

The Dawn

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HIGHLIGHTS OF DAWN

The process of bringing the alienated human race back into accord with God is called the doctrine of the Atonement. The necessity for the Atonement is one of the most fundamental teachings in the Bible. Over and over again is repeated the theme of man's fall, his need of a Redeemer, the sacrificial work of Christ, and finally the coming kingdom as the agency to accomplish the needed conciliation.

In many circles today, however, the plain teachings of the Bible regarding the fall of man and his present state of alienation from God are made light of, and discounted as too primitive a belief to be retained in modern theology.

The authenticity of the whole Genesis account of the entrance of sin into the world is repudiated by labeling the book as mythology, noteworthy only for its literary style. Man is pictured as making steady progress toward the sublime state as a result of his own exalted efforts.

But how differently the Scriptures view the matter!

ATONEMENT: WHAT IS IT?

THE BOOK OF Genesis shows that Adam was originally created in the mental and moral image of God. He was placed in a garden-like environment "eastward in Eden," (Gen. 2:8) flourishing with the vegetation needed to sustain life. He was given dominion over all the lower animals, whether creatures of the air, land, or sea. In effect, Adam was a king of an earthly kingdom which had been established for him by

His conversing with God in the cool of the evening demonstrated the fellowship and communion which he enjoyed with the Creator as one of his sons on the human plane of existence. Here was a picture of perfect tranquillity and harmony existing between man and his Creator in the original kingdom of God.

How quickly this scene was changed, however, when Adam transgressed the law of God! He lost the right to reside in the earthly paradise which had been his. Thorns and thistles, and the sweat of his brow as he labored for a living, were to become his lot. Under the sentence of death, physical, mental, and moral decay began to set in, each day carrying him farther away from the original state of perfection.

Under these circumstances of condemnation and imperfection, he also lost the right of fellowshipping directly with his Creator. Thus was forfeited the original kingdom of God and earthly paradise—a permanent loss, were it not for a plan of salvation designed by a loving God.

This is the Genesis account of the Creation and Fall of man. If it is mere mythology and cannot be depended upon as the inspired Word of God, then the foremost personalities of the Christian church have been deceived. Jesus frequently cited incidents mentioned in Genesis in his own personal ministry among the Jews, such as in Matthew 23:35 when he referred to Abel, and Matthew 24:37 when he spoke of Noah.

And the great Apostle Paul confirmed the Creation account when he wrote, "The first man Adam was made a living soul." (I Cor. 15:45) Whom, then, are we to believe? We prefer to side with Jesus and Paul, accept the Book of Genesis as authentic, and observe that those who try to discredit it are not benefiting by the enlightenment which it provides.

Another objection has been advanced by those who deny man's need for atonement. Their argument is that God should simply forgive man for a disobedient act,

especially for a first offense. If the account of man's fall in the Garden of Eden be true, God should have immediately reinstated him to favor. This objection seems somewhat plausible on the surface. The basic question to be resolved is, could God have forgiven his wayward human creation without requiring an atoning sacrifice?

Before this question can be answered, it will be necessary to provide a background sketch of the character of the Creator and of the setting of man's creation. The Bible describes God as an invisible spirit being, possessing grand attributes of character which are in perfect balance with each other. Briefly, the chief characteristics of God are wisdom, justice, love, and power. All these attributes are constantly working together in every act in which God is engaged. As the great Sovereign of the universe, God conducts all his affairs in perfect harmony with each of these four basic attributes.

Consider, now, how these must have reacted to the impulse of simply forgiving the transgression of man: divine wisdom at once would have foreseen the dangers of such a course. God had originally declared that the penalty for disobedience would be death. If he now altered the consequences, others of God's intelligent creatures, as well as man, would conclude that God was changeable and his word not trustworthy. The Scriptures expressly declare that in God there "is no variable-ness, neither shadow of turning."—James 1:17

Further, divine justice pointed to God's position as the Lawgiver of the universe. He is the great King of many creations on various planes of existence in addition to that of man. Man's disobedience to the just laws of his Creator represented a rebellion in one quarter of the vast universe. It had to be dealt with fairly and strictly in accordance with those laws. Could one measure of justice be meted out to man and another to the remainder of creation? No. Divine justice demanded the same standard, which was an exacting one, of full obe-

dience to the divine will. Justice, then, required that the death penalty be carried out as originally imposed.

Divine love desired that man should be fully forgiven. God's mercy and compassion had already provided a way of meeting the strict requirements of his justice. The solution was a plan of salvation (conceived before the creation of man) centering around a substitutionary sacrifice to be offered on behalf of Adam. The Son of God, would be commissioned to perform this task, to which he willingly consented.

He would undergo a change of nature from the spiritual to the human state. He would become a ransom, an exact equivalent to Adam in his perfection, and then voluntarily offer his life as an atoning sacrifice. "Ye were . . . redeemed with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: who verily was foreordained [foreknown] before the foundation of the world." (I Pet. 1:18-20; Heb. 10:5-7) In this way divine justice would be fully satisfied, since a perfect human life was to be offered for the transgression of Adam.

Thus, too, the life of Adam would not be forfeited forever, but would be restored in the resurrection on the basis of the merit of the Redeemer. And not only Adam, of course, but the entire human race condemned in him would benefit from such a plan.

This, then, is the method which God adopted to begin the work of Atonement. It carries a logic which at once satisfies the reasoning of the inquirer for truth, and it counters all objections that are raised against it. It is a plan to which all the attributes of God's character can give wholehearted consent. And the great power of the Almighty One is pledged to carry it out.

Thereby, it is seen that man will ultimately be forgiven, but through a course which provides him with a valuable lesson in the results of disobedience to the divine will. It is a pathway which leads from condemnation in Adam to justification in Christ.

FURTHER PROOF

If the doctrine of the Atonement is fundamental, then it should be possible to produce additional Scriptural support for it throughout the Bible. Evidence should be available showing the present fallen state of man, the method God has devised to redeem and restore him, and the final outcome of the application and execution of such a plan. Consider first the following texts to determine whether man is described as being in a condition out of harmony with God:

"By the offense of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation; . . . by one man's disobedience many were made sinners."—Rom. 5:18,19

"We have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin; as it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one. . . . They are all gone out of the way."
—Rom 3:9-12

"Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God."—James 4:4

"God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him."—Rom. 5:8,9

Is not the conclusion self-evident? All mankind is described as sinful, unrighteous, at enmity with God, and under his condemnation and wrath. The only exception to this general rule is the church class. All dedicated believers, on the basis of their faith in the atoning sacrifice of Jesus on their behalf, are justified, or reckoned acceptable in God's sight. All others stand separate from the righteousness and perfection of God, wholly condemned before the divine bar of justice.

Originally the only separating influence between God and man was the sentence of death for disobedience. Now—as a result of the accumulated effect of many

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years of alienation and sin—degradation and depravity have set in, removing man still farther away from the divine image.

As a result of the atoning sacrifice of Jesus, all men are guaranteed an awakening from the dead. As previously shown, however, all will return from the tomb with the same character which had been developed in this life. Even the noblest individuals will have some measure of imperfection, and the average lot of man, no doubt, will display a considerable tinge of sin.

Unless, therefore, God were to provide some means of assistance, all men would immediately be condemned to death. Their imperfection would prevent them from rendering full obedience to the divine will and would only lead to a renewed condemnation. Thank God, provision has already been made in the divine plan to permit the temporary shielding of all humanity during the thousand-year kingdom, while the great work of restoration proceeds.

Jesus Christ and his church will act in the capacity of Mediator between God and man. They will act in a manner similar to that of Moses during the inauguration of the Old or Law Covenant with the nation of Israel. When this covenant was originally instituted, Moses was selected by God to come up on the mount of Sinai and obtain the tables of the Law directly from God. Before he set forth the Law to the people, Moses sprinkled the tables of the Law with the blood of sacrificed animals. If the Israelites had been able to live up to the requirements of this covenant in full obedience to the will of God, they would have received everlasting life.

This entire proceeding foreshadowed a much greater and more beneficial arrangement. Jeremiah 31:31-33 states: "Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will make a New Covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah. . . . After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write

it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people."

God will establish a New Covenant with man, starting with Israel and finally encompassing all the families of the earth. Instead of Moses, there will be Christ and the church to act as the Mediator of this covenant. "Jesus the Mediator of the New Covenant." (Heb. 12:24) "God . . . hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation."—II Cor. 5:18

Jesus and the church class will be in Mt. Zion, a symbol of the spiritual phase of the kingdom, administering the affairs and laws of that kingdom. Instead of the blood of animals, there will be the merit of the blood of Jesus, which will make the New Covenant possible and eventually take away the sin of the world. The Mediator will set forth the laws and regulations of the kingdom and assist all those who are willing to come to a full knowledge of the truth. All will be informed of their privilege to return to harmony with God and gain everlasting life.

Jeremiah continues: "They shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more."—Jer. 31:34

There is yet another beautiful picture of the great work of sin removal in the kingdom period, found in the experiences of the Israelites under the old Law Covenant. To compensate for the inability of the people to live up to the requirements of the Law, God instituted Tabernacle sacrifices, which typically cleansed the people of their sins. The High Priest offered the sacrifices of specified animals, which were accepted by God as an atonement for sin. When the sacrifices were completed, the children of Israel could receive the blessings

of God through the priesthood for another covenant year.

Jesus is referred to in Scripture as the great High Priest (Heb. 4:14), and his true followers as his priesthood. (Rev. 20:6) The faithful sacrifices of the church during this life qualify them to become under-priests in the Millennial Age. As priests of God, they will reign together with Jesus for the express purpose of blessing the masses of humanity returning from the grave.

As a result of receiving instruction in the ways of righteousness and acting in harmony with it, the world will gradually be restored to the original state of perfection as represented in Adam. At the end of the thousand years they will be fully cleansed of all imperfection and enabled to stand in the presence of God without the need of a Mediator.

There is an interesting text of Scripture bearing on the restoration of man's lost dominion, which has generally been overlooked by most Christians. It is found in Acts 3:20,21: "He shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: whom the heaven must receive [retain] until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began." Here is a clear statement connecting the Second Advent of Christ with blessings of restitution—a restoration of all that was lost in the Fall of man.

Notice that this text cannot apply to the church, which is promised a new thing—the reward of the divine nature. It does apply to the whole world of mankind, who will be blessed by a restoration of that which was lost—perfect human life in abundance. During the times of restitution, man will regain his original state of perfection, a mental and moral likeness of God, the dominion of earth, and harmony with his Creator. Not only was this statement made by the Apostle Peter, but, as he points out, it has been spoken by the mouth of all God's holy prophets since the world began. How

strange, then, that more Christians have not understood that the kingdom era was designed to be one of blessing and benefit for man.

Other scriptures elaborate further on how the church will be used in accomplishing man's restoration. The call of the church was not intended to result in the selfish enjoyment of heavenly bliss. Rather, the church was designed by God to act as his instrument in blessing all the families of the earth. One of the earliest evidences of this is found in the Old Testament, in God's promise of blessing to Abraham. God said to him: "I will bless thee, and . . . I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore. . . . And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." (Gen. 22:17,18) The Apostle Paul later explained that the 'Seed' mentioned in this promise was in reality Christ, and also his church. He wrote: "If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."—Gal. 3:29

How will Christ and the church accomplish the blessing of all the families of the earth? The essential features of the work they will accomplish during the Millennial Kingdom have already been touched upon. The method to be used is summed up in Isaiah 49:8-10:

"Thus saith the LORD . . . 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, Show yourselves. They shall feed in the ways, and their pastures shall be in all high places. They shall not hunger nor thirst; neither shall the heat nor sun smite them: for he that hath mercy on them shall lead them, even by the springs of water shall he guide them."

Within the wording of this text are hidden rich gems of truth. The broad outlines of the entire work of reconciliation to be carried on by Christ and his glorified church are found therein. God's purpose for the church is shown in its position as Mediator of a covenant with

the people. The people to be blessed by this New Covenant are not just those who happen to be living at the time, but include all that are in the grave.

To these 'prisoners', bound by the shackles of sin, ignorance, superstition, and death, it will be the privilege of the church class to say: "Go forth, . . . Show yourselves." This is another way of expressing the resurrection of the dead and the enlightenment which will accompany it and be available to all during the kingdom. The inhabitants at that time 'shall not hunger nor thirst', not only because of the abundance of natural food, but also because they will be nourished and sustained by the truth of God's Word. Through processes of instruction and judgment, all mankind will be led back to the ways of God and to harmony with him.

"Then cometh the end, when he [Jesus] shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death."—I Cor. 15:24-26

What is the 'end' mentioned here? It is not the 'end of time', or the 'end of the earth'. It is the grand finale of the thousand-year reign of Christ and the church. It represents the climax of God's great plan of salvation, marking the moment when the earthly creation will have been fully purified and brought back to the perfection lost in the fall.

The Mediatorial reign will then have accomplished its objective, and the need for the Mediator will have ceased. When Christ returns the kingdom to the Father, man will again stand directly before his Creator to enjoy all the benefits of human sonship. Reconciliation between God and man will be complete!

"God be merciful unto us and bless us and cause his face to shine upon us. That thy way may be known upon earth, thy saving health among all nations. Let the people praise thee, O God; let all the people praise thee. O let the nations

be glad and sing for joy: for thou shalt judge the people righteously, and govern the nations upon earth. . . . Then shall the earth yield her increase; and God, even our own God, shall bless us. God shall bless us; and all the ends of the earth shall fear [reverence] him.” —Ps. 67:1-7

God has promised a glorious day,
And by faith we now see it draw near;
Our Redeemer has opened the way,
And soon will its glory appear.

There the dead shall arise from the tomb
And the living to health be restored;
And, away from all sorrow and gloom,
They'll be led by the life-giving Lord.

And an highway shall there be cast up,
And the stones shall be all gathered out,
And errors no weak ones shall trip,
And no lions of vice stalk about.

There nothing shall hurt nor offend
In God's kingdom of glory and peace;
The wicked their ways shall amend,
And the righteous their joys shall increase.

There God's hand shall all tears wipe away;
He'll the joy of his favor restore;
And the light of that glorious day
Will bring life, joy and peace evermore!



“I [GOD] BARE YOU ON EAGLES' WINGS!”
—Exodus 19:4

WEEKLY PRAYER MEETING TEXTS

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

AUGUST 11—"Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."—Revelation 2:10 (Z. '04-63 Hymn 78)

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

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



LET YOUR LIGHT so shine before men,
that they may see your good works, and
glorify your Father which is in heaven.—

Matthew 5:16

NOT ONLY SHALL it be true that the LORD's Anointed One shall be head and shoulders above all others, "the chiefest among ten thousand, the One altogether lovely," but it should also be true to a considerable extent that all those who are intimately associated with the members of the body of Christ in the present life—before He is proclaimed King of the whole world—should be able to recognize the largeness and grandeur of character in those whom the LORD is choosing for this place of honor in the affairs of men. They should be able to take knowledge of them that they have been with Jesus, should see their largeness of heart, their moral heights—should discern in them the spirit of a sound mind.—*Daily Heavenly Manna*, Comment for August 30th.

INTERNATIONAL BIBLE STUDIES

LESSON FOR AUGUST 7

CELEBRATE GOD'S OWNERSHIP

KEY VERSE: *"The land shall not be sold for ever: for the land is mine; for ye are strangers and sojourners with me."*
—Leviticus 25:23

SELECTED SCRIPTURE: *Leviticus 25:8-10, 23-28, 39-42*

IN THE FINAL sense of the word, all that we or anyone else possess belongs to Jehovah God. To the Israelites, their possession of the land of Canaan was in reality a stewardship. They were to use the land for their good, according to specific commandments imposed by God.

Christians, too, are stewards over the things they may possess. These possessions are not only of a material nature, but include those things of much greater value which Paul described as the "all things [which] are become new."—II Cor. 5:17-20

The Apostle Paul expressed the thought clearly in verses 14 and 15, saying, "For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto them-

selves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again."

It is only through the merit of the blood of redemption that we are able to present our bodies a 'living' sacrifice, for otherwise our bodies would be dead; that is, under condemnation to death because of Adamic sin, hence could not be 'holy' and 'acceptable' to the LORD as a sacrifice. (Rom. 12:1) However, we have the blessed assurance, not only that we have been bought with the precious blood of Christ, and therefore belong to the LORD, but also that in devoting our lives as 'bond slaves' to our new owner, our sacrifice will be reckoned perfect and counted as part of the better sacrifices of this present Gospel Age.—Heb. 9:23

In devoting our lives to the LORD, however, it is essential that we "prove what is that good, and acceptable, and per-

fect, will of God" (Rom. 12:2), and conform ourselves thereto. Sacrifice, in order to be acceptable to God, must be in keeping with the divine will. It would be quite possible to sacrifice all that we have and are, yet not be acceptable to the LORD. For example, Paul wrote that we might give all our goods to feed the poor, yet if we have not love, it would profit us nothing.—I Cor. 13:3

A faithful stewardship of our lives, therefore, involves giving proper attention to the directions given us in God's Word as to the manner in which acceptable service may be offered. We are not to be conformed to this world. The selfish pleasures of the world, and its grasping after wealth and fame and power, should hold no attraction for those who are devoting their lives to God. Instead, we are to be transformed by the renewing of our minds. Old ambitions and habits of thought are to be replaced by the things of God—his plan, his work, the fellowship and service of his people. In principle, the will of God is the same for all his consecrated people, although it may vary in detail. This is particularly true with respect to the manner in which we serve the LORD.

In further explanation, the apostle wrote that God has

given unto us the "ministry of reconciliation." (II Cor. 5:17-20) First we are reconciled to God through Christ, and then we are appointed by the LORD to serve as Christ's ambassadors. This work of reconciliation is accomplished through the Word of reconciliation, so it is obvious that the Word needs to be proclaimed. If we allow the Word of reconciliation to lie dormant in our hearts it will not effect the reconciliation of others. Thus our stewardship of the Gospel calls for faithfulness in proclaiming the Gospel. We know that the time when all mankind will be given a full opportunity to be reconciled to God will be during the Mediatorial reign of Christ, but this does not preclude our privilege now.

In II Corinthians 6:1, the apostle states that we are "workers together" with the LORD. And he is speaking of the same work: namely, that of reconciling the world to God. What a high honor has been bestowed upon us! But we can render acceptable service only through compliance with the ways of God. Let us, then, as Paul beseeches us, see to it by our faithfulness that we use all that we have as worthy stewards—for all that we have belongs to our Heavenly Father. ■

LESSON FOR AUGUST 14

ACCEPT GOD'S GUIDANCE

KEY VERSE: *"If the LORD delight in us, then he will bring us into this land, and give it us; a land which floweth with milk and honey. Only rebel not ye against the LORD, neither fear ye the people of the land; for they are bread for us; their defence is departed from them, and the LORD is with us; fear them not."*—Numbers 14:8,9

SELECTED SCRIPTURE: Numbers 13: 25-28, 30,31

AFTER SPYING OUT the land of Canaan, Joshua and Caleb in their minority report gave evidence of great faith in the ability of the God of Israel to help them conquer the land, and they recommended that the Israelites cross over Jordan, trusting the LORD to make good his promise to them. But the Israelites preferred to heed the unfavorable majority report. Indeed, "all the congregation bade stone them with stones."—Num. 14:10

The LORD was greatly displeased with this lack of faith on the part of his people, especially since they indicated that the LORD had led them into the land merely to let them die there by the sword and allow their wives and children to be a prey to the Canaanites. So he said to Moses, "How long will this people provoke me? and how long will it be ere they believe me for all the signs

which I have showed among them?"—Num. 14:11

Caleb and Joshua are presented to us as men of faith in the LORD, courageously confident of his ability to make good all his gracious promises to his people. The Bible gives little additional information concerning Caleb except to confirm the fact that he did enter the Promised Land, was given his portion of it, and fought valiantly to wrest it from the hands of Israel's enemies. (Josh 14:6-15) Moses gave a wonderful testimony concerning Caleb, saying that he had "wholly followed the LORD."—Josh. 14:9; Deut. 1:36

Joshua, on the other hand, likewise faithful to the LORD, possessed natural talents which could be used in the service of his people; so the LORD commissioned Moses to an-

point Joshua to be his successor as leader of the nation. The record of this is found in Numbers 27:18-20, and reads: "The LORD said unto Moses, Take thee Joshua the son of Nun, a man in whom is the Spirit, and lay thine hand upon him and set him before Eleazar the priest, and before all the congregation; and give him a charge in their sight. And thou shalt put some of thine honor upon him, that all the congregation of the children of Israel may be obedient."

These two men were good examples of a special class of faithful people through whom God had worked in those ancient times. While the whole nation of Israel was called and chosen by God, only the few of that class—the Ancient Worthies—made their 'calling and election' sure to the position designed for them in the divine plan. They did this by their faith. It was a faith that was demonstrated by their obedience under the most trying circumstances. Because they thus proved their worthiness by their heart intentions, they will, in the resurrection, be given perfect human bodies through which they will be able to express their praises to God, and serve him perfectly as the "princes in all the earth."—Ps. 45:16

The quality of faith is unchanged from age to age in the plan of God. It was true in the past and is true now that "without faith it is impossible to please God." (Heb. 11:6) No one can enjoy God's friendship without having faith in him. Those who are able to exercise faith are rewarded with whatever blessings the LORD may be pleased to dispense.

Paul wrote, "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." (Rom. 5:1) Caleb and Joshua, and all the Ancient Worthies, had peace in the sense that they were God's 'friends'. Their faith in God's promises removed fear and anxiety from their hearts. But to have the 'peace with God' referred to by the apostle, implies separation from the condemned and dying family of Adam. It implies that peace with God is the heritage of those who belong to the family of God. And now, through faith in Christ—which is demonstrated by full consecration—we may enjoy this rich reward of faith. It is also a reward of receiving the promise of a place in Christ's Messianic kingdom as spiritual rulers with him.

LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD

KEY VERSE: "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God is one LORD: And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might."
—Deuteronomy 6:4,5

SELECTED SCRIPTURE: Deuteronomy 6:1-13

TO LOVE GOD is to love his laws and principles which govern all the functions of his great universe, animate and inanimate. From whatever angle we consider any action of the universe, we come to the conclusion that its creation and its activities are the result of laws made by divine wisdom enforced by divine power. Without divine guidance or law, the universe, and life itself, could neither have been developed nor have continued to exist.

Man can plan profitably because of the constancy of these laws; he can rely on the uniformity of the material with which he works. He cannot change the laws of nature according to his fancy—he can accomplish things only by complying with, and taking advantage of, these laws. For instance, he can build bridges or skyscrapers because he knows that a steel girder of a certain size and quality will support a cer-

girder of the same material, size, and quality will support a like weight. Man cannot violate these laws without serious consequences.

It is quite evident that if man wishes to make the best of life, he must learn the laws of the Creator and conform to them. Do we not see here a wonderful illustration? Here are the laws of a great Creator and all things are the result of his wisdom and his power. His laws and rules extend even to man and his behavior; and only the acceptance of these laws will bring the blessings man so much desires—even eternal life.

As matter performs only in conformity with certain fundamental laws and rules made by the Creator so all forms of life on earth (lower than man) similarly have implanted within themselves instincts, causing them to perform the functions necessary to preserve life, and to

Man is the supreme creation in the material world—he was made in the image of God. He is as superior to the solar system as he is to the atom, because he possesses life and conscious purpose—the ability to think. Man alone is a free moral being, having the privilege of doing good or evil; the privilege to keep the law of his Creator or to disregard it. The fearful conditions existing on this earth are convincing proof that mankind has chosen not to live in harmony with the laws, the principles of God, his Creator. As a result, man is reaping the results of his disobedience—death. “The wages of sin is death.” “Dying thou shalt die.”—Rom. 6:23; Gen. 2:17, *Margin*

We might ask the question: What is this law of God which man has failed to observe? Plainly and simply stated, it is love for God—love for his Creator. Our Lord himself summed up God’s law, saying, “Thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength.” (Mark 12:30) Such love implies reverence for him, obedience to him, a recognition of the fact that God’s authority is supreme; a recognition of the fact that he cannot violate either his laws covering the

material world of the universe or the laws concerning God’s intelligent creation, without suffering harmful consequences. If we can but hear its voice, the natural world is preaching to us a constant sermon in regard to God.

David wrote: “O how love I thy law! It is my meditation all the day.” (Ps. 119: 97) Such was the admiration of David for the law of God, and such were the benefits he received from meditation upon the testimonies of God —“more understanding than all his teachers.” (vs 99) If David could receive such rich blessings from meditating upon God’s law, it would be well for us to do likewise.

The psalmist wrote: “Justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne.” (Ps. 89:14) In these qualities are reflected all God’s attributes: his love, his wisdom, his justice, and his power. It is of utmost importance, as well as of great interest, that we as members of God’s family have a good understanding, a thankful appreciation, and an admiration for his law as it relates to all his works. For, as we increase in our discernment of the ways of our God, our love for him increases, and with it our desire to walk more fully in the path of his light. ■

CHOOSE TO OBEY

KEY VERSE: *"All these blessings shall come on thee, and overtake thee, if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God."*—Deuteronomy 28:2

SELECTED SCRIPTURE: Deuteronomy 28:1-6, 15-19, 64-66

GOD SPOKE to the children of Israel through Moses, and explained to them that if they hearkened "diligently unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe and to do all his commandments . . . that the LORD thy God will set thee on high above all nations. (vs. 1) The history of that nation reveals that they failed to listen to God when he "spoke unto the fathers by the prophets" (Heb. 1:1) and instead of being 'set on high' they were cursed.

Paul further declared that God has "spoken to us by his Son," and Jesus explained that the words which he spoke were not his, but the Father's. (John 8:28; 12:49; 17:8) What particular message did Jesus have for us? What was taught by the voice of God speaking through him? We have in mind Jesus' reply to the young rich man who asked what he must do to inherit eternal life. After learning from this young man that he was doing the best he could to

keep the Jewish Law, Jesus said to him, "Go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me."—Matt. 19:21; Mark 10:21

This was the voice of God speaking through Jesus, explaining that those at this time who desire eternal life must sacrifice all their earthly possessions, and take up their cross and follow Jesus. This means following him into death. Paul explained this point further when he 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

Other texts of Scripture reveal that our imperfect bodies are acceptable to God in that the offering is made on the basis of faith, trusting in the merit of Christ's righteous-

ness as a covering for our imperfections.

Jesus explained that those who take this step of full devotion to the LORD and were faithful in following in Jesus' footsteps would also be 'set on high', they would have treasure in heaven. Here was a new thought to Jesus' apostles. God's voice through the holy prophets spoke mainly of marvelous earthly blessings or treasures. It was not until Jesus came that a heavenly hope was made known to God's people.

The apostles, who had been listening to the conversation between Jesus and the rich young man, seemed somewhat concerned. Through Peter they reminded Jesus that they had left all and followed him, even as he had invited this young man to do, and now Peter asked, "What shall we have therefore?" (Matt. 19:27) It is apparent that the idea of treasure in heaven was new to them. They wanted a further explanation, and this Jesus graciously furnished.

In the next verse we find Jesus replying, "Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration, when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the

twelve tribes of Israel." Here Jesus is explaining that their heavenly treasures would consist of being highly exalted to reign and judge with him.

Many are the statements of God's Word bearing on this point. The Word testifies that those who suffer and die with Jesus will live and reign with him. These are also to be co-judges with Jesus during the world's future Judgment Day, which will be "the times of restitution of all things." (Acts 3:19-21) Jesus had not forgotten this feature of the divine plan. (I Cor. 6:2) And for the faithful followers of Jesus there will be a personal association with him in the kingdom. As he was exalted to the divine nature when raised from the dead, so will be his faithful followers.

While he was with his disciples, Jesus said, "I go to prepare a place for you. And . . . I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." (John 14:2,3) What a truly blessed association this will be, and we are assured of its reality by the voice of God speaking through his beloved Son. May we always be on the alert to follow its leadings, regardless of what the cost might be, as these precious truths inspire us to faithfulness. ■

CHRISTIAN LIFE AND DOCTRINE

“STEDFAST AND ABOUNDING”

*“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast,
unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the LORD,
forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in
vain in the LORD.”*

—I Corinthians 15:58

THE CHURCH OF Christ at Corinth was not without its problems. Judging from the warnings, exhortations, and instructions contained in Paul's letters to this group of Christians, there was a measure of carnality among them. Some did not grasp the real spirit of the Memorial Supper, and some did not believe in the resurrection of the dead. Faithfully, Paul endeavored to correct these faulty situations, and to show the early disciples the way of the LORD more perfectly.

The climax of this presentation of truth comes in the 15th chapter, in which Paul presents the glorious hope of the resurrection, and associates the fruition of this hope with the kingdom reign of Christ—a reign which is to continue until all enemies are put under his feet, and the great enemy, Death, is destroyed. This outline of the divine plan contains the basic fundamentals of the message which has been given to us to proclaim; and Paul's admonition to the brethren of Corinth, and to us, to abound in the work of the LORD, is related to our commission to proclaim this Gospel.

But to do this effectively it is essential that we be “stedfast and unmoveable” in the truth and in our stand

for the truth. The brethren at Corinth could not abound in the work of the LORD while carnally disputing among themselves as to whom they would choose as their favorite leader. Those among them who did not believe in the resurrection of the dead certainly could not abound in the work of proclaiming the Gospel of the kingdom, a Gospel which is void of vital meaning if there is no resurrection of the dead.

It is essential that those who work for the LORD know the plans and ways of the LORD, and that they labor in the spirit of the LORD, recognizing the headship of Christ, enthusiastically believing and witnessing for the Gospel of Christ. One cannot meet these qualifications if tossed about "by every wind of doctrine." (Eph. 4:14) We must be 'stedfast and unmoveable'. This does not imply bigotry, or the unreasonable adherence to unproved theories and traditions. The truth of the divine plan is not such as this. It is the glorious Gospel of the kingdom, which, in all its aspects, is supported by the inspired Word of God.

Not only are we to be 'stedfast and unmoveable' in the truth, but we are also to contend earnestly for it, for the "faith which was once delivered unto the saints." (Jude 3) We are to stand together for the faith of the Gospel. And we are to stand together in keeping with the arrangements the LORD has outlined in his Word. Paul explains this arrangement in the 12th chapter of his first epistle to the Corinthians. We cannot abound in the work of the LORD and ignore this arrangement.

CHRIST THE HEAD

In I Corinthians, chapter 12, and in Ephesians, chapter 4, Paul outlines the working arrangements of "the New Creation." Christ Jesus is the Head over his church. As brethren, and members of Christ's body, we all take our direction from the Head. The more devoted each of us is to our Head, the more fervent will be the spirit of unity among us. Any partisan spirit, whether motivated by friendship, personal preferences, or ambi-

tion, tends to disrupt true fellowship among the brethren, and to weaken "the tie that binds our hearts in Christian love." These undesirable results are due to a failure to look to the Head for leadership and guidance.

We may properly think of Christ and his church from two standpoints. There is the all-inclusive viewpoint in which we see the entire church from Pentecost right down to the full end of the Gospel Age. And then there is the more local viewpoint in which each congregation of the LORD's consecrated people, large or small, is spoken of in the Scriptures as 'the church'. There was the church at Rome, the church at Antioch, and so forth.

For the church as a whole, special servants were appointed by the LORD. In addition to Jesus, the Head, there are the twelve apostles. These rendered personal service to the brethren of the Early Church, and, through their writings and examples, have continued to serve the LORD's people throughout the age. Then there are what we might speak of as dispensational servants. In this category are the "angels," or messengers to the seven churches mentioned in Revelation, chapters 2 and 3. The brethren in this end of the age have been, and continue to be, blessed by the messenger to the Laodicean church. Unlike the twelve apostles, these dispensational messengers have not been inspired.

The various servants in the local groups are elected by the vote of the brethren. Paul wrote that the LORD sets every member in the body as it pleases him. Certainly this is true of the apostles and of the "seven messengers." And we believe that the LORD, in his own way, overrules with respect to the election of servants in the local congregations.

NO CENTRAL CONTROL

A study of The Book of Acts, and of the various epistles of the New Testament, reveals clearly that there was no central authority in the days of the Early Church which governed all the various local congregations. It is

evident that each group was autonomous, and had complete freedom to conduct its own affairs. There is no evidence that even the inspired apostles in any way interfered with this complete liberty of action, except to admonish and exhort.

This liberty doubtless resulted in diversified arrangements on the part of the various congregations. No instructions were given by Jesus or by the apostles as to how each local congregation should conduct its business affairs. Scripturally, there is no right or wrong method. What might work well in a small group, perhaps would not be so satisfactory for a larger congregation. The important consideration is that each group should seek out and apply the methods best suited to its needs, in harmony with the fundamental principles outlined in the divine Word.

When the brethren are emptied of the spirit of self, and filled with the Spirit of the LORD, they find it a great joy to labor together in the service of the LORD, the truth, and of one another. And it was true in the Early Church, even as it is true today, that there was more or less of intermingling on the part of the brethren of the various congregations. And those in the various groups helped their brethren of other groups when there was a need for it. Thus, Paul collected funds from various congregations to help their needy brethren in Judea.

TIMES CHANGE, BUT NOT PRINCIPLES

It was a small world in which the Early Church existed. To begin with it was only Israel. Then the work was expanded to Asia Minor, and later to southern Europe. Communication and travel were slow. Individual brethren did not possess Bibles. Indeed, to start with, the Old Testament Scriptures were the only Bibles available, and copies were scarce. Probably most Jewish synagogues had a copy of the Old Testament manuscripts, and probably some of these found their way into the congregations of the brethren. And doubtless addi-

tional copies were made as time and circumstances permitted.

Certainly there were no printed Bibles, and no books explaining the Bible. To the extent that the brethren were able to bear witness to the truth it had to be by word of mouth. In such circumstances there was not much that one congregation could do to help another in its missionary work. The church at Antioch sent Paul and Barnabas, and later Paul and Silas, into the missionary field. Doubtless the brethren at Antioch contributed the necessary funds to make these missionary journeys possible.

How different the situation is today! Essentially every brother and sister in the truth today, the world over, owns a printed copy of the Bible. English, Hebrew, and Greek concordances of the Bible are available; also Bible dictionaries. In the LORD's providence, we also have "keys" to an understanding of the Bible—"Studies in the Scriptures." The printing press has made available for witness work a generous variety of tracts and booklets.

The personal testimony is still effective, and, without doubt, results in the richest of blessings to those who use all such opportunities that come to them. But now, this method of proclaiming the truth to which the brethren in the Early Church were limited, can be and is augmented by the printed message. There are many today throughout the world who are rejoicing in present truth who have never met another truth brother or sister. These have learned the truth simply by reading.

Today, also, we enjoy the benefits of those two most modern mediums of communication—radio and television. The use of these mediums furnishes additional opportunities for the brethren to 'abound' in the work of the LORD. There is the advertising of the programs, and the follow-up of the interested by means of public meetings, personal calls, and through the mail. A few brethren still today are finding an oppor-

tunity of service in contacting radio and television station managers with the view of interesting them in putting on the programs.

Obviously, these present-day methods of disseminating the truth offer opportunities for the brethren to work together in a general witness work. But this is being done without in any way abridging the independent status of local ecclesias. Indeed, it is this that forms such a solid basis upon which a general ministry of the truth is made possible.

The cooperative ministry of the truth offers privileges of service also to the LORD's people who are isolated. There are thousands of these dear ones, and the fact that they have the opportunity of working together with their brethren in a general ministry of the truth, through their prayers, distribution of literature, and assisting financially, gives them a deep sense of being a part of the 'body', although they seldom, perhaps never, see anyone of "like precious faith."

A "CITY"

Thus it is that the LORD's people throughout the earth today are continuing to be, as Jesus illustrated it, like "a city that is set on a hill which cannot be hid." (Matt. 5:14) They are "the light of the world"—the only true light of the Gospel that is in the world. The fact that Jesus mentioned light in association with the city illustration implies a nighttime setting. There would be some light emanating from a city by night, even in Jesus' day—lights that could be seen at some distance. But certainly the whole countryside would not be made light in this way.

So it has been throughout the ages, and it is so today. The church has not enlightened the world, but from the LORD's true people has shined the only light that has been in the world, and this light has attracted those whom the LORD has designed to 'call'. And what a joy it is to be a part of the symbolic 'city' on the hill! But to continue to be lightbearers we need to be

'stedfast' and 'unmoveable'. Otherwise we will not be displaying a constant light, but one which, at best, will be wavering and intermittent.

To be 'stedfast and unmoveable' in the truth, and in harmony with the LORD's arrangements for his people, is one of the primary requisites for 'always abounding in the work of the LORD'. If we turn aside from the truth to human theories, our abounding will cease. If we are 'hurt' because the ecclesia does not give us the recognition we think we deserve, we will not be so likely to 'abound' in the work of the LORD.

When the Israelites left Egypt to go to the Promised Land, they encountered many difficulties in the wilderness. These experiences were not pleasant, but a strong faith in the LORD, and complete resignation to his will, could have changed their outlook, and they would have had rest. Paul uses this situation to illustrate our wilderness journey, and admonishes us to seek that rest of faith which can be ours amidst all the unpleasant experiences of life. (Heb. 4:1-3) If we do enjoy this rest, then we can give our minds and hearts to 'abounding in the work of the LORD'.

"ALWAYS"

We are reminded of one of the severe tests of Christian faithfulness by Paul's use of the word "always." This suggests a zeal for the LORD and his work which is constant and unremitting. It is of little account that we were zealous yesterday, if we are listless and half-hearted in our service today. It is an encouragement to note how wonderfully the 'always' principle is manifested among the LORD's people as a whole, even though the fruition of our hopes may have been delayed much longer than many of us expected.

"NOT IN VAIN"

"Forasmuch," Paul wrote, "as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the LORD." The preaching of the Gospel of the kingdom has never been in vain. This was

true with respect to Peter's Pentecostal sermon, and it has been true of every witness for the truth which has been given since, whether to a multitude, or to an individual. Yes, this has been true even though the witness has been given with a lisping, "stammering tongue."—Isa. 28:11; 33:19 ■

*"Behold, the Husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it. . . .
Be ye also patient."—James 5:7,8*

PATIENCE IS A virtue which our Heavenly Father desires to cultivate in us and he manifests in himself the grandest example of it. Through all the centuries past he has patiently endured the reproaches of those who, failing to understand the course of his wisdom in executing justice and in working out the deep designs of his abounding grace, attributed evil, and only evil, to his truly glorious and holy character. He knows that in due time his character will be fully vindicated, and so he patiently waits and works and endures. So also our Lord Jesus waits and endures. He endured great humiliation in coming to our low estate. Then as a man he patiently endured the contradictions of sinners against himself, and ungrateful persecution, even unto death, from those he came to save. And, like his Heavenly Father, through it all he was cheered in consideration of that due time, though then in the far distant future, when his character, and also the Father's character, would be fully vindicated and manifested to every creature in heaven and in earth. And still our blessed Lord Jesus and our adorable Heavenly Father await with patience the grand consummation. So, in similar attitude of mind, we must wait; for the servant is not above his Lord, and our rejoicing in view of the future will, if we have the mind of Christ, be not only because of our own prospective vindication and glory, but also in prospect of the vindication and glory of God and of our Lord Jesus, and of the prospective everlasting triumph of truth and righteousness.

—*Songs in the Night*. Comment for March 10th.

CHRISTIAN LIFE AND DOCTRINE

THE UNITY OF THE SPIRIT

"Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard; that went down to the skirts of his garments."—Psalm 133:1,2

ON THE EVE of Jesus' crucifixion he prayed for the unity of his followers. He prayed that they might be 'at one' with each other, even as he and his Heavenly Father were 'at one'. (John 17:20,21) The oneness that has always existed between the Heavenly Father and his beloved Son is a complete unity of purpose and objective resulting from the unreserved dedication of Jesus to do his Heavenly Father's will. Of Jesus it was prophesied, "I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart."—Ps. 40:8

The oneness of the Father and the Son is not the outgrowth of a mutual agreement between the two, but is the result of Jesus' humble obedience to his Heavenly Father. And this is also the basis of our unity with the Father, with Jesus, and with one another. It is described in Ephesians 4:3 as a unity of the Spirit—a unity produced by the Holy Spirit of God. It was this that was illustrated by the holy anointing oil poured upon the head of Israel's High Priest.

The Spirit of God is the power of God, and in this association we may think of it as the power of his mind, his thoughts, his will, as these reach us through his written Word of truth. Every part of the Word of God is a product of the Holy Spirit. The prophets of the Old Testament wrote as they were moved by the Holy Spirit. Jesus' teachings are the setting forth of truths revealed by the Holy Spirit at the River Jordan, when the

'heavens' were opened to him. The teachings of the apostles reflect the truths revealed to them by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, and later by a special dispensation to Paul.

Thus when the fully consecrated children of God humbly search the Scriptures, they find the will of God expressed therein—and if they are obedient to what they find, they will be at one with the Heavenly Father, with his Beloved Son, and with the brethren. Thus the formula for true unity of the Spirit is a simple one, and the real test of its workability depends upon the genuineness of our full and humble devotion to the Heavenly Father's will.

Every follower of the Master from Pentecost until now has been afflicted by human imperfections which have hindered, in varying degrees, a complete subjection to the molding influences of the Holy Spirit. Nevertheless, it is encouraging to note the large degree that the Spirit's influence in the hearts of God's people has brought them together, and enables them to work harmoniously in a common cause, which is the service of the LORD.

In worldly circles, people are brought together by similarities of taste, nationality, or background in life, as well as other factors which make it congenial for them to be associated with one another. But this is not true with the followers of the Master, and apparently this is by divine design. For example, the twelve apostles chosen by Jesus were of differing temperaments and social backgrounds. Certainly Peter would never have chosen Matthew, the publican and tax collector, to be his partner in the fishing business. Nor can we imagine Matthew inviting Peter to assist him in the collection of taxes!

But these two, and the remainder of the twelve—all different—were fused into a working unit by the power of the Holy Spirit, this being made possible by each one's dedication to the Heavenly Father,

(Con't. on page 37)

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San Francisco KEST 1450 4:45 p.m.
Tehachapi KTPI FM 103.1 8:15 a.m.

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Jacksonville WXTL 1010 7:45 p.m.
Orlando WOTO 540 9:00 a.m.
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NORTH CAROLINA

Wendell WETC 540 4:45 a.m.

OHIO

Cincinnati WCKY 550 7:00 a.m.
Cleveland WRKG 1380 7:45 a.m.
Fairfield WCNW 1560 6:00 p.m.

OREGON

Portland KKEY 1150 7:00 a.m.

PENNSYLVANIA

Allentown WHOL 1600 10:45 a.m.
Pittsburgh WPLW 1590 8:00 a.m.
Pottstown WPAZ 1370 12:45 p.m.

SOUTH CAROLINA

Charlestown WOKE 1340 7:06 p.m.
Lexington WLGO 1170 12:30 p.m.

TENNESSEE

Nashville WSM 650 7:45 p.m.

VIRGINIA

Richmond WGGM 820 7:45 a.m.

WASHINGTON

Bremerton KBRO 1490 7:15 a.m.
Spokane KAQQ 590 7:00 a.m.
Tacoma KAMT 1360 10:15 a.m.

WEST VIRGINIA

Wheeling WWVA 1170 6:30 p.m.



PLEASE NOTE
CHANGES!

WORLDWIDE RADIO BROADCASTS

Canada

ALBERTA

Banff	CFHC 1340	11:45 a.m.
Brooks	CIBQ 1340	9:00 a.m.
Canmore	CFNC 1450	11:45 a.m.
Stettler	CKFQ 1400	7:45 a.m.

BRITISH COLUMBIA

Duncan	CKAY 1500	9:00 a.m.
	CKAY 1500	7:30 p.m.
Grand Forks	CKGF 1340	9:00 a.m.
Nanaimo	CHUB 1570	9:30 p.m.
Qualicum-Parksville	CHPQ 1370	9:30 p.m.

MANITOBA

Winnipeg	CKJS 810	9:00 a.m.
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ONTARIO

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

Rosetown	CJYM 1330	9:45 a.m.
Weyburn	CFSL 1190	8:45 a.m.
Estevan	CJSL 1280	8:45 a.m.

Argentina (Spanish)

Buenos Aires (Sat.)	FM Malvinas 91.5 mHz	10:00 a.m. & 10:00 p.m.
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British West Indies

Trinidad	Radio Trinidad 610	10:30 p.m.
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Chile (Spanish)

Talcahuano	Radio Almirante Latorre	
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Costa Rica (Spanish)

San José	Radio Sonora 105.9 FM, 700 AM	6:15 a.m.
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Kenya and Uganda

Radio East Africa		4:00 p.m.
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Mexico (Spanish)

Culiacán Ranchera	XECQ	8:30 a.m.
Guadalajara	XEWK 1130	8:30 a.m.
Monterrey	XHSR FM	10:00 a.m.
Toreon	XETB 1350	8:15 a.m.
Tuxtla Gutierrez	XEON 720	7:30 a.m.

New Zealand

Whakatane	IXX	8:10 a.m.
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Nigeria

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

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

Trujillo	105.7 FM	9:30 a.m. & 10:00 p.m.
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Philippines

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

Vila Nova de Gaia	Radio Minute	8:45 a.m.
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Russia (Russian)

Novgorod	FM 71.3	10:00 a.m.
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South Africa

Swaziland	SWAZI Commercial Radio	1400 AM
Shortwave	49m 6155 kHz	8:15 p.m.

Tonga

Nuku' Alofa (Mon.)		10:15 a.m.
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Uruguay (Spanish)

Radio Mundo	CX32 1170 KHz	9:00 a.m.
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- 28-Creator and Creation

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and to the doing of his will. The out-working of the Heavenly Father's plan became the common cause of all, and they rejoiced in that 'good and pleasant' experience of dwelling together in unity.

JEW AND GENTILE

A severe test of unity came upon the Early Church when the time came for believing Gentiles to be accepted as fellow-heirs of the promises with believing Jews. It is difficult to imagine two groups of people who by nature had so little in common, and at the same time entertained so many prejudices against each other. Yet, through the Gospel, individuals from these two groups were brought together into one fellowship.

This was not accomplished without difficulty. There is much in the Book of Acts and in Paul's epistles concerning the problems created in the church by the incoming Gentile converts. But we can be confident that the fully consecrated among them successfully scaled the hurdles, and found the way to a true unity of the Spirit.

Paul's admonitions were a great help along this line. To the church at Galatia he wrote: "Ye are all the children of God [his household] by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."—Gal. 3:26-29

What a wonderful family—God's family! They are all drawn to him by his love, the power of which is operative through their faith in his promises, a faith that leads to the full dedication of themselves to the doing of his will. Thus they are accepted into his family as 'children'—accepted in and through our beloved Christ Jesus.

It matters not who or what they may have been when the truth of the Word first touched their hearts, for they

are now New Creatures in Christ Jesus. They all have one Father—the Heavenly Father—whose will they delight to do. They also have an Elder Brother—Christ Jesus—whose precepts and example they follow. They are all one in him, and brought into this blessed unity by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Paul makes a general reference to Jews and Gentiles; males and females; the bond and the free. In these general categories we think of individuals. There was the Gentile, Cornelius, a centurion of an Italian troop. There was the wealthy Philemon, and his runaway bondsman, Onesimus. There was Lydia, the seller of purple, who evidently was also a woman of means. There was the young disciple, Timothy.

We might continue mentioning the names of faithful disciples in the Early Church. What we know of the characteristics of each of them suggests how unlikely it would be that any of them would have sought out the companionship of the others, yet they all became brethren in Christ Jesus through the power of the Holy Spirit.

NOT ALL

But not all who attached themselves to the Early Church were at one with the brethren. Paul warned the elders at Ephesus that grievous “wolves” would come in among them, not sparing the flock; also that of their own number men would arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.—Acts 20: 28-30

One of the prevalent causes of disunity among the LORD's people in every part of the Gospel Age has been the desire to have a following. This is a clear manifestation of failure to recognize the basic principle of Christian unity, which is a recognition of the will of God that Jesus Christ alone is to be the Head and Leader of the church.

There are those among the human race who are not happy unless they are leading somebody or directing something. If perchance a person of this nature is attracted by the Gospel and associates himself with the LORD's people, he has difficulty overcoming this desire to be a leader. If he fails to overcome it, then sooner or later he is likely to be found teaching "perverse things"—things, either of doctrine or practice—hoping thus to attract a following.

As Paul indicated, there were such in the Early Church, and it is the same now. But this does not imply that the LORD's truly consecrated and humble people are not at one. God may permit some of these to be influenced temporarily by false teachers so that they might learn needed lessons. However, if their hearts are perfect before him, he will draw them back to himself, and to that blessed oneness with his people which is a part of their present heritage of joy.

CARNALITY

In the church at Corinth a state of immaturity existed among the brethren, which Paul described as carnality, meaning that the viewpoints and desires of the flesh were not being fully yielded up in preference to the will of God. Paul explained how this spirit of carnality manifested itself. We quote:

"I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions [**Margin**, 'factions'], are ye not carnal, and walk as men [**Margin**, according to man]? For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal? Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the LORD gave to every man? I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planted any thing, neither he

that watereth; but God that gave the increase. Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labor. For we are laborers together with God.”—I Cor. 3:1-9

This admonition is not addressed to those who desired to attract a following, nor to ‘wolves in sheep’s clothing’, but to the sincere, fully consecrated, albeit, immature followers of the Master. Instead of seeking a following, they desired to be followers of men rather than the LORD. And with this immature viewpoint, there was naturally envying and strife among them.

This viewpoint also has prevailed throughout the age, and exists here and there today. It reflects a state of immaturity that is due to a lack of full faith and confidence in the LORD and in his leadership. One reason some of the brethren in Corinth wanted to be ‘Paulites’ and others ‘Apollosites’ is that these brethren seemed nearer to them than the LORD, and were more tangible.

This lack of faith has led, in all periods of the Gospel Age, to the setting up of human leaders, with the claim that they spoke with equal authority in the church to our Lord Jesus, himself. Paul hoped that the brethren in Corinth would outgrow this lack of faith, and learn to look directly to the LORD and to his Word for authoritative leadership, and he continually endeavored to help them toward this end.

And in this connection, what humility and nobility of character Paul manifested! Actually, Paul did speak with authority in the church, for he was not “a whit behind” the other apostles as an infallibly inspired servant of the church. (II Cor. 11:5) Nevertheless, he was determined to point the Corinthian brethren to their true Head and Leader, Jesus; and to do this he emphasized that in his personal ministry to the brethren in Corinth he was merely one of the laborers together with God. He also put Apollos in the same category.

THE LORD'S SERVANTS

One of the evidences of growth in grace is the ability to discern the true position of the LORD's servants in the church, and the ability to give proper honor where honor is due. The mature follower of the Master knows that there is only one Head of the Church, who is Christ Jesus. He also knows that the holy prophets of the Old Testament, the twelve apostles of the New Testament, and our Lord Jesus Christ, are the only infallible guides of the church. These are the ones who have been used by the LORD to fill his great storehouse of truth with the precious doctrines of the divine plan which constitute the true basis of our unity in Christ.

And then there are the pastors, teachers, and evangelists whom the LORD uses to help us understand the doctrines of the divine plan. Jesus spoke of "that servant" who, at the end of the age, and the time of his second presence, would be used as a "steward" to take from the "storehouse" and serve those glorious gems of truth placed there by God's infallible servants of the past.—Eph. 4:11,12; Matt. 24:45-47

Wisely and faithfully, that servant emphasized and reemphasized the vital need of proving all things by the inspired Word, and of looking to Jesus as the true Head and Leader of his people. Human nature has not changed since the days of the Early Church, and we need to be reminded over and over again that it is not God's will to be 'of' Paul, or 'of' Apollos, or 'of' Peter, or 'of' any beloved and greatly used servant in the church. We honor them most when we take heed to their instructions—instructions in keeping with Jesus' statement, "One is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren."—Matt. 23:8

TODAY'S DIVERSITIES

Considering the lessons and examples of unity we find in the Word of God and bringing them down to our day, we find that God's Spirit is working among God's

people now, even as then; for it continues to hold the brethren together despite their differences of background and characteristics. This is a great encouragement, for it is one of the evidences that God is dealing with us, even as his blessing was upon the brethren in the Early Church.

Actually, conditions are not too different among the brethren now than they were at the beginning of the age. True, we do not have the Jews/Gentiles problem as a deterrent to unity, but we do have brethren of many nationalities, races, and former faiths. By the power of the Holy Spirit these have been brought into a blessed unity of the Spirit in the bonds of peace. If Paul were writing to us now he might well say, "There is neither Greek nor Italian; there is neither German nor French; there is neither British nor American; there is neither Polish nor Scandinavian; there is neither black nor white; there is neither Spanish nor Indian, for ye are all one in Christ Jesus."

Before coming into the truth, some of these were Catholics, some were Methodists, Baptists, Episcopalians, or members of one or another of the many other denominations. Some were associated with non-Christian groups, and some were unbelievers. In the Early Church there were both young and old, and that also is true today. All these factors make for diversification of temperament which would tend to separate rather than draw together. But the power of the Holy Spirit overcomes these differences, and blends the hearts of the LORD's people into that 'good and pleasant' unity of the Spirit.

Regardless of nationality, race, or former religious affiliations, or lack of them, each of the LORD's truth-enlightened, Spirit-filled people has something to contribute toward the spiritual upbuilding of the brethren with whom he may come in contact. This is also true regardless of age. Paul wrote to Timothy, "Let no man despise thy youth." To this he added, "But be thou

an example of the believers, in word, in conversation [Greek, 'conduct'], in charity, in faith, and in purity." (I Tim. 4:12) In other words, if Timothy displayed from the heart these genuine qualities of a mature New Creature in Christ Jesus, which we have every reason to think he did, he would continue to be accepted by those of 'like precious faith', and by his ministry be a blessing to them.

UNITY IN THE MINISTRY

We are to use every possible opportunity to minister the glorious Gospel of Christ. As we grow in grace we will rejoice to cooperate with the brethren in that ministry, and thus enjoy this aspect of the blessed unity of the Spirit. Our increasing faith will enable us to discern that the Spirit of the LORD would not be leading his people in different directions.

Faith is a tremendously important adjunct to the unity of the Spirit, both as it is related to our fellowship in the meetings and to our ministry of the truth. If we truly believe that God is dealing with us, and teaching us through his Word, there will be little danger of our doing and saying things which may tend to disrupt the blessed unity of the Spirit which we enjoy with his people. If we lack faith, any slight spirit of ambition might well cause us to go contrary to the Holy Spirit, and thus fail, temporarily, at least, to enjoy the blessings which belong to those who are at one with Christ Jesus and with his people.

Our faith should enable us to believe that God is caring for his people today, even as he has in the past. By faith we accept the divine commission of the Spirit to be heralds of the kingdom message, and thereby bind up the brokenhearted, comfort the mourning, proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound. We also have the privilege of proclaiming "the day of vengeance of our God" against sin, and Satan, and all his works.—Isa. 61:1-3

Faith will accept the instructions of the Word of God as to how this is to be done—that Jesus is to be the hub around which our message is proclaimed—for we are to be his witnesses. By faith we will rejoice in the knowledge that it is those who are beheaded for “the witness of Jesus and for the Word of God” (Rev. 20:4), who will live and reign with Christ a thousand years. Faith in the Word of God should help us to realize that we are not commissioned to proclaim any other message.

Thus we will continue to rejoice in the privilege of “together lifting up the voice” of truth in proclaiming the glorious Gospel of the kingdom. (Isa. 52:8) Truly our partnership in the ministry of the truth is one of the blessed aspects of our unity in Christ.

THE SPIRIT'S POWER

We should not underestimate the power of God's Spirit in keeping his people together. Some years ago a brother from another part of the world attended one of the general conventions of the brethren in America. He observed the harmony that existed, not only in the many discourses which were given from the platform, but also in the general fellowship of the brethren. In reporting his experience, he implied that in his opinion there must have been some form of dictatorship that was holding the brethren in line. He seemed unable to believe that the Spirit of God could be working so fully among the brethren in these last days.

How blessed it is to realize that the Spirit of the LORD is still in the midst of his people! We believe that we have been begotten by the Spirit, and have received the Spirit's anointing. We are assured of our sonship by the witness of the Spirit. By the seal of the Spirit our victory of faith is guaranteed, if we continue faithful. Shall we doubt that the same Holy Spirit of God that has come on down from Jesus, the Head, even to the ‘feet’ members of the body, functions to hold us together in a sweet and blessed oneness, even as it did in the Early Church?

Outwardly, it is not a perfect unity now, even as it was not a perfect unity at the beginning of the age. 'Wolves' appear among us now, even as then. From time to time there are those who seem more interested in a following than in the spiritual prosperity of Zion. There are also those whose faith is not yet quite strong enough to let go of the arm of flesh and lean wholly on the LORD. But we are all maturing into a deeper spiritual life, and into a more precious and fuller unity with our LORD and with one another. And we are rejoicing in the hope of that perfect oneness beyond the veil, when the Master's prayer for unity will be fully and gloriously answered. ■

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TREASURE IN HEAVEN

LIFE, UNDER CONDITIONS of peace and happiness, is a priceless possession. Only those who are so acutely distressed as to be rendered to some extent mentally unbalanced, destroy themselves. To the normal mind, life is considered well worthwhile, even though accompanied by more or less disappointment and sorrow. In Matthew 19:16-21 we are told of a young man in Jesus' day who was wealthy and who had a great desire to continue living, so he went to the Master to inquire if there were anything he could do that would assure him of eternal life.

First of all Jesus referred this young man to the Law of God which had been given to Israel at the hand of Moses. The promise had been given "that the man which doeth those things shall live by them." (Lev. 18:5; Rom. 10:5; Gal. 3:12) Our first parents were condemned to death because they disobeyed God's law, and death had reigned over all from Adam to Moses because, although not necessarily willful sinners, they were born imperfect and shared in the condemnation which fell upon our first parents.—Gal. 3:21,22; Rom. 5:12-15

But, with the giving of the Law at Mount Sinai, God extended an opportunity to the people of Israel to gain life by obedience to his Law; so when the young rich man inquired of Jesus what he could do to secure eternal life, Jesus simply referred him to the Law of God, epitomized in the Ten Commandments.

In reply to Jesus the young man declared that he had been obedient to the Law—"All these have I kept from

my youth up." Then he inquired further, "What lack I yet?" This was apparently a noble young Israelite, for we read in Mark 10:21 that "Jesus . . . loved him." He had doubtless lived up to the requirements of God's Law to the best of his ability, yet realized that the seeds of death were working in him. Even though young, he could recognize that, just like everyone else, he was already losing some of his youthful vigor, and that if this continued, he eventually would become old and die.

Hence the question, "What lack I yet?" Jesus said to him, "If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me." Mark's account states, "Take up the cross, and follow me." (Mark 10:21) Analyzing this reply, it simply means that Jesus asked this young man to die with him, sacrificially, symbolized by the invitation to take up his cross. In return for this, Jesus promised the young man that he would have treasure in heaven.

A NEW HOPE

Jesus knew that because he would voluntarily die as the world's Redeemer, the opportunity to secure everlasting life on earth as humans eventually would be available to all mankind, that even those asleep in death would be awakened and have this opportunity extended to them. But the time in the divine plan had not yet arrived for this. As the 'seed' of promise through which this wonderful blessing would eventually be made available to all the families of the earth, Jesus was to have associates who would share in dispensing the blessings.

Jesus also knew that the condition upon which these could qualify to be associate blessers with him was that they suffer and die with him, as symbolized by the cross. In the divine plan for the recovery of mankind from sin and death, this was the only way of life then open. Jesus described this way as "narrow," and the "gate" or entrance into it as "strait" or difficult. In-

deed, it was too difficult for the young man, for "he went away sorrowful."—vs. 22

This young man had asked Jesus what he could do to live; and what Jesus told him was that he could follow him into death. But with this invitation to die with Jesus there was offered the great compensation of 'treasure in heaven'. This was a new concept to the young man, for up until this time God had not offered 'heavenly treasures' to the people of Israel. That Jesus should now do so, indicated that the plan of God was moving forward into a new phase, and the work of a new age was beginning.

In a vague way, Christians have always believed that they would share a heavenly home with Jesus, but few have realized that the hope of a heavenly reward was not held out to anyone until Jesus came. Moses and the prophets neither offered such a hope to the people of Israel, nor even for themselves! Paul wrote that Jesus brought "life and immortality to light through the Gospel."—II Tim. 1:10

Just as a heavenly hope was not offered to the ancients, neither was immortality. Jesus brought both 'life and immortality' to light through the Gospel. God's prophets of old were assured of an awakening from the dead, but they did not understand clearly the fullness of perfect human life which would be vouchsafed to them through Christ, the coming Redeemer. As for immortality, no hint had been given to them concerning it. This remained for Jesus to do.

Immortality is life, but life is not necessarily immortality. Immortality is indestructibility. It is a quality of the divine nature, and was possessed originally only by the great Creator of the universe. Jesus was exalted to the divine nature and was given immortality at the time of his resurrection; and immortality is promised as a reward to those who follow faithfully in the footsteps of Jesus.—Rom. 2:7

Immortality is one of the 'treasures' of heaven, and those who attain it will share a heavenly home with Jesus. To his disciples Jesus said, "In my Father's house are many mansions: . . . I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."—John 14:2,3

Concerning the heavenly reward for the followers of Jesus, the Apostle Peter wrote, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance **incorruptible**, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time."—I Pet. 1:3-5

The Apostle Paul wrote, "Holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus." (Heb. 3:1) The priests of ancient Israel were God's servants through whom he extended his blessings to the people, and Paul is telling us that if we have partaken of the 'heavenly calling' we are to consider ourselves members of a priesthood under Christ—not an earthly priesthood, but a heavenly priesthood, over which the exalted Jesus is the Head.

Part of the function of Israel's earthly, typical priesthood was the offering of sacrifice, and now those who have received the heavenly calling are also invited to offer sacrifice. Israel's priesthood offered animals in sacrifice, but the prospective heavenly priesthood are admonished to offer themselves. The Apostle Paul wrote, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, . . . that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service."—Rom. 12:1

UNTO DEATH

This sacrifice of the human body is unto death, for it is only through faithfulness in laying down the human life that one proves worthy to inherit those 'treasures in heaven' which Jesus mentioned to the rich young ruler. Jesus showed the way, in this respect, by giving his own "flesh," his humanity, for the life of the world. (John 6:51) Now those who would be his disciples are invited to take up their cross and follow him into death.—Matt. 16:24

Jesus promised, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." (Rev. 2:10) Immortality is the 'crown of life', and can be obtained only through faithfulness in laying down the human, the mortal life in sacrifice; and it will be obtained in the resurrection. Describing the resurrection of those who are partakers of the heavenly calling, Paul said that "this mortal" will "put on immortality."—I Cor. 15:54

CHRIST'S RESURRECTION

To attain immortality and to be with Jesus in the place prepared by him, is likened by the Apostle Paul to a valuable 'prize', and in order to win this prize Paul said that he was willing to give up every earthly advantage he possessed, even life itself.

Paul wrote: "I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the Law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: that I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I

am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."—Phil. 3:8-14

The Christian hope of being exalted with Jesus in the resurrection, and of sharing his heavenly glory is further confirmed by the Apostle Paul in Colossians 3:2-4, which reads: "Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory."

NOT ON THE EARTH

Paul's admonition to set our 'affection' on things 'above' and not on things of the earth, is quite in contrast with the incentives God held out to Adam in the Garden of Eden. We are informed that in that garden God planted every tree that was pleasant to the eye and good for food. It was a beauty spot which was offered to Adam forever on conditions of obedience to divine law. Trees of life were provided in Eden which would have assured our first parents of continued health and life.

These earthly blessings were theirs to enjoy, and God wanted them to set their affection upon them. When they sinned and were sentenced to death it meant the loss of this earthly paradise; but through the redeeming work of Christ, human life with its earthly blessings eventually will be restored to Adam and his race.

However, this is not the 'prize' being sought after by the followers of Christ during the present age in the divine plan, for to these Paul wrote, "Set your affection on things **above**, not on things on the earth." To this he adds, "For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." The true followers of Jesus are looked upon

by God as dead to the things of the earth because they are voluntarily following in the sacrificial footsteps of Jesus, being "planted together in the likeness of his death."—Rom. 6:3-8

The purpose of suffering and dying with Jesus is explained by Paul in a letter to Timothy. We quote: "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) All the faithful of Jesus' followers will reign with him as the 'seed' to 'bless all the families of the earth'.

ANOTHER TREASURE

The privilege of reigning with Jesus as the spiritual 'seed' of Abraham will be one of the 'treasures in heaven' promised by Jesus. Jesus' immediate disciples were very much concerned over this prospect, and two of them made bold to request that they might have a specially favored position in his kingdom, one on his right hand and the other on his left hand. (Matt. 20:20-23; Mark 10:35-40) Jesus explained that he did not have the authority to assign special privileges to those who would be in the kingdom with him, but if they wanted to be in the kingdom with him at all, they would need to 'drink' of his 'cup', and be 'baptized' with his 'baptism'.

Jesus' 'cup' was one of suffering, and his 'baptism' was one of death, and all who will reign with him when his kingdom is established will, first of all, have to suffer and die with him. Not many, in the more than nineteen centuries since Jesus suffered and died, have been willing to pass this test. There have been countless millions of professed followers of Jesus, but only a "little flock" to whom it is the Father's "good pleasure" to give the kingdom, because only the few have been willing to walk in the footsteps of Jesus, footsteps which lead to suffering and death.—Luke 12:32

In one of the beautiful symbolisms of the Bible we see the resurrected Jesus exalted to Mount Zion, which pictures the spiritual rulership of the kingdom, and with Jesus—here shown as the Lamb which had been slain—there are “an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father’s name written in their foreheads.” It is explained that these are the ones who “follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth,” meaning that they die sacrificially, even as he died.—Rev. 14:1-5

The significance of being on symbolic Mount Zion is revealed by the LORD in Psalm 2:6-9. We quote: “Yet have I set my King [Jesus] upon my holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree: the LORD hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen [Gentiles] for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter’s vessel.” Jesus will share this highly exalted position of authority and rulership with his faithful followers. He promised: “He that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers: even as I received of my Father.”—Rev. 2:26,27

‘Even as I received of my Father’, said Jesus to those who would be overcomers. Jesus had already been exalted to power and great glory. Paul wrote concerning Jesus: “God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”—Phil. 2:9-11

In another promise to the overcomers the highly exalted Jesus said, “To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.” (Rev. 3:21)

From these promises it becomes clear that to be a follower of Jesus implies much more than attaining salvation—that to the faithful it will lead to association with him in the glory of his kingdom through which all nations will be blessed.

“CALLING” AND “ELECTION”

The Apostle Peter admonished Christians to make their “calling and election sure.” (II Pet. 1:10) He also wrote that there are “given unto us exceeding great and precious promises; that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature.” (II Pet. 1:4) Peter further admonished that to our faith in these promises we should add “virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity [love].” See II Pet. 1:5-8.

Peter indicated that by doing these things we will gain for ourselves an abundant entrance into “the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.” (vss. 10,11) It is through the agencies of this kingdom that all the families of the earth will be blessed, in keeping with the promise God made to Abraham concerning his ‘seed’. One aspect of the promise was that the seed would “possess the gate of his enemies.” (Gen. 22:16-18) This denotes rulership and control, such as we would expect of a powerful king.

And so it is that Jesus and his faithful disciples will establish a kingdom through which they will rule the world, and it will be this righteous rulership which will extend the promised blessings of peace and health and life to the people. When Jesus was raised from the dead a glorious divine being, he announced that “all power” had been given unto him “in heaven and in earth.” (Matt. 28:18) And God’s promise to Jesus’ faithful disciples is that they, too, will be raised from the dead to be “kings and priests,” and “to reign with Christ a thousand years.”—Rev. 1:6; 20:6

The resurrected Jesus, having been exalted to the divine nature, was invisible to human eyes except as he miraculously manifested himself—which he did do to his disciples on a few occasions. Jesus, in the resurrection, had experienced a spiritual birth and, as he explained to Nicodemus, was now able to ‘go and come as the wind’, invisibly, and with great power.—John 3:8

When this same change of nature, from human to divine, is experienced by Jesus’ faithful overcomers, they also will possess the ability to exercise power, yet be invisible to human eyes. Thus, together with Jesus as their Head, they will be the invisible rulers of mankind during the prophetic thousand-year kingdom. Just as the unseen powerful and wicked spirit being, Satan, has ruled the world in unrighteousness, so the spiritual seed of Abraham will reign in righteousness.

Then Satan will be bound, and, at the end of the thousand years, destroyed. (Rev. 20:1-3) All wicked institutions and governments, through which Satan has used his influence to degrade the human race, will also be destroyed; or, as the Scriptures state it, ‘as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers’. All unrighteousness will be destroyed. Paul wrote that Christ must reign until all enemies are subdued, and that the “last enemy” to be destroyed will be death. This is why the Bible assures us that ultimately there shall be “no more death.”—I Cor. 15:25,26; Rev. 21:4 ■

GOD IS LOVE!

THE LAME MAN SHALL LEAP AS AN HART

*"Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of
the deaf shall be unstopped: Then shall the lame man
leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing.
. . . And the ransomed of the LORD shall return,
and come to Zion with songs, and everlasting joy."
—Isaiah 35:5-10*

IN FORESTS OF Europe and Asia
The agile Red Deer make their home.
At evening they feed in the meadows and fields;
In groups they may quietly roam.

The hart is the male in adulthood,
With antlers elaborate and strong.
In swimming and jumping, he's noted for skill,
With leaps up to forty feet long.

While holding these thoughts as a backdrop
So none of the details depart,
Let's focus our minds on the promise of God:
"The lame man shall leap as an hart."

No braces, no crutches, no wheelchairs,
No struggles with weakness and pain.
Prosthetics will then be a thing of the past,
And none will need walker or cane.

Restored to God's image and likeness,
Unblemished and whole they will be;
Surpassing the athlete in fitness and skill;
From physical problems set free.

Will man bring to pass such achievement
Through medical knowledge and skill?

Not so—for the scope of the promise is such
That none but our God can fulfill!

Man's fall from perfection in Eden
Brought sickness and sorrow and pain.
But mental and moral and physical health
Will soon be man's portion again.

"The eyes of the blind shall be opened,"
"The tongue of the dumb: it will sing,"
"And hearing shall come to the ears of the deaf."
These blessings God's Kingdom will bring.

"The ransomed" (the whole race of Adam)
"With joy" from the grave "shall return."
With Satan and all his deceptions removed,
God's Truth they will speedily learn.

For those who respond in obedience,
Rich blessings will never depart.
Oh, fervently pray for God's Kingdom—for then
"The lame man shall leap as an hart."—*E.L.R.*



YOUR QUESTIONS

Can a Christian Sin?

"Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God."

—I John 3:9

In spite of my best endeavors I am being constantly overtaken with my own weaknesses. Does this mean that I am not "born of God"?

IN THE COURSE of human events, begetting precedes birth. In the development of the New Creation this is also true. Those who consecrate themselves to God and are accepted through Christ as members of the divine family, are first begotten of the Holy Spirit. These subsequently develop, and if faithful, are ultimately born of the Spirit in the "first resurrection." (Rev. 2:6) The word for both begotten and born in the Greek is *gennaō*, and the context must indicate which word should be used to translate the meaning intended. Because the text of our question

refers to the New Creature in 'embryo'—having a new mind in our old imperfect fleshly bodies—the word begotten should be used instead of born, and our text should read, "Whosoever is begotten of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is begotten of God."

"All unrighteousness is sin." (I John 5:17) Everything connected with the New Creature is pure and sinless. (II Cor. 5:17) As Christians we cannot agree to sin because our new life is from God. But let us remember that this New Creature is in an "earthen vessel" (II Cor. 4:7)—our imperfect human body—which cannot perform perfectly the desires of this new nature.

"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a New Creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new," is the statement of the Apostle Paul (II Cor. 5:17; and yet, because of his inherited im-

perfections, he also declared in Romans 7:15-23:

"That which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members."

In corroboration of the law which the Apostle Paul had found, the Apostle John has said, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the

truth is not in us." (I John 1:8) But, thank God, he knows our hearts, and sees that our desire is to serve him perfectly; for John continues in the very next verse to say, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." In the assurance of these texts, we all can take hope and courage.

But to sin willfully is a different matter from being overcome by the "law of sin which is in our members." The weakness of our flesh is manifest in spite of our best endeavors; but willful sin is conniving to sin, taking advantage of opportunities to get into relationship with sinful things, choosing a sinful course willfully at variance to one's consecration. In which case one who willfully practices sin, ceases to be begotten of God, the Spirit of the Father has been quenched, and such a person has passed beyond hope of eternal life.

It is to this willful sin that our text refers. As long as one is 'begotten of God' he will have no willful desire to commit sin. To entertain such desire would indicate

that he had ceased to be in Christ, and under the influence of God's power.

Anyone, therefore, who would willfully practice sin, after having been spiritually enlightened, would give evidence of the new mind having become dead toward God, even as previously in consecration it had become dead toward sin. But never to fail perfectly to carry into effect the desires of the new mind, we must wait until the new and perfect body is received in the resurrection from the dead.

Scriptural Ordination

I am sixteen years of age. How can I prepare to use my life for God? What are the qualifications of an ordained minister of the Gospel?

OUR LORD SAYS, "Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me; for whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the Gospel's, the same shall save it."

(Mark 8:34,35) The way of consecration and sacrifice as

outlined by the Master is the only preparation acceptable to God. No other way will do. There is no member of the divine family who has given only half of his heart to God. The most lowly member must meet the same standard of devotion as those who are more prominent; and age makes no difference. The reason for this is that every member of his church is a minister of his Gospel.

From the Bible standpoint there are two ordinations. One is of God, and one of men. The ordination which is of God is based upon the possession of the Holy Spirit. Without the Holy Spirit no one is really authorized to preach the Gospel, whether or not graduated from a theological seminary, although some preach what they call the "gospel."

This ordination of God is expressed in Isaiah 61:1: "The Spirit of the LORD God is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the

opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn."

This applies to every member of the body of Christ; for each is an ordained minister to preach the Gospel, to show forth the praises of him who has called us out of darkness into the light of Truth.—I Pet. 2:9

There is, however, another ordination of those who are called to be his ministers. This is the ordination which the church bestows. This ordination is recognized by all sects and denominations, everywhere. By some it is performed with great ceremony, far from the simplicity of the Early Church. It is our understanding that each congregation of the LORD's people should have as its ministers or servants, only those who have confessed complete consecration to God, and who give evidence of the possession of the Holy Spirit.—I Tim. 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9

In Acts 14:23 we read, "When they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fast-

ing, they commended them to the LORD on whom they believed." Professor Young's **Analytical Concordance to the Bible**, a recognized authority, on page 722 defines the word *ordained* in this text as being from the Greek word, **cheirotoneo**, which he says literally means 'to elect by stretching out the hand.' From this it would appear that the congregation should choose its teachers by a vote, or stretching forth of hands.

But one consecrated to God need not wait until he is elected an elder or deacon before using his life for God. Each one has time, or means, or talents that can be used at every opportunity to witness for the truth, and thus express the spirit of sacrifice; this is the spirit of sonship.

Difficult to Explain

"Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost. And, behold, the veil of the Temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent; and the graves were opened; and

many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many."

(Matt. 27:50-53 Who are the "saints" here referred to? Were they Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and the prophets, who had died before Christ had become their savior?

THIS TEXT HAS been the source of much discussion among students of the Bible. That the words: "and the graves were opened," and, "and went," appear in early manuscripts of the New Testament cannot be denied. Ferrar Fenton, in his translation, makes the following notation which appeals to us as being reasonable: "Matthew, Chapter 27: verses 52,53, are evidently an early note of a transcriber and not a part of the original text." At any rate, those referred to in the text were not Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, or any of the Ancient Worthies who had died before Christ, for years later when the Epistle to the Hebrews was written, the

apostle mentions these prophets of old, declaring that the church class of the Gospel Age will be complete before these will be resurrected.—Heb. 11:39,40

One of the reasons for doubting the authenticity of this text is found in the text itself. Please notice the record states that "the graves were opened, and many bodies of the saints which slept arose" at the time of the earthquake which occurred when our Master died on the cross. The text then continues, "and came out of the graves ***after his resurrection***, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many." Between our Lord's death and resurrection there was a lapse of three days; this would mean that from the time the sleeping ones arose and the time that they came out of their graves, a number of days had elapsed. This does not appeal to us as being consistent, and seems to lend weight to the opinion expressed in the Ferrar Fenton translation, which we have already mentioned.

If the text is authentic, then we believe that instead of

referring to the ancient prophets it would appear that it had reference to some who had died just prior to the crucifixion and who were raised from the sleep of death as was Lazarus and others, and who, in appreciation of the miracle performed on their behalf, became followers of

Christ, and, through consecration of themselves to God at Pentecost or subsequent thereto had, through the begetting of the Holy Spirit, become saints, set apart for the doing of God's will, so that at the time the account in Matthew was written, they had become saints. ■

SPEAKERS' APPOINTMENTS

M. Balko

Kalispell, MT August 5-7

B. Clark

Greenfield, OH August 7

R. Goodman

Louisville, Al August 14

R. Gorecki

New London, CT August 21

W. Harp

Greenfield, OH August 7

S. Jeuck

St. Petersburg, FL August 14

F. Nemesh

Poitiers, France August 7-12

L.B. Post

Claymont, DE August 21

J.H. Snyder

Havre, MT August 4

Kalispell, MT 5-7

Spokane, WA 8

CONVENTIONS

KALISPELL & HAVRE BIBLE STUDENTS CONVENTION, August 5-7—The Big Mountain Ski and Summer Resort, Whitefish, MT. For information and reservations, please contact: Mrs. Marie Lewis, P.O. Box 7205, Kalispell, MT

59904. *Reservation deadline: May 30th; cancellation deadline: July 10th.*
Phone: (406) 892-4103

INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION, August 7-12—Poitiers, France. For information, write to: In-

ternational Convention, 1425 Lachman Lane, Pacific Palisades, CA 90272

Phone: (310) 454-5248

JACKSON LABOR DAY CONVENTION, September 3,4,5—Northwest Elementary School, 3757 Lansing Ave., Jackson, MI. For information please contact: Mrs. Ray Lumley, 2531 Ashton Road, Jackson, MI 49203

Phone: (517) 782-7252

NEW YORK LABOR DAY CONVENTION, September 2,3,4—Ramada Inn, Two Bridges Road, Exit 52 Route 80, Fairfield, NJ. For room reservations and information, contact: Mrs. Ann-Truth Lange, 76 Longview Avenue, White Plains, NY 10605.

Phone: (914) 948-5428

SEATTLE LABOR DAY CONVENTION, September 2-5—Bellevue Inn, Bellevue, WA. For information and reservations, contact Mrs. Ginger Brann, 20B East Inter-city Avenue, Everett, WA 98208-2747 **Deadline for reservations, August 19th.**

Phone: (206) 353-8983

DETROIT, MI, September 17,18—Echo Grove Conference Center, Lakeville, MI. Contact: George Tivador, 11202 Lorman, Sterling Heights, MI 48312

LOS ANGELES, CA, September 25—Burbank Auditorium, 248 E. Olive Avenue, Burbank. For information, contact: Stephen Mengos, 8355 Santa Ynez, San Gabriel, CA 91775

Phone: (818) 286-0766

BALTIMORE, MD, October 2—Knights of Columbus Hall, 7910 Har-

ford Rd., Baltimore. For information contact: Robert Wagner, 2753 Pelham Ave., Baltimore 21213

Phone: (410) 483-1394

FREDRICKSBURG NORTH, VA, October 8,9—Holiday Inn. For information, contact Mrs. Felicia Everett, Washington Bible Students, 2027 North Lexington St., Arlington, VA 22205. **Reservation deadline: October 1st.**

Phone: (703) 538-6406

NEW ENGLAND CONVENTION, October 7,8,9—Howard Johnsons, 400 New Britain Ave., Plainfield, CT 06062. For reservations, contact: Mrs. Anna May Suraci, 171 Johnson Rd., Hamden, CT 06518

Phone: (203) 248-3793

GRAND RAPIDS, MI, October 15,16—Contact: Mark Carpenter, 804 Conger, N.E., 49505

Phone: (616) 365-2635

PITTSBURGH AREA CONVENTION, October 15,16—Sewickley Grange Hall, Rte. 136, West Newton, PA. For information, contact: Charles Martig, 94 S. Harrison St., Pittsburgh, PA 15202

Phone: (412) 734-9269

SAN LUIS OBISPO, CA, October 15,16—Masonic Temple, 858 Marsh St., San Luis Obispo. Make reservations early by contacting either Lynn Murray, (805) 544-3037, or, Helen Franklin (805) 541-0132, for assistance.

GREECE AND THE SEVEN CHURCHES CONVENTION, June 5-19, 1995. Contact Mary Mali, 638 Pequot Ave., New London, CT 06320

Phone: (203) 447-2872 ■