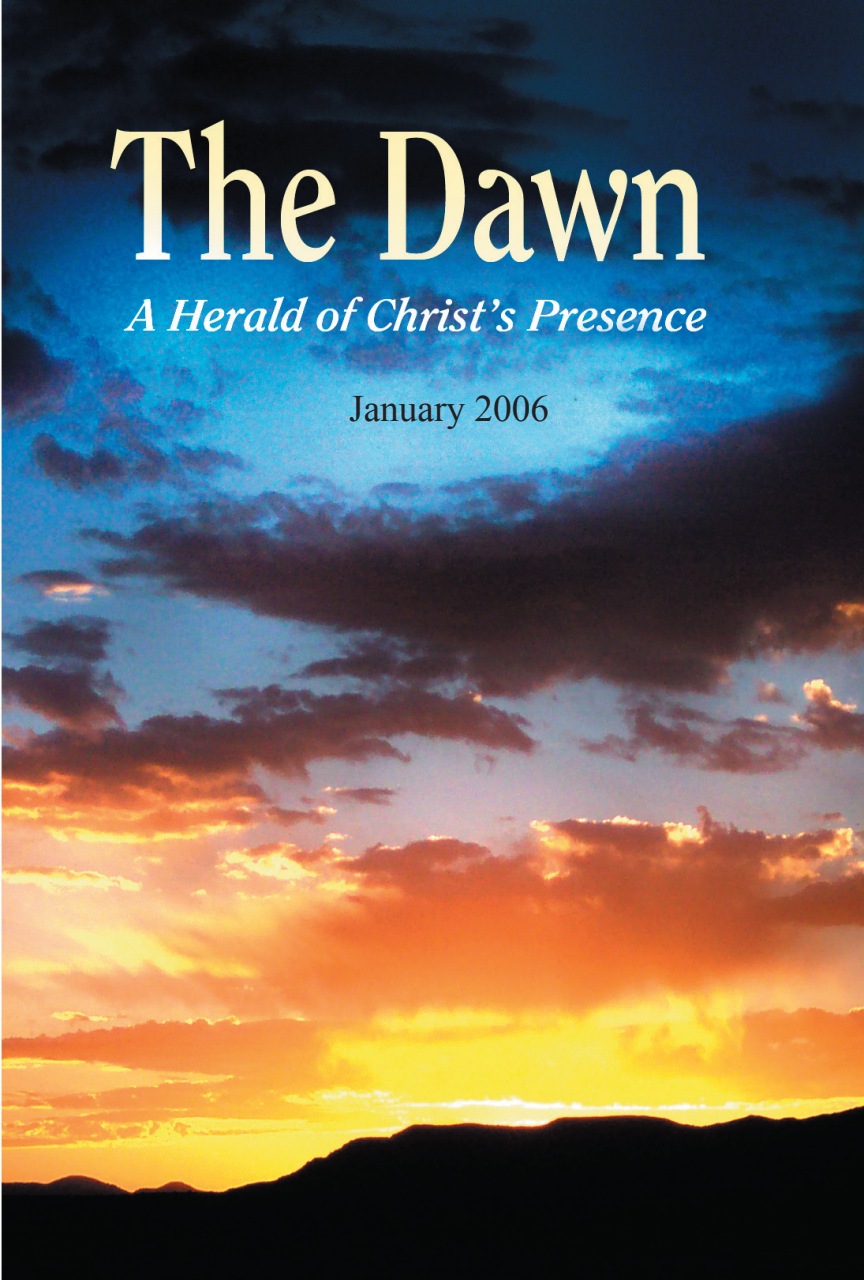


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The DAWN

VOLUME NO. LXXIV, Number 1
(USPS 149-380), January 2006

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Second-class postage paid at Rutherford, NJ. Published monthly by The Dawn Bible Students Association, 199 Railroad Avenue, East Rutherford, NJ 07073. \$3.00 a year; Great Britain £2. Write to foreign addresses for other prices.

ARGENTINA: El Alba, Calle Almirante Brown 674, Monte Grande 1842, Buenos Aires

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

BRITISH ISLES: Associated Bible Students, P.O. Box 136, Chesham, Bucks HP5 3EB

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

FRANCE: Aurore, B. Boulter, 8 rue du Docteur Laennec, 95520, Osny

GERMANY: Tagesanbruch Bibelstudien-Vereinigung, Alzeyer Str. 8 (Postfach 252), D 67253 Frensdorf

GREECE: He Haravgi (The Dawn), 33-33 149th Street, Flushing, NY 11354 USA

ITALY: Aurora, Via S. Leonardo 21, Ottaviano 80044, Napoli

SOUTH AMERICA: El Alba, Apartado 1390, Trujillo, Peru

SPAIN: El Alba, Via S. Leonardo 21, Ottaviano 80044 Napoli, Italy

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Another New Year

A Time for Reflection and Anticipation

*“Thou crownest the
year with thy
goodness; and thy
paths drop
fatness.”
—Psalm 65:11*

THE ENDING OF ONE YEAR

and the beginning of another new year is the traditional time when many people from all walks of life pause for reflection, as they look

back on the events of the year that has just passed. This would include a review of some of the experiences in their own lives, and also the events that had occurred on the world scene. They may also look forward with anticipation to what may, or may not, come to pass in the year just ahead. Many will welcome in the new year with celebration, some will usher it in with uncertainty and apprehension, while others will do so with the making of New Year's resolutions.

A YEAR CROWNED WITH GOODNESS

The word ‘crownest’ which is used in our featured scripture text means to encircle or surround, either for attack or for protection. In this case, the thought obviously points to God's protection, encirclement, and providential care over his people. This same Hebrew word was also used by the Psalmist

David when he wrote, “Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies.” (Ps. 103:4) This thought is also brought to our attention where he said, “Thou, LORD, wilt bless the righteous; with favour wilt thou compass [marginal translation, crown] him as with a shield.”—Ps. 5:12, *Marginal Translation*

“THY PATHS DROP FATNESS”

The words ‘thy paths drop fatness’ were used by David in the second clause of our scripture text and further emphasize the Divine promise, that bountiful blessings are given by God to his people. The word fatness suggests abundance, or fertility, and was used by the psalmist in another psalm where he wrote, “My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness; and my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips.” (Ps. 63:5) He used this word again when he said, “They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house; and thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures.”—Ps. 36: 8

PASSING OF THE OLD YEAR

In reviewing the year which is now coming to a close, we can look back and remember it as a time filled with devastating natural disasters of all kinds, which have affected countless numbers of people in many parts of the world. There have been super storms, including hurricanes and tornadoes, as well as earthquakes and tsunamis. Floods have destroyed lives and property in some areas, while droughts have devastated others. There have been destructive volcanoes, and whole communities have been consumed by mud slides.

THE MONSTROUS TSUNAMI

As the year 2005 began, the world was grappling with one of the most destructive natural disasters of modern times. The people of southern Asia, and particularly those living along the seacoast of the Indian Ocean, were struggling to bring a semblance of order out of the catastrophic carnage that had taken place as a result of one of the most powerful underwater earthquakes ever recorded, along with the tsunami that followed. This had all taken place only a few days before the New Year 2005 began.

Thousands of people were killed, and many more thousands lost their homes and livelihood. This has resulted in great monetary cost, as well as in human resources.

SUPER HURRICANES

Later, in the summer, the Gulf Coast region of America suffered tremendous damage from two monstrous hurricanes that came ashore within the same general region only a few weeks apart. The first of these super storms, named Katrina, was responsible for causing the greatest amount of destruction in the history of the United States. Although widespread damage had been done all along the coastlines of Alabama and Mississippi, the largest impact of the storm was centered in Louisiana, with special focus on the city of New Orleans.

The levee system, which had been built to protect New Orleans from the mighty Mississippi River and nearby Lake Pontchartrain, failed as a result of the heavy rains, high winds, and storm surge that accompanied the hurricane. The city is mostly

below sea level and, with the break in the levees in various parts of the city, it filled up quickly with water. The floodwaters killed many of its citizens, stranded and displaced countless more, and triggered a massive relief and evacuation effort that has involved the efforts of search and rescue teams from all over the country. The cost in property damage has been estimated in the billions of dollars and it may take years to rebuild, if ever. Few hurricanes in recorded history have been as powerful as those which struck these areas of the Gulf States. The adverse effect on the economy and resources of the United States has been enormous.

POWERFUL EARTHQUAKES

A powerful earthquake with a magnitude of 7.6 struck in the area of Kashmir, Pakistan, and other nearby regions, in the early part of the month of October. The epicenter was near Muzzaffarad, in the region of Pakistan-administered Kashmir, and was the strongest and most devastating quake in that part of the world in one hundred years. The effects of the quake, and its several powerful after-shocks, were felt in many parts of South Asia. Many people lost their lives, and countless others were injured and driven from their homes and livelihood. The toll continues to rise, but the current estimates are tens of thousands dead, with millions of others affected by injury, disease, and displacement. Rescue workers and aid were brought into the area from all over the world. The immediate priorities are treating the injured and others to prevent further death and illness from secondary causes.

WAR AND TERRORISM

The year 2005 saw a rising level of violence and death as a result of war and terrorism. Destruction has taken place in many parts of the earth at the hands of terrorists, with a total disregard for human suffering and loss of property. Furthermore, there is little evidence that the war in Iraq will be over any time soon, and that the thousands of American troops will be coming home. Specialists who study terrorism and their techniques openly acknowledge that they foresee the prospect for endless war with the terrorists, and some say that Al-Qaida is already mutating into a global insurgency. Others say that the battle against terrorism has hardly begun.

IRAQ WAR

There is growing apprehension and criticism among many Americans concerning the role of the United States military in Iraq. Some are voicing their criticisms, while others are asking for the reasons why the country was invaded in the first place. They point out that there has never been any credible link established that legitimizes the invasion, or that proves there ever was a substantial connection between Iraq and the perpetrators of the 9/11 terrorist bombing in New York City. Further, the war has seriously undermined the ability of United States military forces to maintain law and order, or to accomplish many of the goals that were initially set out for them to do. Many Americans believe that the war in Iraq is not going well, and that the whole matter is becoming a disaster. At the time of this writing, the casualty figure

of American soldiers killed has reached two thousand, and there are thousands more who have been injured, many of them critically.

THE LONDON BOMBING

In midsummer, central London's busy mass transit system became a scene of senseless horror and carnage as three terrorist bombs blew up in the Underground while a fourth bomb exploded on a double-decker bus above ground. Approximately fifty people were killed, and another seven hundred or more were injured.

A clear message was sent by the terrorists, not only to those who ride the London subways everyday, but also to the rest of the world, that in the present age of terror, there are no safe places anymore. Analysts pointed out that this was the bloodiest day in London since the terrible days of the Nazi Blitz during the early years of World War II. To many Americans, this bombing was a wake-up call to those who ride the subways in New York, and other large cities in the United States. Cities in other parts of the world are also now on high alert.

THE GAZA PULLOUT

One of the most dramatic events that took place in the Holy Land during the year 2005 was Israel's withdrawal from the Gaza Strip after having occupied the region for the past thirty-eight years. Israel's Prime Minister Sharon was seen by many of his people as having turned his back on the Jewish settlers who were being forced from their homes in Gaza and a small part of the West Bank. The Sharon government promised that they would be properly compensated for the move.

The rest of the world generally viewed the pull-out in a positive way, believing that Sharon had achieved a milestone in Israeli-Palestinian relations. Within his own country, his initial move was viewed with alarm and as a huge political gamble. As the evacuation proceeded, and as Israeli troops were completing their removal from the settlements in Gaza, national support for Sharon's plan rose to more than 50%. His standing within his own Likud party at that time, however, plunged to a new all-time low. Until he had unveiled the disengagement plan a year before, he had presided over a powerful coalition in the Israeli government. But the coalition began to break up as far-right and religious parties removed their support for his plan, and he lost considerable credibility as a result.

The situation remains unpredictable, but the Gaza disengagement has weighed heavily on Sharon's shoulders, especially the plight of the evacuees. Long-term housing continues to be a major concern for these displaced people although the Treasury Department has allocated large sums of money to compensate settlers for their former homes and property. The problem that these people are having, however, is trying to find comparable housing with the funds which have been appropriated for that purpose. There is a sudden demand for housing all over the country, and prices are not stable. It takes time to build new homes and when they become available the prices for these properties will likely have risen.

MAN'S PLANS WILL FAIL

As the world enters another new year, there is a rising level of apprehension and fear among the

general population. This sense of foreboding has come about largely because of the tragic events that have taken place throughout the world in recent years. This includes terrorism, instability in the world's economies, changing weather patterns, and a host of other calamities both man-made, and otherwise. International statesmen and heads of government cannot find solutions to solve the many problems confronting the world, and financial leaders don't have the answers to the world's monetary difficulties.

Luke points forward to this closing time at the end of the Gospel Age. He says, "Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken." (Luke 21:26) Religious leaders differ widely in their views as they endeavor to find answers in the Bible, and some see the future as one filled with gloom, doom, and the final destruction of the earth and everything in it. However, there is a growing interest in end-time prophecy as it relates to the times in which we are now living.

REFLECTIONS ON THE OLD YEAR

For the Lord's people, the closing of one chapter in their consecrated lives and the opening of another one is usually a special time for reflection. They will no doubt include a mental account of their personal experiences, and the degree of spiritual progress and growth that may have taken place during the previous year. Their resolutions will be of a spiritual nature, and will include a renewed commitment to be more resolute and faithful to

God in connection with their High Calling in Christ Jesus during the coming year.

On a larger scale, the children of God, in their endeavor to watch the signs of the times as they have been instructed to do during these closing years of the Gospel Age, look forward to the approaching new age of Christ's kingdom which is ever close at hand. Their meditation will likely include consideration of the prophecies and other scriptures dealing with the wondrous events of our day. Surely we are living in momentous times with increasing anticipation, as we look ahead to the events of the future and particularly in the new year.

Students of the Bible who have learned to love and trust our Heavenly Father and his dearly beloved Son, our Lord Jesus, will look back on the previous twelve months and reflect upon the many ways in which he has led them in the paths of Truth and righteousness. This reflection will undoubtedly include many spiritual blessings that may be remembered with joy and gladness, especially in our fellowship with others of like precious faith. On the other hand, some of our experiences may have been painful and difficult to endure, yet we count them as all joy in our special calling of God.

To the dedicated and well-seasoned Christian, this reflection is one which includes our heartfelt devotion and praise to God in the crowning of our year with blessings, and the achievement of spiritual growth as New Creatures in Christ Jesus. In all of this reflection, they will readily acknowledge that the year just ending has been one which was filled with all goodness and mercy, and for which they will render their highest degree of thanksgiving.

ANTICIPATION FOR THE NEW YEAR

Not one of us is capable of foreseeing all of the numerous and varied circumstances, personal and otherwise, that may transpire in the future, or perhaps during the coming year. However, those of the Lord's children who have learned to put their complete trust in him concerning the outworking of his wondrous plans, and for their spiritual growth as New Creatures in Christ Jesus, will manifest evidences of character development as seen in the special qualities of hope and trust. They will have developed a degree of trust that whatever may be permitted by God to come to pass in their lives is a manifestation of his loving and providential care for them, and also in the affairs of all of his people. They will also put their trust in the Heavenly Father's ultimate plans for the reconciliation of the whole world of mankind during the future kingdom of Christ, and the eventual outworking of the Divine plan for the blessing of all the families of the earth at that time.

CHRIST'S KINGDOM THE ONLY HOPE

Many passages of scripture foretell the blessed promises that will be a part of Christ's kingdom; and Isaiah describes that wonderful time in symbolic language, when he says, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price." (Isa. 55:1) The prophet describes the calling that will go forth all over the world during that future thousand-year kingdom, when the human family will thirst for righteousness and Truth.

Concerning this water Jesus tells us, "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." (John 4:14) This water of life is a symbol to illustrate the gift of life that will become available for all of earth's obedient to drink.

As we look ahead to the New Year 2006, it is proper that we reflect on the many mercies and provisions of grace, both temporal and spiritual, that we have enjoyed in the past. This appreciation for the Lord's direction and guidance in our lives should not only be a part of our meditation at this particular time, but in a grander sense it should include an appreciation for those blessings that have come to pass throughout the entire time of our association with the Truth, and with those of like precious faith. This is a time to renew our consecration to do the will of God to the best of our ability. Let us strive to be faithful even unto death that we may share in the grand uplifting of the whole world of mankind in Christ's kingdom. ■

Another Year for Thee

*Another year we welcome! Dear Master, may it be,
In thought and word and action, another year for thee.
Another year of leaning upon thy loving breast,
Where heartaches, pain and sorrow are lost in happy rest.*

*Another year of proving thy holy blessed will,
To find my joy in doing, and in thy hand hold still;
Another year of service, to prove to Thee my love;
Another year of training for greater works above.*

—Poems of Dawn

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

QUESTION: Will those who have been cremated be raised from the dead?

ANSWER: Yes. In principle there is no difference between cremation and burial. It is merely that in cremation the disintegration of the body is brought about more quickly. In both cases the body returns to the earth as it was. (Gen. 3:19) The manner in which one's body is disposed of after death will have no bearing on the resurrection, for the Apostle Paul wrote, "Thou sowest not that body that shall be."—I Cor. 15:37

The chemical elements that make up the human body are constantly undergoing change, even while the body lives. It is not these elements that determine character or personality. The bodies of the lower animals, as a matter of fact, are composed of identical chemical elements.

The brain is part of the body structure, and it is the sum total of the thoughts recorded by the brain which makes the person. It is this personality that will be restored in the resurrection. The new brain will not need to contain the same chemical elements as the former one, but it will contain the same thought impressions, so the person will be the same. This is possible through the creative power of God.

Those who in this life have set their affections on things above, and therefore have developed a mind that is bent toward heavenly things, will, in the resurrection, be given "celestial," or heavenly, bodies. All others will be restored as humans. If they then prove faithful to the LORD they will go on to human perfection, and live forever. ■

Finding Strength to Serve

Key Verse: *"I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry."*
—*I Timothy 1:12*

Selected Scripture:
I Timothy 1:12-20

WE BEGIN ANOTHER NEW

year with a series of five weekly Bible lessons that will be taken from the Apostle Paul's first epistle to Timothy. This first lesson begins in chapter one, and the Key Verse focuses on the subject "Finding Strength to Serve."

How grandly providential it is that our loving Heavenly Father sought out the Apostle Paul as an outstanding and most prominent servant. His writings

contain the most powerful teachings found anywhere in the New Testament, and his profound spiritual insight has been used for the strengthening and uplifting of God's people throughout the present Gospel Age.

We quote the Key Verse from one of the modern translations, which provides an interesting perspective concerning Paul's appreciation for his privilege of being selected for service in the Truth. "I am deeply grateful to Christ Jesus our Lord (to whom I owe all that I have accomplished) for trusting me enough to appoint me his minister, despite the fact that I had previously blasphemed his name, persecuted his Church and insulted him." (vss. 12,13, *J. B. Phillips Translation*) Because Paul had been a persecutor of the early Christians, he

did not consider himself worthy to be called an apostle, and freely acknowledged that he had been called to this service only by the undeserved kindness of the Lord. This deep sense of unworthiness was what made him so acceptable for God's service.

Paul identifies himself as the author of this epistle in the opening verse, and then reveals his most affectionate love and devotion to his younger brother Timothy as if he were his own dearly beloved son. "Unto Timothy, my own son in the faith: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord."—vs. 2

We catch a further glimpse of the great apostle's sense of humility and appreciation to God as he expresses it to his beloved Timothy. "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief. Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting. Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen."—vss. 15-17

Paul's encouragement to his beloved Timothy was one in which he devoted his attention to the younger brother, that he would be faithful to his consecration and fight a good warfare in the faith to which he had been called. To do otherwise, the apostle observes, would result in a shipwreck of Timothy's faith, as some others who had put away these blessed promises.

The admonitions given to Timothy attest to the capacity for service in the Truth which Paul so willingly gave. His wise counsel and encouraging ministry are a great blessing to all of the Lord's people living during these closing years of the Gospel Age. May we also renew our own consecrations in the blessed hope of our High Calling in Christ Jesus, and serve him faithfully even unto death. ■

Everyone Needs Prayer

Key Verse: “*I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men.*”
—*I Timothy 2:1*

Selected Scripture:
I Timothy 2:1-8

IN THE KEY VERSE OF THIS

lesson, the Apostle Paul directs our attention to the proper spirit of supplication, intercession and prayer that should be exercised on behalf of all mankind, and also toward those who are in responsible leadership positions—“For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.”—vs. 2

In his epistle to the brethren at Rome, the apostle also addresses this important matter with an interesting perspective. He says, “Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained [ordered, *Marginal Translation*] of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation [condemnation, *New American Standard Version*]. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same.” (Rom. 13:1-3) Paul also emphasizes, “Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour

to whom honour.”—vs. 7

Again Paul points out, “Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work. To speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, shewing all meekness unto all men. For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another.”—Tit. 3:1-3

Thus we learn to trust our all-wise and loving Heavenly Father to work out the everlasting arrangements concerning his separated people of faith, who are being called during the present Gospel Age and are living under man-made arrangements of authority. The children of God have received much that they should be thankful for during this time. God’s plans will ultimately include the whole world who will then receive the blessings of his plan of reconciliation under the administration of our Lord Jesus.

Paul further emphasizes the importance of putting our trust in God, “This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.” (I Tim. 2:3,4) God’s plans center around the gift of his only begotten Son, our Lord Jesus, who gave his perfect human life for the human family, and will be the Mediator of a new and better covenant that will be established for the blessing of all mankind. “There is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.”—vss. 5,6

To wait on the Lord, and to continue to trust him in these closing years of the present Gospel Age, is a fundamental element of our walk in newness of life. We should always exercise our privileges of prayer, and be in harmony with God’s overruling providence concerning the ultimate purpose of his will. ■

Leading God's People

Key Verse:
***“Holding the
mystery of the
faith in a pure
conscience.”***
—I Timothy 3:9

Selected Scripture:
I Timothy 3:2-15
Although this is a commendable work, there are essential conditions, and he emphasizes that this work of faith be held with a pure conscience.

In the apostle's first epistle to Timothy, he establishes, in chapter three, the qualifications pertaining to the service of elders and deacons who serve in the household of faith. “This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop [Greek, overseer], he desireth a good work.”—I Tim. 3:1

However, restrictions apply that pertain to this important work. “A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach; Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous; One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?)”—vss. 2-5

Furthermore, Paul admonishes that an elder should be well-established in the Truth, humble by nature, having respect among all who may know him, “Not a

novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil. Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil.”—vss. 6,7

The apostle also addresses the qualifications that are necessary for those who would serve as deacons within the ecclesia arrangement. Although the office of deacon does not carry the same degree of responsibility as that of an elder, we note that the qualifications are similar, with high standards for both elders and deacons. A deacon’s responsibilities are generally those of being assistants, or helpers, within the congregation. The elders share in the larger work as being shepherds of the flock. Although this lesson’s Key Verse (3:9) is directed to the deacons who are admonished to hold the ‘mystery of the faith in a pure conscience,’ it nevertheless applies to brethren serving in either capacity.

We also are given a glimpse of the apostle’s great sense of responsibility in writing this epistle. He was giving his younger brother Timothy valuable instructions concerning the acceptable rules concerning a congregation of the Lord’s people. “These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly: But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.”—vss. 14,15

Throughout the Gospel Age, and during the present time, the order of the ecclesia, pertaining to the offices of elders and deacons, continues to hold to these instructions as given by Paul to Timothy. It is, however, the ecclesia’s responsibility to only vote for those brethren whom they know to be of good character, well-established in the Truth, and having a strong desire to serve the Lord’s people and to be good examples to the flock. If the scriptural instructions regarding these qualifications are adhered to, the congregation will surely be richly blessed. ■

Set an Example

Key Verse: *“Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.”*
—*I Timothy 4:16*

Selected Scripture:
I Timothy 4

bride of Christ, as well as to be an example to others who would be witnesses of his determined efforts, and be blessed accordingly.

In this first epistle to Timothy, the apostle pointed to a future time at the end of the Gospel Age when some would depart from this position of faithfulness to seek other nonspiritual pursuits and teachings. “The Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth.”—*I Tim. 4:1-3*

This warning of a worldly spirit entering into the congregations of the Lord’s people in the ‘latter times’

IN THE KEY VERSE OF THIS

lesson, the Apostle Paul encourages his beloved younger brother Timothy to maintain diligence in the growth and development of his Christian character, and to uphold the doctrines of Truth by faithfully defending and declaring them. To follow this wise counsel, would assure Timothy of receiving an abundant entrance into the spiritual inheritance of the

prompted Paul to admonish Timothy to be careful with the doctrinal teachings that he had once received. "If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine, whereunto thou hast attained." (vs. 6) Paul's concern seems to take on added meaning to those who would be guided by his wise counsel in the latter times, or end of the Gospel Age calling to the church.

Concerning the seriousness of this impending worldly spirit that would come upon the Lord's people, we note the apostle's words on the matter of doctrinal teachings in his second letter to Timothy, where he again writes, "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables." (II Tim. 4:2-4) Although the Lord's people have undergone trying experiences throughout the Gospel Age, there would be the need for increased diligence and combativeness at the end of the age.

Paul continues with these serious words of advice to his beloved Timothy by saying, "Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity. Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine." (I Tim. 4:12,13) No better counsel could be given, nor heeded, than these encouraging words from the pen of the great apostle.

As we contemplate the increasing level of violence and indifference to spiritual teachings during these closing years of the Gospel Age, let us consider well the wise counsel of Paul's admonitions in this wonderful epistle written so long ago. Let us strive to set a good example in our characters and in our doctrine. ■

Practicing Justice and Mercy

Key Verses:
“Rebuke not an elder, but intreat him as a father; and the younger men as brethren; The elder women as mothers; the younger sisters, with all purity.”
—I Timothy 5:1,2

Selected Scripture:
I Timothy 5:1-8;
17-24

THE APOSTLE PAUL OUT-lines in the Key Verse a level of acceptable conduct and respect that all of the Lord’s people should acknowledge and practice. This includes equitable behavior towards those who are advanced in years, as well as toward those of the younger generation. He also extends this sense of justice and mercy toward the widows. (vss. 3-5) Justice and mercy are truly marks that identify the well-established and mature Christian’s character.

The apostle also addresses proper behavior that we should expect from others, “That the aged men be sober [vigilant, *Marginal Translation*], grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience. The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things; That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed. Young men likewise exhort to be sober minded.” (Tit. 2:2-6) With the increasing levels of

stress in our modern world, Paul's admonitions of honor and respect toward others have not been as closely followed as it once was.

Those who are servants in the congregations of the Lord's people are worthy of more honor and respect than that which is normally given to others, because of their labors of love. "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double [Greek, twofold] honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine." (I Tim. 5:17) In further clarification of this line of reasoning concerning those who preach and teach in the household of faith, Paul explains, "The scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, The labourer is worthy of his reward."—vs. 18; Deut. 25:4; Luke 10:7

Paul has directed special attention to this matter of honoring the servants of God. During the period of the early church, it was the usual custom for the apostles, or others who traveled about while serving the brethren, to expect to receive a meal and a place to spend the night wherever they happened to be. Hospitality and temporal blessings were freely offered in exchange for the spiritual food that was given by these servants of the Truth.

Further to this, the apostle gives added counsel, "Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses. Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear." (I Tim. 5:19,20) Paul encourages his younger brother Timothy to be aware of all wrongdoing among the Lord's people and to act positively against it. "I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things without preferring [without prejudice, *Marginal Translation*] one before another, doing nothing by partiality."—vs. 21

Let us resolve to practice justice and mercy toward all of our fellow creatures, and especially toward our brethren. It should be a major feature of our Christian characters, and an important part of our consecrated walk in newness of life. ■

Appointed Times

***“O LORD, how long
shall I cry, and
thou wilt not hear!
even cry out unto
thee of violence,
and thou wilt not
save.”***

—Habakkuk 1:2

THROUGHOUT ALL THE centuries of human misery the cry, “How long, O LORD, how long?” has gone up from the hearts of those who have loved righteousness and have been pained by the sin and suffering with which they

were surrounded. It has seemed to most of these, as it did to Habakkuk, that the LORD did not hear them when they cried, or if he did hear, either he was indifferent to the evils which plague mankind, or was powerless to do anything about it.

The prophet's immediate concern was the sins of his people, which at that time were erupting into violence against one another. He asked the LORD, “Why dost thou shew me iniquity, and cause me to behold grievance? for spoiling and violence are before me: and there are that raise up strife and contention.” (Hab. 1:3) This prophet had been commissioned by God to serve Israel and to correct her wrongs, yet to him it seemed that all his efforts were to no avail. So it has seemed to the vast majority of those who, during the reign of sin

and death, have endeavored faithfully to serve the LORD.

As Habakkuk studied the situation with which he was surrounded in Israel, it appeared to worsen rather than to improve. He wrote, "The law is slacked, and judgment doth never go forth: for the wicked doth compass about the righteous; therefore wrong judgment proceedeth." (vs. 4) Not only was sin rampant throughout the nation, but no serious attempt was being made to curb the wrongdoers. The unrighteous had control of law enforcement, 'therefore wrong judgment proceedeth.'

The LORD's answer to his prayer is interesting and revealing. We read, "Behold ye among the heathen, and regard, and wonder marvellously: for I will work a work in your days, which ye will not believe, though it be told you. For, lo, I raise up the Chaldeans, that bitter and hasty nation, which shall march through the breadth of the land, to possess the dwellingplaces that are not theirs."—vss. 5,6

The LORD explained to Habakkuk that he would use the Chaldeans to punish Israel. This 'bitter and hasty nation,' would be ruthless, and would take many prisoners. He said, "They shall come all for violence: their faces shall sup up as the east wind, and they shall gather the captivity as the sand."—vs. 9

From this, Habakkuk would know that the LORD intended to do something about the sins of his people; but still his ways were shrouded in mystery, so in prayer he sought further information. He said to the LORD, "Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity: wherefore

lookest thou upon them that deal treacherously, and holdest thy tongue when the wicked devoureth the man that is more righteous than he?"—vs. 13

While the prophet lamented the sins of Israel he could not understand why the LORD would use those even more sinful as his instruments of retribution. At the conclusion of his petition for an understanding of the LORD's ways in this difficult situation, he said to himself, "I will stand upon my watch, and set me upon the tower, and will watch to see what he [the LORD] will say unto me, and what I shall answer when I am argued with."—Hab. 2:1, *Marginal Translation*

The LORD did answer his prophet. He said, "Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it. For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak, and not lie: though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry." (chap. 2:2,3) In this reply to Habakkuk, the LORD takes the subject out of the purely local setting with which Habakkuk was concerned, and places it in a setting which encompasses his entire purpose toward the sin-sick and dying race.

Habakkuk was concerned, and properly so, with the immediate difficulties which then confronted the nation of Israel. But the LORD is interested, and always has been, in the well-being of Israel and all mankind. His purpose in permitting evil, and his plan for destroying it, is concerned not with one nation alone, but with all nations, and it is for the understanding of this larger aspect of the permission of evil that God's people in every age have sought.

THE “APPOINTED TIME”

The LORD’s answer to Habakkuk gave him little or no comfort with respect to his concern over the sins of Israel. However, if he grasped its import to any extent, he would realize that the LORD had not only this situation well in hand, but that eventually righteousness will triumph over evil throughout all the earth. The ‘vision,’ or understanding of the LORD’s viewpoint with respect to evil, was for an ‘appointed time,’ that ‘time’ being ‘at the end,’ when the vision would ‘speak and not lie.’

In Hebrews 10:35-38, Paul quotes from the LORD’s statement to Habakkuk concerning the vision that would speak at the appointed time and would not tarry, and the apostle indicates that the fulfillment of it takes place at the time of Christ’s second visit to earth. He quoted from Habakkuk to encourage the Hebrew brethren to be patient in their waiting on the LORD. They knew that the promised Messiah had come; that he had been crucified and raised from the dead. But he had gone away, and when would he return? Paul wanted them to be assured that it would be in God’s appointed time, and that there would be no tarrying of the Divine plan.

CHRIST THE DELIVERER

God has made it plain in his Word that the deliverance of mankind from sin and death, and the destruction of all evil, is to be accomplished by Christ, the promised Messiah. The Old Testament prophets foretold his coming and work. However, not until he did come at his First Advent did the Lord’s people understand that the Messiah was to visit the earth twice—the first time he was to die

as the Redeemer of the people; the second time to reign as king in a kingdom, or government, which was to be worldwide.—Isa. 9:6,7

There was an appointed time in the Divine plan for both of these visits. Concerning the death of the Savior we read, “In due time Christ died for the ungodly.” (Rom. 5:6) Four thousand years of sin and suffering had passed before this great event in the Divine plan occurred, but it was exactly on time.

Nearly two thousand years have passed since, and throughout all that time only a small minority of earth’s population have even heard of Jesus, and fewer still have gained a real understanding of the Divine plan of salvation which is centered in him. But this does not mean that God’s plan has failed. It is simply that the ‘due time’ has not yet arrived for the world in general to be adequately informed concerning Jesus and the real import of his sacrificial death.

Writing to Timothy concerning an important aspect of the work of Christ during his Second Presence on earth, Paul said, “This is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.”—I Tim. 2:3-6

TIME OF FIRST ADVENT FORETOLD

It was with good authority that Paul wrote, ‘In due time Christ died for the ungodly.’ Through the Prophet Daniel the LORD had foretold this ‘due time.’ We quote, “After threescore and two weeks

shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself.” (Dan. 9:26) The ‘cutting off’ mentioned here refers to Jesus’ death, for which, it should be noted, this prophecy establishes the due time.

The understanding of this prophecy is not difficult, although it is essential to take into consideration the circumstances that form its background. It was given near the close of Israel’s captivity in Babylon. The Prophet Daniel was one of the Hebrew captives, although, because of his ability and trustworthiness, he had been exalted to the position of Prime Minister, first under Nebuchadnezzar, and continuing until Cyrus of the Medo-Persian Empire.

Daniel did not allow his high position in a Gentile government to interfere with serving his own people, and being interested in their standing before God. In chapter nine, verse two, of Daniel’s prophecy, we find him saying, “I Daniel understood by books the number of the years, whereof the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah the prophet, that he would accomplish seventy years in the desolations of Jerusalem.” See Jeremiah 25:8-11 and II Chronicles 36:20-23.

From this, we learn that there was an appointed time for Israel’s captivity in Babylon; namely, seventy years. When Daniel made reference to this, the conclusion of the foretold seventy years was approaching. In the preceding chapter, Daniel records a vision the LORD had given to him in which were portrayed events that seemed to Daniel to be the distant future. In this vision, it was revealed that one of the powerful kings he saw in this vision would “destroy the mighty and the holy people,” and that he would stand up “against the Prince of princes.”—Dan. 8:18-25

To climax this forecast of calamitous events, it was said to Daniel, "Shut thou up the vision; for it shall be for many days." (vs. 26) With this, Daniel "fainted, and was sick." (vs. 27) He apparently feared that the foretold seventy years of captivity might be continued, and wondered if the 'many days' of chapter eight, verse twenty-six, referred to a period of calamity beyond the seventy years.

Since Daniel had studied the prophecy of Jeremiah, it is not unlikely that he was acquainted with the lesson set forth in chapter eighteen, verses one to nine—the lesson taught to the prophet by observing the potter. Jeremiah wrote, "I went down to the potter's house, and, behold, he wrought a work on the wheels. And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter: so he made it again another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make it."—vss. 3,4

We further read, "O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter? saith the LORD. Behold, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are ye in mine hand, O house of Israel." (vs. 6) Continuing, the LORD explains, "At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy it; If that nation, against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil, I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them. And at what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it; If it do evil in my sight, that it obey not my voice, then I will repent of the good, wherewith I said I would benefit them."—vss. 7-10

Daniel might easily understand from this lesson that, although God had set a fixed time of seventy

years for Israel's captivity in Babylon, nevertheless their punishment was to be extended; for as Daniel well knew, the people had not learned the needed lesson, continuing to be disobedient to God and to his Law. So he went to the LORD in prayer, passionately asking him to extend mercy to his people.

This prayer is recorded in Daniel 9:3-19, and is eloquent in its appeal to God on behalf of his chosen people. Verse five reads, "We have sinned, and have committed iniquity, and have done wickedly, and have rebelled, even by departing from thy precepts and from thy judgments." Verses eight and nine read, "O Lord, to us belongeth confusion of face, to our kings, to our princes, and to our fathers, because we have sinned against thee. To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgivenesses, though we have rebelled against him."

Finally, "O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive; O Lord, hearken and do; defer not, for thine own sake, O my God: for thy city and thy people are called by thy name." (vs. 19) Thus did the faithful Daniel plead to God on behalf of his people, asking God not to 'defer' the time when they could return to their own land and to their own city, Jerusalem.

Daniel explains that, while he was thus praying on behalf of Israel, "The man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision [recorded in preceding chapter] at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, touched me about the time of the evening oblation." (vss. 20,21) Gabriel explained to Daniel that his prayer had been heard, and that he had been sent to give him "skill and understanding."—vs. 22

(Continued on page 35)

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(Continued from page 31) Since Daniel was assured that his prayer had been heard, he would know that the foretold seventy years of captivity were not to be extended. Then, through Gabriel, the LORD gave his faithful servant another vision. As we noted in the case of Habakkuk, the LORD lifted his mind away from his immediate concern for a local situation in Israel and told him of a vision which would speak at the end, and would not tarry; so with Daniel, the vision he was now given superseded Israel's immediate experiences as captives in Babylon, and took his mind down through the centuries to the coming of the long-promised Messiah.

To Daniel, the coming of the Messiah was to be the solution of all Israel's problems as well as the problems of the whole world. Although Daniel saw the LORD's people persecuted and trodden down in the previous visions given to him, there was no real excuse for him to 'faint' and to be 'sick,' since God's promises pertaining to the Messiah and his triumphant kingdom were to be fulfilled.

"The kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him."—Dan. 7:27

We continue to pray that this wonderful promise from God's Word will soon come, and bring an end to earth's weary night of sin and death. ■

All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.

—II Timothy 3:16

A New Kind of Love

*“This commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also.”
—I John 4:21*

IN OUR DAY, UNIMAGINABLE horrors are being perpetrated by some who feel they are thereby contending for their faith. The entire world is presently besieged by zealots intent upon imposing their religious beliefs, employing wholesale and indiscriminate slaughter of men, women, and children by sword, gun, and bomb.

Many religions, including nominal Christianity, have long, bloody histories rife with so-called “holy wars.” This was barbarism initiated and driven by an utter misunderstanding of what it means to contend for one’s faith. The past and present barbarity in the name of God is a chilling example of the deadly extremes that are possible when those who contend for their faith are not motivated and guided by the power and principles of the Holy Spirit.

While abhorring such extremes as perpetrating physical harm upon those with whom they disagree, there are, nevertheless, within Christendom

(so-called) those who feel contending for the faith is a license to be argumentative, confrontational, even verbally combative, about doctrinal technicalities. These are as seriously in error as those who visit terror and bodily injury upon those with whom they disagree. Both attitudes grossly dishonor God and mark their bearers as being bereft of the Holy Spirit.

Jude, strongly under the influence of the Holy Spirit, had something very specific and urgent to say to the church about contending for “the faith.” (Jude 3) His short, but potent, letter was a direct product of that holy influence.

RISE OF “UNGODLY MEN”

Centuries before Jude wrote his letter, Enoch, under the power of the same holy influence, had warned of the rise of “ungodly men” who would be judged and condemned in due time. (Jude 14,15) However, Enoch did not define those ‘ungodly men.’ It was left for Jude to define and identify them for the collective benefit of all who would, likewise, experience the power of the Holy Spirit during the Gospel Age.

Neither Enoch nor Jude were addressing the extreme, murderous zealotry that so besets the world today, which is so obviously evil to all but the perpetrators themselves. Rather, they were specifically concerned with forewarning the church of the much more subtle insinuation of ungodly men into the fellowship of believers; ungodly men who, though not obviously evil to the casual observer, would, if left unnoted, do great harm to ‘the faith’ while professing to defend it.

Jude's focus was on "certain men whose condemnation was written about long ago [who] have secretly slipped in among you . . . godless men, who change the grace of our God into a license for immorality and deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord."—Jude 4, *New International Version*

UNGODLY MEN IDENTIFIED

"These men speak abusively against whatever they do not understand; and what things they do understand by instinct, like unreasoning animals—these are the very things that destroy them." (vs. 10, *NIV*)

He continues to identify the ungodly men: "These men are grumblers and faultfinders; they follow their own evil desires; they boast about themselves and flatter others for their own advantage. . . . Remember what the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ foretold. They said to you, 'In the last times there will be scoffers who will follow their own ungodly desires.' These are the men who divide you, who follow mere natural instincts and do not have the Spirit."—vss. 16-19, *NIV*

In verses fourteen through nineteen, Jude's sole purpose is to characterize the ungodly men; to identify the ungodly men and to define for his brethren what constitutes the ungodly men. They are those who do not have the Holy Spirit. That is his point. The ungodly men divide; they do not unite because they follow their worldly instincts. They cannot do otherwise because they do not have the Holy Spirit. They pretend they do. They often seem to. But they do not.

CALLED AND LOVED BY THE FATHER

Jude addresses his brethren collectively; not only those living in his day but all the consecrated and spirit-begotten today. “Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ and a brother of James, To those who have been called, who are loved by God the Father and kept by Jesus Christ: Mercy, peace and love be yours in abundance. Dear friends, although I was very eager to write to you about the salvation we share, I felt I had to write and urge you to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints.”—Jude 1-3, *NIV*

After thus urging them to contend for ‘the faith,’ Jude tells his brethren how to contend for the faith. “You, dear friends, build yourselves . . . in God’s love as you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life.”—vss. 20,21, *NIV*

However, between exhorting his brethren to contend for the faith and telling them how to contend for the faith, he inserted, almost parenthetically, his long urgent caution about the ungodly men in verses 14-19, some verses of which we just noted. By this means, he emphasized the critical difference between the godly and the ungodly. The ungodly men that Enoch and Jude spoke of are masters of emulation and deception. But, skilled as they are in the practice of spiritual fakery, they cannot build themselves up in the ‘most holy faith,’ they cannot pray in the Holy Spirit, and they cannot keep themselves in the love of God.

“CONTENDING FOR THE FAITH” DEFINED

Jude is urgently stating that ‘contending for the faith’ is something other than argument and

confrontation. He suggests in verses twenty and twenty-one that contending for the faith is a collective building up in the most holy faith, a collective praying in the Holy Spirit, and a collective keeping of the brethren in the love of God.

In these verses, Jude is urging his brethren to do the very things which ungodly men cannot do. Jude is thereby emphasizing that those things of which the ungodly men are utterly incapable are the very means by which those who are truly godly contend for the faith!

The ability of the consecrated to build themselves up in the faith and pray in the Holy Spirit is clear. However, some might question whether, being imperfect, they have the further ability to keep themselves in the love of God. It might be surmised that it is the all-powerful and perfect God who keeps the consecrated in his love.

Further, these might say our Lord seems to imply as much in the Gospel of John—"No man is able to pluck them [the consecrated] out of my Father's hand."—John 10:29

Romans, the eighth chapter, seems to lend further support to the idea that surely it is God alone who has the ability to keep the consecrated in his love. "Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Just as it is written, 'For your sake we are being put to death all day long; we were considered as sheep to be slaughtered.' But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to

come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”—Rom. 8:35-39, *New American Standard Version*

In these verses, we see the wisdom of Paul. He has listed every possibility, every element and condition, every conceivable circumstance, every power, in both the physical and spiritual realms, both in the present and in the future. Everything that can be imagined, dreamed of, or ever created is listed as lacking the power to separate the consecrated from the love of God . . . with the exception of the consecrated themselves! Therefore, Paul is saying it is only the consecrated who can separate themselves from the love of God! God will never separate the members of the church from his love. Nor will he ever allow anything, or anyone else, to do so, neither now or in the future, either in this realm nor in the spiritual realm.

OUR DUTY

Shortly before his death, the Lord told his disciples, “As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love.” (John 15:9) He then added that they would ‘continue’ in his love if they did something very specific—“If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father’s commandments, and abide in his love.”—John 15:10

It is clear, therefore, that the duty of the consecrated is to continue in their Master’s love by keeping his commandments, as he kept the commandments of his Father.

Again, it might be asked, "How can the consecrated—flawed, and imperfect as they are—possibly keep the Lord's commandments as he, in his perfection, kept the commandments of his Father?" The answer is in the commandment itself. "This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you." (John 15:12) Here, the Lord gives his disciples a commandment that, even in their imperfection, they can keep. But it is a commandment that can be kept only if they are determined to keep it; and they can only be determined to keep it because they have the Holy Spirit, which those ungodly men that Enoch and Jude spoke of do not have and can never have! It is this unique ability to love one another as their Lord has loved them that marks the Lord's people as entirely different from those ungodly men. Exercising this ability to love is the means by which the godly collectively contend for the faith regardless of their flaws, weaknesses, and imperfections.

Therefore, those who will keep themselves in the love of God will do so by loving their brethren, just as their Heavenly Father and his beloved Son loves them—constantly, fervently, and without reservation.

Our Lord Jesus, as well as Paul and Jude, encourage all those who would keep themselves in the love of God to be determined to love one another constantly, fervently and without reservation under all circumstances—whether it be tribulation, or distress, or famine, or nakedness, or sword; whether it be death, or life, or angels, or principalities, or powers, or things present, or things to come, or height, or depth, or any other creature. They are saying these must be as determined to

love one another as the Heavenly Father is determined to love them.

It is in this way that they collectively contend for the faith. "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." (John 13:34,35) No other faith defines contending for it in this holy way. No other faith ever has.

Paul wrote to the Philippians, "Let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you for myself or hear about you from a distance, I may know that you are standing firm, one in spirit, one in mind, contending [collectively] as one man, for the gospel faith, meeting your opponents without so much as a tremor. This [loving oneness] is a sure sign to them [the ungodly men] that their doom is sealed, but [it is] a sign of your salvation."—Phil. 1:27,28, *New English Bible*

In light of the foregoing, some may be inclined to feel the doctrines of the faith are, therefore, somewhat of an impediment to the development of the love spoken of by our Lord, the Apostle Paul, and Jude, and should be put aside or minimized to forestall strife or tension. These seriously err! For it is only those doctrines that define the very love that our Lord, the Apostle Paul, and Jude encourage us to exercise in contending for the faith. Without those doctrines (teachings) it would be impossible to conceive of, and identify, the superior order of love that our Lord spoke of in the Gospel of John; a love that is far higher than the order of love expressed in the so-called golden rule with which even the world is familiar.

A NEW KIND OF LOVE

When our Lord told his disciples to ‘love one another’ in John 13:34 and John 15:12, he was not referring to the love of the golden rule of which even the world is capable. Our Lord issued a new commandment because he had brought a new kind of love to light to his disciples, of which the world is ignorant and of which those of the fleshly world are entirely incapable. The new kind of love of which our Lord was speaking in the Gospel of John is a love that is generated only by the power of the Holy Spirit, and only within those who have been spirit begotten.

This is the love to which Paul and Jude were also referring, and it is this new kind of love that can be defined if one understands the doctrines of the faith.

The doctrines of the Ransom (I Tim. 2:6) and Sin Offering (Lev. 16:15) define the depth of God’s love. The doctrine of Two Salvations (John 5:28,29) defines the breadth of the love of God. The doctrine of the High Calling (II Pet. 1:4) defines the height of God’s love. The doctrines of the Covenants (Gal. 4:24) define the length of the love of God. This is love of a higher and different order, a love far beyond that expressed by the golden rule.—Luke 3:6

The doctrines are indispensable to understanding what sort of love it is that the church is to collectively develop and express as it collectively contends for the faith.

UNGODLY INCAPABLE OF THIS TRUE LOVE

The ungodly men have a remarkable ability to appear as completely genuine children of God. They can appear as kind and sympathetic, charitable,

and hospitable, learned, zealous for the Gospel, even compassionate and caring. What betrays and identifies the ungodly men is their utter inability to even pretend to love determinedly, fervently, constantly, and without reservation. They are entirely incapable of feigning this kind of love because this love is solely the product of the Holy Spirit. Only those begotten of the Spirit are capable of loving in the manner the Lord commanded them to love. It is this ability that distinguishes them from the ungodly men. It is this ability that enables the godly to contend for the faith in a godly manner. It is that very love for one another which defines the faith, and raises it above all others as a “standard for the people.”—Isa. 62:10 ■

WEEKLY PRAYER MEETING TEXTS

JANUARY 5—“The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me.”—Romans 15:3 (Z. '96-83 Hymn 299)

JANUARY 12—“Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.”—Galatians 6:1 (Z. '01-150 Hymn 267)

JANUARY 19—“O how love I thy law! It is my meditation all the day.”—Psalm 119:97 (Z. '99-156 Hymn 238)

JANUARY 26—“When ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance.”—Matthew 6:16 (Z. '98-45 Hymn 196)

His Hands Shall Finish It

*“The hands of
Zerubbabel have
laid the foundation
of this house; his
hands shall also
finish it; and thou
shalt know that
the LORD of hosts
hath sent me
unto you.”
—Zech. 4:9*

OUR TEXT CONCERNS THE

building of Zerubbabel's temple which took place after the return of the Jews from captivity. This prophecy teaches a much larger lesson than to limit its application to the local events that took place during Zerubbabel's day. Instead, it has a greater significance in the building of the spiritual temple of God that has been underway during the present Gospel Age.—I Cor. 3:16,17

As in Zerubbabel's day, there was opposition to the building of that temple, and so also has there been opposition to the present building work of the spiritual temple. This is spoken of in the prophecy as being a “great mountain” (vs. 7), which in prophetic language illustrates the greater antitypical work. During this age the ‘great mountain’ has in part represented the kingdoms of this world that have wielded their power and wealth to adversely

affect the construction work of the spiritual temple, and the gathering of the little flock. (Luke 12:32) Much has been antagonistic to the success of this work, such as error masquerading as truth and darkness appearing as light; but the heavenly Architect has arranged to providentially care for his children and the building of the temple.

What has God arranged to do for his people? Will he vanquish the enemies of truth and righteousness? Will he erect a protecting fence around them? We answer no, because he permits the enemy to pursue their course, and his people to be tested for their loyalty to him. God ultimately defeats the enemy's purpose by giving his people spiritual vision; and during Zerubbabel's day he sent two of his prophets, Haggai and Zechariah, with a vision. The vision consisted of a candlestick that provides light. The oil that fed the lamps came through seven golden pipes from two olive trees. (Zech. 4:2) The message is particularly meaningful because it was "Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts." (vs.6) How strengthening this was to the people in that time, and what an encouragement it is to us in our day.

The children of Israel believed that some day they would be the light of the world. God warned them that as the secret of the candlestick's light was in the oil coming from the two olive trees (vs. 3), so also the secret of their success as a nation lay in their having a continual supply of his Holy Spirit. But, to the natural eye, seeing on one side the military might which had gathered against them, and on the other side nothing but the Spirit of God invisibly working, it seemed their chances of success

were remote. The same is true today—the Lord’s people are in a minority as regards numbers and earthly influence. Some may have supposed that success would be ensured if they could count on the support of earthly powers, but the LORD’s message is ‘not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit.’

THE DAY OF SMALL THINGS

Let us consider the progress of this temple-building work and note how marvelously it has proceeded, even though it is spoken of as having taken place in the “day of small things.” (vs. 10) This ‘day’ began at Pentecost when the foundation of the spiritual house was laid. For thirty years the life and earthly ministry of our dear Redeemer was mostly hidden from the public’s understanding. Mary, and a few other close friends of our Lord, knew of his miraculous birth, and they no doubt pondered over the angel’s message, and the prophecies concerning him.

Wonderful things were foretold concerning the child Jesus, and as the years passed with no apparent sign of the foretold predictions being fulfilled, some perhaps felt that they would never come to pass. His eventual identification with John at the Jordan River, and his baptism, and anointing with the Holy Spirit, were great things. We know how the life and ministry of our Lord Jesus was viewed from a purely human standpoint, and it was considered largely as an apparent failure in the eyes of the worldly-wise. He presented himself to Israel as their Messiah, but because he did not measure up to their perception of what Messiah should be, they rejected him.

A few days before he died, Jesus said to his disciples, "I have overcome the world." (John 16:33) He was an overcomer in every sense of the word, although it did not appear evident when, a few days later, he hung upon the cross dying. There, amidst a fearful darkness, Jesus experienced his greatest triumph over the world. To the average man, it was only the end of a very foolish and fanatical life. The death and burial of Jesus, although it may have been a day of 'small things' in the estimation of those who witnessed the events, it was actually a day of great victory. The results of these events will only be seen when every creature which is upon earth will lift up his voice in praise to him saying, "Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever."—Rev. 5:13

LAYING THE FOUNDATION

We read that it was a day of small things when Zerubbabel laid the foundation of the house. The foundation was laid by his own hands (Zech. 4:9), and indicates that it was a work which he attended to personally. After our Lord's ascension to heaven, we find that his first work was to lay the foundation of the spiritual temple, and this he also attended to personally, laying the foundation with his own hands. For it was then that he carried into the courts of Divine justice the merit of his sacrificed, perfect humanity, and presented it to the Heavenly Father for us. He laid the foundation of the house of sons (Heb. 3:6), upon the basis of our coming to God and consecrating our lives unto him as acceptable sacrifices.—Rom. 12:1

Looking back to Jerusalem and seeing what was taking place there, we note that the Lord's bewildered disciples were assembled there according to his instructions. He told them to tarry in Jerusalem until they would be endued with power from on high. (Acts 1:4) In that upper room, we may visualize them all gathered together. Perhaps Thomas was wondering whether or not they had understood the instructions of the Lord correctly. Peter may have been reasoning what the meaning of it all could be, while the meditative John questioned why the abiding presence of the Master was not yet with them.

In the city, the tumult which but a few weeks earlier had raged so furiously had now been stilled. The chief priests and elders of the Jews were quiet; the cause of all their anxiety and contention was gone, or so they thought. The Nazarene was dead, his earthly ministry finished, the hopes of his followers were dashed, and the victory was theirs. It was a day of small things on earth, but it was a day of great things in heaven. The risen and glorified Redeemer was laying the foundation of a house that will be the meeting place between God and men when ultimately completed.

PREPARATION OF THE LIVING STONES

What was true of Jesus' ministry and at Pentecost has been true throughout the Gospel Age since, for it has been a day of small things. We know that even before the apostles fell asleep in death, the "mystery of iniquity" had already begun to work in the infant church. (II Thess. 2:7) This developed into a great mountain, opposing all who kept the faith and walked in the footsteps of our Lord. This

mountain has persecuted and opposed with sword, stake, and the scaffold the true saints of God. They have been compelled to flee to dens and caves of the earth before its relentless and persecuting power.

To the human observer, it might appear that the great Architect did not have much interest in his work to allow it to be impeded, or apparently so, but the situation has never been out of God's control, and the work has been grandly going forward. In the midst of this day of small things, the living stones for the temple have been in course of preparation. They have been—one by one—prepared, chiseled and polished in the very presence of their foes, and often at their hands.

It has been a day of great things when viewed from the heavenly standpoint. The prophecy states that the hands of Zerubbabel laid the foundation of the house, and "his hands shall also finish it." (Zech. 4:9) The laying of the foundation was a personal work in which our Lord, with his own hands, presented to God the valuable basis of our acceptance to him. Since we read that his hands shall also finish the work, we must conclude that it will also be a personal work attended to by our Lord. What a wonderful thought it is that we are now living in the days of the Second Presence of the Master. He has come to attend personally to the finishing work of this great spiritual building.—John 14:1-3

THE SPIRITUAL TEMPLE SOON TO BE COMPLETED

When he laid the foundation of this spiritual house at Pentecost, he had in his hands the merit by which the house of sons was made acceptable

(Heb. 9:24); but, now that he has come to finish it, we read that he comes with a “plummet” in his hands. (Zech. 4:10) The ‘plummet’ is for the work of putting all things into alignment. Upon his arrival, the greater Zerubbabel, Christ Jesus, with the plummet of Truth in his hands, began to hold it up to the many long-held accepted doctrines. When the plummet was held up, how distorted the teachings were that have come down to us from a darker past. The true saints of God have been gathering around the Truth wonderfully served at the table of their returned Lord (Rev. 3:20,21), that they might learn more of his Truth and enjoy the increasing light of his presence. What has been the result of the use of this plummet? Has the light of Truth shined forth from his presence, and have the Lord’s people quickly sought to put off all that pertains to the old man, and have they endeavored to “put on the new man”?—Col. 3:10

Let it enthuse us to face the trials of our prophetic day by remembering that the finishing work is now taking place, and that it is being performed by our Lord’s own hands, and that he is personally present to attend to it. The great temple is being completed, and, when the last member has passed beyond the veil, he will bring them all together from every corner of the earth. Then the day of small things will be past, and from our future, heavenly home we shall hear restored humanity saying, “Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised in the city of our God, in the mountain of his holiness. Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the great King.”—Ps. 48:1,2 ■

Trip To Alaska

Bro. Wade and Sr. Lois Austin
Bro. Bob and Sr. Deanna Gorecki

ON FRIDAY MORNING, after attending the 2005 General Convention at Johnstown, PA, the four of us started on a twelve-thousand-mile trip in a motor home that would take us through the United States, Canada, the Yukon Territory, and Alaska.

Our first planned stop was to be Selkirk, Manitoba, where we would visit a brother and sister. A very serious operation left these brethren unable to have visitors.



Meeting in Yorkton, SK

We moved on to our next planned stop in Yorkton, Saskatchewan, where some brethren traveled from several distant towns to join local brethren for an

evening Bible study on the Book of Daniel, followed by discussion and fellowship. Seventeen were present for the meeting. The majority of the brethren were related.

Our next stop was near Tarnapol, Saskatchewan, out in the countryside on a large farm. Again, brethren from other distant towns arrived early for dinner, and an evening meeting that consisted of two discourses followed by a discussion. Fourteen were present at the meeting.



Meeting in Tarnapol, SK

The next day we visited brethren who lived near Battleford, Saskatchewan, on a small farm. Upon arrival, discussions on Bible subjects started and continued late into the evening. At breakfast the next morning, discussions continued until it was time to leave.

The following day, we traveled to Red Deer, Alberta, where two families of brethren were waiting for us. Bible discussions over supper continued late into the evening with a list of questions that needed to be answered.

The next morning, we traveled to the Barhill, Alberta area, where, about thirty miles out of town, we met brethren who were living on a farm. After supper, Bible discussions and questions continued late into the evening. The next day, a meeting was planned in Barhill at a senior living facility. In addition to the sister living in the facility, there were ten others who attended the meeting, and fellowship followed. Lunch was served in between the two Bible studies. More discussions followed back at the farm, late into the evening. That night we heard the coyotes in the distance.

Early the next morning we left for our trip north to Alaska.

After traveling several days through many miles of trees, rivers, and lakes, we arrived in Alaska. There the land consisted of snowcapped mountains and glaciers, waterfalls, lakes, and rivers. The scenery was breathtaking, and we all marveled at our Heavenly Father's handiwork. Thirty-five miles from Anchorage is the town of Wasilla. About ten miles out of town lives a sister on a small farm. Since her husband died several years ago, there are no other brethren to meet with for hundreds of miles. We enjoyed our fellowship with her and talked about the possibility of her attending a Bible study over the telephone with brethren in the United States.

Our next stop was Seattle, Washington, and the Labor Day Convention, where about one-hundred-twenty brethren gathered to enjoy three days of rich blessings. The convention was in a new location, on the shores of the Puget Sound. We were pleasantly surprised when the sister from Alaska walked

in the door. She had made a quick decision a few days earlier to attend the convention.

As we made our way homeward after the convention, our first stop was Columbia Falls, Montana, where an evening meeting was held with several brethren in the area. The meeting was filled with questions that lasted late into the evening.

Our next stop would be our last visit with brethren. We arrived in Havre, Montana at a sister's home that is also the location of a pizza/bakery. That evening we discussed Bible subjects that continued late into the evening. The next morning we returned to her house to say our last goodbyes.

As we left this sister's home, the four of us reflected back on our days of travel. We all agreed that the highlights of our trip were the visits with brethren in their homes and small towns. The loving-kindness that each family showered upon us left a lasting memory, and we thank our Heavenly Father for the opportunity to have spent a few moments in each of their lives. Each departure left us filled with both joy and sadness—joy at having been there and sadness that it had to end and that it might be our last visit.

We continue to thank our Heavenly Father for allowing us to have this wonderful experience. ■

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General Convention Bulletin

July 15-20, 2006—Johnston, Pennsylvania

THE 2006 GENERAL CONVENTION returns to the lovely facilities of the University of Pittsburgh at Johnstown. Air-conditioned hotel-like rooms with private bathrooms in the Living-Learning Center (LLC), family-style apartments (also air-conditioned) with private bathrooms (APTS), and housing with two rooms sharing one bathroom (not air-conditioned) in other facilities are available on campus. A child may sleep on a bedroom floor at no charge in his own sleeping bag if both beds are occupied. If a child is alone in a bedroom sharing the bathroom with other adults, the double occupancy rate will apply to all family members.

The cost of meals for those 5 years old or younger will be paid by the convention. Once again 50% of the cost of those from 6 through 17 will be refunded if the young person attends at least 75% of the studies for his or her age group. This subsidy does not cover meals paid in cash at the door.

The convention will provide one shuttle bus leaving the Pittsburgh airport in the early evening for the college in Johnstown on Friday, July 14. There will be one shuttle bus leaving the college in the early morning hours for the Pittsburgh airport on Friday, July 21.

The convention theme text is taken from the words of Psalm 119:105, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path," and a discourse

will be given on this important subject. In addition, a series of three mini-talks will be presented based on I Timothy 1:5, “Charity [Love] out of a Pure Heart,” “A Good Conscience,” and “Faith Unfeigned.” There will be a discussion of “The Fall of Babylon” based on Revelation 14:8 and 18:2, and a symposium of two brethren will consider the topics “Advocate” and “Mediator.” We encourage you to make your plans now to attend and participate in the blessings of this year’s General Convention. ■

Ages	18 & up	**13-17	**6-12
Breakfast	\$6.00	\$5.00	\$4.00
Lunch	7.00	6.00	5.00
Dinner	9.00	8.00	6.00
Total, three meals	\$22.00	\$19.00	\$15.00
Lodging (per night)			
*dbl occ (LLC or APTS)	\$25.00	\$20.00	\$15.00
dbl occ (non-LLC or APTS)	\$20.00	\$18.00	\$10.00
*single occ (LLC)	\$45.00	n/a	n/a
single occ (non-LLC)	\$25.00	n/a	n/a
PKG: 7 nights, 18 meals			
*dbl occ (LLC or APTS)	\$275+	\$240+	\$190+
dbl occ (non-LLC or APTS)	\$195+	\$160+	\$100+
*single occ (LLC)	\$395+	n/a	n/a
single occ (non-LLC)	\$235+	n/a	n/a
If no breakfasts, deduct—+\$30 or +\$20			
*Air conditioned			
**50% of these costs will be refunded if the young person attends 75% of the studies for his/her age group			

General Convention Registration

1425 Lachman Lane — Pacific Palisades, CA 90272

E-mail: Nekora@aol.com (310) 454-5248

	Brkfst	Lunch	Dinner	Bed
Friday, July 14, 2006				
Saturday, 15th				
Sunday, 16th				
Monday, 17th				
Tuesday, 18th				
Wednesday, 19th				
Thursday, 20th				
Check for package: 7 nights, all 18 meals <input type="checkbox"/> or 7 nights, 12 meals (no breakfasts) <input type="checkbox"/>				
Check: <input type="checkbox"/> private bath or <input type="checkbox"/> shared bath <input type="checkbox"/> double occupancy <input type="checkbox"/> single occupancy <input type="checkbox"/> interested in APTS				
Names and ecclesia name (age if under 18)				
Address:				

Statistical Report

For the year ended September 30, 2005

IN THE FISCAL year 2005, we implemented significant expense curtailments due to declining trends in reserves. The budget for 2005 was set to spend no more than 20% of our reserves. The year's operating expenses were 97% of budget, and witnessing expenses were 101% of budget. Revenues were 142% of budget, resulting in a net gain for the year of \$6,074, compared to a budgeted net loss of \$150,000.

Although we budgeted to use up to 20% of our reserves in 2005, due to increased revenues from

Income	Receipts	Expenditures
All revenue other than bequests	\$297,299	
Expenses		
Radio (domestic and foreign)		\$63,681
TV (includes spots and recordings)		50,168
Other Media and Editorial		14,713
Pilgrim Service (domestic and foreign)		16,757
Other Foreign Support		14,170
Plant Operating Expense		50,119
Shop Operating Expense		54,931
House Operating Expense		55,126
Shipping/Mailing		95,082
Outside Printing		75,404
Total Expenses		490,151
Less Income	297,299	
Loss	(192,852)	
Bequests	198,926	
Gain after Bequests	6,074	

large bequests received, we did not have to use any reserves during the fiscal year.

For 2006, we have budgeted to increase radio, television, internet, and other witnessing efforts, but to limit the use of reserves to a maximum of \$110,000. If financial conditions become more favorable, further increases in witnessing efforts will be considered.

The Heidelberg Print-on-Demand machine is producing *The Dawn* magazine in 10 different languages, and is also being used to print booklets and other materials. The Dawn plant has continued to operate on a full-time basis during the past year. Large amounts of printed materials have been supplied to various individuals and classes worldwide. *Hope* booklets continue to be supplied to various funeral homes throughout the United States.

We greatly appreciate the offsite help we receive on a continual basis at the Dawn from many individuals throughout the country, both near and far. In addition, we're thankful for assistance provided in the mailing of booklets and other printed material by many in this country and abroad. During the past year this assistance has been provided, in part, by brethren in Portland, Seattle, Los Angeles, New Haven, Detroit, Chicago, Orlando, Boise, Cincinnati and Greenfield, also in other countries such as Philippines, Australia, England, Canada, Ukraine, Moldova, Romania, India, Nigeria, Ghana and South America.

The message of hope and comfort continues to be spread throughout the world by many means. We appreciate an interest in the prayers of the brethren that we may, by the Lord's grace, continue to spread the message of coming peace and joy promised in God's Holy Word during the year 2006. (Psalm 90:12, January 6, *Manna*) ■

SPEAKERS' APPOINTMENTS

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

A. Allers

Australia

January 1-17

OBITUARIES

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

Sister Esa Keetman, Marquartstein, Germany—November 17. Age, 89

Sister Anna Tsimonis, Waterbury, CT—December 1. Age, 86

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*So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.—Psalm 90:12*

The Christian, in numbering his days, does not do so with a doleful or disconsolate sentiment, although he does so with sobriety. He counts the days as they go as so many blessings, so many privileges, so many opportunities to “show forth the praises of Him who called us out of darkness into His marvelous light,” to render assistance to others in the pilgrim journey, and to develop in himself more and more of the character pleasing in the sight of God,—to become more and more a copy of God’s dear son.

—Daily Heavenly Manna, January 6



# CONVENTIONS

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

**CHICAGO NEW YEAR'S CONVENTION, December 31, January 1,2**—Elk Grove High School, 500 W. Elk Grove Blvd., Elk Grove Village, IL 60007. Contact R. Tabac 4N233 Norris Avenue, West Chicago, IL 60185 Phone: (630) 231-1874

**PHOENIX NEW YEAR'S CONVENTION, December 31, January 1,2**—La Quinta Inn, 2510 W. Greenway Road, Phoenix, AZ 85203. Contact J. Porcolab, PO Box 5432, Sun City West, AZ 85376. Phone: (602) 363-3612

**LOS ANGELES QUARTERLY CONVENTION, January 29**—Burbank Masonic Auditorium, 406 Irving Drive, Burbank, CA. Contact Richard Bieniak. Phone: (949) 457-0894

**SACRAMENTO CONVENTION, February 17,18,19**—The Clarion Hotel, 2600 Auburn Blvd. Contact K. Ajise, 6925 Gallery Way, Sacramento, CA. Phone: (916) 421-0755

**ROCKLAND ANNUAL CONVENTION, February 26**—Comfort Inn, Nanuet, NY. Contact D. Shallieu, 1041 Johnston Drive, Watchung, NJ 07069. Phone: (908) 756-4954

**FLORIDA CONVENTION, March 4,5,6**—Clarion Hotel, Orlando International Airport, 3835 McCoy Road, Orlando, FL 32812. Phone: (407) 859-2711 or (888) 266-2711. Specify "Florida Bible Students Group" in order to guarantee convention special rate.

Other information, contact R. Sconyers, 601 S. Winter Park Drive, Casselberry, FL 32707. Phone: (407) 339-0970

**NEW YORK SPRING CONVENTION, March 19—**Wellesley Inn, Two Bridges Road & Exit 52, Route 80, Fairfield, NJ. Contact D. Gorecki. Phone: (845) 758-0223

**FRESNO CONVENTION, March 31-April 2—**Best Western Garden Court Inn, 2141 N. Parkway Drive, Fresno, CA 93705. Contact B. Wilson, 2103 N. Price Avenue, #112, Fresno, CA 93703. Phone: (559) 255-2241

**DETROIT PRE-MEMORIAL CONVENTION, April 7,8,9—**Macomb Community College, 14500 12 Mile Road, Warren, MI. Contact F. Nemesh. Phone: (248) 649-6588

**BOISE CONVENTION, April 28,29,30—**Owyhee Plaza Hotel, 1109 Main Street, Boise, ID. Contact D. Allers, 2438 Bruins Circle, Boise, ID 83704. Phone: (208) 375-6873

**BIBLE STUDENTS GENERAL CONVENTION, July 15-20—**University of Pittsburgh, Johnstown, PA. Contact Michael Nekora, 1425 Lachman Lane, Pacific Palisades, CA 90272. Phone: (310) 454-5248

**INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION, August 6-11—**Nowy Sacz, Poland. (International Youth Seminar follows in Baia Mare, Romania, August 14-18. Contact T. Machacek. Phone: (219) 662-8107



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*To us the Scriptures clearly teach:*

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

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

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

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

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

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