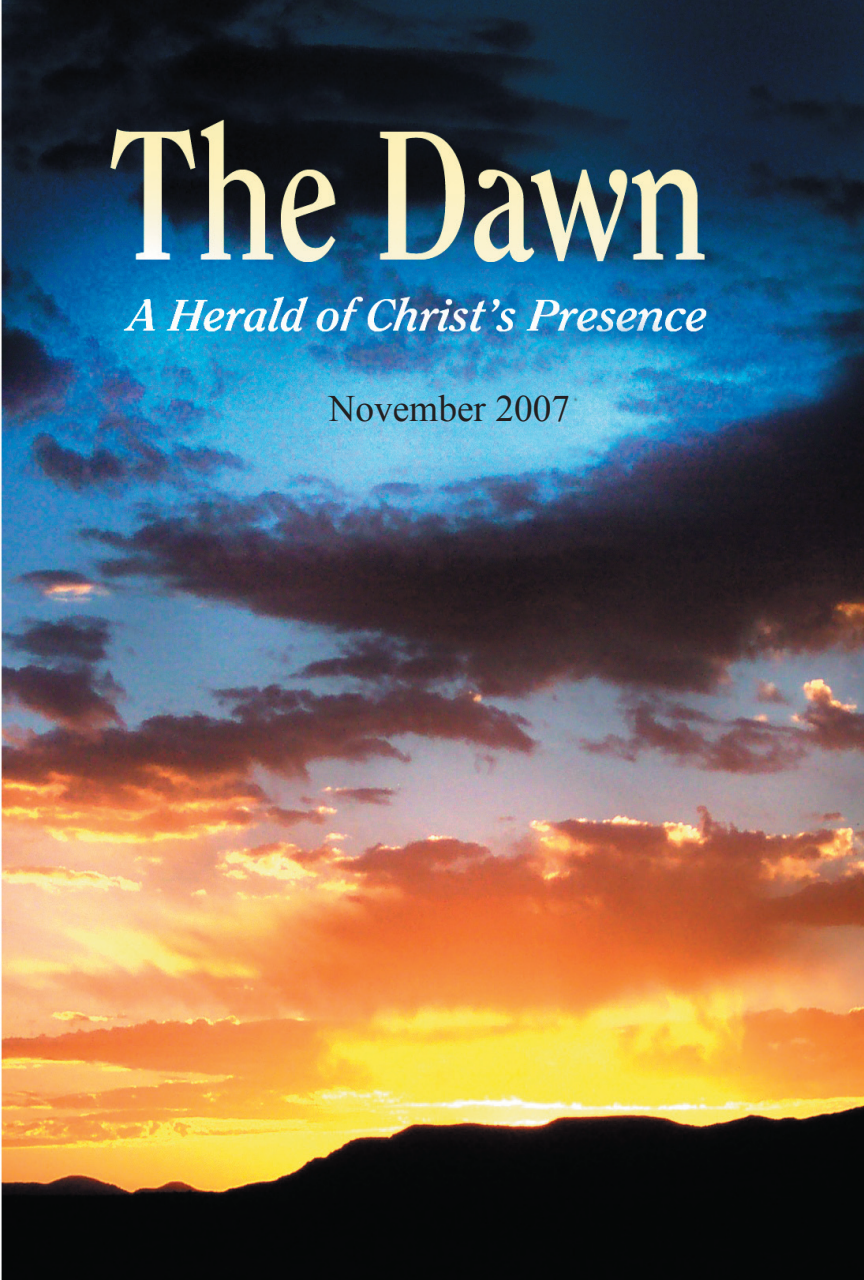


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Our Crumbling Infrastructure

“Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands.”

—*Hebrews 1:10*

IN THIS SCRIPTURE, THE

Apostle Paul speaks of the foundations of heaven and earth that were laid down by the powerful and everlasting hands of the God of the universe. The Bible's earliest record in the book of Genesis provides us with a colorful, although brief, account of the mighty works of old, when the earth was being established and prepared by our loving and eternal Heavenly Father as a home for his future human creation.

RECOLLECTIONS OF THE LOGOS

Among the wise sayings of Solomon are also included, in more detail, the Logos' firsthand account of the wonderful creative works of his Father. He acknowledged, “The LORD possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was.” (Prov. 8:22,23) Students of the Bible have pointed out the fact that the word ‘LORD’

as it is used in this scripture identifies the everlasting and great God of the universe, the Heavenly Father.

In the book of Proverbs, Solomon's writings provide a most remarkable and interesting record of the foundation work concerning our planet earth. The Logos [*Word*, Greek] was the first creative work of God, and recalls, "When there were no depths, I was brought forth; when there were no fountains abounding with water. Before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth: While as yet he had not made the earth, nor the fields, nor the highest part [the chief part, *Marginal Translation*] of the dust of the world." (vss. 24-26) In this wonderful account, the Logos here refers to the future creation of man who would crown the highest, or chief part, of the dust of the earth.

Continuing with his account, the Logos next says, "When he prepared the heavens, I was there: when he set a compass [circle, *Marginal Translation*] upon the face of the depth: When he established the clouds above: when he strengthened the fountains of the deep: When he gave to the sea his decree, that the waters should not pass his commandment: when he appointed the foundations of the earth." (vss. 27-29) Here the Logos speaks of the preparation of the 'heavens' and the 'foundations of the earth.'

As a witness to the love and harmony that filled this most wonderful scene, we read, "Then I was by him, as one brought up with him: and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him; Rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth; and my delights were with the sons of men."—vss. 30,31

THE FOUNDATIONS OF MAN

Having learned from a firsthand witness of the magnificent manner in which our earth was established and the many intricate processes it passed through many long ages ago, we here give consideration to the foundation substructure that forms our present world order. There are many facets to this underlying arrangement, and each one must work in harmony with all of the others to make commerce and daily life dependable.

Infrastructure refers to the foundation, basis or underlying framework upon which a particular community or institution is established and depends. Numerous basic services, facilities, equipment and institutions make up the daily operation of a community as well as its growth and development. These may include a broad range of public utility, communications, transportation, financial and many other systems.

All communities, whether large or small, depend on highways, bridges, railroads, airports, seaports and other forms of public transportation. They also depend upon water and sewage systems, and gas, oil, hydropower and various forms of energy to heat and light their homes and to provide a safe and secure environment for its citizens. The modern communications field includes vast networks of telephone and internet facilities. In addition, there are laws and law enforcement, as well as education and research facilities which play major roles in our modern world. Hospitals and many kinds of health services are also required.

COMPLACENCY

A complacent attitude among many city, state and federal officials throughout America, and also in other parts of the world, has led to a very serious and steadily worsening situation that needs to be addressed and acted upon. The problems are great in many places, and there is an urgent need to rebuild the infrastructure systems. In some cases there seems to be an unwillingness to address the mounting problems, or to consider the catastrophic consequences of failing to do so.

A DRAMATIC REMINDER

The nation's largest city was again suddenly reminded of the age and deteriorating condition of some of its major infrastructure systems during a normal busy working day in July of this year. The sense of urgency and awakening concerning this serious situation was captured by *New York Times* staff writers Ken Belson and Anthony De Palma who submitted an article (July 19, 2007) under the caption "Asbestos and Aging Pipes Remain Buried Hazards."

Their report in part reads as follows: "Exploding steam pipes and manhole covers popping loose and flying skyward, a constant in New York for decades, had all but disappeared in recent years. But the city got a reminder of the vulnerability of its aging infrastructure yesterday when a 24-inch-steam pipe that was laid in 1924 exploded in Midtown (Manhattan) near Grand Central Terminal, leaving one person dead and more than 30 injured. Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg said cold water apparently got into the pipe, producing a change in pressure and

the blast. Because the pipe was near a water main, the explosion sent water, steam and debris skyward. Kevin Burke, chief executive of Consolidated Edison, which operated the city's steam network, said that during rainstorms yesterday pipes could have been surrounded by cold water, causing dangerous condensation.

"Burke said that 11 valves in the network of pipes feeding the area were shut, cutting off steam to 15 to 20 buildings nearby. There was no work being done on the pipes before the incident, but after the morning rain, crews inspected them and found nothing of concern. The pipe that burst is part of an underground network that Con Edison acquired in the mid-1950s, when it absorbed the old New York Steam Corporation, which started selling steam to Manhattan buildings in 1882. The steam company's huge generating plants once powered elevators. But as electricity became more widely available the demand for steam power leveled off.

"Now the steam is used to spin turbines that make electricity in Con Edison plants. After that, it is piped to about 1,800 customers in Manhattan, mainly large buildings. In most cases, the steam provides heating and, with the help of compressors, air-conditioning.

"The event yesterday stoked fears not just because of the power of the blast, but because many of the city's oldest steam pipes are covered with asbestos for insulation, and those around the accident could be at risk if they inhale significant amounts of tainted air. That was the fear back in 1989, when Con Ed was criticized after a major steam pipe explosion near Gramercy Park for waiting four days

before notifying residents of the area about possible asbestos contamination. Asbestos is a known human carcinogen. Asbestos-related diseases, however, are generally linked to sustained exposure in an industrial setting over many years.

“Yesterday, Con Ed said almost immediately that it assumed that the blast had released asbestos into the air. The company said it was testing for asbestos in the air and in the material that settled onto the streets after the steam abated. The City Department of Environmental Protection also said it was testing for asbestos in the surrounding neighborhood to determine the extent of any contamination. The worries are not new. Between 1986 and 1997, at least a dozen steam pipes ruptured, killing several people, injuring many others and, in several cases, sending asbestos-laden mud into the air.

“Only a handful of steam pipes have exploded in the past decade, but the threat remains because the 105 miles of steam mains and service pipes that pump steam beneath the streets of Manhattan are near other utilities, including gas and electrical equipment. Buried so close together, problems with one system can often affect others, infrastructure experts say.”

New York Times staff writers Belson and De Palma have reported on a very serious condition that poses a major threat to the daily lives and routine of millions of citizens in this great city. The threat, however, focuses on only one of the many other infrastructure systems that also need immediate attention, not only in New York City, but also in countless other communities throughout the United States.

DISASTER IN MINNEAPOLIS

A few weeks after the steam pipe explosion in New York, the nation was again abruptly awakened to the fact that America's infrastructure systems are in need of immediate attention. This occurred during busy evening rush hour traffic in downtown Minneapolis, Minnesota when a major eight-lane interstate highway bridge, I- 35 W which spans the Mississippi River, suddenly collapsed. The bridge was crammed with dozens of vehicles, and the death toll stands at 13 at the time of this writing, several days after the event. Many more were injured and missing when the massive structure plummeted more than 60 feet into the Mississippi River.

Minnesota Governor Tim Pawlenty declared a peacetime emergency for the state, activating the State Emergency Operations Center in the wake of the collapse. The Coast Guard also closed a nine-mile stretch of the river to conduct search and rescue operations in response to the tragedy. Pawlenty ordered an immediate inspection of all bridges throughout the state that were similar in construction and design. Later at a press conference the governor cited three such bridges that are located in St. Cloud, Sandstone, and Osceola, Minnesota.

WARNINGS ISSUED

To make matters worse, it has been reported that Minnesota state officials have been warned of problems developing on the interstate bridge for several years. Because of this situation, it was recommended that it be inspected on an annual basis, and in a 2006 report it was suggested that the bridge be

reinforced with steel plating. Although officials waited to consider other options, the eight-lane bridge was in the midst of repairs at the time of the accident.

THE AFTERMATH

This was one of the busiest stretches of highway in the state and was used by more than 140,000 people every day. The disruption to traffic patterns, and the commuters who need to use them throughout the metropolitan area of Minneapolis-St. Paul, will be massive throughout the cleanup operations and the rebuilding of a new structure.

HIGH RISK DAM

Turning our attention to another area of America's failing infrastructure systems, we note a CBS news report that was given on August 20, 2007 by CBS News transportation and consumer safety correspondent Nancy Cordes. Under the caption "Is A Major U. S. Dam At Its Breaking Point?" with the subheading 'Wolf Creek, largest dam east of the Mississippi, at High Risk for failure' we quote in part: "Stretching a mile from end to end, the gigantic Wolf Creek Dam is vital to southern Kentucky and northern Tennessee preventing the periodic flooding that once plagued the cities and towns along the 700-mile Cumberland River. But Wolf Creek Dam is in trouble.

"The problem is about 250-300 feet below us in the rock, says Mike Zoccola who is with the Army Corps of Engineers, which recently designated the dam at 'high risk' for failure, requiring emergency measures to reduce an imminent risk to human life. The devil is in the design. Wolf Creek was built

on porous limestone. Over time, water has seeped into cracks in the rock, eroding a Swiss cheese of holes and caves. A sinkhole could cause this entire earthen embankment to collapse. The first town downstream is Burkesville, Kentucky. The state has handed out warning radios to all 1,700 residents.

“There are currently 3,500 dams in the United States listed as unsafe and the list is growing faster than the rate of repair. They may not all be as big as Wolf Creek Dam, but when they fail, the results can be catastrophic. In recent years, fears about dams giving way have forced evacuations in Maryland, Massachusetts and Missouri. Seven lives were lost last year when a dam broke in Hawaii.

“The American Society of Civil Engineers gives the infrastructure report of the nation’s dams a ‘D’ and called for fully funded dam safety programs in all 50 states. If you live downstream from the dam, it doesn’t matter whether the dam was attacked by terrorists or whether it failed because of fatigue and age and lack of repair. The people downstream are all impacted the same.”

A GRIM REMINDER

As a result of these and other recent breakdowns in America’s complex infrastructure systems, many people are being grimly reminded of the overpowering devastation that occurred in the summer of 2005 when hurricane Katrina slammed ashore in the vicinity of New Orleans, Louisiana.

At that time the levee and flood wall system that had been put in place to protect the city and its extensive metropolitan area failed catastrophically. Many levees collapsed well below the design

threshold that had been designed and constructed, while others collapsed after a brief period of overtopping which caused serious erosion of the earthen levee walls, another serious design flaw. It was noted that the levee system failed in numerous places, and approximately 80% of the city of New Orleans was flooded. Many innocent people died, and others were injured while the loss in property and human misery can hardly be calculated.

AN ENGINEERING DISASTER

After hurricane Betsy in 1965, heavy flooding brought awareness and concern regarding the possible danger from other hurricanes. Congress then gave the United States Army Corps of Engineers sole authority to design and construct a new and modern flood protection system as part of the infrastructure of New Orleans and surrounding area. After the disaster of hurricane Katrina, engineers and others from around the world proclaimed that the flooding was the worst engineering disaster in the history of the United States.

TIME TO REBUILD

These recent events, and many others, stand as warning signs that the infrastructure systems in the United States are aging and that some may have been poorly constructed, while others may have serious design flaws. These are not isolated instances, and countless examples could pose problems in the future with catastrophic results. From Boston, Massachusetts to Los Angeles, California and from Duluth, Minnesota to Houston, Texas, American cities are now entering a new phase of middle age and the infrastructure that is

propping them up is showing multiple signs of strain.

Many of Chicago's systems date from the early part of the 20th century, and city officials are faced with tough decisions as to what to fix first. The aging infrastructure below the city's bustling streets is an enormous liability, and the cost to modernize these systems would be staggering. Miles of underground water and sewage pipes are nearing the end of their expected life. Electrical systems that continue to operate with outdated components and equipment are decades old, and struggle to handle the increasing demand for power.

Recently, The American Society of Civil Engineers estimated that it will take 1.6 trillion dollars over the next five years to put the nation's roads, bridges, dams, water systems, and airports back into good working order. They point out that replacing old parts in a labyrinth of cables, tunnels and piping, often extending hundreds of feet below the ground's surface, is a very difficult and dangerous procedure. Furthermore, the fact that all of this infrastructure equipment may be crowded together into very small spaces makes the risk of accidents even worse. When one component goes wrong, other parts may also fail. A water main break may wash out the street above, or rupture a nearby gas line.

A NEW WORLD ORDER

Although commendable, man's best efforts to seek a better way of life for himself and others often fail. But God has been preparing a new and lasting rule for man that will not become old and will not deteriorate. When the present nighttime of

sin and death has passed, the world of mankind will then be under the administration of an entirely new order. Christ and his faithful church members, who have accepted the present Gospel Age call to follow him, will then have the wonderful opportunity of lifting up mankind and instructing them in the ways of truth and holiness. The world will also experience a massive rebuilding and reconstruction period.

The revelator describes this wonderful scene. He writes, "I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful."—Rev. 21:1-5

FIRM FOUNDATIONS

The city that was called 'new Jerusalem' had "twelve gates" which represent the twelve tribes of Israel. (vss. 12,13) "And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb." (vs. 14) "And he that talked with me had a golden reed to measure the

city, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof. And the city lieth foursquare, and the length is as large as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs. The length and the breadth and the height of it are equal. And he measured the wall thereof, an hundred and forty and four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of the angel.”—vss. 15-17

LASTING BEAUTY

The twelve foundations of the city were garnished with precious stones to emphasize its lasting beauty. (vss. 19-21) Continuing, the revelator said, “I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it. And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof.” (vss. 22,23) Beautiful symbols describe the grandeur of our loving Heavenly Father’s ultimate purpose for his creation.

NOTHING TO DEFILE

“The gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there. And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it. And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb’s book of life.”—vss. 25-27

We have God’s positive and unfailing assurance that all things will be made new and all injustice and unrighteousness will be put away. Our Lord Jesus’ wonderful kingdom of peace and truth will soon be administered to bring this promise to fulfillment in the affairs of all the families of the earth. ■

Gladness Will Come

*Some glowing morn when heaven bends caressing,
Earth's darkest vale to cheer;
Waking to know and love our Father's blessing,
Life will be grandly dear.*

*Gladness will come, hallelujah it is coming,
Gladness is on the way;
God will unveil the fulness of his mercy,
Gladness will come to stay.*

*Some holy hour when broken hearts are crying;
Turning from sin away;
Mercy will bring a solace for their sighing,
Gladness will come to stay.*

*Gladness will come, hallelujah it is coming,
Gladness is on the way;
God will unveil the fulness of his mercy,
Gladness will come to stay.*

*Desolate soul for vanished treasure pining,
Wreck'd on a friendless shore;
See thro' the gloom the star of promise shining,
Gladness will come once more.*

*Gladness will come, hallelujah it is coming,
Gladness is on the way;
God will unveil the fulness of his mercy,
Gladness will come to stay.*

*Fulness of joy will shine away our sorrow,
Sighing will flee away;
Tears will not mar life's beautiful tomorrow,
Gladness will come to stay.*

—*Hymns of Dawn*

Joseph's Dream

Key Verse: *"Joseph dreamed a dream, and he told it his brethren: and they hated him yet the more."*

—Genesis 37:5

Selected Scripture:
Genesis 37

OUR SELECTED SCRIPTURE emphasizes the hatred Joseph's brothers had towards him because he was especially favored by his father in receiving a tunic of many colors. It seemed to signify an intention to give him the birthright which obviously his older brethren would resent.

Joseph then recounted a dream he had wherein there were twelve sheaves of wheat in a field. Eleven of them, owned by his brothers, bowed down before his upright sheaf as though they were paying homage to Joseph. The force of this illustration caused his brethren to inquire of Joseph whether he should have dominion over them.—vss. 6-8

Joseph revealed another of his dreams indicating the sun, moon and eleven stars knelt before him. Although Jacob issued a mild rebuke to Joseph by inquiring whether it meant his parents and brethren would someday acknowledge Joseph to be their superiors, his father evidently gave consideration to such a possibility, but his brethren were enraged.—vss. 9-11

On another occasion, Jacob sent Joseph to determine the condition of the flocks which his brethren were tending some distance from their home. When they saw Joseph approaching, they plotted, in their bitterness, to put him to death. Reuben, the eldest brother, convinced

the others to spare Joseph's life by throwing him into an empty well. He had intended to later remove Joseph from his confinement and return him to Jacob. A subsequent opportunity presented itself to Joseph's brothers and instead, during Reuben's absence, they sold him to Ishmaelite (Midianite) traders for twenty pieces of silver.—vss. 12-28

Subsequently, Joseph's brothers conspired to dip his tunic in the blood of a goat and brought it to Jacob. He assumed Joseph had been killed and was grief stricken. In accordance with God's purpose, Joseph was taken to Egypt and sold to Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh.—vss. 29-36

Jacob's partiality in providing Joseph a special coat kindled jealousy among his older brothers. Christians who observe others attaining greater recognition than themselves should not allow any bitterness to grow in their hearts. God is able to overrule in every situation for his children's highest spiritual welfare.

Despite the deep anguish Jacob experienced, Joseph's brethren allowed him to believe his son was devoured by wild beasts. "There is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known." (Luke 12:2) This passage should be internalized by believers so that their conduct is always above reproach and worthy of commendation by God.

Joseph is cited in the New Testament for his confidence in God's promises regarding Israel and was counted among a group of ancient believers who will be especially used to bring blessings to mankind when they return from the tomb during God's kingdom of righteousness here on earth. (Heb. 11:22,39,40) Of even greater magnitude is the heavenly promise of the Divine nature for all the faithful members of the body of Christ at the end of this Gospel Age. "Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature."—II Pet. 1:4 ■

Joseph's Dream Began to Come True

Key Verse:
***“Pharaoh said
unto Joseph,
Forasmuch as God
hath shewed thee
all this, there is
none so discreet
and wise as
thou art.”***
—Genesis 41:39

Selected Scripture:
Genesis 41:25-45

PHARAOH HAD TWO TROU-bling dreams. The first was that seven gaunt cows came out of the river and consumed seven fat cows. In a second dream, seven thin ears of corn devoured seven plump ears of corn.

The king's wise men were unable to interpret the dreams. Pharaoh's chief butler then recalled that Joseph had correctly interpreted his own dream while both of them were in prison.—Gen. 41:8-13

Pharaoh summoned Joseph. In a humble manner, Joseph acknowledged that it was God who gave him the power of interpretation. After Pharaoh recounted his dreams, Joseph explained they both had the same meaning. There would be seven years of bountiful harvests in Egypt followed by seven years of famine. Preparations were needed to prevent the people from starving during the time of scarcity.—vss. 14-32

Joseph gave the king some profound advice. “Now therefore let Pharaoh look out a man discreet and wise, and set him over the land of Egypt. Let Pharaoh do this, and let him appoint officers over the land, and take up

the fifth part of the land of Egypt in the seven plenteous years. And let them gather all the food of those good years that come, and lay up corn under the hand of Pharaoh, and let them keep food in the cities. And that food shall be for store to the land against the seven years of famine, which shall be in the land of Egypt; that the land perish not through the famine.”—vss. 33-36

In our Key Verse, Pharaoh acknowledges the superiority of this wisdom and appoints Joseph to be in charge of gathering the surplus grain during the years of plenty and disbursing it throughout the time of famine.—vs. 40

“Pharaoh said unto Joseph, See, I have set thee over all the land of Egypt. And Pharaoh took off his ring from his hand, and put it upon Joseph’s hand, and arrayed him in vestures of fine linen, and put a gold chain about his neck; And he made him to ride in the second chariot which he had; and they cried before him, Bow the knee: and he made him ruler over all the land of Egypt. And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, I am Pharaoh, and without thee shall no man lift up his hand or foot in all the land of Egypt. And Pharaoh called Joseph’s name Zaphnath-paaneah; and he gave him to wife Asenath the daughter of Potipherah priest of On. And Joseph went out over all the land of Egypt.”—vss. 41-45

Joseph’s elevation from a dungeon to be second in power to Pharaoh finds a parallel during this Gospel Age. Jesus Christ came to earth in the form of a bond-servant, entered the prison house of death, and is now highly exalted, next to his Father. “Being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name.” (Phil. 2:8,9) Faithful Christians who follow in the Master’s footsteps have a similar hope to be raised to glory and associated with Christ in his kingdom.—Rom. 8:34 ■

God Preserved a Remnant

Key Verse: “*God sent me before you to preserve you a posterity in the earth, and to save your lives by a great deliverance.*”
—*Genesis 45:7*

Selected Scripture:
Genesis 43:1-45:15

After the famine began, all who wished to secure grain had to purchase it in Egypt. Jacob sent ten of his sons to buy food while Benjamin remained at home. Joseph was in charge of distributing provisions. When they appeared before Joseph, his brethren did not recognize him. Joseph treated them harshly and demanded their youngest brother, Benjamin, be brought to him. Simeon, another brother, remained in Egypt as a hostage and the others returned to Jacob well supplied with food.

The famine continued to be severe. Jacob again sent his sons including Benjamin to purchase food in Egypt. Joseph arranged for all his brethren to join him for a banquet. When Joseph entered the room, his brethren, still unaware of who he was, bowed before him as predicted in one of his dreams. (Gen. 43:1-26) He then inquired of their welfare as well as Jacob's and wept after seeing Benjamin, upon whom he subsequently lavished special attention as they dined.—vss. 27-34

Joseph then had his brethren's sacks filled with food. Additionally, he had his own silver cup placed secretly in

Benjamin's bag and sent his brothers back to their father. Shortly, thereafter, Joseph's steward overtook his brothers and charged them with stealing Joseph's cup. (Gen. 44:1-7) Despite protestations that none of them would do that, the cup was found in Benjamin's sack. In great anguish, Joseph's brothers returned to his house where they again fell prostrate before him.—vss. 44:8-13

Joseph indicated he would keep Benjamin as his servant in Egypt but Judah acted as spokesman. He explained the circumstances of Benjamin's being in Egypt with them on this occasion. He described the grief Jacob would experience if Benjamin did not return to his father. Judah even volunteered to become Joseph's servant to insure Benjamin's release.—vss. 14-34

"Then Joseph could not refrain himself before all them that stood by him; and he cried, Cause every man to go out from me. And there stood no man with him, while Joseph made himself known unto his brethren. And he wept aloud: and the Egyptians and the house of Pharaoh heard. And Joseph said unto his brethren, I am Joseph; doth my father yet live? And his brethren could not answer him; for they were troubled at his presence."—Gen. 45:1-3

Our Key Verse reveals God's purpose in Joseph's elevation as Egypt's prime minister. Amidst an emotional and loving reunion with his brothers, Joseph instructed them to bring his father and all of their households to Goshen in Egypt. There they would thrive under his protective care, thus ensuring the continuation of Jacob's lineage from whom the Messiah ultimately would emerge.—vss. 8-15

A major lesson which all Christians should derive from Joseph's attitude towards his brethren is the importance of having the spirit of forgiveness, without which none can be acceptable to the Lord. "What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?"—Rom. 8:31 ■

Jacob Blessed His Family

Key Verse: “*Israel said unto Joseph, I had not thought to see thy face: and, lo, God hath shewed me also thy seed.*”
—**Genesis 48:11**

Selected Scripture:
Genesis 48:8-21
tribal heads, would provide Joseph a double portion of the inheritance.—Gen. 48:5,6

BEFORE JACOB DIED, HE

adopted Joseph’s two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim, as his own. This would ensure that his favorite son, Joseph, would receive a double portion. In effect, Jacob was elevating Joseph to his own status so that when the land of Canaan would be divided in the future, Ephraim and Manasseh, as tribal heads, would provide Joseph a double portion of the inheritance.—Gen. 48:5,6

“Israel beheld Joseph’s sons, and said, Who are these? And Joseph said unto his father, They are my sons, whom God hath given me in this place. And he said, Bring them, I pray thee, unto me, and I will bless them. Now the eyes of Israel were dim for age, so that he could not see. And he brought them near unto him; and he kissed them, and embraced them.”—vss. 8-10

Our Key Verse is an acknowledgement by Jacob of God’s love and faithfulness in permitting him to see Joseph again after such a lengthy interval during which period he had been grieving for his lost son that he believed was dead. There was also added joy for Jacob in being able to confer blessings upon his two grandsons out of Joseph’s loins.

Although Joseph was second in authority in all of Egypt, he manifested great reverence towards his father, bowing in his presence. Jacob blessed his grandsons, giving the birthright to Ephraim despite Joseph's efforts to have his firstborn, Manasseh, receive the position of preeminence. Evidently Jacob's actions reflected God's foreknowledge in the matter as the tribe of Ephraim grew to be larger and more influential than Manasseh's descendants.—vss. 13-20

At this stage in his life, when Jacob's end was approaching, he probably thought about the great privilege of sharing the promises of the Abrahamic Covenant with his descendants as he recalled the message he received so long ago. "Behold, the LORD stood above it, and said, I am the LORD God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed; And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed."—Gen. 28:13,14

The followers of Christ during this Gospel Age look forward to being participants in an even higher and heavenly calling. "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ. 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. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ." (Gal. 3:16,27-29; 4:6,7) What an incentive for being faithful to the Master! ■

A Little Flock

“Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.”

—Luke 12:32

AS A MAJOR WRITER OF

one of the gospels of our Lord Jesus’ earthly ministry, Luke has here recorded one of the most beautiful and inspiring promises that our

loving Heavenly Father has ever given to his special people. It focuses on the wonderful promise to give us an inheritance in the future kingdom of Christ, and is the fundamental hope that we have for a place in the spiritual kingdom of our Lord. We are in awe to be assured that it is God’s good pleasure to offer this unspeakable blessing to those who are yet walking in newness of life with Christ Jesus during this present Gospel Age.

This inspiring hope is uppermost in the minds of all God’s people, and particularly we who are now living during the closing harvest years of this age. This prospect includes being with our Lord and sharing in his glory for the future great work of uplifting fallen mankind from the penalty of sin and death which yet prevails over the human family.

Generated by this wonderful hope, the Apostle Paul speaks of the consecrated walk of the New

Creature in Christ Jesus. In his epistle to the brethren at Rome, he points to the complete consecration necessary for those who are being called out of the world for this great inheritance. In his letter, he writes, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written [Ps. 44:22], For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us." (Rom. 8:35-37) The apostle gives us a powerful insight into the level of dedication that he possessed, and which in turn is a vital encouragement to us.

THE GOSPEL AGE CALLING

Writing under inspiration of the Holy Spirit of God, the revelator, too, has pointed to the inheritance that is promised to those who have been faithful to their High Calling in Christ Jesus. God's promise was, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." (Rev. 2:10) The faithful members of the body of Christ who have lived during this present Gospel Age are given the promise of receiving Divine glory with our Lord in his kingdom. Many wonderful promises are directed to the Lord's people as outlined in the messages to the seven churches.—Rev. 2,3

SEVEN CHURCHES BLESSED

The first of these blessings was addressed to the brethren at Ephesus at the very beginning of the Gospel Age. Concerning this promise we read, "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I

give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.” (Rev. 2:7) This promise of eternal life is in full accord with our featured scripture recorded by Luke. It is the gift of life on the highest of all planes on the spiritual realm, and is offered to the faithful members of the church class.

Another promise is pointed out in God’s message to the church at Smyrna. “He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death.” (vs. 11) The promise of receiving the Divine nature to immortal life is a special gift only to the overcomers of this age. To those of Pergamos we note, “To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it.” (vs. 17) The ‘hidden manna’ suggests the spiritual food that has been given to those who have responded to the High Calling in Christ Jesus. Each one of the faithful will be identified by receiving a new name as a special gift from our loving Heavenly Father. The ‘white stone’ represents the sealing of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of God’s people.

We read of those at Thyatira, “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. And I will give him the morning star.” (vss. 26-28) The body members of the spiritual class of followers of our Lord will share in establishing the just rule over the world during the time of Christ’s future kingdom.

Those in Sardis were promised, “He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels.” (chap. 3:5) Purity in righteousness will be reflected in the new and glorious nature of the elect church.

The revelator next writes concerning the faithful brethren at Philadelphia. “Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, . . . and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and I will write upon him my new name.” (vs. 12) The kingdom of God is represented by the ‘new Jerusalem’ that will be the new spiritual government over the nations. What a glorious prospect awaits us in God’s everlasting kingdom.

The last message concerning the church’s inheritance was addressed to the brethren at Laodicea. We read, “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.” (vs. 21) Here we note the wonderful prospect of sharing in our Lord’s glory in his kingdom. The faithful overcomers of this Gospel Age will receive this promise.

A SPECIAL CLASS

The rewards promised to the brethren at the church in Ephesus apply to all of the called and faithful class who have lived during this Gospel Age. Likewise, the other promises of God that are offered to the Gospel Age church are applicable to

all who have responded to his wonderful invitation. The overcomers represented by the church at Laodicea are not the only faithful ones who will sit with Christ in his throne. This honor will be granted to all who have overcome the world, the flesh and the Devil during this age of sacrifice. We thus have a broad range of blessings as special rewards for those who overcome the hardships incidental to their traveling in the narrow way of sacrifice.

In our featured scripture (Luke 12:32), we learned of a 'little flock' to whom God is pleased to give the kingdom. Of them, Paul said, "That he [Christ] might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." (Eph. 5:27) This class represents those who have overcome the world and its evil influences and are found faithful even unto death.

FAITHFULNESS NECESSARY

In contrast to the faithful bride class who willingly sacrifice their lives in full consecration to God, we note also that there is another class who have defiled their garments and need to wash them in the blood of the Lamb. Of these we read, "After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands. And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb."—Rev. 7:9,10

This is an unnumbered group of Christians who wore white robes, had palms in their hands and

honored the name of our Lord. We read further concerning them, "One of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they? And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them."—vss. 13-15

The heart intention of the true members of Christ's body is indicated in the Apostle Paul's second epistle to the brethren at Corinth. He writes, "For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; While we look not at the things which are seen, . . . for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal."—II Cor. 4:16-18

WORDS OF TRUTH AND LIFE

The Scriptures provide many valuable admonitions for the Lord's people to consider. For example, we read, "My son, attend to my words; incline thine ear unto my sayings. Let them not depart from thine eyes; keep them in the midst of thine heart. For they are life unto those that find them, and health to all their flesh. Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life."—Prov. 4:20-23

How wonderful are these words written by Solomon many centuries ago. Yet they are timely and

powerful admonitions for the New Creature in Christ even during the closing years of this present Gospel Age harvest. They are true words of life, and stand in direct contrast to the carnal mind of the flesh. Since we were born in sin and shapen in iniquity, our carnal mind is sinful and stands in the way of the New Creature. As fallen fleshly beings, we are often prone to act on the impulse of the moment. We may not stop to think whether it is the carnal mind of the flesh, or whether we are acting from the standpoint of our spiritual interests.

If we could consider this before acting, how much richer our spiritual lives would be. In all our reasoning, we should be very careful that self is entirely eliminated, for the carnal mind is so clever that it can often make what is wrong appear to be right. Solomon again says, "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death."—Prov. 14:12

THE NEW CREATURE

Concerning the nature of our High Calling, the Apostle Paul writes, "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." (II Cor. 5:17) God has planned from the very beginning a New Creation, different from anything he had ever created in the past, or anything that he would ever again create. These were to have his nature and share in his glory.

When anyone becomes a member of the Christ he becomes an heir to that nature. "If children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. For I reckon that the sufferings

of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.” (Rom. 8:17,18) What Paul means by being ‘in Christ’ is that we are so closely associated with him that we become a part of the Christ.

BAPTIZED INTO DEATH

Paul explains, “Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed [justified, *Marginal Translation*] from sin.

“Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him: Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.”—Rom. 6:3-13

(Continued on page 35)

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(Continued from page 31) Another scripture along this same line reads, "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 themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again."—II Cor. 5:14,15

When we became associated with Christ, we became partners in his death and resurrection. "Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit." (I Pet. 3:18) Further to this, Paul says, "Henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more." (II Cor. 5:16) This makes clear the statement of being in Christ. Therefore if we share in his death, we likewise will share in his resurrection.

RISEN WITH CHRIST

Even now, while still in the flesh and imperfect we realize that we are accepted as New Creatures in Christ Jesus, how much more sincere our consecrated lives should be. How much more it should intensify the meaning to us of the Apostle Paul's instructions. "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. 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. Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication,

uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry.”—Col. 3:1-5

EXAMINING OURSELVES

One of the best ways to make certain that we will be more than an overcomer is to forget about self. Self takes up so much room in the lives of each of us that very little of our time and talent is left for God. We do the things that are pleasing to us, or we avoid doing those things which are unpleasant. The apostle admonishes us to do all things to the glory of God, whether or not the thing is pleasing to us. “Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.”—Col. 3:17

The little flock and the great company may have a common begetting, but they do not have a common birth. They both receive the pledge of their inheritance, the Holy Spirit of God. Paul wrote, “Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.” (II Cor. 1:22) The apostle again says, “Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit.”—II Cor. 5:5

THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Holy Spirit is the vitalizing influence of the Christian, and the mind is the personality. The Holy Spirit thus operating on the mind gradually changes the person into the image of Christ. There, in the mind, the great battle takes place. If we can keep our minds fixed upon Christ by adhering to his words, then Satan can have no influence on us. However, if our minds are centered on the things of

self, then we are consequently very likely to be overreached, and to this extent it is possible to fail in making our calling and election sure. We must ever be on guard at all times.

If, in the many things that go to make up our daily lives, we could forget about self and think only of Christ, how much more blessed our lives would be, and how many heartaches we would save ourselves and others. This thought seems to be borne out by Paul when he wrote, "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. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin." (Rom. 7:18-25) This is rather an unhappy state for us to be in, but Paul says there is relief for those who are really striving to be more than overcomers.

CONQUERING THE FLESH

As a final admonition, we note that those who are more than overcomers are those who have conquered self. It is only as we bring every thought into subjection to the will of God in Christ that we can

have the full assurance of faith of the outcome. "Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ."—II Cor. 10:5

Wise scriptural counsel directs our thoughts and actions. "If ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God."—Rom. 8:13,14

"This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law." (Gal. 5:16-18) Let us then renew our determination to conquer self in our Christian walk of faith, remembering that it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. ■

OBITUARIES

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

Brother Stanley Gorgas, Salem, OR—September 3.

Sister Janet Jezuit, Mundelein, IL—September 28. Age,
59

A Time for Thanksgiving

*“It is a good thing
to give thanks unto
the LORD, and to
sing praises unto
thy name, O most*

*High: To shew
forth thy loving-
kindness in the
morning, and thy
faithfulness every
night.”*

—Psalm 92:1,2

THIS YEAR ON NOVEMBER

22nd, the citizens of the United States will again observe a very special day that has been set aside for giving thanks to our Creator for his abundant blessings. Although this custom has continued for many decades, the people of God are glad for another occasion and opportunity to give special

thanks to our loving and eternal Heavenly Father. They rejoice in the knowledge of his ultimate purpose concerning his human family.

THANKS BE UNTO GOD

In our featured text, the psalmist encourages us to show forth our thankfulness to God in the morning as well as in the night. In this connection, the Apostle Paul also wrote, “In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.” (I Thess. 5:18) For us to properly

give thanks in Christ Jesus in everything that we say and do, means that each and every day will be filled with thanksgiving and praise to him. This further suggests that we should thank him not only for those blessings that have contributed to our well-being and joy, but we also trust and thank him for the trials and testings that he has permitted to come our way for our spiritual growth as New Creatures in Christ Jesus.

THE UNSPEAKABLE GIFT

In his letter to the brethren at Corinth, the apostle proclaimed, "Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift." (II Cor. 9:15) Paul's use of the word 'unspeakable' in this scripture points to the fact that words cannot possibly convey the true meaning and value of Jesus' sacrificial life on our behalf, as well as for the sins of the whole world. The Apostle Peter also used this same word that has been translated unspeakable in his first epistle, when he wrote, "Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." (I Pet. 1:8) Peter emphasizes the fact that, although we cannot now see our dear Lord, we yet continue to rejoice in the wonderful hope that, if faithful, we will share with him in his glory. This is indeed an 'unspeakable' blessing for which we give thanks to our all-wise and loving Heavenly Father.

God's gift of his only begotten Son to the world of mankind indicates Jesus' willingness to leave his heavenly home, come to earth and give his own perfect life in sacrifice to save mankind from their

inherited penalty of sin and death. Concerning this wonderful gift, Luke wrote, "The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." (Luke 19:10) The Apostle John also addressed this thought when he said, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John 3:16) This promise will be ultimately realized during the future kingdom of our dear Lord and his faithful church, for which the whole obedient human family will offer their thanks.

THE PSALMIST'S MESSAGE

In his further exhortations of praise and thanksgiving to God in our featured text, the psalmist says, "Thou, LORD, hast made me glad through thy work: I will triumph in the works of thy hands. O LORD, how great are thy works! and thy thoughts are very deep." (Ps. 92:4,5) We behold the wondrous works of God on a continuing daily basis and are thus filled with love and thankfulness to him. All of the sustenance for our lives, both temporal and spiritual, have been made available to us by his power, love, and grace. He has truly provided for our every need and growth, not only in the physical sense, but even more importantly as New Creatures in Christ Jesus.

GOD'S MAJESTIC GLORY

The psalmist David proclaims the fact that the marvelous and intricate works of God will speak for themselves. In this connection he pointed out, "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork. Day unto day

uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge.” (Ps. 19:1,2) Anyone who has ever looked up at the starry sky at night can surely bear witness to the majestic works and glory of our eternal and loving Heavenly Father. He emphasizes further, “There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard.” (vs. 3) During the daylight hours, the sun shines to provide us with light and life and, during the night, we may behold the awesome majesty of the stars, planets, and other heavenly bodies. For this, we offer him our thanks and praise.

David continues by explaining, “Their line [their rule or direction, *Marginal Translation*] is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them hath he set a tabernacle of the sun. Which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race.” (vss. 4,5) God’s wonderful handiwork of Creation truly speaks for itself. We note, too, that in the psalmist’s symbolic language we are given a brief glimpse of the glorious bridegroom coming forward to meet the faithful members of his bride who have been running in the race for the High Calling that has been set before them.

The psalmist then says, “His going forth is from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it: and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof.” (vs. 6) How thankful we all should be for the joy that has been set before us. We are glad for another opportunity to give thanks and praise to our loving Heavenly Father at this Thanksgiving season, and also at all times during the year.

JESUS GAVE THANKS TO HIS FATHER

Our precious Lord Jesus always gave thanks to his Heavenly Father. He did this on the occasion of passing the cup, and again when offering the unleavened bread to his disciples when they were invited to partake of the Last Supper. Luke records this very special event, saying, "He took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves." (Luke 22:17) Afterward, we read, "He took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me." (vs. 19) Our Lord's attitude of giving thanks to his Heavenly Father on every occasion should also be an ever present mark of character for the Lord's people on this, as well as on all other occasions.

EXPRESSING OUR THANKFULNESS

One of the more familiar ways in which we may take to express our gratitude for the many benefits we receive from God is to thank him daily for the food that he has provided for us at mealtimes. This should become a regular habit among all who are striving to follow in the footsteps of our Lord Jesus. When we begin our day, we should thank our loving Father for all of his blessings toward us. Also, at the conclusion of our day, we should thank him, and ask his forgiveness for whatever we may have said or done that may not have been pleasing to him.

CHRISTIAN RESPONSIBILITIES

Christian parents will most likely want to teach their children to be thankful for whatever gifts and other blessings that they may receive. When they

are very young they may have to be reminded of this, but if this is instilled in them from early childhood the habit of giving thanks to God will become well established when he or she grows up. Parents are thus pleased when their children begin to show their genuine gratitude and thankfulness. So, too, is it with our Heavenly Father when his special children become well established as mature Christians. He is surely pleased whenever we may come to him with our heartfelt thanks and gratitude for all of his abundant grace and watchcare over us.

PRAYERS OF THANKSGIVING

Giving thanks to God for his many blessings thus becomes an important part of our everyday prayer life. When writing to the Colossian brethren, the Apostle Paul revealed this particular trait of his Christian growth and character development. He told them, “We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you.” (Col. 1:3) The apostle indicated that he had learned of the ecclesia’s progress in grace from his friend and fellow servant Epaphras, “Who also declared unto us your love in the Spirit.”—vss. 7,8

In his letter, Paul then wrote, “For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding.” (vs. 9) His prayers were surely filled with the spirit of praise and thankfulness on behalf of his brethren at Colossae. This is strongly indicated when he told them, “That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing

in the knowledge of God; Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness; Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.”—vss. 10-12

The apostle’s words of prayer and thanksgiving to God were surely a blessing to those brethren who received his letter, and they are also a blessing to us who are now living during the closing years of harvest of the present Gospel Age. All who have heard the wonderful invitation to the High Calling in Christ Jesus and have responded to it in terms of full consecration are blessed, and give thanks unto God. Paul’s wonderful testimony shows his degree of thankfulness for the Truth and God’s marvelous plans for his people.

A MARK OF CHARACTER

One of the main reasons for the apostle’s thanksgiving was his love for the brethren in Christ Jesus. He appreciated and loved them very much. Not only did he pray for them, but daily gave thanks to God for what they truly meant to him. This aspect of his Christlike character is also shown in his expression of love and thankfulness for the brethren at Philippi. When he wrote to them he said, “I thank my God upon every remembrance of you. Always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy, For your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now; Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it [finish it, *Marginal Translation*] until the day of Jesus Christ.”—Phil. 1:3-6

A DAY OF THANKSGIVING

The apostle's sentiments are to be seen in all of the Lord's people, and should be one of the main causes for our giving thanks again on this Thanksgiving Day, 2007. We have much to be thankful for as we continue to proclaim the ministry of our dear Lord Jesus and the promises of his coming kingdom of truth and righteousness for all the families of the earth. For this wonderful hope, we truly give our thanks. ■

“Your Father knoweth what things ye have need of.”—Matthew 6:8

Our petitions, our requests, our cries to the Lord, therefore, should be for the holiness of heart, for the filling of his Spirit, for the spiritual food, refreshment, strength; and as for the natural things, he knoweth the way we take and what would be to our best interests as New Creatures. We are to leave this to him: he would not be pleased to see us importuning him for things which he did not give us, for to do so would not be an exemplification of faith in him, but the reverse—an exemplification of doubt, a manifestation of fear that he was forgetting or neglecting his promise to give us the things needful.

—November 13, Daily Heavenly Manna

2007 General Convention

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You may also send a request via e-mail to cmora@dawnvideo.com. Please put “General Convention” in your subject line.

Prejudice

PREJUDICE IS pre-judgment. It is forming an opinion without examining the facts. It is hastily accepting a conclusion without fully investigating the evidence upon which it rests. It is allowing ourselves to be hoodwinked when stopping, considering, investigating would keep us from making this mistake. It is being satisfied with hearsay when we should demand the proof. It is rejecting at first sight what does not conform to our former opinions, convictions. It is a deep-seated reluctance to part with what we have been accustomed to. It is persistent hesitation to accept as true that which we have not hitherto believed; an unwillingness to admit that we may be wrong and others right.

It has to do with persons, places, creeds, parties, systems—hence its influence is extensive and its evils manifold, for it can and has been cruel, unforgiving, unjust, relentless. We have much clear evidence in history on issues small and great, of the injurious influence of prejudice; of an unbending dislike to be persuaded to reconsider to see if better information can not be presented; or a disposition to silence even forcibly those who attempt such presentation.

All Israel was in expectation of the coming Deliverer and knew he was to be born in Bethlehem. (Luke 3:15; Matthew 2:5) We of today marvel that they did not hit upon the simple test of investigating our Savior's claims with the many testimonies of the prophets and discover that Jesus of Nazareth was born in Bethlehem. When Philip said, "We have found the Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth," Nathanael said, "Can any good come out of Nazareth?" Philip did not debate but met his prejudice simply by saying, "Come and see." ■



WEEKLY PRAYER MEETING TEXTS

NOVEMBER 1—"Set a watch, O LORD, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips."—Psalm 141:3 (Z. '04-23 Hymn 95)

NOVEMBER 8—"Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain."—Exodus 20:7 (Z. '04-73 Hymn 196)

NOVEMBER 15—"He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked."—I John 2:6 (Z. '03-345 Hymn 57A)

NOVEMBER 22—"The zeal of thine house hath consumed me."—Psalm 69:9 (Z. '98-112 Hymn 164)

NOVEMBER 29—"Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised.)"—Hebrews 10:23 (Z. '01-119 Hymn 93)

Trip to Germany and Ukraine

Bro. Mike and Sr. Marge Balko

NEAR THE END of May we, along with our grandson Jonathan Keith, left the Newark airport for our long flight to Cologne, Germany. We were greatly anticipating seeing our brethren again and attending the Korbach convention. Our flight was a pleasant one, and we were able to gaze at the grandeur of God's Creation, as we had lovely glimpses of the wide ocean and the expanse of land.

Upon our arrival the next morning, we were greeted by Brother and Sister Ruthmann, and driven to their home where we would have sweet fellowship and much discussion on the gems of Truth. At their home, we had the privilege of meeting their daughter and her family once more and, much to our joy, we were greeted by Brother Gonos and a relative of the Ruthmanns from the Athens, Greece area. Our discussion with Brother Gonos, and the others, was a rich blessing. We learned that the number of brethren in Greece and parts of Germany, has declined, just as it has in many places back home. Some, sad to

say, have left the precious fellowship due to a conflict of ideas, but we all felt this judgment is in God's hands.



Ruthmann Home, Germany

On the morning of May 24, we traveled through the lovely farm country and forests on our way to Korbach. We saw many windmills that have been erected to create electric power, and this so reminded us of Western Pennsylvania where the same effort has been put forth. After checking in at the hotel, we rested for a little while and then went downstairs to the hall where the convention was held and we were all welcomed by the chairman. Brother and Sister Stalder, along with other sisters, were our translators for the convention.

The first discourse was given by Brother Schultz and his subject, "The Name of God," brought out the distinction between God—the Heavenly Father—and his beloved Son, and the reverence that each should be offered.

Brother Gonos was the next speaker and his discourse "He Went Forth Conquering"—based on Revelation 6:2—was read in the German language

by Brother Ruthmann, and prayer was given by Brother Gonos at its conclusion.

Sweet fellowship followed at the evening meal and, after its conclusion, all retired for the night.

At the Sunday meeting, we were blessed to meet many more brethren who, because of work and such, were unable to attend the previous day. The talks again focused on the precious gems of Truth such as “The Way of Our Calling,” “The Altar,” and “Walking in the Truth.”

Greetings were extended from the Berlin area, and the brethren from Romania and Poland.

As stated, the discourses were very uplifting and focused on the permission of evil, the High Calling, and salvation through Christ for all in due time.

In the evening, there was an informal meeting, with the reading of scriptures, singing of hymns, and testimonies. One of the cherished memories was hearing about a dear brother who had been taken to a concentration camp during World War II. This dear brother, in some way, had heard that another brother was to be sent to the camp. So this dear one decided to hum a favorite hymn, and perhaps by so doing, he would find the other brother.



Korbach, Germany Convention

This is exactly what happened, and the two did meet. Truly an overruling of the Lord, as we are well aware of what many brethren endured in the war. Surely, this is still the very reason we strive to strengthen each other and shed heartfelt tears for those who endure such experiences.

The Monday attendance was a bit smaller than the 80-some that attended on Sunday, as some had to travel back to their homes and go to work. After the opening services, discourses were given on the rebirth of Israel, and what the Bible teaches us about the problems that plague the human family, and what the blessed solutions will be in God's due time.

The blessed convention was closed with the hymn, "He Leadeth Me," and a lovely prayer. After this, there was the breaking of bread for all those in attendance. It was a privilege to join in this offering, and love and greetings were sent to all, with the desire that all may have a safe trip home.

With the singing of "God Be With You," all stood up and bid each other a fond farewell. There were tears of joy, and a little sadness, as we bid farewell to all the dear ones assembled. It was a blessed joy to see Sister Brunner and her daughter, whom we had met many years ago, and Brother and Sister Ranik also.

We traveled back to the Ruthmann home, and in the morning they drove us to the airport for our flight to Lvov, Ukraine, via Vienna. Going through customs was no problem at either airport. Upon our arrival at Lvov, we were met by Brother Zigmund and the Kravetzes. As is the custom, a lovely bouquet of flowers was given to Sister Marge, and then

we departed for the home of Brother Zigmund. We were warmly greeted by Sister Maria and daughters, Marta and Christina.

After a lovely dinner, we discussed many Truth subjects—some from the book of Revelation. After a night of good rest, we were driven to a nearby bazaar where we could observe what the people were interested in. Upon our return, we were greeted by the Lajbidas, and Sr. Kravetz, and again, a blessed time of fellowship.



Bro. and Sr. Preslab, Lvov, Ukraine

In the evening, we had a meeting at the home of Brother and Sister Preslab, with 16 brethren attending. After offering a discourse, there were good discussions on timely subjects. Again, it was so good to see all these dear ones once more, and see that their love for the Lord and his Truth is commendable.

The next day Brothers Igor and Symchuk traveled from Ternapol to take us and Brother Lajbida to visit the class in Ternapol.

We traveled for about 1½ hours and then stopped to visit Brother Ginnic and his dear family. In fellowship, we were asked about the work at the Dawn and those who labor there. Also, there many questions about the brethren in the United States. Some of the questions—Do all meet together? Are there different groups of Bible Students? Has the number of brethren declined as it has in other countries? We trust our answers were helpful and pleasing to them and the Lord.

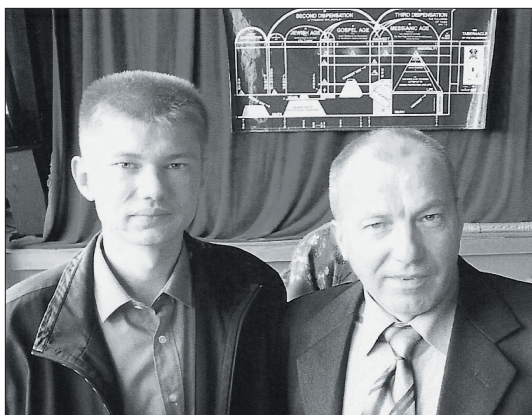
After bidding these dear ones farewell, we continued with our trip to the Symchuk home, and were warmly greeted by the family. The meeting began at 6 P.M. with 19 brethren present. After the discourse, we shared many experiences and entertained many questions. It was a blessed meeting, and we bid goodbye to many. After this, we had a lovely dinner, and fellowshipped with the family for some time. Brother Lajbida was a great help since he translates very well from Ukrainian to English.



Visit with elderly sister in Ukraine

The next morning we departed for the Lajbida home, and Sister Symchuk made the trip with us, as Brother Igor had to return to work. Enroute we stopped to visit an elderly sister in a nursing home. We had nice fellowship with her, and after offering a prayer, we departed and came to the Lajbida home. There we were greeted by his wife, daughter, mother, and his sister and her daughter.

After lunch and fellowship, we were driven to Zigmund's home where Brother Bogden would meet us and take us, along with Brother Lajbida, to the southern part of Ukraine, where we would visit family and the dear brethren in the area.



Bro. Bogden and his son

It was amazing to see that the one very narrow and rough road that had existed since our first visit in 1990, was now being made into a 4-lane highway. The lovely Carpathian mountains, with its rich green forests, is a lovely sight to behold. We arrived at the home of our relatives in the early evening, while

Brothers Andrij and Bogden would stay with brethren nearby.

The evening was spent in refreshing memories with the family, and it was a joy to see that the younger family members are now being taught English in school—unheard of before. It was sad to learn that that great enemy cancer has caused pain, suffering, and death, to many of the younger ones, just as it has done at home. We assured the family that a ‘better day’ lies ahead, and this pain and suffering will come to an end.

In the morning, we were driven to a nearby village of Klucharky where we had a meeting with 21 brethren. We shared many blessings and experiences and on this occasion Brother Lajbida also gave an inspiring discourse. After the meeting, we went to Brother Kuchar’s home for lunch and sweet fellowship. We bid farewell to all these dear ones, and Brother Bogden began the drive back to the Lvov area. It soon began to rain, and the brethren got



Meeting in village in Ukraine

word on their cell phones, that there was a violent storm ahead, with heavy rain, high winds, and large hail. But, thanks to the Lord, the storm took a different track, and we missed the storm that had done much damage in other areas.

Enroute home, we stopped to visit the older daughter of Brother Zigmund and her family. Though there is no power, the sister served us a lovely dinner, and we enjoyed sweet fellowship before leaving to take Brother Lajbida home. After leaving him off, we went to the home of Brother Zigmund, where the storm had impact, and there was no power. It was not even restored by morning, but we managed to get ready.



Gathering for meeting in Lvov, Ukraine

Brother Zigmund drove us to the hall in Lvov where the Sunday meeting was being held. There were over 60 brethren present for the meetings. Many of the brethren we had the privilege of meeting with in other places. After giving a discourse, there was a good study on the book of Matthew, regarding the Lord's acts of healing and the casting out of evil spirits. It was a good meeting, with fine comments.

We bid farewell to so many of the dear brethren, with hugs and tears and much thankfulness for the

blessed privilege of meeting with them once more. Some we had met on our first visit in 1990, and this being our 12th visit we rejoiced that so many were still grandly upholding the gems of Truth.

We were taken to a brother's home for lunch and then were driven to the Lvov airport for our departure for Germany. Again, it was so hard to say good-bye to those dear ones who had come to see us leave from the airport. Truly, it is leaving a 'part of your family' behind.

Our flights to Vienna and Cologne were good ones, and there we were met by Brother Stalder. We were driven to his home and greeted by Sister Anika. We fellowshipped for a number of hours, relating our glad experiences in Ukraine and our blessings at Korbach.

The next morning Brother Samuel took us to the Cologne airport, and we bid good-bye at the check-in counter as Brother Samuel had to go to his workplace. Again, it was hard to say good-bye as we were so blessed to spend time with these dear ones.

After a good flight across the land and the ocean, we arrived safely in Newark where we were met by the Fernets, who took us to the Dawn home. Our grandson, Jonathan, would leave for Seattle the next day, but we would be able to spend a little time at the Dawn.

As we look back on our visit overseas, we are indeed very thankful for the Lord's overruling providence in our lives. We are truly indebted to all those who took care of our needs, and all those who remembered us in prayer. All the brethren we met are so thankful for your love and support of them.

"Blest be the tie that binds."



ENCOURAGING LETTERS

WEBSITE OPTIONS

Dear Dawn: We love the new options on the site! (www.dawnbible.com) For years we have wanted to listen to the “Frank and Ernest” Program, and now we can. Thank you so much. The doctrinal discourses are wonderful as well.

The Lord continue to bless you at the Dawn.—
OH

SUNDAY SCHOOL SOURCE

Dear Dawn: This little magazine is a joy to read. Mrs. ____, who is the oldest member of our church, has always shared this magazine with the congregation. She always uses more than one source of information when teaching Sunday school.

Thanks for listening.—
MS

FRANK AND ERNEST

Dear Sir/Madam: I often hear your program

“Frank and Ernest” on every Thursday at 7:45 P.M.

This program is inspiring, uplifting, and more-over informative. Considering the importance of the program and how helpful it has been to me, I will encourage friends and relatives to listen to it, and they will as well give their feedback.

Truly yours—GHANA

POLLUTION AND GLOBAL WARMING

Dear Dawn: My apologies for being so late with my renewal, but I thank you for continuing to send *The Dawn* magazine.

There is a lot of concern lately about pollution and global warming. Isaiah said, “The desert shall blossom as the rose.” I have always been of the opinion that the remote polar regions would make some extreme changes. Now we see this taking

place. I think we have reason to “lift up our heads and rejoice.” May God bless you for the great work you are doing.—CANADA

FARMER’S ALMANAC

Dear Dawnbible: Just logged onto your site. Found it in the *Farmer’s Almanac*. Always glad to find a good Christian site for information and inspiration.—NC

HELP WITH CHURCH DUTIES

Dawnbible: I enjoyed everything I read on this Internet site (www.dawnbible.com), and being a deacon in my church, I do a lot of reading, and I find a lot of interesting material on this Internet site, and I just want to thank you for all the material I find that helps me in my church duties.—GA

BIBLICAL ANSWERS

Dawnbible: I was scanning through a *Grier’s Almanac* year 2000, and

I saw this interesting question that pricked my heart: “Why God Permits Evil.” I perused the website and found it more interesting than any others to answer this question.

May God bless you, and I’m grateful unto God for this wonderful discourse that gave biblical answers to this question. I will return for more quiet time in God’s presence at this site.—NC

WEB RADIO

Dawnbible: Thank you so much for adding Dawn Radio WDDR to 7/24 worldwide web radio via *Live365*. It is a blessing to hear Truth in words and song 7/24. Many thanks. I hope I am worthy to make it up God’s highway with your kind help.—TX

KINGDOM MESSAGES

Dawnbible: I appreciate the Dawn for its publications of the kingdom messages, and *The Dawn* magazine.—IL ■

SPEAKERS' APPOINTMENTS

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

R. Gorecki

Chennai, India

November 14-18

Trichy/Manapparai 19-21

Coimbatore 22-25

Conoor/Wellington/Ooty 26-28

Mangalore 29-30

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

A. Allers

New Haven, CT November 4

W. Austin

Chennai, India

November 14-18

Trichy/Manapparai 19-21

Coimbatore 22-25

Conoor/Wellington/Ooty 26-28

Mangalore 29-30

E. Blicharz

Atlanta, GA November 4

L. Griehs

New Haven, CT November 4

E. Kuenzli

Chennai, India

November 14-18

Trichy/Manapparai 19-21

Coimbatore 22-25

Conoor/Wellington/Ooty 26-28

Mysore 29-30

B. Montague

New Haven, CT November 4

P. Robinson

Louisville, AL November 11

L. Wesol

St. Petersburg, FL November 11

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CONVENTIONS

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

NEW HAVEN CONVENTION, November 4—Italian American Club, 85 Chase Lane, West Haven, CT. Contact A. Suraci. Phone: (203) 248-3793

JERSEY CITY CONVENTION, November 18—The Loyalty Lodge, 1912 Morris Avenue, Union, NJ. Contact S. Koterba. Phone: (718) 961-4437

SAN DIEGO CONVENTION, November 22,23,24,25—Alliant University, 10455 Pomerado Road, San Diego, CA 92131. For hotel reservations (7 miles north), contact La Quinta Inn (858) 484-8800, specify "Bible Students." For on-campus college dorm, contact D. Rice (619) 589-1534. Other information, contact R. Rice, 13084 Treecrest Street, Poway, CA 92064. Phone: (858) 486-0381

PHOENIX CONVENTION, December 29,30,31—La Quinta Inn, 2510 W. Greenway Road, Phoenix, AZ 85203. Contact J. Porcolab, PO Box 5432, Sun City West, AZ 85376. Phone: (602) 363-2612

MELBOURNE AUSTRALIA CONVENTION, January 24,25,26,27,28—ESA Conference Centre, Buxton Road, Marysville. Contact R. Charlton, 6 Laane Avenue, Rosanna 3084 VIC Australia

SACRAMENTO CONVENTION, February 15,16,17—The Clarion Hotel, 2600 Auburn Blvd., Sacramento, CA 95821. Contact K. Ajise, 6925 Gallery Way, Sacramento, CA 95831. Phone: (916) 813-3948

SOUTHWEST WINTER CONVENTION, February 23,24,25—Sunnyslope High School, 35 West Dunlap Avenue, Phoenix, AZ 85021. Contact A. Mengos. Phone: (480) 390-3767

FLORIDA CONVENTION, March 8,9,10—Hilton Orlando Altamonte Springs, 350 S. North Lake Blvd., Altamonte Springs, FL 32701. Contact S. Jeuck, 471 Kentia Road, Casselberry, FL 32707. Phone: (407) 834-7592

GREATER NEW LONDON PRE-MEMORIAL CONVENTION, April 6—Bayview Lodge, Society Road, East Lyme, CT. Contact V. Grillo. Phone: (860) 823-7099

*I love to tell the story
Of gracious, heavenly love;
How Jesus left his glory,
That wondrous love to prove.*

*I love to tell the story,
Because I know it's true;
It satisfies my longings,
As nothing else would do.*

*I love to tell the story!
'Twill be my theme in glory,
To tell the old, old story
Of gracious, heavenly love.*

*I love to tell the story!
For those who know it best
Seem hungering and thirsting
To hear it, like the rest,
And when, in scenes of glory,
I sing the new, new song,
'Twill be the old, old story
That I have loved so long.*

*I love to tell the story!
'Twill be my theme in glory,
To tell the old, old story
Of gracious, heavenly love.*

—Hymns of Dawn

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THY KINGDOM COME (\$2.00 + \$1.00 postage) Discusses time prophecies relating to the work of the church at this end of the age, the restoration of Israel, and the setting up of Christ's kingdom. One chapter pertains to the Great Pyramid of Egypt.—384 pages

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DAWN PUBLICATIONS

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To us the Scriptures clearly teach:

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

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

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

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

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

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