day if ye will hear his voice, Harden not your heart, as in the provocation, . . . When your fathers tempted me. . . . Unto whom I swear in my wrath that they should not enter into my rest.”

We might well wonder why David should write this so long a time after Canaan had been entered. But we are not left in doubt, for the Apostle Paul’s reasoning brings the subject into focus. “He limiteth a certain day, saying in David, To day, after so long a time; as it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice,

harden not your hearts, for if Joshua (*Marginal Translation*) had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day. There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God.” (Heb. 4:7,8) Thus Paul explains that David had been speaking prophetically. God has promised a ‘rest’ of which the land of Canaan was a symbol, or type.

GOD RESTED

Adam was created just at the close of the sixth creative day, and God declared that the work thus concluded was “very good.” (Gen. 1:31) With the dawning of the great seventh creative day, “God rested from all his works.” (Gen. 2:2) God promised Israel a rest. Let us see how they failed to enter that rest. In Hebrews 4:2, we read that the Gospel was preached “unto them”—that is, the good news. This, briefly stated, was the good news that under the leadership of Moses they would inherit the land and, as chosen people, they would bless all the families of the earth.

When told to go in and possess the land, through lack of faith they refused. Canaan was designed to be their rest. Was this God’s rest? No, it was only a picture. If Israel had exercised faith, they could have entered Canaan and probably would have been able eventually to enter into the true rest.

The Gospel, or good news, in substance is the same as that preached unto Abraham—“In thee [and in thy seed] shall all nations be blessed.” (Gal. 3:8) Abraham’s natural seed, Isaac, came through faith. He pictured the greater seed that was to bless all nations, which seed was to be developed by faith. Abraham thought to make his servant Eliezer his

seed and heir. (Gen. 15:2) Next he sought to help God with Ishmael.

Israel fully expected to become that promised seed by keeping God's Law. That this was impossible for imperfect beings was manifest in Israel's failure to keep the Law. The Apostle Paul confirms this, saying that "no man is justified by the law," and that "the law is not of faith." (Gal. 3:11-14) He continues, saying that Christ redeemed the Jews from the curse of the Law, that the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, and that the promise of the Spirit might be received through faith. He also states that the "just shall live by faith." (vs. 11) We might put it another way by saying that it is only through faith in Christ's sacrificial death that we may be justified, or made right.

Therefore, we conclude that it is impossible to enter God's rest through one's own works. So it was that Israel could not enter by works. But a rest was promised. And we see that a remnant from Israel did enter into God's rest. Paul wrote, "Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded."—Rom. 11:5-7

We ask ourselves how was it that God rested from his works? It was not because of weariness, for we find, in Isaiah 40:28, that the "LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary." And it was surely not the lack of something to do. He rested in the sense that he anticipated the finished work of Christ, and left the outworking of the seventh creative day to him. Therefore, we conclude that the only way to enter into God's rest is to cease from one's own works

and accept the finished work of Christ. The Apostle Paul expresses it thus, “He that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his.”—Heb. 4:10

THE WORKS OF CHRIST

We ask, then, on what are the works of Christ based? They are based on his perfection, the keeping of God’s law, and the fact that he willingly gave up his own life, which was a perfect human life, as a ransom for all. This constitutes a corresponding price for Adam. Because all in Adam die, therefore Christ has tasted death for every man. (Heb. 2:9) Further than this, the works of Christ are based upon his resurrection from the dead in order that the benefits of his ransom could be made available to mankind.

We have seen that, through unbelief, Israel could not enter God’s rest. Failure to keep the Law also hindered them, although a remnant at the end of the age did ‘enter into rest.’ Then the opportunity was presented to the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name. So this Gospel has been preached since the First Advent unto the present day.

All down through this Gospel Age there has been a mixture of ‘wheat’ and ‘tares.’ Many for a time sought rest in the ‘creed’ beds. These were uncomfortable and chilly. Concerning these resting places Isaiah wrote, “The bed is shorter than that a man can stretch himself on it: and the covering narrower than that he can wrap himself in it.” (Isa. 28:20) The true wheat class has found that their only genuine rest is in Christ. This has been true of all during the age and in this harvest time.

ABRAHAM'S FAITH

In Romans 4:19-25, Abraham's faith is brought to our attention. Undoubtedly Abraham's faith was great. It is not just the fact that he believed that commends him, but additionally, the fact that he acted upon his faith in God's promises. Thus he attested his assurance that God's promises would come true.

When Abraham sought to make his servant Eliezer his heir, God told him that his own offspring would be his heir and that his seed should be as the stars of heaven. Abraham believed God and it was accounted to him for righteousness. (Gen. 15:6) Paul quotes this in Romans 4:22-25, and explains that these words were not merely for Abraham's benefit, but were spoken for ours also.

Verses twenty-four and twenty-five enlarge on the subject and show how it is that this righteousness is imputed to us. "If we believe on him [God] that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification." We read, in Hebrews 9:24, that he appeared "in the presence of God for us," to apply the merit of his sacrifice on our behalf.

So, if we believe in Jesus' sacrifice, and if we make a full consecration, and if we are accepted by God, we then have been justified and begotten of the Holy Spirit. The apostle continues his reasoning in Romans 5:1,2: "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."

A ROBE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

Standing now in this grace, covered by the robe of Christ's righteousness, we are no longer at enmity with God, and no longer depending on our own works. Then have we entered into God's rest. "He that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his." (Heb. 4:10) This constitutes, for the Christian, a present and continuous rest in Christ. However, we realize that this is only a hand payment, a foretaste of the final rest beyond the veil.

We read, "Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest." (Heb. 4:11) This brings to mind those who contend in the games. They must strive lawfully. (I Cor. 9:24-27; II Tim. 2:5) Having gained access to the racecourse we must press along the line, earnestly and zealously running for the prize of the High Calling. (Phil. 3:14) We must be determined that nothing will hinder or divert us as we steadily progress toward the goal.

This labor will cost us something in time and talent. Our weak flesh may cry "enough," but the sacrifice must be consumed if it is to be accepted.

"Ne'er think the victory won,
Nor once at ease sit down,
Thine arduous work will not be done
Till thou has gained the crown."

Paul gives his reason for urging us to labor—"Lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief." (Heb. 4:11) These words are full of meaning to us. Think of Israel, the example of unbelief. Nor does he let the matter rest here. In Hebrews 3:12, he says: "Take heed, brethren," and in 4:1, "Let us therefore fear." These are warnings, danger signals,

that we who have entered into God's rest now, may fall short of entering the ultimate and complete rest in glory.

How Paul magnifies the importance of faith! Faith is the basis upon which we must build a character adorned with the fruits and graces of the Spirit. Some of these are fortitude, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, love. And again, love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance. (II Pet. 1:5-11; Gal. 5:22) We realize that of our own selves we would be unable to accomplish this transformation of character, but we are thankful to realize that having begun a good work in us, God is able also to finish it. We have been promised all the help we need.

Coming now to verse twelve and on to the end of Hebrews, the fourth chapter, Paul concludes his thoughts with the encouraging assurance that those who have entered into God's rest, have every provision made for them to receive help through their "great high priest"(vs. 14), and, by availing themselves of these privileges, will be able to be "more than conquerors."—Rom. 8:37

"The word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword." (Heb. 4:12) The truth of God's Word is the source from which we gain eternal life. It reveals God's purposes both for the church and for all mankind. It reveals our faults and failings, and shows us how to overcome them. It is given "for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."—II Tim. 3:16,17

“All things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.” (Heb. 4:13) We may hide things from others and even from ourselves, but we cannot hide them from God, for he knows the very thoughts and intents of our hearts. It should be our constant prayer to be cleansed from secret faults and thus be kept back from presumptuous sins. David expresses this thought beautifully: “Who shall ascend into the hill of the LORD? or who shall stand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart.”—Ps. 24:3,4

PURITY OF HEART

But how can we maintain this purity of heart? How can we overcome the wiles of the Adversary, the lust of the world, and the many weaknesses of our own flesh? Are we sometimes overwhelmed and discouraged at our failures? Do we sometimes allow our eyes to leave our Savior momentarily and look upon the roaring waves; or, perhaps, think that the fiery trials are more than we can endure?

What consolation is brought to us in the following verses: “Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.”—Heb. 4:14,15

What comfort it brings to consider Jesus! We have been beheaded and have accepted Christ instead as our Head. He knows each member of his body and is looking after the needs of each one, no

matter how small or insignificant those needs may be. He is our heavenly Bridegroom and is very solicitous for the welfare of his bride. He is anxiously awaiting as, one by one, they complete the adornment of their wedding gowns. Finally the marriage will take place. This will be “a marriage such as earth hath never known, when bride and Bridegroom are made one before the great white throne.”

ANOINTED IN CHRIST

We think of the anointing that we have received in coming into the body of Christ, and of all the privileges that we enjoy as we endeavor to follow faithfully in the steps of our Beloved. And how blessed the invitation, “Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.”—vs. 16

Having received all the admonition and encouragement of the preceding verses it is only logical that we should avail ourselves of the opportunity of coming to God in prayer. Indeed, we should feel the warmth of his relationship as a Father to his children, and should joyfully and eagerly come to him in prayer.

The word ‘boldly’ contains the thought of ‘frankly’ and ‘with assurance.’ We can bring our failures and shortcomings to our Father, for we have an Advocate, Jesus Christ the righteous, who pleads our cause, who intercedes on our behalf that our robes may be cleansed from every spot, stain, and wrinkle.—I John 2:1; Eph. 5:27

“Let no earthborn cloud arise to hide thee from thy servant’s eyes.”

So, then, it is by faith that we enter into God's rest in Christ. It is the proving of our faith that will determine our worthiness to enter into rest beyond the river of death.

"Let the saints be joyful in glory: let them sing aloud upon their beds." (Ps. 149:5) It has been well said, he who believes fully, rests fully. ■

Day by Day, Hour by Hour

*God broke our years to hours and days
That, hour by hour and day by day,
Just going on a little way
We might be able all along, to keep quite strong.*

*Should all the weight of life be laid
across our shoulders,
And the future, rife with woe and struggle,
Meet us face to face at just one place,
We could not go.*

*Our feet would stop; and so
God lays a little on us every day.*

*And never, I believe, on all the way
Will burdens bear so deep,
Or pathway lie so threatening and so steep,
But we can go,
If, by God's power,
we only bear the burden of the hour.*

—Selected

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

This cannot mean that we are to violate the laws of reason and decency by intruding the good tidings upon others at times inconvenient and unseasonable to them; but it does mean that we are to have such a love for the Truth, . . . that we will gladly accept the opportunity to do so, however inconvenient it may be for ourselves. It is the chief business of our lives, to which life itself even is subservient, and hence, no opportunity for service must be laid aside. Z.'03-189

—Daily Heavenly Manna, August 28

SPEAKERS' APPOINTMENTS

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

W. Austin

Cherhill, AB August 2,3
Wasilla, AK 21

E. Kuenzli

Louisville, AL August 14

P. Robinson

Atlanta, GA August 7

M. J. Balko

St. Petersburg, FL August 14

R. Gorecki

Cherhill, AB August 2,3
Wasilla, AK 21

OBITUARIES

The following brethren have recently finished their Christian course. We wish to express our sincere sympathy to their family and friends in the loss of these dear ones.

**Brother Frank Kamarunas, Hanover Twp., PA—
April 20. Age, 85**

Brother Paul Brown, Columbus, IN—May 30. Age, 90
Sister Helen Thompson, Downey, CA—June 24. Age, 85

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.

NIGERIAN GENERAL CONVENTION, August 17-21—Institute of Church and Society, Samonda Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria. Contact Cajetan Egbu, Chairman, No. 2 Darlington Street, Mokola Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria. Phone: 234-803-333-9949

JACKSON LABOR DAY CONVENTION, September 3,4—FaHaLo Camp & Conference Center, 3000 Mt. Hope Road, Grass Lake, MI 49240. Contact Mrs. Ray Lumley. Phone: (517) 782-7252

NEW YORK LABOR DAY CONVENTION, September 3,4—Wellesley Inn (formerly Ramada Inn), Two Bridges Road & Exit 52, Route 80, Fairfield, NJ 07006. Contact Debra Szybinski, 250 West 102 Street, 1 A, New York, NY 10025. Phone: (212) 998-2095

SEATTLE LABOR DAY CONVENTION, September 3,4,5—Seabeck Christian Conference Center, 15395 Seabeck Highway NW, Seabeck, WA 98380. Contact Laurie Flinn. Phone: (253) 939-9838

MILWAUKEE CONVENTION, September 17,18—Lake Lodge, 1235 East Howard Avenue, WI 53207. Contact Debi Moore. Phone: (414) 541-8937, or contact Chris Kuenzli. Phone: (414) 257-2672

CLAY CITY CONVENTION, September 24,25—Canyon Inn, McCormick's Creek State Park, Clay City, IN. Contact Sondra Clark, 7861 Clearwater Parkway, Indianapolis, IN 46240. Phone: (317) 578-2634

HUNTSVILLE CONVENTION, September 30, October 1,2—Holiday Inn Select (formally Huntsville Hilton), 401 Williams Avenue, Huntsville, AL 35801. Phone: (256) 533-1400. Contact Phillip Mosley, 1006 Mill Race Circle, Guntersville, AL 35976. Phone: (256) 582-3640

GRAND RAPIDS CONVENTION, October 8,9—Kenowa Hills Middle School, 3950 Hendershot Avenue, MI 49544. Contact Joanne Houlmont. Phone: (231) 972-4259

PITTSBURGH AREA CONVENTION, October 8,9—Sewickley Grange Hall, Route 136, West Newton, PA. Contact George Balko, Jr., 1300 High Street, West Newton, PA 15089. Phone: (724) 872-6418

NEW ENGLAND CONVENTION, October 14,15,16—Ramada Inn, Crooked Street, Plainville, CT. Contact Mrs. Richard Suraci, 171 Johnson Road, Hamden, CT 06518. Phone: (203) 248-3793

SAN LUIS OBISPO CONVENTION, October 15,16—Masonic Temple, 859 Marsh Street. Contact Lynn Murray. Phone: (805) 544-3037

ORLANDO CONVENTION, October 29,30—Garden Club of Sanford, 200 Fairmont Drive (corner of Hwy. 17-92), Sanford, FL. Contact Helen Jeuck, 587 Queens Mirror Circle, Casselberry, FL 32707. Phone: (407) 699-8303

JERSEY CITY PRE-THANKSGIVING CONVENTION, November 19,20—Loyalty Lodge, 1912 Morris Avenue, Union, NJ 07083. Phone: (908) 688-9842. Contact Mrs. Marilyn J. Rodriguez, P. O. Box 6685, Bridgewater, NJ 08807-6685. Phone: (908) 917-8211

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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