

The DAWN

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

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HIGHLIGHTS OF DAWN

"Baptized for the Dead" 2

INTERNATIONAL BIBLE STUDIES

Praying for One Another 16

Sharing All Things 18

Witnessing to the Truth 20

Remembering God's Faithfulness 22

CHRISTIAN LIFE AND DOCTRINE

Parables of Jesus—Part 9

Importuning in Prayer 24

"Teach Us to Pray" 36

Not Only Believe—But Work 50

Weekly Prayer Meeting Texts 14

OBITUARIES 15

SPEAKERS' APPOINTMENTS 62

CONVENTIONS 63

“Baptized for the Dead”

“What shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? why are they then baptized for the dead?”
—*I Corinthians 15:29*

THE DOCTRINE OF BAPTISM is one of the basic tenets of Christian belief. It is proper that it be considered such, since the Apostle Paul identifies it as one of the “principles of the doctrine of Christ.” (Heb. 6:1,2) In its various forms, the word “baptism” appears over one hundred times in the New Testament. Yet, for all its usage in Scripture, the understanding of this important teaching varies widely among professed believers in Christ. One verse which speaks of baptism has especially puzzled many for centuries. It is the statement of Paul found in our opening text, and in particular the phrase which appears twice in that verse, “baptized for the dead.”

Various explanations of this phrase have been offered. Some church historians claim that John Calvin interpreted it as a reference to being baptized shortly before death. Martin Luther is said to have believed it should be translated “baptized

above the tombs of the dead.” Still others claim that the mention of baptism in this verse refers to the ritual washings which were required of Jews under the Mosaic law in the case of contact with a dead body. The most commonly known interpretation of these words is that given by various factions of Mormonism, which view the rite of baptism as an indispensable requirement to enter the kingdom of God. Their belief states that baptism for the dead can be offered by “proxy” to those who have died without the opportunity to receive it themselves. Ironically, it is also taught that those who have died may choose to either accept or reject the baptism done on their behalf.

None of these explanations of our text are satisfactory to the sincere student of the Bible. How are we, though, to properly interpret Paul’s words? What did he mean by the phrase, “baptized for the dead,” especially in view of the fact that he repeats it a second time in the verse? Like many other Scriptures which may at first appear very puzzling, the key to correctly understanding these words of the apostle is found in the context in which they appear—in this case, the entire 15th chapter of I Corinthians. We believe the context of this chapter provides not only a correct understanding of what Paul meant by the words of our text, but also enlightens us concerning the important doctrines of death and resurrection.

PAUL’S TESTIMONY

Few will deny that the entire human race is either dead or dying. Paul explains that this began with the first man, Adam: “By man came death . . . in

Adam all die.” (I Cor. 15:21,22) Adam’s death came as a result of his disobedience to divine law. All his progeny have inherited to one extent or another the sinful nature to which he fell, and all have consequently suffered the same penalty—death. As the psalmist says, “In sin did my mother conceive me.” (Ps. 51:5) Paul confirms the end result of this by saying that the “wages of sin is death.”—Rom. 6:23

The Scriptures, however, provide a wonderful hope for man’s ultimate recovery from sin and death. The 15th chapter of I Corinthians presents the assurance that the dead will be restored to life by means of a resurrection. Paul explains why this is so: “Since by a man came death, by a man also came the resurrection of the dead.” (vs. 21, *New American Standard Bible*) Here we are reminded that just as it was by a fallen man—Adam—that death came about, it is by a perfect man—Christ Jesus—that the resurrection of the dead is made possible. Jesus redeemed the world from Adamic death, which is in keeping with his own words when he said that he would give his flesh “for the life of the world.” (John 6:51) Thus as “in Adam” all have died, “in Christ” all will “be made alive.” (I Cor. 15:22) That is, all will be given the opportunity to be restored to perfect, everlasting human life based on obedience to divine law, the same conditions under which Adam lived before he sinned.

“A RANSOM FOR ALL”

The apostle used the word “ransom” to describe the means by which God’s plan for the recovery of man from the condemnation of death is accomplished. He wrote, “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

The Greek word in the New Testament which is translated ransom signifies “a price to correspond.” The man Christ Jesus was, as the Scriptures declare, “holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners.” (Heb. 7:26) In this way he “corresponded” to the perfect man Adam, who was created in God’s image. However, Adam lost that perfection and brought death upon himself and upon all his descendants through transgression of divine law. The perfect man Jesus gave himself voluntarily in sacrificial death, and in so doing he was a “price to correspond” which provided redemption for Adam and the entire human race—all “in Adam.” This provision of the ransom opened the way for all to return to life.

As quoted earlier, Paul said, “The wages of sin is death,” but then adds, “the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” (Rom. 6:23) A similar thought is expressed in John 3:16,17: “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.”

Jesus further explained, “He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.” (vs. 18) These texts reveal that the whole world, by

heredity, is under condemnation to death, and that escape from this condemnation has been provided through Christ. They further tell us that this escape depends upon the faith and acceptance by the individual of this provision which has been made for him.

During this present age, those who, on learning about this provision of God's grace, accept it upon the conditions of obedience and full dedication to do God's will, are said to be "justified." Paul wrote, "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." (Rom. 5:1) Those who have not come to Christ in full faith, and by a complete dedication of their lives to do the will of God by following in the footsteps of Jesus, do not enjoy this "peace with God." These are still alienated from him through sin—still under condemnation to death.

There is no other way of salvation from death than through Christ. Speaking of Jesus, Peter said, "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." (Acts 4:12) The reason there is no salvation from death except through Jesus is that he is the only one who shed his perfect human blood on behalf of the sin-cursed and dying race. Shed blood is, in the Scriptures, a symbol of life poured out, and Jesus "poured out his soul unto death," that all of Adam's children might have an opportunity to live.—Isa. 53:12

When we accept by faith the provisions of Christ's shed blood, and devote ourselves to the divine will, we find that there is more to it than merely believing. Paul wrote, "Unto you it is given

in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake.” (Phil. 1:29) There are many Scriptures to indicate that it is the privilege of believers to suffer with Jesus. In his letter to Timothy, Paul wrote, “It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him: If we suffer, we shall also reign with him.”—II Tim. 2:11,12

“FOR THE DEAD”

Turning again to the words of our opening text, Paul appropriately mentions this aspect of the divine will for all consecrated believers in connection with his discussion of the resurrection of the dead. There were apparently some in the church at Corinth who did not believe in the resurrection of Jesus, and he points out that if Christ be not raised from the dead then there is no hope that any of the dead will be restored to life. He shows, on the other hand, not only that Jesus has been raised from the dead, but that all through him will be restored to life.—I Cor. 15:12-22

The apostle shows clearly that this will be accomplished by Christ’s kingdom rulership, that he will reign until all enemies are put under his feet, and that even death itself will be destroyed. When that glorious work is complete the kingdom will be turned over to the Father, that he “may be all in all.”—vss. 24-28

It is in this context that Paul then adds the words of our text, “Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? why are they then baptized for the dead?” To further emphasize his point, the apostle adds that if

the dead rise not, “Why stand we in jeopardy every hour? I protest by your rejoicing which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily. If after the manner of men I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantageth it me, if the dead rise not? let us eat and drink; for to morrow we die.”—I Cor. 15:30-32

These verses remind us that consecrated believers during the present age—those striving to follow in Jesus’ footsteps of sacrifice—suffer and “die daily” with him. This, Paul explains, is on behalf of the world of mankind, presently “dead” in God’s sight. The apostle indicates that the dead will benefit, in some manner and in God’s due time, from the sufferings and death of the followers of Jesus. This is one of the important features of God’s grand design for giving life to the world of mankind. It is brought to our attention in a number of ways in the Scriptures, one of those being through the promise which God made to Abraham, that through his seed “all families of the earth” would “be blessed.”—Gen. 12:3; 22:18

In Galatians 3:16, Paul identifies the promised seed of Abraham as being Christ Jesus. He then adds, “As many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. . . . And if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.” (vss. 27-29) Here it is clearly shown that those who are baptized into Christ and who are faithful, will inherit with him the promise of blessing the families of the earth. Since these families of the earth which are to be blessed are either already dead or dying, it is logical to think of those who are thus “baptized into Christ” as being

“baptized for the dead.” That is, those “baptized into Christ” and fully developed into his character likeness during the present age, are also “baptized,” symbolically speaking, with a view toward helping the dead and dying world. It is through this further process of being “baptized for the dead” that consecrated believers are developed to be part of a sympathetic priesthood, “touched with the feeling” of mankind’s infirmities, and tested by experiences which are “common to man.” (Heb. 4:15; I Cor. 10:13) Thus, they are proven worthy of and prepared for that great future work of blessing all the families of the earth.

BAPTISM FURTHER EXPLAINED

The water baptism authorized in the Scriptures for consecrated believers is merely a symbol, or picture, of the true baptism, which is not into water, but into Christ. Paul explains, “Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?” Continuing, he says, “For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection.”—Rom. 6:3,5

What was the “likeness” of Jesus’ death? Paul states, “In that he died, he died unto sin once. . . . Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin.” (vss. 10,11) Jesus never had been a sinner. His death “unto sin” was therefore a sacrificial death on behalf of the world of mankind. Our being planted with him by baptism into death is likewise a sacrificial death, and also on behalf of the dead human race. Later, in this same epistle Paul wrote, “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by

the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.”—Rom. 12:1

Jesus’ sacrificial death unto sin provided for the cancellation of the sentence of death resting against the Adamic race. No other sacrifice is needed for this. Christ’s consecrated followers do not share in this aspect of his sacrifice because, as previously noted, it required a perfect man—a corresponding price for Adam—to accomplish this. The world, however, once made free from Adamic condemnation, needs to be enlightened concerning the sacrificial work of Christ. Upon the understanding and acceptance of this provision it also needs to be lifted up out of all the vestiges of degradation, sickness, and death in order to be restored to the perfection lost in Adam. The followers of Jesus who are faithfully planted together—baptized—in the “likeness of his death,” will participate in this work of enlightenment and restoration.

RECONCILING THE WORLD

Paul wrote, “All things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the ministry of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God.”—II Cor. 5:18-20

It is apparent from this passage that the sacrificing followers of the Master participate with him in

the reconciliation of the world. This work originates with God. He is the great Author of the plan of salvation of the lost race, and this plan was put into operation through Jesus—"God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself." Then we, the followers of Christ, are brought into the picture as Christ's representatives in the work of reconciliation for which he made provision. We are given the "ministry of reconciliation."

Verse 21 reads, "For he hath made him to be sin [a sin-offering] for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." Here we have the explanation of the basis upon which we, who are by inheritance members of the sin-cursed and dying race, can be used by God in the work of reconciliation. It is because Christ made provision for our reconciliation, and upon the acceptance of this provision we are "made the righteousness of God in him." We, as consecrated believers, add nothing to the merit of the blood by which we are reconciled, but the power of that blood effects our reconciliation. God reckons us as perfect, and gives us the privilege of participating with Christ in the work of reconciliation for others.

The following verse, which is the first verse of II Corinthians 6, reads, "We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain." How marvelous is "the grace of God" which Paul urges us not to receive in vain. This privilege of being workers together with God is one which embraces two ages in the divine plan of salvation—the Gospel Age and the Messianic Age. Christ commissioned his followers to go into all the world and preach the Gospel—the word of

reconciliation. This work requires sacrifice and the laying down of our lives. It is this that is involved in our death baptism with Christ, our suffering and dying with him. Then, as we have seen, the work of the approaching Messianic Age, when Christ's body members have all been gathered and prepared, will be to reconcile and restore mankind to life.

Verse 2 of chapter 6 reads, "I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." The expression, "Now is the accepted time," does not apply to the lifetime of individuals, but to an age in the plan of God—the Gospel Age—when God accepts the sacrifice of his people and assigns them a role in his plan as workers together with him. In this text, Paul is quoting in part from Isaiah 49:8,9: "Thus saith the LORD, In an acceptable time have I heard thee, and in a day of salvation have I helped thee: and I will preserve thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, to establish the earth, to cause to inherit the desolate heritages; That thou mayest say to the prisoners, Go forth; to them that are in darkness, Shew yourselves. They shall feed in the ways, and their pastures shall be in all high places."

THE BRIDE

In symbolic language the Bible speaks of the church as a whole—all those who, during the Gospel Age, are planted together in the likeness of Jesus death, as the "bride" of Christ. In Revelation 19:7, Jesus is mentioned as the "Lamb," because of the sacrificial nature of his work of redemption.

We read, "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready."

The adornment of the bride-to-be is unselfish love which leads to sacrifice for others. It is also an adornment of humility and obedience in doing God's will. It is a rich combination of all the fruits and graces of the Holy Spirit. (Gal. 5:22,23; II Pet. 1:5-8) It is only when each prospective member of Christ's future bride is thus adorned, and then brought forth in the first resurrection, that the marriage of the Lamb will take place.

It will be then that Revelation 22:17 will be fulfilled, for not until then will there be a bride. The text reads, "The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." Here we are informed that "the Spirit and the bride" will constitute the forefront of those who invite mankind to partake of the water of life. Here again is revealed the special position in the plan of salvation to be occupied by those who are planted together in the likeness of Jesus' death.

With such understanding, it is no marvel that Paul points out how futile would be Christian suffering and death, how empty of meaning our baptism for the dead world of mankind, if there is to be no resurrection of the dead! With rejoicing, however, we claim the scriptural promise that there is to be a resurrection of the dead, because Christ Jesus our Lord has already been raised from the dead and exalted to heavenly glory. The first resurrection will embrace all who have suffered

and died with him, that they might live and reign with him, but this glorious hope can be realized only through faithfulness in death baptism.

We rejoice in the assurance of divine help for those who are laying down their lives in sacrifice. One of the greatest incentives to faithfulness is the truth of the Scriptures, such as given in our opening text, that the Church's death baptism is to accrue to the benefit of the world. Let us be faithful, that we might have a share in the great future work of restoring the dead world to life, enlightening them, and giving them the opportunity to live forever. ■

*For the love of God is broader
Than the measure of man's mind;
And the heart of the eternal
Is most wonderfully kind.
Search the Scriptures, search and see
God's great kindness unto thee.*

WEEKLY PRAYER MEETING TEXTS

SEPTEMBER 3—"I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings."—Hosea 6:6 (Z. '03-220 Hymn 177)

SEPTEMBER 10—"Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers."—Ephesians 4:29 (Z. '99-70 Hymn 136)

SEPTEMBER 17—"Christ in you, the hope of glory."—Colossians 1:27 (Z. '03-375 Hymn 238)

SEPTEMBER 24—"I keep by body under, and bring it into subjection, lest...I myself should be a castaway."—I Corinthians 9:27 (Z. '03-425 Hymn 200)

OBITUARIES

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

Brother Carlton Chandler, Portland, OR—August
10. Age, 84

Brother Charles Paschall, Richmond, VA—August
16. Age, 87

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Praying for One Another

Key Verse: “*When they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spake the word of God with boldness.*”
—Acts 4:31

Selected Scripture:
Acts 4:23-31

THE DISCIPLES OF JESUS

rejoiced to know that the long awaited Messiah had arrived according to the promises spoken by the prophets. However, that joy was replaced with perplexity with his unexpected death. The Gospel accounts tell of their disappointment as they contemplated a return to their former pursuits of life. The Scriptures also describe Jesus' resurrection and appearances to his disciples. He reminded them that it was necessary that he

die, then rise again, and that they would be witnesses of these things and preach his name among all nations.

In his final appearance before ascending to heaven, Jesus told his followers, “Ye shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days hence.” (Acts 1:5) On the day of Pentecost, the record states that the disciples were “filled with the Holy Spirit.” (chap. 2:1-4) This was outwardly manifest when they began to speak in other languages “as the Spirit gave them utterance.” The masses marveled, but some mocked. Peter responded with a forceful speech proclaiming the resurrection of Jesus by the power of God in accordance with the words

of God's prophets.—vss. 14-36

In the fourth chapter of Acts is another example of the Holy Spirit poured out with a physical manifestation. After Peter and John were threatened by the Jewish council, verse 29 says the brethren prayed, "Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word." Their prayer was answered as stated in our Key Verse. In this lesson we find the importance and effectiveness of praying for our brethren.

Paul says, "Let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another." (Heb. 10:24-25) The work of "provoking" and "exhorting" one another is best accomplished through assembling together and by prayer.

John claims that love of the brethren is the ultimate test of our love of God, stating, "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death. . . . Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he [Jesus] laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." (I John 3:14,16) Sincere prayer for the brethren is an important aspect of laying down our lives for them.

James provides a similar message to us, saying, "Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." (James 5:16) A "righteous man" described here is one begotten by the Holy Spirit—a member of the class described as "the sons of God."—Rom. 8:14

Finally, Jesus prayed for all his followers, including those living at the present time: "I pray . . . for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine. . . . Keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are." (John 17:9,11) Let us faithfully follow these exhortations to pray fervently for one another. ■

Sharing All Things

Key Verse: “Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold.”
—Acts 4:34

Selected Scripture:
Acts 4:34-5:10

status, this was an impressive way of demonstrating their full support for the work of preaching the Gospel.

The personal seriousness of this effort to support witnessing to the Gospel of Christ was demonstrated by the actions of a certain husband and wife named Ananias and Sapphira. They sold a possession to contribute to the common care of the brethren, but kept back part of the price for themselves. Peter quickly discerned their dishonesty, saying they had not lied to men, but to God. He declared that Satan had filled their hearts with the spirit of covetousness. When confronted with their sin, both Ananias and his wife fell to the ground and died. Their deaths resulted in a great swelling of reverential fear among the brethren. (Acts 5:1-11) This account provides us with a powerful spiritual lesson concerning the importance of fully keeping our vows of consecration,

FOLLOWING THE ANSWER

to prayer recorded in Acts 4:31 considered in our previous lesson, the brethren were drawn closer to one another to the extent of declaring all they possessed was not their own, but belonged to the church in common. (vs. 32) This was evidently an acknowledgement that all they owned came not from their own talents and abilities, but were the gifts of God. In a world where riches are often a barometer of one's

and not holding anything back from the Lord. “Better is it that thou shouldest not vow, than that thou shouldest vow and not pay.”—Eccles. 5:5

This arrangement of communal living soon ended, being demonstrated that it was not feasible in an imperfect world. However, it points out the important lesson that the entire body of Christ is “fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part,” and “maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.” (Eph. 4:16) It also corroborates Paul’s description of the members of the body of Christ as all being equal in God’s sight. He says, “There should be no schism in the body; . . . the members should have the same care one for another.”—I Cor. 12:25

Although we do not live communally with the brethren, we are to assist with their spiritual and temporal needs whenever possible. The Apostle John states, “Whoso hath this world’s good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.” (I John 3:17,18) Those who fail to live up to this required “fruit of the Spirit” are like those described by our Lord: “Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.”—Matt. 7:19,20

James also speaks of this principle with these words: “If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit?” (James 2:15,16) Such was the case with Ananias and Sapphira, and it resulted in not only the loss of temporal gain, but also of their very lives. Let us be ever careful to examine the needs of our brethren and live up to the principle of sharing from a heart of sincere generosity. ■

Witnessing to the Truth

Key Verse: “*Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men.*”
—Acts 5:29

Selected Scripture:
Acts 5:27-42

IN OUR PREVIOUS LESSONS we found the Christian multitude praying with one heart for the Apostles. Their specific words as recorded in Acts 4:29,30 were, “Grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word, By stretching forth thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus.” We also saw that the worldly resources of the brethren were donated in full in support of this witness work.

Their prayers for strength and power on behalf of the Apostles were immediately answered: “By the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people.” (chap. 5:12) The account continues by describing the effectiveness of their efforts. Great numbers of sick were brought to the apostles at the Temple from both Jerusalem as well as from surrounding cities. As a result, “believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women.”—vss. 14-16

The high priest and those of the Sadducees did not rejoice, as did the people, with the effectiveness of the apostles’ preaching and healing. Instead, they were filled with indignation and had the apostles thrown into prison. (vss. 17,18) However, just as the witness work had been

at first boosted by the prayers and resources of the Christian multitude, God now intervened directly through his angels. “The angel of the Lord by night opened the prison doors, and brought them forth, and said, Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life.” (vss. 19,20) Here was another miraculous manifestation by God giving further proof that the Gospel message of Christ would not be hindered by any human opposition.

When the officers found the prison empty the next morning and the apostles preaching in the Temple, they were ordered to bring them before the council. They were again threatened with punishment if they failed to heed the authority of the Jewish authorities. (vss. 21-28) The apostles’ response is recorded in our Key Verse. Similar threats have been made to many of God’s people throughout the Gospel Age. It has been the privilege of these witnesses of Jesus to declare also: “We ought to obey God rather than men.”

In the debate following the apostles’ declaration to follow God rather than the council of men, a Pharisee of high reputation named Gamaliel stood up and gave testimony of others who had challenged the council’s authority in the past. He said, “Ye men of Israel, take heed to yourselves what ye intend to do as touching these men.” (vs. 35) He reminded them that others had similarly drawn followers, but their movements had quickly come and gone. Gamaliel then concluded with these wise words of advice: “Now I say unto you, Refrain from these men, and let them alone: for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought: But if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God.”—vss. 38,39

The record of Gamaliel’s words of caution to the council reminds us of similar situations today, in which people are willing to let our witnessing to the Gospel stand on its own merit. Let us take advantage of such reasonable voices in the midst of most who would oppose our efforts.■

Remembering God's Faithfulness

***Key Verse: "He, being full of the Holy Spirit, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God."
—Acts 7:55***

***Selected Scripture:
Acts 7:2-53***

Having established a communal living arrangement in the church based on sharing earthly possessions, problems began to arise with the influx of new believers concerning the administration of the brethren's daily needs. In response to this the apostles appointed deacons "of honest report, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom," to oversee this business while they committed all of their time and efforts to the preaching of Jesus Christ.—Acts 6:1-4

Among those chosen was Stephen, "a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit." (vs. 5) Of the seven deacons selected, he appears to have been perhaps most talented in witnessing to the Truth. "Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people.

OUR LESSONS THIS MONTH

have focused on the early activities of the Gospel Age church. We have considered the principles of prayer for one another, of giving all to the Lord, and of being faithful in witnessing to the Truth whenever opportunities arise. Today's lesson concludes the examination of these principles with the record of Stephen, the first Christian martyr.

Then there arose certain of the synagogue . . . disputing with Stephen. And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake.”—vss. 8-10

As a result of his preaching, false accusations were made against Stephen that he spoke blasphemous words against the holy Temple. The Jewish council found itself confronting yet another disciple of Jesus in an attempt to put an end to the spread of the Gospel. In this case, they perhaps should have known better, for as Stephen was brought before them, “All that sat in the council, looking stedfastly on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel.”—vs. 15

Asked by the high priest, “Are these things so?,” Stephen answered by presenting a history of Israel’s repeated failure to follow the commandments of God. He accused them of being “stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears” and of resisting the Holy Spirit. In so doing, Stephen presented a defense of the Truth rather than of himself.—Acts 7:1-51

He reminded them that as Israel had at first rejected Moses, they now had rejected Jesus. Then, concerning Jesus, he said, “This is that Moses, which said unto the children of Israel, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear.” (vs. 37) Concluding his discourse, Stephen stated: “Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which shewed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers: Who have received the law, . . . and have not kept it.”—vss. 52,53

Stephen’s speech angered the council as they realized it was a condemnation of their actions. Their anger turned violent when he told them what he beheld in the heavens, recorded in our Key Verse—“Jesus standing on the right hand of God.” They immediately cast him out of the city and stoned him to death. (vss. 55-58) May we be as courageous as Stephen in witnessing for Jesus! ■

Importuning in Prayer

***“He spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint.”
—Luke 18:1***

LUKE RECORDS TWO PAR-ables of Jesus which emphasize the importance of importunity—that is, perseverance—in prayer. In the first of these parables, recorded in chapter 11:5-10, the Lord describes a man who makes a request for bread to a “friend.” In the second parable, found in chapter 18:1-8, a widow asks an “unjust judge” to avenge her of an adversary. Luke suggests that the main lesson of the latter parable, as stated in our opening scripture, is that his footstep followers should continually take advantage of the benefits derived from prayer, and not to “faint” from that privilege. Indeed, this lesson is contained in both parables.

This is a beautiful and important teaching from the Master. It serves as a reminder to us that, as consecrated believers, we are in continuous need of divine grace and assistance. We are confronted with many temptations, difficulties, obstacles, discouragements, and other potentially unhappy situations. Apart from God’s overruling providences in our

lives, and his willingness and ability to help us in our every time of need, we would be sure to “faint” by the wayside and perhaps even drop out of the ranks of those who serve the Lord.

In the dedicated lives of those striving to serve God during the present age, prayer can make the difference between fainting and continuing courageously on in the narrow way. Therefore, as Luke indicates, when the various difficult situations of life confront us, instead of fainting, we should pray. Additionally, such experiences when rightly appreciated provide us with the assurance that prayers offered in great times of need will be heard and answered. The Lord’s answer may seem to be delayed, but this is no reason to refrain from earnestly seeking what would be his will for us.

MODEL FOR PRAYER

The parable in the 11th chapter, in which one petitions for bread from a friend, immediately follows what is often referred to as “The Lord’s Prayer.” Jesus provided this outline to his disciples in response to their request, “Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples.” (vs. 1) In this model prayer we are reminded of the importance of proper reverence in approaching the throne of heavenly grace—“Hallowed be thy name.” We are also to remember to pray for God’s kingdom, which is the divine arrangement for the blessing of all the families of the earth. Our Heavenly Father wants us to be interested in others—all whom he has promised to bless, and for whom Christ died.—vs. 2

We are to ask for our daily bread, keeping in mind that our spiritual needs are by far the most

important. We are also to seek the forgiveness of our sins, and in connection with the prayer are reminded that the Lord's favorable answer to petitions along this line depends upon our willingness to forgive those who trespass against us.—vss. 3,4

GIVING THE PARABLE

Jesus followed his outline of prayer with the parable, saying: "Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and say unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves; For a friend of mine in his journey is come to me, and I have nothing to set before him? And he from within shall answer and say, Trouble me not: the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give thee. I say unto you, Though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him as many as he needeth. And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened."—vss. 5-10

Here, unmistakably, the lesson is perseverance in prayer. James wrote of those who ask, and receive not, because they "ask amiss." (James 4:3) This point, however, is not involved in the parables under consideration. Jesus had just provided the outline of his model prayer, and in the parable, as he stresses the importance of continuing to ask in order to receive the blessings which we need, he is speaking of the things which the Heavenly Father is pleased to give us, and which are in harmony with the model just given.

Prayer is communion with God, and Jesus would have us remember that we need this communion. Hence, we should not suppose that the blessings he is pleased to give us need be requested only once at the beginning of our Christian life, or even at the beginning of each day. Think of the request, "Thy kingdom come." How many times this petition has gone up to our Heavenly Father since the beginning of the Gospel Age! Indeed, this prayer is still in the hearts and on the lips of God's consecrated people. Although his will is not yet being done in earth as it is in heaven, it is still very proper to continue to pray earnestly for that kingdom to come.

In the morning when we pray, "Give us this day our daily bread," we cannot expect that this petition will suffice for weeks to come. We may find it appropriate to repeat this request even before the day is over. The Lord knows what our daily needs are, but he wants us to realize those needs, especially those of a spiritual nature. We are to become more and more conscious of our source of supply by the habit of praying often for those things which our Heavenly Father has promised to provide for our spiritual growth and development.

THE FATHER'S CARE

Immediately following the parable Jesus raises the question, "If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your

heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?"—Luke 11:11-13

This is an encouraging lesson, and evidently based upon the parable. In the parable, the man of whom bread is requested displays a measure of indifference, in that he does not wish to inconvenience himself to get up in the night and give bread to a friend who requests it, and is in need. This is not a wicked man. It is just that his own comfort seems more important than his friend's need. However, even this man, "being evil" or imperfect, though he is, does finally bestir himself to answer his friend's repeated petition.

"How much more," Jesus said, "shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?" Our Heavenly Father is not moved in any sense by self interest, nor is he indifferent. He is wholly unselfish, and is interested only in that which is the very best for his consecrated children. We can never go to God in prayer at a time that is inopportune to him. He never sleeps; he is never weary. If it seems that he does not grant our petitions immediately, it is because in his wisdom he knows that a delay is best for us as New Creatures in Christ Jesus, and he wants us the more earnestly to seek the blessings which he has promised.

In this lesson, the Holy Spirit is referred to especially as being a needed gift from God. Perhaps, by using this example, Jesus is reminding us that all our needs as New Creatures are of a spiritual sort. They encompass blessings which come to us through the Word of God and our understanding of the precious truths of his divine plan, which are revealed to us through his Holy Spirit.

The Apostle Paul speaks of the love of God being “shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which is given unto us.” (Rom. 5:5) This means that if we have the Holy Spirit we have the love of God filling and blessing our lives. God’s love is manifested in providing for all our needs, and we can always be sure that those needs will be supplied, according to the “abundance of grace” in Christ Jesus our Lord.—vs. 17

SECOND PARABLE—ADVERSARIES AVENGED

The parable of the importunate widow also emphasizes the need of continuance and perseverance in prayer. It reads: “There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man: And there was a widow in that city; and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary. And he would not for a while: but afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man; Yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me. And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge saith. And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them?”—Luke 18:2-7

Here the petition of the widow is not presented to a friend, as in the first parable, but to a “judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man.” If the “friend” of the first parable could be spoken of as “evil,” certainly this judge could be considered more so. Thus the contrast is the greater, in that if such a judge would grant the widow’s request because of her importuning, how much more would the Heavenly Father grant the requests of his faithful people whom he loves and for whom he has promised to care.

That which was sought by the widow is somewhat different from the bread requested in the former parable. She wished to be avenged of her adversary. Like the widow, the true followers of the Master live in a hostile world where Satan, the Devil, is the prince. Jesus warned his disciples that in the world they would have tribulation, but encouraged them by saying, "Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world."—John 16:33

Because of the blinding influences of Satan, our great Adversary, many in the world may be unkind and unjust to those who are following in the footsteps of the Master. However, it is not for us to retaliate or seek to punish them. This is to be left in the hands of the Lord. Jesus is our great example along this line. Peter wrote of Jesus that he was one "who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself [his cause] to him that judgeth righteously."—I Pet. 2:23

From the standpoint of our limited perspective of time in the divine plan, it could well seem, apart from faith, that God is doing little or nothing about the sufferings of his people in this present evil world. Throughout the age they have been praying for deliverance, and yet the great Adversary is still able to stir up opposition. They are still reviled, persecuted, and spoken evil of falsely. (Matt. 5:11) However, the Lord wants us to continue praying that our adversaries will be avenged by him, in his own due time and way. As individuals, the saints throughout the age have continued thus to pray, but have finished their course in death without seeing their prayers answered.

In Revelation 6:9,10 we are given a general picture which reminds us of this. Here those who faithfully

laid down their lives giving testimony to the Truth are represented as crying out from “under the altar.” They say, “How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?” These, without doubt, even before they completed their course in death, still petitioned the Lord for the establishment of his kingdom, and through its agencies subdue all the powers of evil. This petition continues even today.

The concluding words of the second parable of our lesson are in keeping with this. Jesus said, “I tell you that he will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless when the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?” (Luke 18:8) This indicates that the full answer to the petition of the “widow” class to be avenged takes place at the end of the age, when the Lord returns for the purpose of bringing to an end this “present evil world” and establishing his kingdom. For many of the saints this has seemed to be a long wait for the answer to prayer.

Even now, when our Lord is present and engaged in work preparatory to the establishment of his Messianic kingdom, we still must wait. We are still not to revile those who revile us, nor in any way to seek our own vengeance against them. It is still true that vengeance belongs only to God, and that we are to wait for his due time to vindicate himself and his people.—Deut. 32:35; Ps. 94:1; Rom. 12:19; Heb. 10:30

Thus, as Jesus indicated in our opening Scripture, we are to continue praying, and not to faint, regardless of how unfriendly the world may be. Let us continually look to the Lord, praying for his kingdom to come, and for his will to be done in his own due time and way. ■

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“Teach Us to Pray”

“Lord, teach us to pray.” **IN THE FOREGOING ARTI-**
—**Luke 11:1** *The Dawn*, we considered
two parables given by Jesus which dealt with
importuning in prayer. The first of these, found in
Luke chapter 11, was predicated on the request of
the disciples found in our opening text, “Lord,
teach us to pray.” The Master’s response to their
inquiry, just preceding the parable, was his giving
of a model prayer to the disciples, and to us, which
is known throughout the world as “The Lord’s
Prayer.” Its words have no doubt been spoken
untold millions of times during the past two
thousand years. Unfortunately, over the centuries
it has, for most, become a prayer merely committed
to memory and uttered in a repetitious manner.
Few have truly appreciated and understood the
real meaning and power of its words.

To consecrated believers, however, The Lord’s
Prayer has a depth of import which goes to the heart
of our understanding of God’s great plan of the
ages. As such, it is worthy of our consideration and
review, so that we might be ever encouraged and
strengthened by its words and teachings, and hence
give glory and honor to our loving Heavenly Father,
the only “true” and “living God.”—Jer. 10:10

MEN OF PRAYER

The servants of God in every age have been men of prayer. This was particularly true of Jesus, who was in the habit of communing often and long with his Heavenly Father. The Old Testament record discloses that the prophets and other outstanding servants of God had also learned the value and necessity of prayer. Jesus' disciples seemed to be greatly impressed with the prayer life of their Master. They probably noted to some extent the strength and encouragement which he received through prayer, and his peaceful demeanor even in difficult circumstances. For this reason, they perhaps felt that they too would benefit if they were able to follow his example. Hence the request, "Lord, teach us to pray."

It was in response to this request that Jesus gave a model for prayer that he knew would be of benefit to his disciples and footstep followers throughout the Christian age. We are not to suppose that he expected his followers always to use the exact words of this prayer. It is, rather, a compilation of the essential elements of acceptable Christian prayer. It deals with fundamentals which should be taken to the throne of heavenly grace, and presents them in an appropriate order to best benefit those who desire to engage in close, personal communion with God.

On the evening before his death, Jesus said to his disciples, "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." (John 15:7) It is reasonable to believe that the "words" he said should "abide in you" included the outline given in the model prayer of our lesson. This means that only if our petitions

are in keeping with the fundamentals of prayer suggested by the Master may we expect them to be answered favorably.

“OUR FATHER”

The opening salutation of the prayer expresses a thought which was new to the disciples. It addresses God as Father: “Our Father which art in heaven.” (Luke 11:2) To the natural house of Israel the Creator was the great Jehovah God, the “I Am” of the universe, and they were merely his servants. True Christians, Israelites indeed, also are servants of God. However, in addition to this, they have received the spirit of sonship, and are privileged to address the Creator as “Abba, Father.”—Rom. 8:15

Truly this is an intimate relationship, and when in prayer we come to God as “our Father,” it conjures before our minds assuring thoughts of God’s tender love and genuine interest in us as children—members of his divine family. Nevertheless, we are not to presume upon the dignity of God simply because we have been invited to become members of his family. His name is to be cherished and revered at all times, especially in prayer. We are reminded of this in the further words of salutation in the model prayer: “Hallowed be thy name.”

The word “hallowed” means “holy.” The glory of God’s name is a direct reflection of his perfect holiness, and should be our uppermost thought in connection with all of our petitions. Whether in prayer, in word or deed, the Christian’s first consideration always should be the glory and holiness of God. If, in our prayers, we are seeking chiefly our own interests rather than the glory of God and

his holy will, there is little likelihood that our praying will receive serious consideration by him.

We find examples of prayer in the Old Testament in which the glory and holiness of God were made the point of chief consideration. One of Moses' appeals on behalf of Israel was a prayer in which he beseeched God not to blot his rebellious people out of existence, but to preserve them. His chief consideration in this prayer was not so much the salvation of Israel as it was the upholding of God's holy character. Moses' words were, "Lest the [inhabitants of the] land whence thou broughtest us out say, Because the LORD was not able to bring them into the land which he promised them, and because he hated them, he hath brought them out to slay them in the wilderness." (Deut. 9:28) As Moses viewed the matter, if God destroyed the Israelites after bringing them out of Egypt, it would reflect against the divine character and name. Thus in this prayer we find an application of the same principle later set forth in the words, "Hallowed be thy name."

Another interesting example of considering the glory of God, shown by his holy character, is found in Joshua's prayer in connection with the defeat of the Israelites who attempted to capture the Canaanite city of Ai. Joshua asked God for direction and assistance in order that this defeat might in some way be turned into a victory. The important issue was the holy and glorious name of God: "What wilt thou do unto thy great name?" (Josh. 7:9) To Joshua, it seemed inevitable that if God permitted the Israelites to be defeated after having brought them miraculously across Jordan into the land of promise, it would be a serious reflection

against the honor of his name—that he would lose esteem not only with the Israelites, but also with the Canaanites. Thus we see that in effect the spirit of Joshua’s petition to God on this occasion could well be summed up by the Master’s words, “Hallowed be thy name.”

“THY KINGDOM COME” —ON EARTH AND IN HEAVEN

Having taught us that the first essentials of prayer are an appreciation of God as our Heavenly Father and the bestowing of proper reverence to his glorious and holy name, Jesus continues with his outline of prayer. He indicates that the next consideration in our supplications should be, not our own interests, but the welfare and blessing of others. This is set forth comprehensively in the expression, “Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.” (Matt. 6:10; Luke 11:2) When we pray, “Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done,” we are asking God to bless all mankind and teach them his will, that all might have the opportunity to obey and live. As a result, the very thought of this expression is calculated to enlarge our hearts, and cause us to be deeply concerned for the welfare of others, even at the present time.

When we ask for God’s kingdom to come, we may know for a certainty that our desires, thoughts, and longings, are in tune with the mind and will of our Heavenly Father. He has promised his kingdom of blessing not only once or twice, but by the mouth of all his holy prophets, by Jesus, and by the apostles. His kingdom and the blessings of life and joy it will bring to all mankind is the theme song of the

Word of God. Hence, to sincerely pray, “Thy kingdom come,” is to have that in mind which is close to the heart of God. He has planned and promised his kingdom throughout the ages, and it is the center of his interest in connection with his human creation.

In his prayer, Jesus makes mention of two phases of God’s kingdom—“in earth” and “in heaven.” Thus, when we pray, “Thy kingdom come,” we are asking God to bestow the blessings of his kingdom upon the world in general—those “in earth” during his kingdom. In addition, by these words we are petitioning the Heavenly Father to provide to the heirs of the kingdom—those who are to reign with Christ “in heaven”—the necessary spiritual guidance and strength which will enable them to make their calling and election sure. In short, the request, “Thy kingdom come, . . . in earth” and “in heaven,” should be an expression of our being in harmony with the whole plan of God, and an evidence of our interest in that plan and our desire to cooperate in it. It means, also, that in praying for his kingdom to come and his will to be done, we are endeavoring in a personal way to have God’s will done in our own hearts and lives.

“OUR DAILY BREAD”

Only after having first ascribed glory to God, and then made clear our interest in the blessing of others by means of both the heavenly and earthly phases of God’s kingdom, may we properly think of prayer from the standpoint of seeking blessings for ourselves. Even in this respect our petitions should not be for more than the necessities of life—our “daily bread.” The request, “Give us this day our daily bread,” suggests a childlike dependence upon

the Heavenly Father for the needs of each day. (Matt. 6:11; Luke 11:3) It does not ask for the building up of reserves that will make us independent of God tomorrow, or at any future time. It is an expression of faith in God's ability and willingness to care for us today and in all the days as they come.

The question may be raised as to whether "our daily bread" in this prayer refers to material or spiritual food. There seems to be no scriptural reason why it should not include both. As spirit-begotten New Creatures at the present time, we have this "treasure in earthen vessels." (II Cor. 4:7) Thus, all matters pertaining to the body, the "earthen vessel," are related to our spiritual interests, and should have a place in our prayers. Nevertheless, our spiritual "daily bread" is vastly more important than material food.

The expression, "daily bread," might properly be thought of as including not only things we eat, but all of our needs—the daily portion which God allots to us, including our experiences of joy and sorrow, ease and pain, blessings and trials. All of these are in the "cup" which the Father pours for us, and it is well to have them all in mind when we pray, "Give us this day our daily bread." When we take this broader view of our daily needs we should have no difficulty in discerning that God is continually answering our prayers.

Remembering that we have entered into a covenant of sacrifice which calls for the death of our humanity, we have no right to expect that God will necessarily preserve our health, or supply all the material food that may be essential for maintaining our bodies in a healthy, robust condition. The Apostle

Paul tells us that he had learned how to “suffer need.” (Phil. 4:12) If God, in his wisdom, permitted such a faithful one thus to suffer, we have no right to expect that he will deal differently with us.

Bread and water for the faithful of Israel under the Law Covenant was sure. (Isa. 33:16) In fact, God promised to bless them abundantly in “thy basket and thy store.” (Deut. 28:5) Consecrated believers, however, are not under that covenant. We are under a covenant which calls for the sacrifice of earthly interests and material blessings. Therefore, if God deems it to be for our highest spiritual interest to accept our sacrifice by means of a somewhat meager food allowance, we can rejoice to know that this is still our “need” which he is supplying.

SPIRITUAL “DAILY BREAD”

“Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.” (Matt. 4:4; Deut. 8:3) This great truth was first given to natural Israel. Jesus used it when declining Satan’s suggestion to turn stones into bread. It was true concerning Israel under the Law Covenant, and it will be true of mankind under the New Covenant in the next age. Material food is neither sufficient nor wholesome enough to provide everlasting life apart from obedience to the will of God—to “every word” of his mouth.

This is especially true of New Creatures in Christ Jesus at the present time. Our food is the Word of God. It is our daily “manna” from heaven. By feeding upon it we grow in stature and strength, from a spiritual babe to full maturity in Christ. Hence when we pray, “Give us this day our daily bread,” we are

asking for that upon which our spiritual existence depends. Furthermore, we are asking for God's Holy Spirit, which is his power and influence provided to assist us with the gathering, understanding, and application of the benefits of his "every word." Indeed, Jesus went on record to assure us that God would give the Holy Spirit of truth to consecrated believers who ask him for it.—Luke 11:13

The Spirit or mind of God reaches us through daily "eating" and appropriating his Word. When we pray for daily spiritual bread, it is implied that we are willing to give up our own plans, desires, thoughts, and be filled with and controlled by the plan and will of God, as delineated in the Scriptures. If our lives are thus in harmony with our prayers, we may confidently expect that our "daily bread" will be abundantly supplied. God's table will be laden with rich spiritual food of which it will be our happy privilege to partake.

"AS WE FORGIVE"

The next point in our Lord's prayer has to do with our relationship to God in connection with our transgressions. Jesus makes it clear that God's forgiveness of us is dependent upon our forgiveness of others: "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors," to which he adds, "If ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you." (Matt. 6:12,14) Here again we are asking in prayer for that which God has promised to do. We are invited to "come boldly unto the throne of grace" to obtain mercy. (Heb. 4:16) We are assured that God is "faithful and just to forgive our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (I John 1:9) He has

promised to remove our transgressions as far from us “as the east is from the west.”—Ps. 103:12

We cannot expect God to forgive us, however, if we are harboring resentment and bitterness in our hearts toward others. Inadvertently we may attach an incorrect meaning to this part of the Master’s model prayer. We may think of the trespasses as being merely misunderstandings. Some incident may occur which we at first decide is a trespass against us, but upon investigation we find that we were misinformed, or that the supposed trespasser did not intend the matter as we thought he had. Thus we are glad to forgive.

In such a case, though, there is no need for forgiveness, because in reality there has been no trespass, only a misunderstanding. Our trespasses against God are not just misunderstandings. Daily we come short of glorifying his name as we should—in thought, word, and deed. It is, likewise, genuine trespasses which we need to forgive in others. It is important to note, however, that God does not forgive willful sins. If we are willfully opposing him and misrepresenting his character, we will have no desire to ask forgiveness.

The key to this point is found in the word “as.” God will forgive us “as,” or upon the same conditions to the same degree, and in the same manner, as we forgive others. This means that if others ask our forgiveness, as we ask for God’s forgiveness, we will forgive. Beyond even this, it means that we will have the spirit of forgiveness in our hearts even before being asked to forgive. We are not justified in harboring bitterness in our hearts, even against our worst enemies. We are not to malign them, nor

do them harm, remembering that we are to hate all sin, but not the sinner. We are to be ready and anxious at all times to extend forgiveness to others as soon as they ask, for this is God's attitude toward us. God wants us to be like him.

GOD TEMPTETH NO MAN

The next request in the Lord's Prayer is, "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil." (Matt. 6:13; Luke 11:4) The *Emphatic Diaglott* paraphrased translation of this request reads, "Abandon us not to trial." However, the word-for-word translation and numerous other renderings, use the word "bring." *Strong's Greek Dictionary* defines the meaning of the word as "to carry inward." The same Greek word is sometimes translated "bring" in the *King James Version*. It would seem, therefore, that the translation, "Lead us not into temptation," is essentially correct.

Our first reaction to this thought is that surely God would not "bring" or "lead" his people into temptation, so why should we imply such a possibility in our prayer? However, God will not "abandon" us in temptation, either. We can be sure that God will neither bring nor lead us into temptation, nor will he abandon us therein. The principle involved in this part of the prayer is easily understood when we remember that the entire petition is an expression of what God has promised to do and promised not to do, and in offering it from our hearts we are but claiming God's promises.

We do not pray, "Thy kingdom come," with the thought that there is any possibility it will not come, nor are we asking God to do something he has not

already planned and promised to do. Prayer is not for this purpose. If we pray with the thought that we will thereby induce God to change his plans, either for us or for the world, we do not have the proper conception of what constitutes acceptable prayer. If our supplications are to be heard and answered, it will be because we are abiding in Christ and his words are abiding in us to direct our prayers in harmony with the will and plan of God.

Thus we pray, "Thy kingdom come," and we know that it will come because God has promised it. We pray, "Give us this day our daily bread," and we know that all our needs will be supplied because this is what God has promised us he will do. We pray, "Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors," and we know that God will forgive us in the same proportion that we forgive others, because he has promised to do so.

These are the blessings God has promised to bestow upon us as New Creatures, but there are also things which he has promised not to do. He has promised not to permit us to be tempted above that which we are able to bear. (I Cor. 10:13) We are assured by his Word that God "tempteth" no man, meaning that he does not bring or lead his people into temptations. (James 1:13) It is therefore just as proper for us to claim these promises in our prayers as it is to claim those concerning the kingdom, our daily bread, and God's forgiveness.

Prayer is an expression to God of our interest in the fulfillment of his promises. God knows all that we have need of before we ask him, but he wants us to ask just the same. He is ready to forgive us before we ask, but he wants us to appreciate his

forgiveness the more by asking for it. We know that he will not lead us into temptation, but he wants us to be the more keenly aware of it by including the thought in our prayers. This will help us realize that when we yield to temptation it is because we have permitted ourselves to be drawn away because of the weakness of our fallen flesh, or by succumbing, if only momentarily, to the influences of Satan. Knowing that God does not lead us into temptation, in fact, should cause us, even the more quickly, to claim the promise of his forgiveness by humbly asking for it.

AN ADDITION MADE

The concluding sentence of the prayer is not in the original manuscripts. It reads, "For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen." (Matt. 6:13) These words are a quote from I Chronicles 29:11, and evidently, on this account, the translator who added them to the Lord's prayer felt justified in so doing. However, when David spoke these words, he was referring to God's kingdom then operating in Israel. David was the king of Israel, but he sat upon "the throne of the LORD." (vs. 23) Hence in this expression of praise to God he acknowledged that he was not the real ruler of Israel in his own right, but merely a representative of God—that the kingdom belonged to him.

This typical kingdom of God came to an end when it was overthrown by the king of Babylon. At that time the prophetic declaration was, "It shall be no more, until he come whose right it is; and I will give it [to] him." (Ezek. 21:27) Jesus is the rightful king, and while he came twenty centuries

ago, it was not as a reigning king. He came then in his humiliation. The exercise of his kingly power was not due until his Second Advent. Even then, until his kingdom is set up and manifested to the world, we should continue to pray, “Thy kingdom come.”

As long as we pray, “Thy kingdom come,” it would be inconsistent to say, “Thine is the kingdom.” It is true that God is the supreme ruler of the universe, and if we think of the expression, “Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory” from this standpoint, there is nothing particularly out of place with this expression. Nevertheless, these words were added by translators. They are words which originally referred to a kingdom which perished before the First Advent of Jesus. Therefore, we believe it more fitting for Christians not to use them in prayer today. Moreover, they are omitted in Luke’s gospel.

In summary, the model prayer which Jesus gave to his followers in response to the request, “Teach us to pray,” embodies the recognition of God as “our Father”; ascribes glory and holiness to his name; petitions him to fulfill his promises to establish both the heavenly and earthly phases of his kingdom; asks that he care for our daily material and spiritual needs; requests that he forgive our sins as we forgive others; and asks him not to lead us into nor to abandon us in temptation. It can be said that there is nothing which a footstep follower of Christ can properly make a matter of prayer which does not fall within these general principles. If we are guided by them it will not be said of us, “Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss.”—James 4:3 ■

Not Only Believe—But Work

*“This is the work
of God, that ye
believe on him
whom he hath
sent.”*

—*John 6:29*

THE SCRIPTURES TELL US

that without faith it is impossible to please God. (Heb. 11:6) This is understandable, for we see the same principle exemplified in human relationships. If faith in one another is requisite to a genuine friendship among human beings, how much more essential it is to have faith in God if we expect to please him and enjoy the rich benefits of being his friends. Abraham was called a friend of God, because he was faithful and believed the promises God made to him. (James 2:23) Throughout all the ages of his plans and purposes, faith in God has opened the door of divine favor to all the blessings and honor his wisdom and love are pleased to provide to his people.

There is no other approach to a close relationship with God except by faith. All works of righteousness,

apart from faith, are “as filthy rags” in his sight. (Isa. 64:6) Any attempt on our part to cooperate in his plan which is not based upon full confidence in him and a belief that his will and way are best, is unacceptable. Additionally, our faith in him must be absolute—so full and complete that whatever he reveals his will to be, even though it may lead to privation, hardship, suffering, or death, we will do it. A faith that trusts God only when the sunshine of joy is brightening our lives is not the kind of faith which constitutes a basis of true friendship with God.

So fundamental to at-one-ment with our Creator is true belief in him that in our text Jesus indicates it to be the sum total of everything which may properly be considered “the work of God.” In this passage, the test of true belief in God is shown to be the acceptance of Jesus, whom God had sent. The full force of the thought is more readily grasped when we remember that it was addressed to a people who considered themselves specially chosen of God in the earth, the ones to whom God had committed his work of blessing all nations.

The Israelites claimed Abraham as their father and Moses as their lawgiver. They believed that the promises made to Abraham concerning his “seed” were to have fulfillment through them. They considered themselves to be God’s royal nation, his special people, and that the Messiah would exalt their nation to prominence in the earth. They felt that all other nations, in order to receive God’s promised blessings, would have to bow down to them. As they understood the matter, this was God’s program for the human family, the “work of

God” in the earth, in which they assumed they would have an assured part.

Moreover, the Israelites supposed that they were qualified to be God’s servants through their keeping of the Law. Indeed, they viewed their many ceremonies as being properly a part of the works of God. Israel as a nation had never been faithful in keeping the Law, but they made a show of outward obedience to it and its ceremonies. They failed, however, to exercise genuine faith in God, and this was displayed throughout the entire period of their national existence. It kept them in the wilderness for forty years after leaving Egypt. It prevented their entering into rest under the leadership of Joshua. It led to the loss of national independence when taken captive by Gentile nations, and hindered them from accepting the Messiah when he came to them at his First Advent. They thought they were the true servants of God, and they could have been, but their lack of proper belief in God hindered their participation in his works.

PARTNERS WITH GOD

There is work to do for God, and the Scriptures refer to those who are “workers together” with him. (II Cor. 6:1) However, God will not use anyone in such an exalted work who does not have full faith and confidence in him. Quoting again the words of our text, Jesus said, “This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.” This struck right at the root of Israel’s most damaging weakness. They presumed to be the nation to whom, and through whom, the Messiah of promise would come. They professed to be God’s coworkers in the earth,

yet all of their professions, claims, and ambitions were meaningless unless they believed on the Messiah whom God had sent.

Whether Jew or Gentile, no one can be a coworker with God except through Jesus. All things are of the Father and through the Son. (I Cor. 8:6) “In the dispensation of the fulness of times” God will “gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him.” (Eph. 1:10) Belief in Jesus is essential, both to our salvation and as a basis of acceptable service to God. The entire plan of God—all his works—is for the purpose of gathering mankind into Jesus, through belief in him. It is a work which will not be complete until the close of the “dispensation of the fulness of times.”

To “believe” on Jesus is much more far-reaching in its implications than many have supposed. It was so for the Jews at the time of his First Advent. They looked for a Messiah who would exalt their nation to a position of glory among the other nations. Hence, they were not prepared to believe on the one who was “despised and rejected of men.” (Isa. 53:3) After Jesus was raised from the dead he said to two of his disciples that they were “slow of heart to believe” all that the prophets had said concerning the Messiah. (Luke 24:25) They had exulted over the promises of the Messiah’s glory but had not believed the prophetic record telling of his suffering and death.

The Jews were “slow of heart” to believe that which was not to their liking. In all ages this has constituted the supreme test of genuine belief. Abraham demonstrated his living faith in God by

an obedience which caused him to leave his own people and his father's house. It was certainly no alluring prospect for Abraham to leave his home in Ur and to start out on a long journey to a land of promise, "not knowing whither he went." (Heb. 11:8) However, had he not done this, he would have given no evidence that he truly believed God.

All Israel would readily have believed on Jesus if he had come in glory and in conquering power. However, because he was meek and lowly, a friend of publicans and sinners, and a reprover of unrighteousness, they "hid as it were" their faces from him. (Isa. 53:3) Those who did believe did so at great cost. They lost their standing among their fellows. Their names were cast out as evil. Their belief made it incumbent upon them to become witnesses for the despised Nazarene, not only in Judea but to the uttermost parts of the earth. Had they side-stepped their belief, it would have been an evidence that their profession of faith was not wholehearted and sincere.

NO FAITH WITHOUT WORKS

James declares that "faith without works is dead." (James 2:20) This is evidenced along all lines of Christian discipleship. When Jesus said that the works of God were accomplished by believing on him, he did not mean that a mere lip profession of belief that he is the Messiah and Redeemer of the world is all the works of God his followers are expected to perform. Jesus said too many other things in explanation of true discipleship to permit us to misinterpret this one statement so totally as to find in it an excuse for an easy way of living the Christian life.

Jesus' disciples believed on him. They had confidence that he was the Messiah and visualized the glory of his kingdom. They wanted to be with him in that kingdom. The mother of two of them, ambitious for her sons, asked that one might sit on his right hand and the other on his left hand in the kingdom. Jesus asked them, "Are ye able to drink of the cup" of trying experiences "that I shall drink of, and . . . be baptized with the baptism" unto sacrificial death "that I am baptized with?" (Matt. 20:22) Here was something far beyond merely giving mental assent to the fact of his Messiahship. In this was the real test of their belief—a severe test—one of willingness to suffer and to die with him.

To believe on Jesus in the full, absolute sense is to believe that through him the entire plan of human redemption and salvation is to be carried out. It is to accept his leadership role in this plan by faithfully following in his steps. It is to accept his headship in a body of which we are the members, directed by his will. It is a willingness to obey his commands, to be guided by his principles, and to die as he died. It is to work for God and to speak the things he gives us to proclaim, as Jesus did. It is our faithfulness along all these lines that proves our sincere belief in Jesus, the one "sent" of God.

In brief, the real evidence of belief is our willingness to do God's will as expressed in and through Jesus, even when his will runs contrary to our own natural inclinations. The sermon on the mount contains many expressions of the divine will which are not easy to carry out in our lives. For example, we are instructed to love our enemies and to do good to those who despitefully use us and persecute us.

Instructions like these run counter to the will of the flesh. If we believe in Jesus, however, we will obey them, no matter what the cost may be.

A SEVERE TEST

In this connection, we have seen the inspiring examples of consecrated believers who have refused to speak ill of, or denigrate in some way, those who oppose them, because it is contrary to the Master's instructions. To have taken such a stand no doubt has cost these followers of Jesus a great deal. They have been looked down upon by their unbelieving friends and relatives. Some no doubt have been treated unjustly and with ill will. All of them have most likely suffered in one way or another—sometimes cruelly, and in other cases less severely.

Why is this so? It is simply because these faithful Christians have believed on Jesus in the full measure which leads to obedience. By contrast, many profess to believe but claim that the Master's teachings on love are not practical for this day and age, feeling that if he were here today he would probably change his instructions in this regard. In this way, many professed believers draw near to the Lord with their lips, but their hearts are far from him, even as the prophet foretold would be the case.—Isa. 29:13; Matt. 15:8

When Jesus first sent his disciples into the ministry, these believers were given what has always appeared to the half-hearted Christian very radical instructions. He told them, "Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat," or how you shall be clothed. (Luke 12:22; Matt. 6:25,31) Their willingness to obey these instructions was the practical

test of their genuine belief in Jesus' leadership. It was a severe test, because the idea was contrary to human wisdom, which concluded it to be unsound and foolhardy reasoning. It is the same test shown in the course of Abraham when he left his own people and his father's house. However, as with Abraham, so it was with these disciples—their obedience to the instructions of the Lord was the proof of their belief.

Later, at the close of his ministry, the Master inquired of these faithful ones, "Lacked ye any thing?" (Luke 22:35) No, they had not. There is never any danger of lacking either temporal or spiritual blessings so long as we are faithful to the Lord's commands, for the promise is that "no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly."—Ps. 84:11

It is nearly two thousand years since Jesus gave instructions to his disciples, and many of the circumstances of life are now quite different from what they were at the time of his First Advent. Yet, the underlying principles of these instructions are the same, and obedience to them is still one of the severest tests of our faith. As disciples of Jesus today, we are also called to be his ambassadors, his representatives. Our belief, leading up to full consecration to do God's will, puts us in harmony with God, and with truth and righteousness. We are told plainly that we are no longer the servants of self, but of God. Our approach to the entire array of life's experiences is therefore changed.

The chief concern of the man or woman in the world is to "make a living." From childhood begins the planning, educating, and working for temporal

needs of home, food, clothing, and finally for ease and security in old age. This is all legitimate for the natural man. However, belief in Christ, if it is genuine and complete, changes the whole outlook and approach. The wholehearted believer notes the instructions of the Scriptures which reveal that his chief concern now is to serve the Heavenly Father. He still recognizes that he needs food and clothing and that his family does also. In doing so, however, he sees the main purpose of his life is to do the will and work of God.

It is not easy to make this change in our hearts and lives. Only an unbounded faith in God and in Jesus will enable us to do so. It is a radical change, and to the extent our unconsecrated friends know about it they will think we are foolish, and that our judgment is unsound. Religion is all right, such may say, when kept within bounds and in its proper sphere. It is all right, they say, to go to church on Sunday and to send our children to Sunday School. It is good for our children, and an hour inside the church will not hurt any of us, but to make religion the chief thing in our lives, that is all right for the minister. It is his business, and he gets paid for it.

Thus it is that the true believer finds himself at odds with the world and with many professed Christians. However, his true belief leaves him no choice. He rejoices to have a share in the commission given: "We are ambassadors for Christ," and have a "ministry of reconciliation." (II Cor. 5:20,18) From this and other instructions, he knows that he has been called to be a minister, and as a minister of God his chief work is the service of the Almighty. He does not expect a salary for his services, for

they are to be given freely and without bounds, in order that others might be blessed.

THINGS NEEDFUL

For some it is a severe test of faith to wait upon the Lord. The knowledge of God and of his plans and purposes is so inspiring that we want to tell it out far and wide. If we presume we are handicapped because of scriptural responsibilities toward our families, we might be tempted to neglect these obligations in order to devote ourselves more fully to the service of the Lord. In such an event, the test of our belief would be our obedience to the instruction and warning that “if any provide not for his own, . . . he hath denied the faith.”—I Tim. 5:8

This might well be a difficult test of faith. We might see the need of workers in the vineyard and, feeling that we possess ability for some particular part of the work, be inclined to reason that surely the Lord would not want us to neglect this opportunity merely because we have a family to support. However, this would be the reasoning of the flesh. Any service that is rendered contrary to the clear instructions of God’s Word, such as given in the foregoing text, is not acceptable to him and evidences a lack of confidence in the divine arrangements.

Moses waited forty years before the Lord was ready to use him. Jesus waited eighteen years. At the age of twelve he was desirous of being about his Father’s business, but not until he was thirty could he properly enter upon that ministry. Thus, if the instructions of the Word of God and the circumstances of life seem, for a time, to restrict our activities in the Lord’s service, we should wait

patiently. Meanwhile, we should make the very best use possible of whatever opportunities we may rightfully enjoy. Thus we will demonstrate our true belief and proper heart preparation for greater privileges of service in “due time,” according to God’s leading and direction.

BELIEF AND CONSECRATION

As we have seen, true and full belief implies action. Belief in Christ, therefore, means full consecration—and its daily renewal—to do the will of God as it is expressed through his Son. If we say, “Yes, Lord, I believe,” it is the equivalent of saying to him that he should take our lives and use them to his glory. Any other attitude would come short of revealing a genuine and full belief.

Let us think of what it is that we profess to believe. We believe that Jesus is the Son of the Almighty Creator and God of the universe, and that he was with the Father from the beginning and shared in the work of creation. We believe that the human race was created to live upon this earth forever, and that sickness and death entered into the world only because of sin. We further believe that the Creator of the universe, whom we call our Heavenly Father, sent his Son into the world to redeem the dying race and restore mankind to life. We believe that Christ’s followers of this age are invited to share in his sufferings now and are promised a share in his kingdom glory—if they are faithful unto death.

All these things are included in our belief in Jesus, for he is the embodiment of the entire plan of God. Is it not evident, then, that such a belief is

bound to change our entire perspective of life? Of what value are the transitory toys and joys of this present and uncertain human life when compared with the privilege that is ours of being “workers together” with God? (II Cor. 6:1) Once we permit the power of our belief to take proper hold upon us, there is nothing we can do except place ourselves entirely in God’s hands to be used according to the wise decisions of his will.

To truly believe means much. It must inevitably lead us to the complete surrender of ourselves to God and to the devoting of everything we have and are to the doing of his will. It is thus that we share in “the work of God” according to his plan of the ages, and fully “believe on him” who God sent to be our Redeemer, instructor, and perfect example, that we may be ministers of reconciliation both now and when exalted to kingdom glory. ■

“My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness; and my mouth shall praise Thee with joyful lips: when I remember Thee upon my bed, and meditate on Thee in the night watches.”—Psalm 63:5,6

Whoever has time for meditation will receive a great blessing if his thoughts shall turn toward the Almighty, acknowledging his goodness, seeking to give praise to God for all his manifold mercies. . . . We should think of God as the personification of all that is just, loving, kind, wise, in character and principle. This should stimulate us to be like him. The more we appreciate a noble character the more we desire to emulate it. The more we see of God’s mighty works in nature and his mercies toward us, in that same proportion our hearts and lips shall praise him.

—Songs in the Night, September 24

SPEAKERS' APPOINTMENTS

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

G. Balko

Buffalo, NY September 19,20

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

T. B. Alexander

Columbus, IN September 19,20

T. N. Alexander

Huntsville, AL September 5,6

M. Balko

Seattle, WA September 5-7

D. Christiansen

Milwaukee, WI September 26,27

O. B. Elbert

Seattle, WA September 5-7

A. Fernets

Seattle, WA September 5-7

J. Freer

Seattle, WA September 5-7

R. Goodman

New York, NY September 5,6

L. Griehs

Jackson, MI September 5,6

E. Kalinski

New York, NY September 5,6

E. Kuenzli

Louisville, AL September 20

H. Montague

New York, NY September 5,6

P. Mora

Seattle, WA September 5-7

T. Ruggirello

Huntsville, AL September 5,6

“Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful; and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.”

*—Hebrews 10:23-25,
New American Standard Bible*

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.

HUNTSVILLE CONVENTION, September 5,6—Wyndham Garden Huntsville Airport, 8721 Madison Blvd., Madison, AL 35758. Contact R. Armstrong. Phone: (256) 281-9556 or Email: robin@exzaktec.com

JACKSON LABOR DAY CONVENTION, September 5,6—Holiday Inn Jackson NW, 2696 Bob McClain Drive, Jackson, MI 49202. Contact V. Lumley, 2531 Ashton Road, Jackson, MI 49203. Phone: (517) 782-7252 or Email: raylumley2531@comcast.net

NEW YORK LABOR DAY CONVENTION, September 5,6—DoubleTree Hotel Mahwah, 180 Route 17 South, Mahwah, NJ. Contact G. Passios. Phone: (201) 939-3196 or Email: gpassios11@verizon.net

SEATTLE LABOR DAY CONVENTION, September 5-7—Seabeck Conference Center, 13395 Lagoon Drive NW, Seabeck, WA 98380. Contact L. Flinn. Phone: (253) 838-3822, (206) 518-2678 or Email: laurie@flinn.us

COLUMBUS HARVEST CONVENTION, September 19,20—Ledwinka Farm, 10004 E. 550 N., Columbus, IN 47203. Contact D. Ledwinka. Phone: (812) 546-5276

MILWAUKEE CONVENTION, September 26,27—Lake Lodge, 1235 East Howard Avenue, Milwaukee, WI 53207. Contact S. Kuenzli. Phone: (414) 690-8281 or Email: song_of_hope@sbcglobal.net

GRAND RAPIDS CONVENTION, October 3,4—Kenowa Hills Middle School, 3950 Hendershot Avenue NW, Grand Rapids, MI 49544. Contact J. Houlmont. Phone: (231) 972-4259 or Email: ljhoulmont@gmail.com

PITTSBURGH AREA CONVENTION, October 3,4—
Sewickly Grange Hall, Route 136, West Newton, PA
15089. Contact G. Balko. Phone: (724) 771-0139

SAN LUIS OBISPO CONVENTION, October 17,18—
Masonic Hall, 859 Marsh Street, San Luis Obispo, CA
93401. Contact M. Allard. Phone: (805) 773-2963 or
Email: medlallard@juno.com

ORLANDO CONVENTION, October 24,25—South
Seminole Masonic Lodge, 122 Triplett Lake Drive,
Casselberry, FL 32707. Contact J. Kuenzli. Phone: (407)
831-2098 or Email: jkuenzli@cfl.rr.com

DETROIT JOINT CONVENTION, October 25—
Pleasant Ridge Community Center, 4 Ridge Road, Pleas-
ant Ridge, MI 48069. Contact G. Zendler. Phone: (248)
399-8843 or Email: ngzendler@wowway.com

NEW HAVEN CONVENTION, November 1—West-
woods Italian-American Club, 85 Chase Lane, West Haven,
CT. Contact A. Suraci, 171 Johnson Road, Hamden, CT
06518. Phone: (203) 248-3793 or E-mail: annasuraci@
comcast.net

PHOENIX CONVENTION, November 15—Boys and
Girls Club of Scottsdale, 10515 E. Lakeview Drive,
Scottsdale, AZ 85258. Contact C. Humphreys. Phone:
(480) 226-9076 or E-mail: christyscastles@gmail.com

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

PHOENIX CONVENTION, January 16-18, 2016—
Location TBA. Contact C. Humphreys. Phone: (480)
226-9076 or Email: christyscastles@gmail.com

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