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TABLE OF CONTENTS

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HIGHLIGHTS OF DAWN

The Doctrine of Purgatory 2

INTERNATIONAL BIBLE STUDIES

Witness about Christ 20

Choose Right Priorities 22

Confess Christ 24

Be True to Christ 26

CHRISTIAN LIFE AND DOCTRINE

Christ, Our All in All 40

Weekly Prayer Meeting Texts 31

TALKING THINGS OVER

General Convention Bulletin 28

Registration Form 30

Statistical Report for 1996 58

Walking in the Light 62

PUBLICATIONS' LIST

Ten-cent Booklets 32

Five-cent Booklets 33

"FRANK AND ERNEST"

Domestic Radio Stations 34

Foreign Radio Stations 35

THE BIBLE ANSWERS

TV Listings 36

American Independent Network 37

Nostalgia Network 39

OBITUARIES

31

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

60

SPEAKERS' APPOINTMENTS

63

CONVENTIONS

64

THE DOCTRINE OF PURGATORY

FOR MANY CENTURIES Catholic Christians have been taught that after death all good Catholics go to Purgatory, which in their catechism (1994) defines Purgatory as the “final purification of the elect [before they enter God’s presence], which is entirely different from the punishment of the damned.”

Yet, the word purgatory does not appear in English translations of the Bible, and there is absolutely no hint of the traditional Purgatory teaching anywhere in the Word of God. How did this teaching arise? Why is it being questioned today? An interesting article appeared in the news media, released by the Associated Press with the title *Purgatory*, and a commentary that said: “Some Protestants now believe it exists; some Catholics seem to be in doubt.” The article went on to say, “Purgatory, unlike its famous cousins, Heaven and Hell, seems to be suffering public relations problems.

“While some Catholic scholars concede that Purgatory isn’t specifically mentioned in the Bible, they do cite several intriguing passages of the Bible in its support.

“In the Book of Matthew, for example, Jesus says that anyone who blasphemes the holy Spirit will not be forgiven ‘either in this age or in the age to come’. The passage appears to imply that excluding blasphemy some sins can be forgiven after death.”

*We do not understand this quotation from Matthew 12:31,32 to imply a place where forgiveness will be granted, but that there will be a time when this will be possible. The **King James Translation** uses the word “world” in this text, and says, “it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come.” (vs. 32) It is interesting that the writer of this article uses the **Revised Standard Version**, in which the correct word, ‘age’, is used denoting time, not place. The article continues:*

“For half a millennium, followers of Jesus have debated the concept of an intermediate state between Heaven and Hell. But since the Second Vatican Council 30 years ago, the subject rarely gets mentioned in books or sermons. And a Survey by ‘U.S. Catholic’ magazine, a liberal publication, found that nearly one in four readers rejected its existence.

“Once a fixture of church subculture—school children and adults prayed frequently for the souls there—the place has lost its prominence. The lowered profile could be attributed to the Second Vatican Council, which refocused Catholic devotional life onto Christ and the sacraments.

“Besides being less visible, Purgatory is not infrequently misunderstood. Even a few Catholics mistakenly believe that Purgatory offers unsaved souls a ‘second chance’ to qualify for Heaven. Actually, everyone there has been deemed worthy of

Paradise, says Peter Kreeft, a Boston College philosophy professor who writes about the afterlife.

"In Kreeft's view, Purgatory is merely a heavenly stopover for incoming saints, where life reviews take place and the last vestiges of self-love and other imperfections are removed. Prayers from the living are said to aid the process. While the subject may be in decline among Roman Catholics, Purgatory seems to be of increasing interest to Protestants.

"One of the first Protestants to broach the subject in modern times, was British author C.S. Lewis. 'Our souls demand Purgatory, don't they?' he wrote. 'Even if God doesn't mind people entering Heaven dripping with mud and slime . . . should we not reply . . . "I'd rather be cleansed first," (even if) it may hurt'. Support for the idea of Purgatory has emerged from the unlikeliest of sources—conservative evangelical college professors—traditionally among the fiercest opponents of Catholicism.

THE ORIGIN OF PURGATORY

"Evangelicals have warmed to Kreeft's speculations on the next world. Kreeft, a one-time Protestant who converted to Catholicism, places Purgatory inside Heaven and says, echoing St. Catherine of Genoa, that any pain felt there is 'incomparably more desirable than the most ecstatic pleasures on earth'. That portrait isn't much different from what some leading evangelical scholars call the 'intermediate state' between death and Paradise, says Gary R. Habermas, a philosophy professor at Jerry Falwell's Liberty University. The origin of Purgatory isn't easy to pin down. The starting point, says historian Alan Bernstein of the University of Arizona, was the practice of praying for the dead. The Apostle Paul, for instance, in a letter to Timothy, prayed for divine

mercy for his apparently deceased friend Onesiphorus.”

It is interesting to note that the basis for this concept comes from interpreting the scripture in II Timothy 1:16: “The LORD give mercy unto the house of Onesiphorus; for he oft refreshed me.” It has been assumed by some analysts that Onesiphorus had died because Paul mentions ‘the house of Onesiphorus’, instead of the individual only. There is no basis for the concept that Paul was praying for the dead. The use of the expression ‘house’ occurs in Paul’s writings frequently when an entire family were consecrated Christians. This was true of Stephanas, and Paul speaks of “the house of Stephanas” in I Corinthians 16:15, when in verse 17 it is quite evident that Stephanas was very much alive. See also Acts 16:15, and Acts. 18:8, where entire families were immersed. From their fallacious assumption, the article continues with an explanation of the origin of Purgatory.

“The implication quickly sank in: If prayers aren’t needed by souls in Heaven and can’t help anyone in Hell, there must be a third destination. But what?

“Barely 100 years after the last book of the New Testament was written, an answer started coming into focus. Theologian Clement of Alexandria theorized that Christians would undergo a purifying fire that ‘sanctifies . . . [and] penetrates the soul.’ That idea, which was echoed by other writers of the era, might owe some inspiration to the ancient Greek philosopher, Plato, who believed that ‘curably wicked’ souls would endure temporary ‘therapeutic punishment’ in the afterlife. Bernstein says, ‘The poet Dante portrayed Purgatory as a mountain, overseen by a guard named Cato and lit up by

a constellation of four flaming stars. Souls struggled up the mountain carrying weights and battling fire, until they reached Paradise'.

"Some Catholic scholars now speculate that the actual process of dying is Purgatory. Others suggest that Purgatory is a spiritual state, not a place."

The article then continues to show that Purgatory still is an essential teaching of the Catholic Church, and quotes several prominent Catholic theologians to show that this is so. But what does the Bible say of Purgatory? The Bible sets forth the thought of a purgation for the human race as part of God's plan of salvation from sin, dying, and death. All will agree that the people of the world need cleansing, that all are imperfect, sinners, coming far short of the perfect standard of righteousness required by God of all whom he will deem worthy of living forever in a state of peace and happiness.

But the Purgatory of the Dark Ages is unscriptural both in its nature and also with respect to its time relationship to the plan of God. This erroneous theory is that those not good enough to go to heaven when they die, go immediately to a Purgatory of suffering, and, after being purified, go to heaven. But the Bible teaches that both saints and sinners become unconscious when they die, and remain thus asleep in death until the resurrection. In the resurrection, according to the Bible, those who have died as saintly Christians will receive a heavenly reward, be united with Jesus, and, together with him, be the spiritual rulers over this earth for a period of a thousand years.

During this period of a thousand years, those who were not of that faithful body of Christ who

live and reign with him as heavenly beings, will be awakened from the sleep of death to dwell on the earth again as human beings. During this reign of Christ these will have an opportunity to be purged, or cleansed of their sins, and thereby prepared to live on the earth forever as perfect, absolutely holy human beings. The thousand years of Christ's reign over the peoples of the earth will therefore be the purgatorial period for the cleansing of mankind from the defilements of sin and death.

JESUS' SACRIFICE NECESSARY

The human race needs more than to be cleansed from sin! As we have seen, there was a penalty attached to sin. That penalty was death. It was not merely the process of dying, but death itself. For this reason the sinful race would have remained dead forever had not the love of God made a provision whereby the penalty of death could be paid by another. That provision was through his own beloved son, Christ Jesus. That is why Jesus is called the Redeemer. He it is who ransoms the world "from the power of the grave."—Hos. 13:14

The Prophet Isaiah says concerning Jesus, "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed." (Isa. 53:5) The Apostle Paul declares concerning Jesus, that he "gave himself a ransom for all." (I Tim. 2:6) Jesus said to his disciples, "The bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." (John 6:51) All of these inspired statements of the Word of God indicate that the first requisite to salvation and peace with God for any of the fallen human race is this provision

the Creator has made through the sacrificial work of the Redeemer. The Apostle Peter declares that "there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."—Acts 4:12, *RSV*

But the sacrificial work of Christ alone does not provide escape from death. In addition to this, it is necessary that the individual repent of sin and accept the gift—that is, exercise faith in the atoning blood of Christ. Beyond this, it is also essential to strive against inherited sin and so far as possible to be cleansed from its defiling influence. It is in this latter respect that the purgatorial teachings of the Scriptures form a part of the plan of God for human redemption and salvation.

PURGATORY BEFORE DEATH

As we have seen, the term 'purgatory' means a place, or condition of cleansing, of purging. There is much said in the Bible about Christian cleansing, or purging from sin. But unlike the traditional view of purgatory, which claims that believers pass through purgatory *after* death and finally enter into heavenly bliss and glory, the Bible shows that the Christian's purgation or cleansing takes place *before* death.

"Let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit," writes the apostle. (II Cor. 7:1) The Christian is expected to do this before he dies, not afterward. Jesus likened himself to a vine and his followers to branches of that vine. (John 15:1-8) Then he said that his Heavenly Father purged, or pruned the branches in order that they might bring forth more fruit. Here again is described a work of purging which takes place in the Christian before death, not afterward.

Peter, whose word is accepted with so much authority in the Catholic Church, wrote to Christians, saying, "Think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings." (I Pet. 4:12,13) Here is the unmistakable mention of fire in connection with Christian experience, but it has no reference to literal fire which it is alleged will torment people after death, but to the purging experiences which come to the Christian in this life.

The Apostle Paul wrote, "Whom the LORD loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth." (Heb. 12:6) There is nothing in this text to indicate that the scourging mentioned is to take place after death. Rather, the apostle is telling Christians what to expect in this life. If we love the LORD, and he loves us and is dealing with us, we must expect to be scourged or disciplined, in order that we might learn his will more perfectly and be trained to do it more faithfully.

Some of the purging experiences of the Christian are at the instance of the LORD, for by his kind providence his people are properly trained. But the Christian is also expected to take himself in hand and do some of the purging on a voluntary basis. Paul wrote, "I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a cast-away."—I Cor. 9:27

All of these passages from God's Holy Word indicate beyond doubt that purging work must go on in the life of every follower of the Master. The Scriptures also reveal that the great objective of this

purgating work is that Christians may be developed into the character likeness of their Lord. Paul writes that it is God's will that all who are called of him should be made copies of his dear Son. (Rom. 8:28,29) And there are many promises in the Bible to indicate that those who now repent of their sins, accept Jesus as their Redeemer, and then follow faithfully in his steps of sacrifice, striving to be made like him, will, when resurrected from the dead, share his heavenly home and reign with him for a thousand years for the blessing of the remainder of the world of mankind.

A THOUSAND YEARS OF CLEANSING

The purgatorial cleansings which we have just described involve but a very small minority of the human race. Jesus referred to this minority as a "little flock," but he said of these, "It is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."—Luke 12:32

We have already mentioned the thousand-year reign of Christ. Now we learn from Jesus that his true followers during the present age, in passing through their period of cleansing, are being prepared, not merely to enjoy a heavenly home with him, but also to work with him to rehabilitate the remainder of the human race, restoring them to live on the earth in a worldwide paradise; for this is the work to be accomplished by the kingdom of Christ. This gigantic undertaking, the Scriptures reveal, will require an entire thousand years for completion.

And it will be during this thousand years that mankind in general will be going through their purgatorial experiences—their purging, or cleansing, from the imperfection due to the Adamic fall.

This thousand-year period, during which Jesus and his church will be reigning over the earth, is also described in the Bible as a judgment day—this particular day being a thousand years long.—II Pet. 3:8; Acts 17:31; Rev. 5:10

The judgment work of that day will involve disciplinary training, or, as the prophet puts it, the LORD will “rebuke strong nations afar off.” (Mic. 4: 3) The Prophet Isaiah declares that when God’s “judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.” (Isa. 26:9) Jesus will be the great Judge of that day, and concerning him the prophet declares, “With righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth: and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked.”—Isa. 11:4

From this latter text we learn that during the world’s trial, or purgation period, those who do not learn righteousness, but who continue to oppose the will of the LORD, will finally be destroyed. This agrees with what the Apostle Peter states, as recorded in Acts 3:19-23. In this passage Peter reveals the purpose of Christ’s Second Coming to earth, that it is to usher in “times of restitution of all things,” that is, the restoration of the human race to life upon the earth. And then he adds concerning the divine method of dealing with mankind during that period, that those who do not obey the laws of the kingdom will be destroyed. Jesus is referred to by Peter as “that Prophet” whom Moses foretold would come, and he states that “every soul, which will not hear [obey] that Prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people.” (Acts 3:23) It is well to notice, in passing, that Peter

refers to the disobedient 'soul' as that which is to be destroyed.

SLEEPING ONES AWAKENED

The purgatorial blessings of the kingdom age will be available for those who have died as well as for those who are alive when the reign of Christ begins; for those who are asleep in death are to be awakened from their long sleep in order that they may share in those blessings. Concerning these the Prophet Daniel wrote, "Many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake." (Dan. 12:2) The reference to those who 'sleep in the dust of the earth' takes our minds back to the Garden of Eden, to the time when God said to our first parents, "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return."—Gen. 3:19

Through Jesus, the Creator provided redemption from this original penalty; hence those who have returned to the dust are to be awakened from the dust; that is, they are to be restored to life upon the earth, which was created to be man's everlasting home. (Isa. 45:18) Jesus said that the time is coming when all who are in their graves shall hear the voice of the Son of man and shall come forth. And then the master adds, "Those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of judgment."—John 5:28,29, *RSV*

Those who have 'done good' are, primarily, those who have followed in the footsteps of Jesus—those who have been purged or cleansed from sin in this life. The 'life resurrection' of these will consist of their being raised immediately to heavenly glory in order that they may live and reign with Christ. But those who have not 'done good', but evil, are also to

hear the Master's voice and come forth from their graves. These, Jesus said, will come forth to a resurrection of judgment.

What does this mean? The Greek word translated judgment in this wonderful promise made by Jesus is *krisis*. It has essentially the same meaning as our English word 'crisis', namely, a testing or trial time. We say, for example, that the crisis of a disease is reached on a certain day. This means that on this particular day it can be determined whether or not the patient will live. If the crisis is passed successfully, the patient takes a turn for the better and usually recovers his health. Otherwise, he dies.

So it will be with the world of mankind during the purgatorial period of the Messianic kingdom. Those who have done evil in this life—which includes practically the whole world of mankind, born as members of a sinful and dying race—will be awakened from death and put on trial for everlasting life. That will be their *krisis* time when they will be enlightened concerning the loving provision made for them through the death of Jesus and be given an opportunity to believe on him and to obey the laws of his kingdom. If they accept and obey it, it will mean that they have turned from sin toward God and righteousness, that thus far they have passed the *krisis* successfully and are on their way to righteousness and life.

But the way will not be easy. The degree to which each one has opposed righteousness in this life will have a bearing upon the severity of the purgatorial experiences through which he will need to pass in order to attain eternal life during that future period of trial. Jesus explained the principle involved in this matter, saying that those who know

not the will of God and do it not, shall be beaten with few stripes, while those who know God's will and do it not, shall be beaten with many stripes. (Luke 12:47,48) This is simply another way of stating that the measure of disciplinary punishment to be experienced by any member of the human race—either now or in the resurrection—will depend upon the measure of willfulness with which he sinned.

Jesus explained that those who have not done righteously in this life shall, when awakened from the sleep of death, be given a resurrection of judgment, or *krisis*. This indicates that a mere awakening from the sleep of death will not constitute a full resurrection. And the reason for this becomes apparent when we recall the glorious perfection from which the human race fell, the perfection that was represented in father Adam before he transgressed the divine law.

The awakening from death will be but the first step on the return road to this original perfection. The other steps will be taken on the basis of passing the tests of obedience which will be placed upon all individuals at that time. Their resurrection, or raising up to perfection, will be by judgment, or *krisis*; all of their cleansing and disciplinary experiences serving as tests will, as those tests are passed, result in their being raised a little nearer to the ultimate perfection for which they will be striving.

THE WAY TO HOLINESS

The progress toward holiness which will take place during the world's purgatorial period is likened by the Prophet Isaiah to one who travels over a highway, or public roadway. He calls it the "way of holiness." (Isa. 35:8) It is to be a 'highway', the prophet explains. "The unclean shall not pass over

it," he declares, although "it shall be for those," that is, for the unclean. The meaning is clear; namely, that while no one will be able to pass all the way over this highway and remain unclean, it is for their benefit; for it is a way over which the unclean can progress toward holiness—a way that leads to righteousness and perfection.

The prophet explains further concerning this highway, that "no lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon." (Isa. 35:9) Thank God for this assurance! Today the Devil goes about as "a roaring lion . . . seeking whom he may devour." (I Pet. 5:8) But at the very beginning of the world's Judgment Day, or purgatorial day, the Devil is to be bound; so it will not be possible for him to deceive the people during that time. (Rev. 20:1-3) Today millions are menaced by the ravenous beasts of temptation so strong that they seem unable to cope with them. But all of this will change!

And who will travel over this road that leads to holiness, to perfection of human nature? The prophet answers, saying, "The ransomed of the LORD shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away." (Isa. 35:10) Yes, this future highway is to be the return road from death, and over it the ransomed of the LORD will make their way back to health and joy and everlasting life.

Who are the ransomed of the LORD? Paul answers by saying that Jesus gave himself "a ransom for all." (I Tim. 2:4-6) All mankind, then, are included in the statement, 'ransomed of the LORD'; for the Lord Christ Jesus has ransomed the entire

human race from sin and death, having made provision for this by his own death on Calvary's cross.

What a glorious prospect! Surely God's ways are higher than man's ways, and his thoughts than a man's thoughts, even as the prophet has declared. —Isa. 55:8,9

THROUGH CLEANSING TO PARADISE

The ultimate destiny of the millions of mankind who will be perfected by the manner in which Christ will deal with them during the thousand years of his reign will be to live in an earthly paradise forever. The Bible is clear and definite in its teaching that the earth was created to be man's home forever, and that man was created to live on the earth, not in heaven. The fact that the church of the present age is called to a special heavenly reward with Jesus does not change God's original plan for the human race in general.

The Prophet Isaiah declares that God created the earth, not in vain, but formed it to be inhabited. (Isa. 45:18) This agrees with the original account of Creation, where we read that when God created man he commanded him to multiply and fill the earth and subdue it. (Gen. 1:27,28) Had man remained obedient to God, and had this divine mandate been carried out as directed, the entire earth would have become one vast and gorgeous paradise, filled with a perfect and happy human family, knowing nothing of sin, sickness, pain, war, and all the other evils which now plague us, including death.

But this original plan of God has not failed. True, man violated the law of God and brought upon himself the penalty of death, yet, through Jesus, redemption has been provided from the results of sin. This means that the original plan is still to be!

Man did multiply, and the earth has been filled, although with a dying race. But the dying and dead race is to be restored to life. This is the purpose of the thousand years of judgment, or trial, which soon will come to the people. And at the end of that period of judgment and cleansing—the true purgatory of the Scriptures—those who pass their trial successfully will have the privilege of living on the earth as perfect human beings throughout the endless ages of eternity.

FIRES OF CLEANSING

Through a misunderstanding of Scriptural symbolism, many have been led to believe that the planet Earth is to be destroyed at the Second Coming of Christ; but this is not true. The Scriptures declare that “the earth abideth forever.” (Eccles. 1:4) The symbolisms which have been misunderstood are those in which fire is used to depict the destruction of the evil elements of society—political and religious—just prior to the establishment of the kingdom of Christ.

There are many prophecies which speak of the symbolic fire that will destroy the evil works of man and thereby cleanse the world in preparation for God’s new order. “The elements shall melt with fervent heat,” declares Peter. (II Pet. 3:10) This does not refer to the melting of the sun, moon, and stars, but to the evil elements of human society, all of which must be burned, or purged away, in preparation for the establishment of Christ’s kingdom.

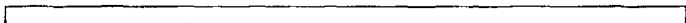
The Apostle Peter, after describing the passing away of man’s selfish and sinful world, reminds us of God’s plan for a new world order, which he describes as a ‘new heavens’ and a ‘new earth’. He says, “We, according to his [God’s] promise, look for

Christ is but a part of the divine arrangement whereby the great purpose of human restoration is to be accomplished.

When we discern this important truth of the divine plan, we realize that God's purpose in the earth has not failed. Countless millions have died without an opportunity to know Christ and the loving provision of his redeeming blood, but this is not because they have been overlooked in the divine plan or because God's purpose toward them has miscarried. It simply means that his time for their blessing has not come—that they were permitted to fall asleep in death until all the arrangements for their blessing were complete. Then, as we have seen, they will be awakened from death, enlightened, and given an opportunity to live on the earth forever. This was the Creator's original plan for them.

There is every indication now that the time for the blessing of mankind—the living and the dead—is near. The prophecies of the Bible pertaining to the end of Satan's misrule are being fulfilled. This, of necessity, is causing a great time of trouble throughout the earth, but soon the governing power of the kingdom of Christ will manifest itself, and the blessings of peace and joy and life will begin to flow to the people.

It is this glorious consummation of the divine plan of salvation that is expressed by those well-known words of the Lord's prayer: "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." (Matt. 6:10) Let us, then, continue to offer this inspired prayer, in faith, believing that the answer to it is near. ■



INTERNATIONAL BIBLE STUDIES

LESSON FOR JANUARY 5

WITNESS ABOUT CHRIST

KEY VERSE: *"I [John] indeed have baptized you with water: but he [Jesus] shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit."*—Mark 1:8

SELECTED SCRIPTURE: *Mark 1:4-11,14,15; Luke 7:18-23*

MOST CHRISTIAN PEOPLE are well acquainted with the short ministry of John the Baptist, who immersed Jesus in the Jordan River and prepared the way for the more widespread ministry of our Lord. (Matt. 3:3) What a grand privilege was John's to have participated in that work, and to have witnessed the Holy Spirit descending upon the Lord Jesus, and to have heard the voice from heaven proclaiming him to be the beloved Son of God in whom the Father was well pleased. —vs. 17

Jesus was the "Lamb of God, which taketh away

the sin of the world." (John 1:29) This was true not only in connection with his disciples and others in the Early Church, but will also be true in its full accomplishment during the future kingdom of righteousness when it is established in the earth.

The Prophet Joel points to the time when God's Spirit will be given to the whole world of mankind. He says: "It shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see

visions.” (Joel 2:28) What a marvelous picture of the time when all people will be blessed by God’s Spirit.

Joel also points to the present Gospel Age when the footstep followers of Jesus receive the Holy Spirit to enable them to walk in “newness of life,” (Rom 6:4) He says: “Upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my Spirit.” (Joel 2:29) It is only after the Spirit has fulfilled its purpose in the lives of the faithful “bride” (Rev. 21:9) class that is presently being selected from the world that the Spirit will be poured upon all flesh.

The Apostle Paul tells us that “the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God.” (Rom. 8:19) The whole human family is waiting for the completion of the ‘bride’ of Christ and the blessings associated with the kingdom to follow. Paul continues: “For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have

the firstfruits of the Spirit.”—vss. 22,23

Luke notes that Jesus performed many wonderful miracles during his earthly ministry. John the Baptist was in prison when he sent two of his disciples to ask Jesus if he was the one promised to come, or should they look for another. The Scriptures say: “In that same hour he [Jesus] cured many of their infirmities and plagues, and of evil spirits; and unto many that were blind he gave sight. Then Jesus answering said unto them, Go your way, and tell John what things ye have seen and heard; how that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, [and] to the poor the Gospel is preached.”—Luke 7:21, 22

The blessings associated with these miracles foreshadowed the greater joys to come in the kingdom when the powerful lessons of our Lord Jesus’ earthly ministry will become a reality for all mankind. Then they will have the opportunity to gain perfect and everlasting life. ■

CHOOSE RIGHT PRIORITIES

KEY VERSE: *“Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.”—Luke 10:41,42*

SELECTED SCRIPTURE: *Luke 10:38-42; John 12:1-8*

THE TWO SISTERS, Mary and Martha, each loved Jesus very much, but showed their appreciation for him in different ways. Martha was diligently preparing the meals and other comforts to provide for the Lord's physical needs. But it was Mary who took every opportunity to sit at his feet to listen and learn those gems of truth that came from the Master's mouth. The Key Verse addresses this matter in Jesus' own words as he points out Martha's overanxious manner in connection with material things, whereas he commends Mary for

having chosen the more important matters concerning his sojourn on earth.

On another occasion, near the end of our Lord's earthly ministry, he was in the home of Martha and Mary, together with their brother, Lazarus, whom he had recently resurrected from the grave. The two sisters were again seen in their respective roles—Mary learning at Jesus' feet. While Martha was busy preparing a sumptuous feast for Jesus, her sister, Mary, set about to perform a special act of reverence and dedication on behalf of her Master. As

the nearness of his death was approaching, she was prepared to do something extra-special for the one she loved so much.

Mary's tenderness and devotion are truly manifest in her actions. "Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment." (John 12:3) The ointment was a very precious perfume which she had procured for this particular occasion. We are told that it was valued at three hundred pence. (vs. 5) A pence was a day's wages. (Matt. 20:2) Mary's gift of the precious spikenard, therefore, was the equivalent of a full year's wages at that time.

The depth of Mary's love is further shown using her hair to wipe our Lord's feet. A woman's hair is universally recognized as a special treasure to her. It is a woman's crowning glory'. To use her hair in such a way suggests an added dimension of her devotion for the Master. The scene suggests the true sense of

esteem and reverence that Mary felt for Jesus. The whole house was subsequently filled with the delightful aroma of her self-sacrificing act, which serves as a memorial to her love for the Lord of glory.

Within a week of the time of this incident, Jesus had been put to death, and his tomb was sealed and guarded by Roman soldiers. Had Mary not seized the opportunity to perform this act of self-sacrificing love for the Lord she could never have done it again. She would only have been able to pour out her precious perfume upon Jesus' dead body.

There seems to be a lesson for all of the Lord's people who are now living at the end of the age—the 'feet' members of the household of faith. Let us also pour out the sweet perfume of love and devotion, especially upon our brethren. We never know when it may be too late to do an act of kindness, or to offer a word of encouragement to those who may be undergoing particularly difficult experiences in their lives, common to us all, at times. ■

CONFESS CHRIST

KEY VERSE: *"Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."—Matthew 16:16*

SELECTED SCRIPTURE: *Matthew 4:18-20; 16:13-23*

ONE DAY WHEN Jesus was walking along the shore of the Sea of Galilee, he found Simon Peter and his brother, Andrew, fishing. (Matt. 4:18) When Jesus invited them to follow him, they both quickly left their pursuits and heeded his invitation. This incident made a lasting impression upon Peter, especially, who quickly recognized the Master.

Later, when the Lord was visiting the coastal town of Caesarea Philippi, Jesus asked his disciples—while identifying himself as the Son of Man—what they had heard concerning who he was. (Matt. 16:13) Various answers were given as to what they had heard men say about him. Some thought he was John the Baptist, while others

had said that he might be Elijah. They had also heard that he might be one of the prophets such as Jeremiah, or, perhaps others might have thought that he could be that unnamed special prophet spoken of by Moses in Deuteronomy 18:15,18.

Our Lord then turned and addressed his question directly to the disciples: But who do you think I am? Peter had followed Jesus during the early days of his ministry and had witnessed the marvelous deeds that he had done, as well as heard him preach. He had gained much insight into whom the Master was, so he was ready to give his answer without hesitation. "Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the

Christ, the Son of the living God.” (Matt. 16:16) Jesus was obviously well pleased with the answer he had received from Peter, for he then said to him: “Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.”—vs. 17

Jesus explained to Peter that he was preparing to build his “church,” which is the first time that he had used that terminology. He wished to emphasize that he himself would be the “rock” upon which that church would be founded, and he would become the ransom, permitting the selection of “living stones” for a spiritual house.—I Pet. 2:5, *Wilson’s Emphatic Diaglott*

Peter, whose name means ‘stone’, would be an important part of that church as one of the twelve apostles who had chosen to follow him. Further, he would receive the “keys of the kingdom of heaven,” a special blessing to the humble fisherman who had so eagerly responded to the Master’s calling. He would use these keys to open the way for ‘the

church’ or called-out ones, using the first key when he explained the meaning of events to Israel on the Day of Pentecost. (Acts 2:14-40) The second key was used when he was sent to the home of Cornelius and his family and friends, the first Gentile converts.—Acts 10:34-48

Until that time, Jesus’ disciples did not properly understand what his earthly ministry was about. They had thought that he would set up his kingdom in their lifetime. But he began to prepare them for the days ahead. “From that time forth began Jesus to show unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day.”—Matt 16: 21

The hard reality that Jesus needed to endure the pain of death put a new dimension on his ministry. He would not disobey the Heavenly Father’s will, but would gladly lay down his life as earth’s Redeemer, in spite of Peter’s wish to spare him pain, suffering and death. ■

BE TRUE TO CHRIST

KEY VERSE: "*Judas, which betrayed him [Jesus], answered and said, Master, is it I? He said unto him, Thou hast said.*"—Matthew 26:25

SELECTED SCRIPTURE: Matthew 26:14-16, 20-25, 47-50; 27:1-5

JUDAS HAD BEEN especially selected by Jesus as one of his twelve apostles, and sent forth by him to heal the sick, to cast out devils, and to carry out many other works in connection with his earthly ministry. He had been a witness to Jesus' miracle-working powers, and had learned firsthand from his teaching of the Scriptures. No doubt he began his ministry with sincere motives and desires to be a true follower of the Master.

Evidently, however, Judas allowed the selfish tendencies of his earthly nature to hold sway over his actions. Instead of appreciating the principles of truth and righteousness as illustrated by our Lord's life and

teachings, he was gradually consumed by pride and greed. He failed to develop the noble qualities of justice, love, and mercy as shown in Jesus' life, and, instead, went on to cultivate earthly characteristics of his own base nature.

Judas had become attracted to the glorious prospects of the kingdom which had been set forth by Jesus to his close followers. He had heard the Master's teachings concerning the throne of glory, and the honors attached to it. He probably misunderstood the reality of the situation as well as the ultimate prospect. The opportunity of judging the twelve tribes of Israel interested his ego, but he was not prepared to

lay his life down in sacrifice to obtain the blessing.

As worldly wisdom overtook his mind, apparently he became offended at Jesus' actions as being foolish, and began to be more critical of him. The multitudes desired to make Jesus a king, so why, from his perspective, should he refuse them and withdraw himself from such an honor? Instead of speaking to the people in parables, why not explain them so that they could understand? Furthermore, Judas may have reasoned that Jesus could have worked with the religious leaders of Israel rather than to constantly reprove them, and to refuse to cooperate with them.

Judas' selfish attitude was revealed in connection with the anointing of Jesus' feet by Mary of Bethany a few days before the Master's betrayal and crucifixion. Mary had procured very expensive and precious perfume for the occasion. Her actions offended Judas who considered the matter as wasteful extravagance. He remarked that the money should have been spent on

behalf of the poor; whereas, he, no doubt, had little interest in their welfare.

This ambitious spirit led him to plot with the chief priests of Israel in Jesus' betrayal and death. Finding them eager to conspire against the Master, "[He] said unto them, What will ye give me, and I will deliver him unto you? And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver. And from that time he sought opportunity to betray him."—Matt. 26:15, 16

Jesus, of course, was aware of the deceitful conspiracy that was being formulated against him. He knew that Judas, one of the twelve who shared with him in the Last Supper around the table that final night of his life on earth, would be the one who would ultimately betray him. The Lord's eloquent teachings, healing of the sick and afflicted, and even the miracles of raising the dead to life, had been disregarded. Jesus said: "Woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! It had been good for that man if he had not been born."—vs 24 ■

TALKING THINGS OVER

General Convention Bulletin July 26-31, 1997—Claremont, California

THE 1997 GENERAL CONVENTION will be held on the lovely grounds of Claremont McKenna college in Claremont, California. For the first time there is no extra charge for singles since the college has more rooms with one bed than with two. Here are the prices:

	ages 18 and up	13-17	7-12
Breakfast	\$4.00	\$3.00	\$2.00
Lunch	5.00	4.00	3.00
Dinner	<u>7.00</u>	<u>6.00</u>	<u>5.00</u>
Total, three meals	16.00	\$13.00	\$10.00
Lodging (per night)			
shared bath, per person	\$16.00	\$12.00	\$8.00
private bath, (two people required)	\$20.00	\$16.00	\$12.00
PKG: 7 nights, 18 meals			
shared bath	\$184	\$150	\$100
private bath	\$212	\$178	\$128

The cost of room and meals for those who are 6 years old or younger will be paid by the convention. Once again, half the subsidized cost of those who are 7 through 17 years old will be refunded if the person attends at least 75% of the Bible classes while at the convention.

The auditorium and cafeteria are air conditioned; some of the sleeping rooms are air conditioned, and some are not. Some rooms will require walking up one flight of steps.

We have a limited number of private bathrooms. Please select the shared bath option if you can. Special facilities for families with very young children are available with a private bath at no extra cost. There are motels nearby, though none are within walking distance.

Again the General Convention treasury is subsidizing the package price to benefit those who stay for the entire convention.

It is a great help if you pay in advance after you receive your confirmation invoice. If your plans change, your money will be promptly refunded. Please register if you expect to be at the convention even if you prefer not to pay in advance.

The college is just ten miles from the Ontario, California, airport. If you want to use our shuttle service, send us the name of your airline, flight number, and arrival date and time. We will be happy to meet your flight.

A registration form follows on page 30.

Special Notice to Young Adults

The brethren in Los Angeles are organizing a four-day youth seminar for July 20-24 at the same location. The cost for five nights and 15 meals is \$90 for seminar participants who stay at the college. Contact Robert Wagoner at (714) 542-8466 or e-mail rnrwagoner@aol.com for more details.

General Convention Registration
1425 Lachman Lane --- Pacific Palisades, CA 90272

	Breakfast	Lunch	Dinner	Lodging
Friday, July 25, '97				
Saturday, 26th				
Sunday, 27th				
Monday, 28th				
Tuesday, 29th				
Wednesday, 30th				
Thursday, 31st				

OR check here for package: 7 nights, 18 meals ☐

Check: ☐ shared bath -or- ☐ private bath [at extra cost]
☐ air conditioning ☐ NO air conditioning ☐ don't care

Names and Ecclesia name (age if under 18)

Address:

--

Telephone number [evenings]: area code ()

Are you able to walk up one flight of steps? ☐ yes ☐ no

Flight info into Ontario, Calif., if you want to be picked up:

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WEEKLY PRAYER MEETING TEXTS

JANUARY 2—"Ye are not your own. For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." — I Corinthians 6:19,20 (Z. '97-35 Hymn 191)

JANUARY 9—"Who maketh thee to differ from another? And what hast thou that thou didst not receive?"—I Corinthians 4:7 (Z. '03-430 Hymn 177)

JANUARY 16—"Instant in prayer."—Romans 12:12 (Z. '95-215 Hymn 323)

JANUARY 23—"Brethren, let every man, wherein he is called, therein abide with God."—I Corinthians 7:24 (Z. 99-155 Hymn 259)

JANUARY 30—"Jesus spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint."—Luke 18:1 (Z. '95-214 Hymn 293)



OBITUARIES

The following brethren have recently finished their Christian courses. We wish to express our sincere sympathy to the family and friends in the loss of these dear ones. We appreciate information concerning any brethren to be included in this list.

Sister Janet Jinjoe, Prince Albert, Sask.—November 5, 1996. Age, 70.

Brother Chas. Chopoorian, Waterbury, CT—November 18.

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PARADISE WITHOUT POLLUTION

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A ROYAL NATION

Deals with British-Israel doctrines

SCIENCE AND CREATION

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THE TRUTH ABOUT HELL

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"FRANK AND ERNEST" . . .

Sundays Unless Otherwise Noted

ALABAMA

Guntersville
WTWX 95.9 fm 6:45 a.m.

ARKANSAS

Little Rock KAAZ 1090 6:30 a.m.
Marshall KCGS 960 4:30 p.m.

CALIFORNIA

Monterey KNRY 1240 8:30 a.m.
Morro Bay KBAI 1150 7:30 p.m.
Paso Robles
KNCR 103.1fm 10:00 p.m.
San Francisco
KEST 1450 3:30 p.m.

FLORIDA

Jacksonville
WIOJ 1010 7:45 p.m.
St. Petersburg
WTIS 1110 5:00 p.m.

GEORGIA

Augusta WGAC 580 8:00 a.m.

ILLINOIS

LaSalle WLFO 1220 9:45 a.m.
West Frankfort
WFRX 1300 9:15 a.m.

INDIANA

Hammond WJOB 1230 8:30 a.m.
LaPorte
WCOE 96.7fm 10:00 a.m.
North Vernon
WKRP 1460 8:00 a.m.

KANSAS

Goodland KLOE 730 7:30 a.m.

KENTUCKY

Bowling Green
WBGN 107.1 fm 8:15 a.m.
Winchester
WINH 1380 10:30 a.m.

MICHIGAN

Detroit WLQV 1500 9:30 a.m.
Fremont WSHN 1500 9:00 a.m.
WSHN 100.1 fm 9:00 a.m.

MISSOURI

Osage Beach
KRMS 1150 8:30 a.m.

NEW JERSEY

Camden (Tues.)
WTMR 800 2:30 p.m.
Salem WJIC 1510 9:45 a.m.
WNNN 101.7 fm 9:45 a.m.

NEW YORK

Buffalo WHLD 1270 12:00 noon
New York WOR 710 9:15 p.m.
New York WEVD 1050 9:00 a.m.

NORTH CAROLINA

Greensboro (Tues.)
WQMG 1510 3:00 p.m.
Wendell WETC 540 4:45 p.m.

NORTH DAKOTA

Fargo KQWB 1500 8:00 a.m.

OHIO

Cleveland WRKG 1380 7:45 a.m.

PENNSYLVANIA

Bethlehem WPGA 1100 7:45 a.m.
Pittsburgh KQV 1410 7:30 p.m.
Pottstown
WPAZ 1370 12:45 p.m.

SOUTH CAROLINA

Charlestown
WOKE 1340 7:45 a.m.

TENNESSEE

Camden WFWL 1220 7:00 p.m.
Nashville WSM 650 7:45 a.m.

VIRGINIA

Richmond WGGM 820 7:45 a.m.

WASHINGTON

Spokane KAQQ 590 7:00 a.m.

WEST VIRGINIA

Wheeling WWVA 1170 6:15 p.m.

.... WORLDWIDE RADIO BROADCASTS

CANADA

ALBERTA

Banff CFHC 1340 11:45 a.m.
Brooks CIBQ 1340 8:00 a.m.
Canmore CFNC 1450 11:45 a.m.
Stettler CKFQ 1400 7:45 a.m.

BRITISH COLUMBIA

Duncan CKAY 1500 10:00 p.m.
Grand Forks
CKFG 1340 9:00 a.m.
Qualicum-Parksville
CHPQ 1370 9:30 p.m.

BRITISH WEST INDIES

Trinidad Radio Trinidad 610
10:30 p.m.

CHILE (Spanish)

Talcahuano Radio Almirante

Latarre

COSTA RICA (Spanish)

San Jose Radio Sonorara
105.9fm and 700am 6:15 a.m.

MEXICO (Spanish)

Culiacán Ranchera
XECQ 8:30 a.m.
Guadalajara
XEWK 1130 8:30 a.m.

MANITOBA

Winnipeg CKJS 810 9:00 a.m.

ONTARIO

St. Thomas
CHLO 1570 10:45 a.m.

SASKATCHEWAN

North Battleford
CJNB 1040 7:15 a.m.
Weyburn CFSL 1190 8:45 a.m.
Estevan CJSL 1280 8:45 a.m.

NIGERIA

Radio Africa (Thurs.) 7:45 p.m.

PANAMA (Spanish)

Panama City (Fri.)
HOQ 1250 6:15 p.m.

PERU (Spanish)

Trujillo 105.7fm
9:30 a.m. and 10:00 p.m.

PHILIPPINES

Manila (Sat.)
DZAM 1026 kHz 7:15 p.m.

SOUTH AFRICA

Swaziland SWAZI 8:15 p.m.
Commercial Radio 1400 am
Shortwave 49m 6156 kHz



*"O send out thy light
and thy truth: let them
lead me; let them bring
me unto thy holy hill,
and to thy tabernacles."*

Psalm 43:3

THE BIBLE ANSWERS TV PROGRAMS

Sundays Unless Otherwise Listed

ALABAMA

Birmingham 12 6:30 a.m.
 Florence WXFL 6:30 a.m.
 Florence F28AP 6:30 a.m.
 Guntersville Chan. 5 10:30 a.m.
 Guntersville Chan. 5 7:30 p.m.
 Guntersville (Mon.) Ch5 7:30 p.m.
 Tuscaloosa 403BF 6:30 p.m.

ARIZONA

Phoenix K23BJ 5:30 a.m.
 Phoenix KBHC 5:30 a.m.

ARKANSAS

Fort Smith KFDF 6:30 a.m.

CALIFORNIA

Chico K2210 4:30 a.m.
 Los Angeles TV6 4:30 a.m.
 Los Angeles KPAL 4:30 a.m.

CONNECTICUT

New Haven/Hartford
 (Fri.) WBNE 10:30 a.m.

FLORIDA

Pensacola WFGX 11:00 a.m.

GEORGIA

Atlanta W34AG 7:30 a.m.

HAWAII

Honolulu Cab. Chan. 22 11:30 a.m.

ILLINOIS

Champaign W41BL 6:30 a.m.

INDIANA

Evansville WJTS 6:30 a.m.
 Evansville WBP 6:30 a.m.
 Evansville TV24 6:30 a.m.

KANSAS

Wichita KSMI 6:30 a.m.

KENTUCKY

Lexington WOGBC 7:30 a.m.
 Lexington W10BM 7:30 a.m.
 Lexington W02BP 7:30 a.m.
 Lexington W07BY 7:30 a.m.
 Louisville 406AY 7:30 a.m.
 Louisville (Tues.) WBNA 8:30 a.m.
 Paducah WQTV 6:30 a.m.

MAINE

Augusta W67BE 7:30 a.m.
 Bangor WBGR 9:30 a.m.

MARYLAND

Baltimore WMJF 7:30 a.m.

MICHIGAN

Grand Rapids W25BI 7:30 a.m.

NEW MEXICO

Albuquerque K31CT 5:30 a.m.

NORTH CAROLINA

Greensboro WAUE 7:30 a.m.
 Raleigh W67CD 7:30 a.m.
 Wilmington WSSN 7:30 a.m.
 Wilmington TV 10 7:30 a.m.

OHIO

Cleveland WOHZ 7:30 a.m.
 Columbus WDLR 7:30 a.m.

OKLAHOMA

Tulsa KPOC 6:30 a.m.

OREGON

Portland K25EB 6:30 a.m.

PENNSYLVANIA

Wilkes Barre W35AT 7:30 a.m.
 Wilkes Barre W47AO 7:30 a.m.
 Wilkes Barre W65CE 7:30 a.m.

UTAH

Salt Lake City KSGF 5:30 a.m.
 Salt Lake City KVLV 5:30 a.m.

WASHINGTON, D.C.

Washington WTMW-14 9:30 a.m.

WISCONSIN

Green Bay W04CW 6:30 a.m.
 La Crosse KQEG 6:30 a.m.

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AMERICAN INDEPENDENT NETWORK, SUNDAYS

11:30 a.m. E.T.-10:30 a.m. CT- 9:30 a.m. MT- 8:30 a.m. PT

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Sitka KSCT-TV5

ALABAMA

Alexander City W64CC

Decatur WMIN-TV43

Florence WBCF-TV3

Greensboro WO3BF

Jasper WACN-TV55

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Talladega Cable TV 7

Talladega W47BS

Tuscumbia WYLE-TV26

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ARIZONA

Bullhead City KMOH-TV 6

Flagstaff KWOBF-TV 13

Lake Havasu K23BI

Payson K22FL

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Prescott KUSK-TV7

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Barstow KTSK-TV 17

Palmdale KPAL-TV 38

Sacramento K25FL

San Francisco KBI-TV 30

San Luis Obispo KSLO-TV 20

COLORADO

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THE BIBLE ANSWERS TV PROGRAMS

AMERICAN INDEPENDENT NETWORK, SUNDAYS, Cont.

TEXAS		UTAH	
Atlanta	AOC-TV 42	Kanab	K12ND
Beaumont	K09VO	Logan	K07-TV 12
Bryan	KTAM-TV 22	VIRGINIA	
Bryan	KYLE-TV 28	Farmville	W52BS
Corpus Christi	KOAO-TV 50	Hampton	WPEN-TV 68
Dallas	KATA-TV 60	Hampton	W07CZ
Dallas	KMPX-TV-29	Hayes	WPEN-TV 51
Greenville	KTAQ-TV 47	Keysville	W39BN
Greenville	KER-TV 53	Montclair	WDRG-TV 24
Harlingen	Cable TV 30	WASHINGTON	
Harlingen	K52EA	Yakima	KEBB-TV 60
Keene	K60FS	WISCONSIN	
San Antonio	K25ES	Kenosha	WHKE-TV 55
Sulphur Springs	KSST-TV 18	LaCrosse	WKBT-TV 8
Tyler	KTLN-TV 48	LaCrosse	KOEG-TV 50
Victoria	KCP-TV 55		

NOSTALGIA NETWORK

Programs are shown every Tuesday at 7:00 a.m. ET

"THESE THINGS HAVE I spoken unto you in proverbs: but the time cometh, when I shall no more speak unto you in proverbs, but I shall show you plainly of the Father. At that day ye shall ask in my name: and I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you: For the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God."
— John 16:25-27

CHRIST, OUR ALL IN ALL

***"There is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all."
Colossians 3:11***

***"Of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption."
I Corinthians 1:30***

AN HONEST AND humble appraisal of ourselves must lead to the inevitable conclusion that, as members of the fallen and sinful race of mankind, we have nothing of virtue or character by which we can commend ourselves to God with the hope of being acceptable to him because of our own righteousness. This means that our sonship privileges in God's family are possible through the abundance of his grace in providing a way whereby he could be just and still be the justifier of those who come to him through Christ. (Rom. 3:25,26) Salvation, and all the divine blessings incidental thereto, are ours—not because of our own merit—but because of the Heavenly Father's love in giving his Son to be our Redeemer. Well has the apostle put it. sav-

ing, "By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God."—Eph. 2:8

And what a wonderful gift! The value of salvation is appreciated most by those who, having a proper evaluation of their own undone condition, realize their great need for it. And what riches of divine favor are represented in the provision the Heavenly Father has made through Christ! Those who come to him in simple faith and full devotion, may not only enjoy peace with God, but have access to the inner chambers of his grace, and therein rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. (Rom. 5:1,2) This "great salvation," the apostle explains, "began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him."—Heb. 2:3

The First Advent of Christ marked the opening of the age during which the "high," or heavenly "calling" (Phil. 3:14) of those who were to reign with him in glory was to operate. Not until Jesus came and shed his blood as the Redeemer of both the church and the world would it have been possible for anyone, no matter how earnestly he may have tried, to meet the conditions laid down for those who are called to glory, honor, and immortality.

CHRIST OUR WISDOM

Not only was Christ the first one to walk in the narrow way that leads to immortality, but only through his merit, and by virtue of his counsel and example is it possible for others to walk acceptably in the same narrow way. As our text emphasizes, Christ is our wisdom, our righteousness, our sanctification and our redemption, or deliverance. In other words, he is all and everything to us that is necessary in order that we may be heirs of God and

joint-heirs with Christ in the heavenly reward offered to the saints during this age.

One of the official titles the Scriptures give to Jesus is that of Counsellor. (Isa. 9:6) If we are to be truly wise, it is essential that we follow the instructions and leadership of Christ. The Wise Man said, "The fear [reverence] of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom." (Prov. 9:10) To reverence the LORD implies respect for his words of enlightenment and instruction—a respect that will lead us to fully obey the divine will. The quality of reverence for God is necessary from the very beginning of our approach to him, for it means that we recognize his greatness, and our own nothingness—his perfection of holiness, and our own depravity and unrighteousness. To recognize this is the true foundation of wisdom's structure, for it implies willingness and desire to put aside our own imperfect viewpoints and ways, and to accept instead the counsel and will of the Highest.—Luke 6:35

Approaching God in this wise attitude of humility, desiring to be taught of him, one of the first lessons we learn is of his wondrous provision through Christ whereby, despite our imperfections, we can enjoy the blessings which his grace vouchsafes to all who long to be in harmony with him—who "pant" after him as "the hart panteth after the water brooks."—Ps. 42:1

An honest recognition of our own imperfections, hence the need of a Redeemer, is but the first step in wisdom's way. We need also to recognize the wisdom of making a full consecration of ourselves to do the Father's will. The recognition of our own lack of wisdom would be largely in vain should we fail to devote ourselves fully to him who has prom-

ised to give to his own that wisdom which is from above. (James 1:5; 3:17) While the Word of God is filled with all the necessary counsel to make us truly wise, its instructions become the guiding star of our lives *only* when we devote ourselves unreservedly to the doing of the will of God represented therein.

Christ is our wisdom in this fuller sense also, because he is to us the living Word of God. In the perfect example of his life we have patterned for us the manner in which the written instructions of the Word apply in the lives of the consecrated. He is the Captain of our salvation, the Forerunner, the Head of the body, who, in being guided by the words of God himself, has shown us the true meaning of those instructions as they affect the lives of those who are following in his footsteps.

WISDOM FROM ABOVE

The Apostle James gives us an overall picture of heavenly wisdom, saying that it is "first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy." (James 3:17) In Christ we have a revealing example of the manner in which these various elements of heavenly wisdom operate in one who is fully devoted to the doing of God's will. Earthly wisdom functions along lines quite contrary to the principles mentioned by James. It is selfish, therefore its objective is to promote self, frequently at the expense of purity, and often by strife, arrogance and stubbornness. Where selfishness reigns supreme, it resorts even to cruelty to attain its ends, while personal favoritisms and hypocrisy are considered virtues, if they can be used to attain the ends sought by the selfish heart.

But how different, as the apostle has shown, is the heavenly wisdom which is in harmony with the divine character of love. How wonderfully, indeed, did Christ display the love qualities of heavenly wisdom as he went about in the divine service doing good. Christ was first pure. He was this by nature, even as a child, having been born perfect. His moral and intellectual purity was sealed by his obedience to the Law Covenant. He was pure also in his wholehearted devotion to the divine will from the time of his consecration at Jordan until the very end of his earthly pilgrimage. With Jesus, it was not a case of "some of self, and some of Thee" (*Hymns of Dawn*, #224, "All of Thee") as the words of a familiar hymn put our case when we first give our lives to the LORD. No, he was "all" for the doing of his Father's will, and ever in harmony with the instructions of the written Word wherein that will was revealed.

Neither men nor devils could turn the Master aside from the purity of a wholly, absolute devotion to his Father's will. Satan, the prince of devils, tried it. At the beginning of Jesus' ministry, Satan brought pressure upon him in the form of subtle temptations to take a course of halfway devotion to his consecration vows. (Matt. 4:1-11) But Jesus was wise and resisted the attack. He was wise in his own right as a perfect human being, but even more important, he was wise toward God in that he not only knew the divine will for him, but hesitated not a moment in his resolute determination to be altogether loyal thereto. So his reply to the Adversary was direct and decisive: "It is written, Thou shalt worship the LORD thy God, and him only shalt thou serve."—vs. 10

THEN PEACEABLE

The Apostle Paul admonished: "If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men." (Rom. 12:18) This beloved traveler in the narrow way knew, even as Jesus exemplified in his life, that putting purity first in the consecrated life means that we will not always be able to dwell in peace in the world, or with the worldly-minded. Had Christ not put purity first, had he yielded to the Adversary's suggestions to compromise the divine will, he doubtless would have avoided much of the persecution that came upon him. Had he taken the course pleasing to "the god of this world" (II Cor. 4:4), he could have dwelt peaceably with those who do the will of that god.

Jesus, on the other hand, was not a promoter of strife. One of the prophetic titles descriptive of the spirit of his mission to earth was that of the Prince of Peace. In his sermon on the mount, he said, "Blessed are the peacemakers." (Matt. 5:9) The gracious words which fell from his consecrated lips were such as to promote peace and good will in the lives of those whose hearts were not calloused by selfishness, and whose minds were not blinded by the darkness of this world. But because the darkness hateth the light, the Master's words of peace and goodwill stirred up enmity against him by the world, an enmity that was not satisfied until the Prince of Peace hung limp and lifeless upon the cross.

In following the Master's example, we may not be confronted with similar large and dramatic issues to test the purity and wholeheartedness of our devotion to God. But his loyalty to the principles of righteousness in the big as well as in the little

things of life, constitutes a perfect guide for us irrespective of the manner in which we may be tested.

Putting purity first in the carrying out of our consecration vows will cause us the loss of worldly friendships, and may even test the depth of our devotion as it applies to our association with some who profess to be followers of the Master. Where issues of the truth and its service are concerned, a 'peace-at-any-price attitude' is not wise. It does not conform to the example of Christ, who, by the appointment of our Heavenly Father, has been made unto us the embodiment of heavenly wisdom. Worldly wisdom often compromises principle in order to avoid suffering. But Jesus did not do this. He was guided by his knowledge of the divine will even though it meant travail and sorrow, thereby proving himself worthy to be the Savior of both the church and the world.—Isa. 53:11

GENTLE, EASY TO BE ENTREATED

Following the course of heavenly wisdom must lead to gentleness of demeanor and character. The coarse, rough ways of the flesh and the world should give place, as we make progress in the narrow way, to genuine refinement and gentleness of heart and disposition. Christ was pleasingly gentle and so "easy to be entreated" (James 3:17) that even the children were not uncomfortable in his sacred presence. Those who sought for the blessings he could bestow were given audience and consideration, even though they succeeded only in touching the hem of his garment. But the Master's gentleness was in keeping with his purity. He was gentle to those deserving gentleness, but stern in his rebuttal of the hypocritical Pharisees.

In our desire for peace, and in our disposition to promote it, we, like the Master, should be gentle. We should have an open heart toward those who cross our pathway, and for whom, in the divine providence, we may have blessings of comfort and joy in the Holy Spirit, if they would but receive them. Yet, as with Jesus, so with us, we will not be easily entreated to walk contrary to the will of God, or to lend our support by sympathy, word, or deed to anything that is out of harmony with the spirit of heavenly wisdom.

MERCY AND GOOD FRUITS

Heavenly wisdom rejoices in mercy. How beautifully Jesus exemplified this quality of the divine character, both in his teaching and manner of life. When he was asked how far one should go in forgiving, he gave that "seventy times seven" (Matt. 18:22) formula of divine mercy, which, when adopted in the Christian life, serves to bypass nearly all friction and disputes that otherwise rob followers of the Master of the fullness of joy in the LORD that should be theirs. Whether in our individual lives as Christians, in our homes, or in the church, the mercy element of heavenly wisdom serves to sweeten all of our experiences and to make us more like our Father in heaven.

Fruits of the Christian life are the fruits of the Spirit. The growth of such fruit and its proper ripening, will inevitably take place in the heart which is illuminated with the wisdom from above. Here again the fullness of our devotion to God will be the measure of the fruitage developed in our lives. If we are to be full of good fruits we must be empty of self. Barren is the selfish heart of the flesh, but to the extent self-will is renounced, and the will

of God in Christ becomes the all-possessing power of our lives, there is certain to be an abundant crop of good fruit.

WITHOUT PARTIALITY

The Scriptures explain that "ye are all one in Christ Jesus." (Gal. 3:28) Therefore, to show partiality in our dealings with fellowmembers of the body of Christ would display a lack of wisdom from above. Just as God is no respecter of persons, so we who are trying to be like him must ever maintain his viewpoint, which is one of love that seeks to bestow blessings upon all. The outward features of the natural man and his social condition are ignored by those who have the Spirit of the LORD, the Spirit of wisdom which cometh from above. To be partial in our dealings with each other, or even with the world, would imply a measure of injustice, which would be contrary to the course of heavenly wisdom, and contrary to the example set by Christ. True, some of the disciples seemed to be more appreciated by the Master than others, and these were granted additional privileges. In doing this, however, the Master did not work any injustice upon the others, and his nearness to Peter, James, and John, was doubtless because of their greater love and understanding of him. God is not unjustly a respecter of persons, yet he makes it plain in his Word that he draws especially near to those who draw near to him.—James 4:8

WITHOUT HYPOCRISY

The heavenly wisdom which we see exemplified in Christ is also without hypocrisy. It is so pure, so peaceable, so gentle, so merciful toward all, that there is the absence of sin and hypocrisy. Those

guided by heavenly wisdom must, of necessity, be out of harmony and sympathy with all that is sinful—not merely outwardly, but in their hearts. To be truly a follower of Christ, who is our wisdom, we must indeed ‘practice what we preach’. We are not only to outwardly support and be in sympathy with that which is pure, peaceable and gentle, but these divine qualities of heavenly wisdom must also be the adornment of our hearts and characters.

And so, from whatever viewpoint we analyze the wisdom which is from above, we find that in the life of Christ we have a perfect example of how it should control those who are following him in the narrow way. Not only, therefore, does the beginning of wisdom lead us to Christ as the Redeemer, but we find wisdom’s perfection manifested in his every word and deed, which, by God’s grace, we are trying to copy in our own lives.

CHRIST—OUR JUSTIFICATION

In addition to being our wisdom, the apostle explains that Christ is also our righteousness. In explaining this point, Paul used the Greek word *dikaiousune*, which, according to Prof. Strong, means ‘equity’, and especially, ‘justification’. Various forms of this same Greek word are used in the New Testament, and are translated as justified, justification, and of course, also, righteousness. As used in our text, the word could properly be translated justification.

Considering the literal meaning of the word *dikaiousune* as being equity, we have presented to us a comprehensive view of what Christ means to us in connection with our relationship to the Heavenly Father and our hope of life. He is our equity, that is,

his merit is the thing of value which gives us a standing with the Heavenly Father, and permits us to enjoy the privileges of fellowship, or partnership, with the Father and the Son.

We may be perfect in our heart's intentions toward God and righteousness. We may be determined to lay down our lives in the divine service. We may appreciate the invitation to suffer with Christ, so that we may reign with him. But that which makes possible the carrying out of our desires, and enables us to render acceptable sacrifices is the equity of Christ's righteousness imputed to us by divine grace.

The fact that Christ's righteousness makes up for our deficiencies does not mean, as the apostle explains, that we can "continue in sin, that grace may abound." (Rom. 6:1) We cannot hope to reach the high standard of perfection displayed in the holy and undefiled Jesus, yet we should strive toward this end. He is our example of righteousness, our pattern and guide, to show us the righteous way in all the vicissitudes of life.

We should daily wage an aggressive struggle to control our thoughts, words, and deeds, to bring them into captivity to the will of God, as expressed by the teachings and example of Christ. The merit of his righteousness is imputed to us upon the basis of our faith, giving us a standing of righteousness or justification before God.

It is important to us as Christians that we always keep in mind the fact that Christ is our righteousness, our justification. To remember this will help us to keep humble. The recognition of our own sinful condition, and of the wondrous provision made for us through Christ, should be indelibly impressed upon our hearts and minds.

It is something that serves as a touchstone of our true relationship to God throughout our entire earthly pilgrimage. If at any time we feel that victories over sin and imperfection have been attained to the point where we have somewhat of our own righteousness wherewith to commend ourselves to God, it is well to remember the pit of sin and death from which we have been rescued by divine grace, and the solid rock, Christ Jesus, upon which we have been granted the privilege of standing. (Ps. 40:2) Yes, our continued standing with the Heavenly Father as his children depends upon Christ being our righteousness to the very end of the way. Only thus will we be victorious.—Isa. 51:1; I Cor. 15:57

CHRIST—OUR SANCTIFICATION

Sanctification signifies setting apart to holy service. The Greek word *hagiasmos* used in our text, which declares that Christ is made unto us sanctification, literally means purity, or purification, according to Prof. Strong. But we should remember that the standard of purity to which the apostle refers is not one of human conception—not merely moral uprightness—but a purity of relationship to God which means a full dedication of ourselves to do his will. The true meaning of sanctification from the divine standpoint is well illustrated by the inscription appearing on the mitre worn by Israel's High Priest, which read, "Holiness unto the LORD." (Exod. 28:36) It meant to the typical priest that through a properly constituted and carried-out service of consecration, or dedication, he had been set apart to serve God in the holy things of the Tabernacle, including the offering of sacrifice.

In the consecration service by which Israel's priests were dedicated to fill the office of the priesthood, a part of the blood from the ram of consecration was placed upon the tip of the right ear, the right thumb, and the great toe of the right foot. (Lev. 8:23 Thus was indicated the all-comprehensiveness of their consecration. Antitypically, in the case of those who follow the Master, it would mean that all of life's powers are to be dedicated and used in the divine service. As the blood was put upon the thumb of the right hand, so our consecrated sentiments will be:

"Take my hands, and let them move,

At the impulse of thy love."

As the blood was put upon the great toe of the priest's right foot, so we will endeavor to walk in the footsteps of the Master, to walk by faith in the way that the Spirit leads, to walk as he walked. In our hearts and by our words and deeds we will say to our God:

"Take my feet and let them be

Swift on errands, LORD for thee."

As the blood was placed upon the right ear of the priest, so our hearing is to be one of faith. We are to "hearken unto the voice of the LORD," (Deut. 15:5) in order that we may not only know his will, but do it. If the dedication of our lives is complete, if our devotion is unmixed and wholehearted, we will not give ear to suggestions of any kind, whether from the world, the flesh, or the Adversary, the purpose of which may be to turn us aside from the narrow way. The life of the fully consecrated is one in which moments and days are made to flow in channels which can be used for showing forth the praises of him who has called us out of darkness into his marvelous light. (I Pet. 2:9) Our every thought and

power should be used in keeping with the divine will. (II Cor. 10:5) We will want the will of God enthroned in our heart so completely that our life will be poured out to him, and our whole being consecrated fully and forever to the doing of his will.

In all this, Christ is our sanctification because the fullness of his devotion to God, a devotion so zealously performed that he was consumed with his zeal, is the example which we should follow. The work of sanctification is not a momentary one. While there is a moment in which an individual definitely decides to consecrate himself to do God's will, the carrying out of that consecration, the living of a life set apart to the holy purpose of God, is the work of a lifetime. Daily we should study the Word of God by which we are sanctified, and daily we should look unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith, in order that we may more and more set aside the ways of the flesh, and have the Spirit of Christ filling our hearts and having the will of God reign supreme in our lives.

Jesus, praying on behalf of his church, asked that they be "sanctified" by the truth. (John 17:17) It is important to realize that error will not sanctify. Neither will ignorance. This is one very good reason why our study of God's Word should be sincere, and in the spirit of humility, that we may glean from its pages what God expects of us, rather than to search the Word for justification of our own ideas. The Prophet Micah expresses this sentiment, when enumerating the requirements of the divine will, he lists among them, "to walk humbly with thy God." (Mic. 6:8) We are not walking humbly with our God when we resist the plain instructions of his Word

with respect to any of the details of the consecrated life.

EMOTION NOT SANCTIFICATION

Confusion exists in the minds of many with respect to the Christian life of sanctification, in that they erroneously couple it with religious emotion, mistakenly expecting an outward manifestation of some spectacular nature, or some inward feeling of ecstasy as an evidence of their acceptance with the LORD. The peace and joy of the LORD which fills the hearts of truly consecrated believers, will be manifested to a large extent in keeping with their own natural dispositions. Some are by nature more emotional than others, and it is expected that when such are introduced to the joys of faith and the blessings of a life that is lived for God, their emotions will be greatly stirred.

On the other hand, the same joys of faith in the hearts of those who by nature are more practical and less demonstrative, will be just as deep and satisfactory, or should be. In other words, religious emotions, to whatever extent they may appear, are to be viewed, not as a guide in the Christian way, but merely as the result of being made free from condemnation and of having the assurance of acceptableness with God.

We should remember, too, that the sanctified life goes far beyond a superficial goodness or righteousness. It is more than an endeavor to be morally upright and pure. It includes this, but upon the basis of one's best efforts to be righteous, there is the further privilege of devoting that life to the service of God. Sanctification, then, goes far beyond the mere giving up of bad habits, the mere forgetting of a few worldly pleasures. It is indeed a giving

up of these, but at the same time it is a living for God.

One who is fully devoted to the doing of God's will, and who is laying down his life in the divine service, will have little time to indulge in worldly pleasures. One who, from the bottom of his heart, can truly say to the LORD:

“Take myself—I wish to be

Ever, only, all for Thee,”—

will not be seeking worldly entertainment—there will be too many things to do for the LORD and for the brethren.

CHRIST—OUR DELIVERANCE

Christ is also made unto us redemption, says the apostle. The word redemption is here used in the sense of deliverance, or salvation, which is the outcome of the redemptive work—the result of the ransom, or a corresponding price, having been given. It is the same Greek word translated deliverance in Hebrews 11:35. The thought is that of the church's full victory through Christ, and of the ultimate attainment of a position of glory with him in the kingdom.

But if this ultimate and full deliverance of the church is to be realized, there must also be the intermediate and incidental deliverances of the faithful all along the narrow way. Christ is made unto us deliverance, both in our daily experiences of trial and testing, as well as in the final deliverance from this “vile” body, in the glories of the first resurrection.—Phil. 3:21

The redemption provided by Christ is yet to result in the deliverance of all mankind from sin and death, but in the divine program the redemption

and deliverance of the church comes first. The redemption, or deliverance, which is in Christ Jesus, both as it applies to our present experiences and also to our ultimate deliverance into the kingdom, is always identified with the sacrifice of our Lord made on our behalf. In connection with that sacrifice, our Lord was severely tested and tried, and the apostle explains that by reason of this, "he is able to succour them that are tempted [able to deliver them from temptations which otherwise might overpower them]."—Heb. 2:17,18

Because Christ is dealing with us as a faithful and sympathetic High Priest, we have the promise that he "will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." (I Cor. 10:13) True, he may permit us to stumble temporarily, but even such an experience will be overruled for our good, if we continue to put our trust in him, and to maintain our assurance in the fact that he will help us, assist us, deliver us, in every time of need.

We are permitted to stumble at times, perhaps in order that valuable lessons may be learned respecting our weaknesses. We may forget our need of divine help. Sometimes we may think that we are able to stand in our own strength. It is then that we need to take heed lest we fall. The LORD in his wisdom permits us to stumble, therefore, in order that we may be reminded of our need of him, our need to lean upon his strength, that we may find in him our staff of support to keep us from actually falling.

If, through all of our daily experiences in the narrow way, we learn to put our trust more fully in

him who is our redemption and deliverance now, who has provided a covering for our sins, and who has promised us help to overcome our temptations, we will finally experience that great and ultimate deliverance into the kingdom. This grand hope is especially meaningful today, because the signs around us in the world indicate that the entire church will soon be delivered and united with her Lord. If we are faithful as individuals we can take comfort in the Master's blessed assurance, "When these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption [deliverance] draweth nigh."—Luke 21:28 ■

A New Year



Into the silent past,
The year has fled,
With all its hope and fear,
Its joy and pain;
And now, like an interminable plain
On which our eager feet
Have yet to tread,
The New Year lies before our gaze.
O'erspread with golden prospects;
Hopes that once in vain
Were entertained
Now spring to life again,
And Heaven's bright sunshine
Gleams above our head.
O, glad New Year,
Unsullied yet and free
From taint of sin
Are thy propitious hours;
Thy cloudless countenance,
Serene and mild,
Assures us of our God's fidelity.

TALKING THINGS OVER

STATISTICAL REPORT

for the year ended September 30, 1996

FOR THE FISCAL year 1996 reported below, the Dawn had a loss before bequests of \$106,052. Bequests in the amount of \$479,491 were much beyond expectations, and provided a net gain for the year of \$373,439.

Revenue from contributions, and income other than bequests, increased 50% over 1995, while expenditures increased 13%.

	<u>Receipts</u>	<u>Expenditures</u>
All revenue other than bequests	\$642,281	
<u>Expenditures</u>		
Radio and Television		\$270,967
Pilgrim Service		13,454
Plant and House		256,996
Print Shop		97,542
Shipping and Mailing		78,932
Outside Printing		30,442
Total before bequests	\$642,281	\$748,333
Loss before bequests	(\$106,052)	
Bequests	479,491	
Gain after bequests	\$373,439	

For the fiscal year 1996, expenditures for witness activity were increased, mainly in the area of television, or an overall increase in witness activity of

20% over 1995. For 1997 we are aiming for an activity increase of 50% over 1996. Currently we have 5 major TV stations carrying "*The Bible Answers*" programs, as well as the Nostalgia Network, the American Independent Network, and American One Network. The use of the 800 phone number, 234-DAWN, for the free booklet offer enables us to get a quick assessment of the station's listening audience response. Our "*Frank and Ernest*" radio tapes now have the 800 number for the booklet offer, and this is assisting us in the assessment of station effectiveness.

In the shop a new saddle stitcher called the Minuteman was acquired for assembling and trimming *The Dawn* magazine in readiness for mailing. The old Rosback equipment was donated to *Bible Students Publications*, and the skilled mechanical talent in that shop overhauled the equipment to make it a useful machine for them. *Bible Students Publications* prints *The Dawn* covers in color, and booklets in color for the Dawn.

The brethren at the Dawn rejoice in the privilege of using the printed page, radio, television, and any other means of proclaiming the kingdom message. "The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. Let us walk honestly, as in the day [as if living in the kingdom]. . . . Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof."—Rom. 13: 12-14 ■

"Every one of us shall give account of himself to God. Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother's way."—Rom. 14:12,13

INTERESTED IN 'END TIME' EVENTS

QUESTIONS: In the 'end time' events, as described in Matthew 24 and the Book of Revelation, exactly when does anyone go to heaven? And, if God is coming here, why do they go to heaven?

What is the full meaning of "there was no more sea?"—Rev. 21:1

Are chapters 21,22 of Revelation after the end of the thousand-year reign of Christ, or immediately following his Second Coming?

When does the New Jerusalem come down from heaven?—TN

ANSWERS: In answering your questions, we need to clarify certain expressions used. One of these is, 'go to heaven'. This expression is used erroneously by those who believe that man has an immortal soul and, upon dying, that it 'goes to heaven'; whereas, all men when they die, in reality, go to *sheol*, or *hades*, a condition of non-existence. Jesus called this condition "sleep," from which all will be awakened. (John 11:11-14; 5:28,29) There is no 'immortal soul'.

However, there is a heavenly reward for the foot-step followers of Jesus. They will be raised from the death condition and made spirit beings—their reward is immortality. (I Cor. 15:23,53,54) When does this happen? I Corinthians 15:52 says, "at the last

trump.” This occurs when our Lord returns at the close of the Gospel Age.—Rev. 8:2; 10:7

Another expression used is, ‘God is coming here’. If you have in mind that God, the Heavenly Father, is coming to earth, this is not correct. God remains in heaven. (Isa. 66:1) But, if you have in mind that his Son, Jesus, comes to reign over earth, and is a mighty one—a god—that is correct. Matthew chapter 24 deals with the signs of our Lord Jesus’ return and presence. The Book of Revelation records events of the Gospel Age and the Millennial Age.

Revelation 21:1 speaks of God’s kingdom being established—there is to be a new symbolic heavens and earth. See II Peter 3:6 to 13. Earth symbolizes the social order on Planet Earth, and the heavens represent the spiritual ruling powers. The sea represents the present restless, uncontrollable humanity.—Luke 21:25; Ps. 46:2,3

We believe Revelation, chapters 20 to 22 to be referring to the time after Christ’s Second Presence, and during his reign. The New Jerusalem is the bride of Christ, the church, or the new earthly government of Christ. The marriage of the Lamb, Jesus, takes place at the close of the Gospel Age, and the beginning of the Millennial Age. (Rev. 19:7) Revelation 20:6 tells of those who reign with Christ, and Revelation chapters 21 and 22 speak of the results of that reign, and of the lifting of the curse.—Rev. 22:3

The faithful members of the church are raised as spirit beings, as was Jesus, and receive a heavenly reward. After the marriage of the Lamb, Jesus will reign with his bride over all mankind who are raised as earthly human beings, and will live upon earth during that kingdom. ■

WALKING IN THE LIGHT

*“Walk as children of light, . . .
proving what is acceptable unto the LORD.”*

Ephesians 5:8-10

THE FIFTH CHAPTER of Ephesians presents a number of interesting expressions descriptive of what it means to be a Christian. The “children of light” in our text, are the “dear children” of God in verse 1, being his children because they follow our Lord’s example. These ‘children’ who in verse 8 walk in the ‘light’, are said in verse 2 to walk in “love.” Those who according to the 10th verse prove “what is acceptable unto the LORD” are the “wise” ones of verse 17, through their understanding of the divine will.

To walk in the light, then, means to walk in love. Jesus walked in love, as verse 2 indicates, because he gave himself for us as a sacrificial offering, which was to his Father a “sweetsmelling savour.” If we walk in love, we, too, will give ourselves in sacrifice, laying down our lives for the brethren and doing good unto “all men” as we have opportunity, “especially unto them who are of the household of faith.”—I John 3:16; Gal. 6:10

Those who are walking in the light should constantly be on the alert to discern the Heavenly Father’s will in the affairs of life. Obedient children of the light will interpret the Word in keeping with the spirit of love. They will not misconstrue God’s commands to justify a selfish course.

As the children of God walk in the light of divine love, they seek every opportunity to sacrifice themselves in the divine cause, for the blessing of others; and they will endeavor to make sure that their efforts are acceptable to God. They will realize that true love not only prompts sacrifice, but also governs the manner in which it is made.

The children of light will be longsuffering and kind. As love "envieth not," they will not envy. As love "vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up," they will be humble. As love does "not behave itself unseemly," they will walk circumspectly before the LORD. As love "seeketh not her own," they will gladly sacrifice their own for the blessing of others. As love is "not easily provoked," they will be even tempered. As love "thinketh no evil," they will think upon good things. As love "rejoiceth not in iniquity," their rejoicing will be in the truth. They will endeavor, by God's grace, to bear all things, believe all things, hope all things, and endure all things; for love never faileth.—I Cor. 13:4-8 ■

SPEAKERS' APPOINTMENTS

The speaker listed below is routed through the Pilgrim Department of The Dawn. Visits are furnished free upon request. Write to: The Dawn Pilgrim Department, 199 Railroad Avenue, East Rutherford, NJ 07073. A visit will be arranged whenever possible:

S. Jones	Huntsville, AL	27
Atlanta, GA	January 26	Louisville, AL 28

The listing in this schedule has been arranged by a local ecclesia cooperating with the Dawn:

F. Nemesh	G. Passios
Portland, OR	January 19 Claymont, DE January 12

R. Shahan
Middletown, NY January 19

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 Ave., East Rutherford, NJ 07073.

DETROIT, MI, January 26—Redford YWCA, 25940 Grand River, Redford Township. Contact: George Ti-vador, 11202 Lorman Dr., Sterling Heights, MI 48312 Phone: (810) 978-7444

LOS ANGELES, CA, January 26—Burbank Auditorium, 248 East Olive Ave. For information, contact: Wade Austin, 21207 Wilder Avenue, Lakewood, CA 90715 Phone: (310) 924-7618 or e-mail: NAAustin125@aol.com

SOUTHWEST FLORIDA CONVENTION, February 1,2—Cape Coral Masonic Temple, 244 Santa Barbara Blvd., Cape Coral, FL 33910. For information, contact: Ed Futchkar, 3460 N. Key Drive, #306E, North Fort Myers, FL 33903

Phone: (941) 997-3008

SACRAMENTO, CA, February 14,15,16—Beverly Garland Hotel, 1780 Tribute Rd., Sacramento. Cut-off date for reservations: Jan. 31, 1997. Please send reservations directly to: Mrs. Betty Lankford, 6000 19th Ave., Sacramento 95826 Phone: (916) 457-0569

ROCKLAND BIBLE STUDENTS, February 23—New location: Comfort Inn, 425 E. Route 59, Nanuet, NY

FLORIDA BIBLE STUDENTS CONVENTION, March 8,9,10—Holiday Inn, 304 West Colonial Drive, Orlando, FL 32801. Request special convention rate before Feb. 8, 1997. Phone (800) 523-3405. For information, contact: Leonard Wesol, 219 Paul Mc Clure Ct., Casselberry, FL 32707

Phone: (407) 695-3309

NEW YORK SPRING CONVENTION, March 23—Ramada Inn Fairfield, Two Bridges Road, Fairfield, NJ. Phone: (201) 531-8617

FRESNO PRE-MEMORIAL CONVENTION, March 21-23—Holiday Inn Fresno Airport, 5090 East Clinton Ave., Fresno, CA 93727. For reservations contact Mrs. Robert Wilson before March 14, 2103 N. Price, #112, Fresno, CA 93703

Phone: (209) 255-2241

BIBLE STUDENTS GENERAL CONVENTION, July 26-31, 1997—See Pages 28-30 of this issue for more information.