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TABLE OF CONTENTS

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HIGHLIGHTS OF DAWN

Our Lord's Return—*Part 1 of 2* 2

INTERNATIONAL BIBLE STUDIES

God Creates Heaven and Earth 18

God Creates Lights and Life 20

God Creates Man 22

God Creates the Family 24

God Confronts Sin 26

CHRISTIAN LIFE AND DOCTRINE

"From Faith to Faith" 28

The Partnership of the
Sons of God 43

Weekly Prayer Meeting Texts 16

VINEYARD ECHOES

In Memoriam—
Brother Sidney Jones 58

ENCOURAGING LETTERS 60

OBITUARIES 57

SPEAKERS' APPOINTMENTS 62

CONVENTIONS 63

Our Lord's Return

“As he was sitting upon the Mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him, privately, saying—Tell us when these things shall be,—... the sign of thy presence, and the conclusion of the age.”
—*Matthew 24:3,*
Rotherham
Emphasized Bible

IN THIS DAY OF TURMOIL, chaos and perplexity, the hearts of the people are filled with fear as they look ahead to what may happen to themselves and to the human race if no solution for the world's many troubles can be found. Students of the Bible who have faith in its promises and prophecies believe that the only sure and lasting remedy to the problems which

have been brought about by human sin and selfishness is the return of Christ and the setting up of his long-promised kingdom of righteousness and peace.

Views concerning this great event in the plan of God are widely variant. Some claim that Jesus returned at Pentecost when the Holy Spirit came upon the waiting disciples, and that since then, as each sinner is converted, it constitutes a further coming of Christ. These further say that when all

are converted he will have fully come. This view holds that such a process will fulfill Jesus' promise, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world [Greek: age]."—Matt. 28:20

On the other hand, many claim that Jesus will return to earth as a man and that he will be recognized by the print of the nails in his hands and in his feet and by the spear wound in his side which he received at the time of his crucifixion. This latter view depends to a considerable extent upon a literal interpretation of certain prophecies, such as that of Revelation 1:7, where we read, "Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him."

We believe that the truth of the matter, supported by the combined testimony of the Scriptures, lies between these two extreme and opposing views. The first view erroneously renounces the necessity of a personal coming of Christ, yet approximates the truth concerning the nature of Jesus, in that it considers him to be so far above humans in nature that he can be present with them without their being able to see him.

The second view holds to the clearly established scriptural fact of a personal return of the Master. However, it limits the grandeur and possibilities of that momentous event. This is done by means of the unscriptural claim that he returns to earth as a glorified man and not as the powerful, invisible divine being which he became when the Heavenly Father raised him from the dead and gave him a name which is above every name.—Phil. 2:9

The Scriptures teach that when Jesus was raised from the dead he was no longer a human, but a powerful divine being, the "image of the invisible

God.” (Col. 1:15; II Cor. 5:16; I Pet. 3:18) This means that Jesus is now invisible to the human eye, even as God is invisible. It is this divine Christ who returns. Hence, the fact of his return will need to be recognized otherwise than by seeing him with the natural eye.

Although Jesus did appear as a man to his disciples on several occasions following his resurrection, this does not mean that he was, by nature, still a human. The circumstances of his few brief appearances prove to the contrary. For example, he always appeared in a different body, which would not have been the case had the form in which he appeared been his real body.

Only once did Jesus appear in a body similar to the one which was crucified, and that was because Thomas indicated that he would not believe the Master had been raised from the dead unless he could see his wounds. Jesus satisfied his lack of faith, although only this once did the disciples see any wounds. This appearance is described by the Apostle John as one of the “signs” by which Jesus proved to them that he had been raised from the dead. (John 20:29-31) On the other occasions of Jesus’ appearances to his disciples after his resurrection, they did not recognize him by his personal appearance but by the things which he said and did.

Jesus’ appearances to his disciples after his resurrection were of the same nature as those of angels in more ancient times. For example, three angels appeared to Abraham. They talked and ate with him, but they were not humans, although for a time Abraham thought that they were.—Gen. 18:1-8; Heb. 13:2

Jesus was present with his disciples for forty days between the time of his resurrection and ascension. However, during only a very small portion of this time were the disciples able to see him, and then only when he miraculously appeared to them. It is this Jesus, who is able to be invisibly present among humans, who was to return for the purpose of establishing his kingdom of righteousness. It is by this means that the problems of human selfishness will be solved, and the redeemed race of mankind will be restored to happiness and life upon the earth.

JESUS' FLESH A RANSOM

Jesus was made flesh in order that he might give his humanity as a corresponding price—a ransom for Adam and his race. The Master said, “My flesh ... I will give for the life of the world.” (John 6:51) Had Jesus been raised from the dead as a human it would have meant that the ransom was taken back and that the world of mankind had not been redeemed.

The Scriptures show, however, that while Jesus was put to death in the flesh, he was made alive in the Spirit, or as a spirit being. (I Cor. 15:44-47; I Pet. 3:18) Jesus had previously explained to Nicodemus that one who is born of the Spirit can come and go as the wind—that is, be invisible to the human eye and have great power. He proved this to be true in his own case, for after his resurrection his disciples could not tell from whence he came or where he went when appearing to them.—John 3:8

We do not dispute that the glorified Jesus has the power to appear to humans as he did to his disciples following his resurrection from the dead. However, the Scriptures do not say that his return to earth

will be revealed to the world in this manner. His appearances to his disciples following his resurrection were evidently intended to establish for them the fact that he had been raised from the dead. This fact having been demonstrated, we have no reason to expect its repetition.

In Romans 1:20, we read concerning God that “the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made.” Here is a key which will help us to understand the significance of the prophecies pertaining to the return of Christ. He is now invisible to human eyes, even as the Heavenly Father is invisible. Hence at his return he can be recognized only by the visible things which transpire, and which can be identified through the prophecies of the Bible as the “signs” which were to mark this all-important event.

Stating the matter another way, we believe in the existence of God, not because we have ever seen him, but because we see his works. With our limited abilities we survey the vast universe, and say there must be a powerful, all-wise Creator behind it. Similarly, in the Bible we find an impressive array of events which are said to take place in the world following the return of the divine Christ. Hence, when it is seen that many of these events are taking place, the logical conclusion concerning that which the Bible describes as Christ’s second visit to earth is that it has become a reality.

GOD OF THIS WORLD INVISIBLE

The Scriptures teach that there is a personal devil, yet no human has ever seen him. However, we have all seen the result of his nefarious influence. The

Apostle Paul informs us that Satan is the “god of this world,” a powerful spirit being who is the “prince of the power of the air,” who now works in the hearts of “the children of disobedience.” (II Cor. 4:4; Eph. 2:2) Jesus, likewise, spoke of Satan as the “prince of this world.” (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11) If we believe the Bible, we must realize that this powerful being has, throughout the centuries, been exercising control over the affairs of men.

The devil is the invisible ruler of “this present evil world.” Peter declares that he goes about as a “roaring lion ... seeking whom he may devour.” (I Pet. 5:8) This clearly indicates that Satan’s field of operation is right here on earth, yet even those who realize this most fully have never heard him literally roar as a lion.

With the return of Jesus, and as a result of his presence, a new world, or social order, is ultimately to be established. In this new arrangement Jesus will be the King, supplanting the rulership of Satan. In a vision, the Apostle John saw an angel come down from God out of heaven and lay hold upon Satan and bind him with a mighty chain. Following this, Christ and his church are seen to reign for a thousand years. As Satan, the one to be bound, is invisible, the agencies which bind him must likewise be invisible.—Rev. 20:1-4,6

Satan’s power and influence in this present evil world are no less potent because of his invisibility. On the contrary, it has given him a certain advantage in that, unseen, he has been a powerful force for evil. Thus, he has been able to make his influence felt in the chambers of the rulers and princes of earth, and to a considerable extent direct their affairs.

Jesus' rulership will also be an invisible one, exercised through human agencies. He will rule the people, however, in righteousness and not in unrighteousness as Satan has done. Even as the evil results of Satan's rulership are now easily discerned, so Jesus' reign will be recognized by all mankind through the righteous results that will be accomplished.

TRUTH CONCEALED BY A MISTRANSLATION

Important truths pertaining to the manner of our Lord's return have been long hidden by a mistranslation. The Bible was not originally written in the English language, hence we who use the English language must depend upon translations from the original Hebrew of the Old Testament and the Greek of the New Testament. In most instances in our English Bibles very little of the richness of meaning has been lost through mistranslation. However, there are exceptions in which profound truths of God's plan have been long hidden by unwitting mistranslations.

One of these exceptions is in the case of the Greek word *parousia*, which is used by Jesus and the apostles to describe the Master's second visit to earth. In our *King James Version* of the Bible this word is almost universally translated "coming." The result of this has been that many students of prophecy have attempted to interpret the prophetic signs pertaining to our Lord's return as denoting that his coming was near. However, the true meaning of this Greek word is defined by *Thayer's Greek Lexicon* as "presence," and is translated "presence" in the *Rotherham Emphasized Bible* and *Young's Literal Translation*. It follows, then, that if we see fulfilled

signs of the Master's *parousia*, or presence, it would indicate that he is already here.

The disciples inquired of Jesus, "What shall be the sign of thy coming [*parousia*: presence]?" (Matt. 24:3) They were not asking how they might know in advance when he would come, but how they would know of his presence once he had come. In other words, they wanted to know what evidences they were to look for as tokens that the invisible Christ had returned, and that his kingdom would ultimately be established.

Archeological discoveries reveal that the Greek word *parousia* was used in ancient times to describe the visits of kings and emperors to various cities and provinces of their realms. One such discovery shows that taxes to pay the expenses of such a visit were raised by the issuing of a special "*parousia* coin." How appropriate, then, that this word should be used in connection with the return of the King of kings and Lord of lords. However, as in the case of earthly rulers whose visits are thus described, so with Jesus, *parousia* does not merely mean the moment of coming but covers the entire duration of his presence.

The first presence of Jesus, when he was here on earth as a man, lasted a total of only thirty-three and one-half years. He remained forty days longer as a resurrected, divine being, invisible to the world, and then he returned to the heavenly courts. There are many prophecies in the Old Testament concerning Jesus' first presence. Some tell of his birth, and some of one or another part of his life and ministry. Still others tell of his death as man's Redeemer. The fulfillment of these prophecies did not, as a rule,

run concurrently, but covered the entire time of his presence.

The prophecies and promises of Christ's second presence likewise cover a great variety of events, culminating in the destruction of death and Satan. The fulfillment of some of these prophecies runs concurrently, but in other instances there is a sequence of events. This calls for carefulness in our study of the prophecies relating to Christ's return and second presence lest we fall into the mistake of expecting them all to be fulfilled at a given moment of time, or within a relatively short period.

MANNER OF HIS PRESENCE

Jesus said to his disciples, "Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not. For as the lightning [Greek: bright shining] cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming [*parousia*, presence] of the Son of man be." (Matt. 24:26,27) By these words Jesus is conveying to our minds that his coming and presence were not to be like that of a human. He was to return as a great divine being, the "express image" of his Father's invisible person. (Heb. 1:3) Jesus is saying that he will not be found hidden away in some secret chamber, as you might find a man or a woman. Rather, his presence would be discerned even as we discern the existence of God himself—that is, by the great things which we ascribe to him.

Thus it is that we behold the sunshine and the rain, watering the earth and warming it that it may bring forth and provide for those upon it, and we

attribute these things to the existence of an all-wise and loving Creator. Similarly, Jesus explained that we would know of his second presence because it will be like the lightning, or bright shining, which, similar to the sun, comes out of the east and shines even unto the west. The blessings to be dispensed to humankind after being brought forth from their graves during the time of Christ's presence are represented as coming to the people because the "Sun of righteousness" shall arise, bringing healing and life to the peoples of earth.—Mal. 4:2

AN INCREASE OF KNOWLEDGE

As already noted, Jesus explained that his second presence would be like a bright shining. Here, we understand, is the idea of enlightenment, symbolizing increasing knowledge. The Prophet Daniel, describing conditions which were to exist in the "time of the end," declares among other things that "knowledge shall be increased." (Dan. 12:4) The "time of the end" here referred to is the period of time in which the rule of sin, selfishness, and death is to be brought to an end. Christ's return and second presence are closely associated with the various processes by which the "end" of this present evil order will come to pass. The world of today has unmistakably been impacted by this foretold increase of knowledge. However, because fallen man does not have the wisdom to use it properly, chaos results, even threatening the destruction of the race.

Thus, man's great strides in knowledge have led to what the Prophet Daniel further described as a "time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation." (Dan. 12:1) In speaking of this same time

Jesus said there would be tribulation on the earth so great that unless it was shortened no flesh would survive. (Matt. 24:21,22) We face this very situation today. Thankfully, however, God's divine intervention through the establishment of the long-promised kingdom of Christ will prevent this.

The long reign of sin and death under Satan, the prince of this world, is described in the Bible as a period of darkness. The Prophet Isaiah wrote, "Darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people." (Isa. 60:2) Through the agencies of Christ's kingdom, when established, the increase of knowledge will be a great blessing to humanity, because it will include enlightenment concerning God and his love in providing redemption from sin and death through the sacrificial work of Jesus. We read concerning the time when Christ's kingdom will be governing in the affairs of men, "The Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising."—Isa. 60:3; Luke 2:32

In John 1:9, it is said that Jesus is that "true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." The prophecies clearly show that the complete fulfillment of this promise will be during the second presence of Christ; that ultimately the "earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea." (Isa. 11:9) Not until the end of the reign of Christ and his church will this prophecy be completely fulfilled.

"HE COMETH IN CLOUDS"

In Revelation 1:7, we are informed that Jesus returns in clouds, and that every eye shall see him. As discussed in foregoing paragraphs, Christ is a

divine being, the express image of God. Humans can see him only through the incidents and events which accompany his return and subsequent presence. The time will yet come, and we believe it is not far off, when these events will be of such a pronounced character that all will readily recognize their true significance.

In Joel 2:1,2, there is further reference to the “clouds” which become so distressingly ominous in the period of Christ’s presence prior to the establishment of his kingdom. Here we are informed that this period is not to be a time of peace, but rather, the reverse. It is to be “a day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and of thick darkness, as the morning spread upon the mountains: a great people and a strong; there hath not been ever the like, neither shall be any more after it, even to the years of many generations.”

It will be noted from this that the clouds here mentioned by the prophet really consist in this case of “a great people and a strong,” the like of which has never before been known. This is evidently a reference to the uprising of the discontented of mankind in such tremendous numbers as to cause the current systems of this world to crumble and fall under the impact of the revolutionary struggle they precipitate.

These clouds of trouble are even now greatly affecting society on every front. The people of earth are filled with fear because of them, although as yet they do not “see” the Master’s presence as being associated with the forces which are gradually destroying “this present evil world.” Jesus said that there would be great mourning because of his

presence, and upon the earth distress of nations with perplexity and fear. (Matt. 24:30; Luke 21:25,26) How confounded the peoples of earth are today! No solutions can be found for the many baffling problems which combine to fill the world with chaos and the hearts of the people with fear.

GOD'S HAND OVER ISRAEL

The experiences of the Jews throughout these days of trouble constitute additional evidence of Christ's second presence. It is the time, according to the Scriptures, when their land was to be restored to them. The events which have occurred along this line during the past century are miraculous, and without doubt have been in preparation for the coming blessings of the Messianic kingdom. This regathering of Israel was prophetically due at the very time when the nations as a whole would be gathered together in preparation for the final climactic events of the "time of trouble." Joel 3:1,2 reads, "Behold, in those days, and in that time, when I shall bring again the captivity of Judah and Jerusalem, I will also gather all nations, and will bring them down into the valley of Jehoshaphat, and will plead with them there for my people and for my heritage Israel, whom they have scattered among the nations, and parted my land."

This prophecy indicates that, while the Jewish people would be restored to their land, it would be amidst a period of trouble for them as well as for the nations in general. Other prophecies indicate that Israel may yet experience additional difficulties. This is not hard to foresee, in view of the circumstances which have existed since their re-establishment as

a nation in 1948, seventy years ago, since which time they have experienced continual trouble from within and without.

It is not wise to go into detail concerning events which have not yet transpired. However, the Scriptures indicate that near the end of the present struggle among earth's nations there will be an attack against the Israelites in their land. Then they will turn to Christ, and he will intervene on their behalf, rescue them from their enemies, and through their resurrected prophets and other worthies of ancient time establish his Messianic kingdom throughout the whole earth.

Ezekiel 38:14-23 presents some of the details of this final trouble. The etymology of the names given to Israel's enemies in this prophecy indicates that they are used prophetically to identify nations, particularly of Europe, Asia and the Middle East. The prophecy shows that these forces eventually will attack the Jewish people. Agreeing with the prophecy of Joel already quoted, Ezekiel explains that the clouds are the armies of great trouble from these nations which finally will threaten the destruction of the returned Israelites.—vss. 15,16

It will be a time of "shaking," the prophet explains. (vs. 19) However, the promise is that God will deliver his ancient people, and that through this deliverance the "eyes" of the nations will discern the presence and power of Christ, the new King of earth. (vs. 23) Thus will all eyes discern the presence of Jesus in the thick, dark clouds of trouble. Moreover, the people will become convinced of his majesty and glory through the new kingdom arrangements which will then be put into operation.

This series of events will lead to the opening of the eyes of all people, Jews and Gentiles alike. We read, “So will I make my holy name known in the midst of my people Israel; and I will not let them pollute my holy name any more: and the heathen [Gentile nations] shall know that I am the LORD, the Holy One in Israel.” (Ezek. 39:7) This will be merely the first manifestation of the operation of the new world order. From then on, its heavenly and earthly agencies will rapidly calm the storm of human passions, which, by that time, will have brought the people of the whole earth to a state of readiness to enter the kingdom arrangement.

Part 2, in our consideration of this subject, will appear in next month’s issue of The Dawn magazine. In it we will examine the work to be accomplished in Christ’s kingdom, and its many blessings to all the families of the earth. ■

WEEKLY PRAYER MEETING TEXTS

SEPTEMBER 6—“There shall no evil befall thee.”—Psalm 91:10 (Z. ’03-331 Hymn 293)

SEPTEMBER 13—“Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity.”—Psalm 133:1 (Z. ’03-363 Hymn 143)

SEPTEMBER 20—“Thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, ... to revive the spirit of the humble, and the heart of the contrite ones.”—Isaiah 57:15 (Z. ’03-383 Hymn 120)

SEPTEMBER 27—“Thou shalt not tempt the LORD thy God.”—Matthew 4:7 (Z. ’04-9 Hymn 238)

In Due Time

In thy due time, our Heavenly Father, shall be
known thy gracious plan, which now is hid
except unto thy saints alone.

O glorious day, when thine all-wisdom,
justice, power and love,
The whole creation shall approve!

In his due time, O blessed Jesus, thou shalt see
the travail of thy soul and shalt
be satisfied eternally;
Thine agony on Calvary, the price
that thou didst give,
Shall cause the dead again to live!

In God's due time, O pilgrim on the "narrow
way," thy painful journey ended,
darkest night shall turn to brightest day;
Thine every trial, then,
thine every tear, shall prove
A gem to beautify thy diadem!

In his due time, O weary, groaning, sin-cursed
Earth, the Lord will wipe away thy tears, and
bring the promised "second birth;"
And there shall be no pain, nor any death
in that blest day
When sin and sorrow flee away!

In his due time angelic choirs shall sing again
in grander strain that heavenly message,
"Peace on earth, good will toward men!"
And every knee shall bow, and every
loving heart confess
The Christ who comes to reign and bless!

—*Poems of Dawn*

God Creates Heaven and Earth

Key Verses: *“In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.”*
—Genesis 1:1,2

Selected Scripture:
Genesis 1:1-13

the statement that “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.”

It is worth noting that the fundamentalist view that the heaven and the earth were created in six literal 24 hour days cannot be reconciled by either Scripture or science. In the Bible the term “day” often relates to a period of time longer than twenty-four hours. For example, Peter says “one day is with the Lord as a thousand years.” (II Pet. 3:8) Genesis 2:4 describes the entire creative period as one day. The same is true in secular language. We speak, for example, of Napoleon’s day, or Washington’s day. Clearly the

THE BIBLE IS THE ONLY

book in existence which sets forth the order of creation in a concise and logical manner. The narrative begins with the reasonable assumption that a Creator already existed. Scientists long ago disproved the theory of spontaneous generation, which postulated that a living form of life can arise from nonliving matter. It is similarly irrational to believe the heavens and the earth could be made from nothing or a void without a master architect. Thus, our Key Verse begins with the

statement that “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.”

creative days of Genesis were not short periods of time, but epochs of time sufficiently long to permit the accomplishment of the work assigned to each.

The verses of our Selected Scripture describe the first three creative days. In the beginning the earth was shapeless and empty, covered in darkness and by a massive depth of water. Verse 3 states God's command, "Let there be light: and there was light." The creation of light was accomplished by the Spirit of God—his invisible power—moving upon the face of the waters. The effect of light was the removal of the total darkness that had engulfed the earth. Light is essential throughout nature. Therefore it was first in the divine order when the time came for the Creator to prepare the void and dark earth for human habitation. Thus, briefly, is summed up the result of the first creative day.

The work of the second creative day, recorded in verses 6-8, was the formation of an atmosphere, or firmament, between the waters upon the earth's surface and the water canopy above. This atmosphere became the source of oxygen which plant and animal life would require when brought forth in subsequent creative days. When the divine intention respecting formation of the earth's atmosphere was complete, the second day ended.

During the third creative day, recorded in verses 9-13, the waters on the earth were gathered together to form the seas. As the waters drained off into the seas and the land dried, vegetation sprang forth, each after its own kind, with seed in itself to reproduce its own species. This matter is so fixed by the laws of the Creator that although horticulture can and does do much to give variety, yet it cannot change the actual nature of species. Geology agrees that vegetation preceded the higher forms of animal life, even as the Scriptures show. Vegetation needed to spread before the creation of the animals that feed on it. God's creation of earth as man's home was now fully underway. ■

God Creates Lights and Life

Key Verse: “*God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years.*”
—*Genesis 1:14*

Selected Scripture:
Genesis 1:14-25

created much earlier, but were previously only partially visible because of the veils of moisture which covered the earth. As these layers gradually dissipated, the “lights” became clearly evident. The use of the sun and the moon to distinguish between day and night now was put into effect. The proper thought of the separation of lights during the fourth creative day is explained in verse 16 of our lesson. The word translated “rule” in this verse describes the relative dominion of each. God caused the sun to have dominion over, or dominate, the day, and the moon to have dominion over, or dominate, the night.

With vegetation and the “greater light” of day and

TODAY’S LESSON CENTERS

on the work of the fourth, fifth and sixth creative days. Our Key Verse says concerning the fourth day that God created special sources of light in the heavens, designed strictly for planet Earth, to divide day from night, to indicate seasons, and to help measure the passage of time.

Although the appearance of the sun, moon, and stars was not until the fourth creative day, or epoch, they were all most likely

“lesser light” of night established, God was ready to begin the creation of animal life. During the fifth creative day the waters brought forth moving creatures that had life as well as birds. (vs. 20) The extent to which warm oceans at that time swarmed with living creatures, from crustaceans to whales, may be judged by the profusion of life in the warm southern seas of the present time. Reptiles and amphibians, existing partly in the water and partly on land, are also found to have lived in this period, designated the Mesozoic Era.

There may well have been some overlapping of the fourth epoch work into the fifth day, as continents and islands were gradually rising and forming into their more permanent state. This accounts for the fact that remains of shellfish are sometimes found in the highest mountains. The immense beds of limestone in all parts of the earth are sometimes called “shellfish cemeteries,” because they are composed almost exclusively of conglomerate remains of shells.

In this connection it may be noted that the Bible does not assert that God created separately and individually all the myriad kinds of fish, birds, and reptiles. The same is true for “the living creature after his kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind” described in the first part of the sixth creative day in verses 24 and 25. The Spirit of God, his divine power, moved upon the face of the waters and the land, and brought forth living creatures according to his design. Hence, all the various forms of life were created by God, whatever may have been the channels and agencies used. We claim further, on the authority of God’s Word, and verified by science, that when the Creator’s intention concerning each species had been reached, no further change took place. In all ages since, no changes in species of either plant or animal life have ever been produced, despite human effort to do so. How thankful we should be for such an unchangeable and trustworthy God! ■

God Creates Man

Key Verse: “So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.”
—Genesis 1:27

Selected Scripture:
Genesis 1:26-31;
2:4-7

IT WAS IN PREPARATION for man that the work of the first five creative epochs, and a portion of the sixth, had been carried forward. Man was to be appointed king of earth as the Scriptures set forth. (Gen. 1:26, 28) Therefore we may reasonably assume that it was toward the close of the sixth epoch day that God created man.

In describing the creation of man, the Scriptures use a very different expression from that employed to explain the previous creative processes. It is not, “Let the earth bring forth,” as in the case of the lower animals. Instead, it is “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness.” (vs. 26) This language, and that of our Key Verse, permits no interpretation concerning the creation of man as occurring through an evolutionary process.

The expressions “our image” and “our likeness” call attention to the fact that God’s only begotten Son in his prehuman existence, the “Word of God,” was with the Heavenly Father and took an active part in the creative work. (John 1:1,2, *Wilson’s Emphatic Diaglott*) Indeed, God gave power to his Son to create all things. (John 1:3; Rev. 4:11) Man was not created in the physical image of God, but in more important ways. He was endowed with the gift of speech and was able to reason rather than

to be guided merely by instinct. He was given the ability to discern between right and wrong, and a conscience to guide him. No other members of the animal kingdom enjoyed these blessings from the Creator.

Not only was man created in the image of God, but he was also blessed with the faculty of worship. This ability, more than any other, separates him from the lower animals. This is one of the qualities in which the image of God is reflected in him. He was so constituted as to have a natural desire to reverence and serve his Creator.

Our Key Verse also points out that God created them “male and female” because human perfection could not be represented in the full sense by one of the sexes, but by them both unitedly. Together, they were fitted to rule over the beasts of the field, and God blessed them with earthly dominion in which they would both participate. His instructions were to “be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion.” (Gen. 1:28) God’s purpose for man was thus shown to fill the earth and rule it as God ruled the universe.

In Genesis 2:4-7 we have more detail given with regard to the creation of man. Verse 4 begins a second account of the work of creation, not a second creative week, as some have tried to force upon its narrative. The detailed statement of verse 7 clarifies the creation of human life. There we read, “The LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.” What God formed out of dust was man’s physical body which consists of a combination of the elements found in the earth. The Apostle Paul verifies that “the first man is of the earth, earthy.” (I Cor. 15:47) Man came alive when God breathed into the body formed from the elements the breath of life. Man then became a living soul. He did not receive a soul from God, but became a soul, as clearly stated in verse 7 of the scriptural account. ■

God Creates the Family

Key Verse:
“Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.”
—Genesis 2:24

Selected Scripture:
Genesis 2:18-24;
4:1,2

IN CHAPTER TWO OF THE

Book of Genesis we read that God provided a home for man in Eden. (Gen. 2:8) In the Scriptures of today’s lesson, God declared that “it is not good that the man should be alone.” (vs. 18) As a perfect man, Adam was far superior to the other animals, and none were suitable for companionship, so God created Eve.

The six creative days were finished at this point, so the creation of Eve was completed in the beginning of the seventh day. We note that Eve was not created in the same way as Adam. God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, then, taking one of his ribs, God made the woman who would become Adam’s wife. (vss. 21,22) Adam rejoiced at the creation of Eve, and said, “This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.”—vs. 23

Today’s Key Verse emphasizes that the establishment of a human family begins with the marriage of a man and a woman. Neither was complete without the other. Thus we read that a man will leave his parents and be joined to his wife, becoming “one flesh.” Adam and Eve were

one in love, one in thought, one in purpose, yet two persons. Jesus expressed this principle of oneness when he said, "I and my Father are one," though they were clearly two separate beings. (John 10:30) Thus, the Scriptures teach that marriage was ordained by God, blessed by our Lord Jesus Christ, and commended by the Apostle Paul as an honorable state.—Gen. 2:24; Matt. 19:4-6; Heb. 13:4

The family arrangement has always been an essential feature of God's plan. In the account of Abraham offering his son, Isaac, we have a beautiful illustration of God sacrificing his son, Jesus, in order to redeem the family of man from the death sentence. (Gen. 22:1-18; I Cor. 15:21,22) The account culminates with an angel of God telling Abraham that because of his willingness to sacrifice his son, God will bless all the nations of the earth. Jesus testified to this great love God has for his human family by noting the personal sacrifice he made of his "only begotten Son."—John 3:16

In God's promise recorded in Genesis 22:17, he mentions a multiplying of Abraham's seed twofold. One of these is described as the "sand which is upon the seashore." This earthly part of the seed will inherit a restored dominion over a perfect earth in accord with God's original purpose stated during the sixth creative day. The earthly blessing of Adam's family is beautifully described: "The tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them. ... 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."—Rev. 21:3-5

The second description of Abraham's seed compares it to the "stars of the heaven." This will be a heavenly seed, comprised of those who offer themselves in sacrifice during this lifetime in the hope of being part of God's divine family. (Rom. 6:3-8) The Apostle Paul says, "He hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, ... according to the good pleasure of his will."—Eph. 3:4,5 ■

God Confronts Sin

Key Verse:
“Therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken.”
—*Genesis 3:23*

Selected Scripture:
Genesis 3:8-24

THE CREATION OF MAN

described in Genesis as occurring in the close of the sixth creative period was only the beginning of what God had purposed concerning him. Genesis 2:2 declares that God “ended” his work on the seventh day. This indicates that man’s creation was near the turning point of the sixth to the seventh creative day.

Thus there was no time remaining in the sixth day for the earth to be filled with the offspring of Adam.

That the Scriptures do not say, “the evening and the morning were the seventh day,” neither in the Old nor New Testaments, is evidence that this last great epoch continued throughout Bible history. In fact, the Scriptures which detail man’s creation suggest that not until a perfect race of mankind fills the earth will the seventh day come to a close. While we marvel at the immensity of the universe and the orderly arrangement of all its parts, we should not overlook the fact that divine law operates to control all of God’s creative works. The entire universe and every creation in it, animate and inanimate, is designed to function in an orderly way according to the fixed laws of God, not by mere chance or happenstance.

In this same manner, the divine purpose in the creation of man is just as dependent upon obedience to God’s law

as is his design for the stars and other inanimate creations. However, man is not a machine. He was created in the image of God, with ability to think, to reason, to choose one course or another. Not only was he competent to exercise a choice, but he was given freedom to use that ability. God, with all his power, will not overstep man's liberty of choice. The divine purpose concerning man is to be fully accomplished, not through coercion, but through education based largely upon experience.

The entire seventh day of creation has been set aside to complete God's purpose as it pertains to man. The Bible shows that the method by which that purpose is being accomplished is by the testing of the entire race, represented in the first man Adam. Then follows the redemption and restoration of the same race through Christ. Each generation of Adam's dying children has come upon the scene, experienced the dire results of disobedience, and passed on into the sleep of death. This process will eventually reach the point where sufficient children of Adam have been born to fill the earth comfortably.

The last thousand years of the seventh creative day will be devoted to the restoration of the sin-cursed and dying race. Those in the grave will be awakened from the sleep of death and given an opportunity to experience good, in contrast to the evil they experienced before they died "in Adam." (I Cor. 15:21,22) Then, having experienced both evil and good, they will be in a position to choose intelligently what course to take. The choice of obedience on the part of the human race will result in the same order and harmony among the children of men as the obedience of the planets in our solar system.

When Adam was first created God pronounced him "very good." (Gen. 1:31) However, not until he and his progeny have gained a thorough "knowledge of good and evil," have been tested, and have partaken of the "tree of life," will the divine purpose in man's creation be fulfilled.—Gen. 2:9; Rev. 22:1,2,14 ■

“From Faith to Faith”

“Therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.”
—Romans 1:17

TO HAVE FAITH DENOTES believing as true that which cannot be demonstrated by our natural, physical senses. Since we cannot physically see God, hear his voice or touch him, it takes faith to

believe in his existence. The Apostle Paul emphasizes the importance of having this special quality of faith, and that God is pleased with those who exercise it. He tells us, “Without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.” (Heb. 11:6) This is faith in the simplest form. However, true Christian faith must go beyond this. We not only must believe that God exists, and that he rewards those who seek him, but it is also necessary to have faith in his character attributes—his justice, love, wisdom, and power—and their harmonious operation in the fulfillment of his purposes.

Our opening text suggests a connection between faith and justice, or righteousness. Indeed, God has

revealed his righteousness to us so that we will have faith in him and his divinely appointed plans. Thus, those who are justified—made righteous in God’s sight—by faith are instructed to “live by faith” in their daily walk with the Lord. Upon this basis, faith must grow and become stronger, through experience, towards higher levels of development. The Scriptures tell us, “They that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.” (Isa. 40:31) Progression from “faith to faith” by consecrated believers leads to Christian maturity, and to a confidence in God which is unwavering, regardless of the difficulty of one’s experiences. Thus, such as follow this course of life “walk by faith, not by sight.”—II Cor. 5:7

Knowing that we are to grow from “faith to faith,” there are various aspects of our faith and its development which are important to note. Just as gemstones have many facets which are cut, chiseled and polished to enhance their appearance and allow them to reflect greater light, our faith is being similarly developed, shaped and polished. Jesus states the result that should come about in our lives from having these facets of faith come to fruition: “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.”—Matt. 5:16

FAITH GIVES ASSURANCE

Hebrews 11:1 states: “Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” True faith has “substance” and “evidence,” and is

not based on mere credulity. The foundation truths of the Scriptures, harmoniously expressed throughout the Bible, provide the substance of our faith. God's providential overruling in our lives, and his daily watch-care over us, affords much in the way of evidence to further bolster our faith. Such a faith, based upon substance and evidence, provides great assurance as we walk in the narrow way of self-sacrifice. The Scriptures also provide us many "exceeding great and precious promises" to give further assurance to our faith. (II Pet. 1:4) A mere sampling of these promises is worthy of joyful contemplation. "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." "Continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, ... To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory." "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."—Luke 12:32; Col. 1:23,27; Rev. 2:10

The members of the church, Christ's footstep followers, are presently being selected, chiseled, and polished for placement in God's heavenly symbolic temple. This work, done in the quarry of our life's experiences, is generally unrecognized by the world. In the case with the building of Solomon's Temple, the stones for the Temple were prepared ahead of time, before being carried to the temple site and assembled. We are told: "Only blocks dressed at the quarry were used, and no hammer, chisel or any other iron tool was heard at the temple site while it was being built."—I Kings 6:7, *New International Version*

Similarly, as footstep followers of Christ we are being prepared now, “transformed by the renewing” of our minds, as well as producing the “peaceable fruit of righteousness” by rightly exercising ourselves during the various trials and testings which our Heavenly Father permits in our life. (Rom. 12:2; Heb. 12:11) The Apostle Peter speaks of this: “Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up ... sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.” (I Pet. 2:5) Therefore, though this great preparation work, and our part in it, are unknown to the world, we can continually draw near to God in “full assurance of faith.”—Heb. 10:22

FAITH PRODUCES ENDURANCE

“Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.” (Heb. 12:1,2) Here we are exhorted to look back at the experiences of the faithful ones of the Old Testament, as well as Jesus and the apostles, all of whom constitute a great “cloud of witnesses.” We should consider what they endured and how faithful and loyal they were to God, even in the most difficult of experiences. Their endurance should inspire us to greater faithfulness in running our race, and to take to heart the many Scriptural admonitions which address the need for constant endurance. “All things are for your sakes, (Continued on page 36)

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(Continued from page 31) that the abundant grace might through the thanksgiving of many redound unto the glory of God. 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.” “Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God.”—II Cor. 4:15-17; Rev. 3:12

We are told: “Consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.” (Heb. 12:3) The mind is a special battleground for each of us. The “old man” of our fallen nature is in continual conflict with the “new man.” (Col. 3:9,10) Our flesh’s resistance to sacrifice is also part of this battle. Rather than succumb to these fleshly influences, however, we should rejoice that our Lord has invited us to walk in his footsteps, and to endure as he did. Let us drink of the cup he drank of and be baptized with the baptism he was baptized with. (Mark 10:38,39) Thus, when we endure hard experiences, or are scorned by others, we can remember the words, “Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, ... Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven.”—Matt. 5:11,12

FAITH CALLS FOR PERSEVERANCE

As we grow from faith to faith, we should recall the words of Paul, “Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.” (Eph. 6:10) To become strong requires continual exercise, training and perseverance. Spiritually speaking, we should be energized by God’s word, and by our relationship

with him through Christ. We have the same favors, promises and inspiring hopes that Jesus and the apostles had. Yet, to fully attain these, we must persevere day by day. “Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised.)” “We are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end.”—Heb. 10:23; 3:14

Perseverance requires vigilance. Peter counsels us, “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: Whom resist stedfast in the faith. ... But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.” (I Pet. 5:8-10) These words indicate that being in the school of Christ will bring trials and suffering from various sources. These are, in reality, manifestations of divine favor because they develop perseverance which, in turn, even more firmly establishes our faith. Paul expressed his desire to continually persevere with these words: “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. 3:13,14) Perseverance begins with our thoughts. Thus, we are reminded that whatever thoughts are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, of a good report, virtuous and praiseworthy, we are to “think on these things.”—Phil. 4:8

A consideration of perseverance is most certainly not complete without mentioning the vital role and

privilege of prayer. “Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints.” (Eph. 6:18) As children of God we must have an active prayer life, “with all perseverance,” communing with him concerning our daily experiences and his help and guidance in them, being motivated by a desire to do his will in all things.

FAITH INSPIRES GRATITUDE

We should be ever thankful to our Heavenly Father, for we owe everything to him through the redemptive work of his beloved Son. Recalling the words of Paul, we are reminded, “Ye are not your own, For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God.” (I Cor. 6:19,20) We understand this to mean that our time, talents, influence, money, and all that we consider precious or valuable, properly belongs to the Lord, including life itself.

Our loving Heavenly Father is concerned about every matter in our lives, and every experience we have. Our faith and trust in him should invoke deep gratitude, as we realize the care, encouragement, comfort, consolation, guidance, peace and rest he daily bestows upon us. To this end Jesus has invited us: “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.” (Matt. 11:28-30) Truly, with gratitude we can be assured, “The LORD will give strength unto his people.”—Ps. 29:11

Christ Jesus is our heavenly friend and advocate. (John 15:14,15; I John 2:1) He is represented to us

in the Bible as being “the brightness” of God’s glory, and the “express image of his person.” (Heb. 1:3) Our understanding of the Heavenly Father and his beloved Son has been revealed to us through the enlightening influence of the Holy Spirit. For this, also, we should daily express our gratitude, for it is God’s spirit which assists us day by day to grow from faith to faith. Truly, we can say with the psalmist, “What shall I render unto the LORD for all his benefits toward me? I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the LORD. I will pay my vows unto the LORD now in the presence of all his people.” —Ps. 116:12-14

As children of God, we are to be ever thankful to our Heavenly Father for his providential care and overruling in all aspects of our lives. We are to realize, through the eye of faith, that he has all of our affairs under his supervision, and he has designed them to work out in full accord with his eternal purposes. This should inspire us to strive to fulfill the vow that we have made concerning faithfulness unto death, as we “by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality.” (Rom. 2:7) “Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift.” —II Cor. 9:15

FAITH REQUIRES MUTUAL LOVE

“Now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.” (I Cor. 13:13) Charity, as spoken of by Paul in this chapter, is more properly translated as love—love that is completely unselfish, not desiring anything in return. This kind of love can be demonstrated by acts of kindness, giving assistance, engaging in sacrificial service on

behalf of others, and even by the expression of goodwill toward our fellow man. The apostle further tells us about this divine love. "Love suffers long and is kind. Love does not envy. Love is not boastful; is not puffed up; acts not unbecomingly, seeks not that which is not her own; is not provoked to anger; does not impute evil; rejoices not with iniquity, but rejoices with the truth; covers all things; believes all things; hopes for all things; endures all things. Love fails not at any time."—I Cor. 13:4-8, *Wilson's Emphatic Diaglott*

Our hearts should be kept full of the love of God to such an extent that there will be no room for unkind thoughts toward others, even those who we may consider our enemies. We should remember that God "first loved us," and did so "while we were yet sinners." (I John 4:19; Rom. 5:8) We can do no less than show our love toward the Heavenly Father and his Son Christ Jesus by loving our brethren, our neighbors, and all mankind, including our enemies. Love is the ultimate mark of true holiness, and God has instructed us, "Be ye holy, for I am holy."—I Pet. 1:16

The Scriptures give us these additional admonitions concerning love. "Honour all men. Love the brotherhood." "Let brotherly love continue." (I Pet. 2:17; Heb. 13:1) We note in these words that brotherly love is not merely to be given at certain times or under limited circumstances, but it is to continue. The word translated "continue" in the above text means "not to depart, ... to be held, kept continually." When our minds are enriched by this understanding we are led to the realization that "a friend loveth at all times."—Prov. 17:17

Hence, we are to love one another even when we do not agree regarding some details of scriptural interpretation. We must inculcate the meaning contained in the words of Ephesians 4:4-6: "There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all." When asked by one of the Jewish religious leaders, "Which is the great commandment of the law?" Jesus replied: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." (Matt. 22:36-39) On the evening before his death, Jesus added a third commandment, which was addressed specifically to his disciples and footstep followers throughout this Gospel Age. "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."—John 13:34,35

FINAL VICTORY THROUGH FAITH

The Apostle John wrote: "All that has been begotten by God overcomes the world; and this is that victory which overcomes the world—our faith." (I John 5:4, *Diaglott*) We note that although faith is necessary to gain this victory, our triumph is only made possible by the conquering power of God. It is he who has begotten us, and it is his Holy Spirit that, through our begettal, leads us to victory. Guided by God's spirit, we know that all things will work together for our ultimate good. (Rom. 8:28) Therefore,

we are to be submissive to the will of our Heavenly Father and his Son, Christ Jesus, and continually put our faith and trust in them, even when the way seems dark and foreboding. This is the ultimate progression of going from “faith to faith”—to implicitly trust our loving and all-wise God even where we cannot trace him. This is how the righteous “live by faith.”

Only those who, from faith to faith, are fully baptized into the sacrificial death of our Lord will be granted a share with him in glory as his joint-heirs, and as members of the great prophet, priest, king, mediator, and judge of the world in the Messianic kingdom. (Rom. 8:16,17; II Tim. 2:10-12; Rev. 3:21) The final members of Christ’s body will all soon be raised up in glory and become sharers in the “first resurrection.” (Rev. 20:6) Having been faithful unto death, the promise given by Jesus in the upper room will be fulfilled: “I will ... receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.” (John 14:3) Then will come the glorious fulfillment of the prayer that has been uttered for more than two thousand years: “Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.”—Matt. 6:10 ■

*Jesus calls us; o’er the tumult
of our life’s wild, restless sea,
Day by day his sweet voice soundeth,
saying, “Christian, follow me.”*

*Jesus calls us by thy mercies,
Savior, may we hear thy call,
Give our hearts to thy obedience,
serve and love thee best of all.*

—*Hymns of Dawn*

The Partnership of the Sons of God

*“That which we
have seen and
heard declare we
unto you, that ye
also may have
fellowship with us:
and truly our
fellowship is with
the Father, and
with his Son
Jesus Christ.”
—I John 1:3*

THE INESTIMABLE PRIVILEGE of becoming sons of God on the divine plane, and therefore members of the Creator’s immediate family, captured the special attention of the Apostle John. It inspired him, both in his Gospel account of Jesus’ life and in his epistles, to emphasize especially this theme in his ministry

to the church. To claim sonship in God’s family at the time John was laying down his life with the Master was a much-honored point of view to the apostle.

Of all the Jews living at that time, only Jesus could truly claim to be the Son of God, yet for this reason he was put to death. It required understanding, faith and courage for any Jew to acknowledge his belief in Jesus as the Son of God and claim to be his follower. Jesus was condemned to death as a blasphemer, and to the Jewish mind all those who

professed to be his followers would necessarily partake with him in this so-called blasphemy.

The immediate disciples of Jesus, however, as well as those who learned of the Master's virtues through them, would have abundant reason to believe that their Lord was indeed the Son of God. They knew of his purity. They knew that he fulfilled perfectly the prophetic description that had been given concerning the Lamb of God, that he was "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners." (Heb. 7:26) They knew of, and had been blessed by, the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth. They had recognized that "never [a] man spake like this man." (John 7:46) They had witnessed his miracles and knew that he ascribed to God the glory for the wonderful works which he performed, acknowledging that they were the works of his Father and wrought by his divine power.

Knowing these facts concerning their Master, there was no other conclusion that could satisfy their minds and hearts, except that such a one was all that he claimed to be—the Son of God—the Messiah of promise. While to confess him as such and become his followers subjected them to scorn and persecution, the strength which came from that knowledge sustained them. It enabled them to affirm boldly the belief which he had established in their hearts, and to proclaim the glad tidings of the kingdom.

John wrote, "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God." (I John 3:1) By these words he gave expression to a truth of the Gospel which, from some standpoints, imposed a greater test of

faith upon the believer than to confess that Jesus was the Son of God. Who are we that we should be called the sons of God? We are defiled and sinful, members of a condemned and dying race, and estranged from the Creator through the fall of our first parents. Upon what basis can we claim to be sons of God? John reminds us that it is upon the authority of God's love. Such "manner of love" is revealed on God's part in the provision he has made whereby we may, together with our beloved Master, also be called the sons of God.

PARTNERSHIP

To John, sonship in the divine family meant partnership with the Father and with his Son. In our opening text, the word "fellowship" is translated from a Greek word denoting "partnership." Thus, the apostle says that we have a partnership with the Father and with his Son. The combined thoughts of sonship and partnership are required in order to convey the full depth of meaning implied in the privilege that is extended to the footstep followers of the Master. One might conceivably be a son of a noble father, and yet not be taken into partnership in his father's business. John, however, would have us understand that the true followers of Jesus are not only made sons of God through the begetting of the Holy Spirit, but also that God takes them into a wondrous partnership with himself and with his Son in the outworking of his plan for the reconciliation and salvation of a lost race.

In the first chapter of his Gospel, John tells of the "Word" [Greek: *Logos*], the only begotten of the Father. He explains that Jesus, in his pre-human

relationship to the Creator as a Son, was even then a coworker with his Father. That was in the original work of Creation. "Without him," writes John, "was not any thing made that was made." (John 1:1-3) What a high privilege and honor was thus bestowed upon God's only begotten Son, the *Logos*.

Yet, John recognized that in the work of bringing the human race back to perfection, the church—as well as Jesus—would participate. He learned from the Master, and through the enlightening influence of the Holy Spirit, that the "manner of love" which caused the Heavenly Father to beget us as sons had also purposed that we become partners with him, and with Jesus, in the restoration of the world of mankind.

This exalted position of divine sonship in the plan of God was, in the Apostle John's mind, such a priceless gem of truth, that when writing his Gospel account of Jesus' ministry he laid special emphasis upon it. The Jewish nation, as the natural descendants of Abraham, were the first in line to have such high favor bestowed upon them. However, nearly all in Israel to whom Jesus went at his First Advent rejected him. The apostle tells us, though, that while he came to his own, and as a nation they "received him not," yet as many as did receive him, "he gave authority to become children of God, to those believing into his name."—John 1:11,12, *Wilson's Emphatic Diaglott*

We thus see that John lays down this foundation fact early in his Gospel account of the Master's life. He then selects from the day-by-day experiences and sayings of Jesus many things which are calculated to enhance the reader's appreciation of the marvelous

love of God displayed in extending to true believers such a High Calling. It is not that John's Gospel deals exclusively with this subject, but in many instances, we discover that the points which have been omitted by the writers of other Gospels and mentioned by John, have to do particularly with Jesus' and our sonship and partnership in God's family.

It is John who records the conversation that took place between Jesus and Nicodemus. In this dialogue Jesus brings to light the necessity for a rebirth on the part of those who enter the kingdom of heaven as joint-heirs with him. In this lesson it is made plain that becoming sons of God, as Jesus was his Son, involves much more than merely thinking of the Creator as a divine caretaker. The sonship which John saw and spoke of required not merely a reformation of character as human beings. Rather, it called for a new life, begotten now, developed and perfected in a glorious new birth in the first resurrection, when we shall be like our Lord and see him as he is. You must be "born again," Jesus said to Nicodemus. (John 3:3,7) From this John gained the understanding of actually becoming sons of God on the divine plane.

A WELL OF WATER

It was John who recorded the conversation between Jesus and the Samaritan woman at the well. Jesus asked her for a drink of water. She was surprised that a Jew asked a favor of a Samaritan, and so expressed herself. Jesus finally explained to her that those drinking the water which he gave would find it to be in them as "a well of water springing up unto everlasting life."—John 4:7-14

John knew, as do all true followers of Jesus, that those who believe on him will have everlasting life. (John 3:16) In this particular conversation between Jesus and the woman at the well, however, John saw an additional ray of light. He understood that not only do believers of this age receive life through the Master, but because they are begotten and will be born into God's heavenly family and become partners with him, they will also share in the magnificent privilege of dispensing life to the fallen race. In them, indeed, there will be "wells of water" springing up to give everlasting life to all who seek it in God's due time. In this dialogue, therefore, John found further confirmation of that love which "the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God."

John records that on another occasion Jesus, again using the symbolism of water, explained the great privilege of all true believers in this age, saying, "He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." (John 7:38) Here again we have a far more important thought than merely that of receiving life as believers. Unmistakably, the Master is explaining that his disciples were to be partners with him in giving the water of life to others.

John observes on his own part that the Master was referring to the work of the Holy Spirit in the lives of believers. (vs. 39) The apostle knew that to be a disciple of Christ involved much more than that which we receive from him. Precious indeed is the gift of life that all believers receive for themselves, but we should not overlook the glorious reality of our partnership with him in the blessing of others.

The Holy Spirit of God and of his Son Christ Jesus has motivated their every action concerning the divine purpose. If the same spirit is the controlling influence in our lives, there will be no adequate way in which we can express appreciation for what has been done for us except by daily laying down our lives in sacrifice for the blessing of others. If faithful in this, even unto death, the partnership with the Father and the Son which begins now will be perfected and enlarged on the divine plane. Then, from Jesus and the church, through the kingdom arrangements of the new age, will flow the river of water of life to all mankind, cleansing and healing all.—Rev. 22:1-3

GOD APPRECIATES SACRIFICE

In all that Jesus said and did, John saw God's love revealed. Our Heavenly Father loved the world and gave his Son that the people might have life. God likewise loved his Son, and Jesus loved his Father. In the parable of the sheepfold Jesus explains why the Father loved him. He says, "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life." (John 10:17) Doubtless it was this, and other similar expressions by Jesus, that helped the Apostle John to understand how truly important it is that love should be such an overwhelming force in our lives that we, like Jesus, will sacrifice all that we have and are in the divine service.

How consistent this is seen to be when we analyze the thought. Back of every partnership there is a motive. In the ordinary business partnerships among men the motive is more or less a selfish one. It is to make money, or to provide a living for oneself and family. However, in the partnership in which the

Father, the Son and his disciples work together in a common cause, the motive is love.

Those engaged in such a brotherhood are unselfishly interested in the well-being of each one participating in this united work. Even more important than this, however, is the motive of love that energizes this partnership in its service for others. The love of God for a fallen race is the motive that brought Jesus to earth from his heavenly home. It is this same love that caused the Son to willingly lay down his life. This same love also prompts all of his faithful disciples similarly to lay down their lives in service to this great eternal cause.

Love begets love, and the love of Jesus manifested in his supreme sacrifice for humanity called forth toward him the boundless love of his Father. It is the same with us, his followers. God loved us while we were yet sinners and gave his Son to die for us. (Rom. 5:8) If we desire to be loved by him as a father loves his children, the only basis upon which we may be assured that this is indeed so, is that like Jesus, we, too, lay down our lives.—John 15:13; I John 3:16

PARTNERSHIP IN WORK

Jesus said, and John recorded it, “My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.” (John 5:17) Having been invited to share in this glorious partnership of work with the Father and the Son, it is now our privilege also to work. We work for God and with God; we work for Christ and with Christ. We also work for each other and with each other in this blessed fellowship of love.

One of the evidences of Jesus’ sonship which his disciples could comprehend, though they were not

yet spirit-begotten, was the miraculous works which he performed. Jesus always accredited God's power for the performance of these miracles. The Master disclaimed that the message he delivered was his own, rather that it, too, came from his Father. He was desirous that his disciples comprehend this thought in order that they give glory where it properly belonged. Jesus said, for example, "Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, he doeth the works. Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake."—John 14:10,11

In emphasizing this mutual partnership of the Father and the Son, Jesus did not fail to tell his disciples that they, too, as believers in him, were to become associated as coworkers therein. He said, "He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father."—vs. 12

Were it not for our understanding of God's eternal purposes, it would be difficult to imagine the possibility of performing greater works than the outstanding miracles wrought by Jesus. Not only did he heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, and drive out demons from the afflicted, but he also raised the dead. However, there are greater works of God than these yet to be performed on behalf of mankind—works that are greater from the standpoint of volume, and greater also because of their enduring qualities.

The entire length of Jesus' earthly ministry was only three and one-half years. His days during this

time were filled with many events. While he gave generously of his time and strength for the healing of the sick, yet when we consider the number of the afflicted in the world, those who were healed by him were extremely few. Of all the billions who have died, the record indicates that Jesus awakened from death only three. Even the comparatively few who were restored to health by him had no assurance that they would not again become ill. Indeed, they all finally were struck down by death, man's great enemy. Likewise, those whom Jesus awakened from death again went the way of all the condemned race into the tomb.

Contrast these limited good and miraculous works by Jesus with those which are to be accomplished during the thousand years of his Messianic kingdom, which will bring about a "restitution of all things." (Acts 3:20,21) All the sick will be healed. All the dead will be awakened. Every individual then, who believes and obeys, will be restored to absolute perfection, and have the privilege of living in peace and happiness forever on the earth.

Truly full of meaning, therefore, is the statement by the Master that "greater works" than those at his First Advent shall be done in due time by Christ and his church. In recording these words, John evidently saw in them further confirmation of the condescending love of the Father which provided that a few members of a fallen and condemned race are to be taken into a divine partnership and share in the work of restoring their fellowmen to that which was lost.

HUSBANDMAN, VINE, BRANCHES

What a precious lesson of the Master his whole church would have failed to learn had John not recorded his parable of the vine and the branches. In this parable we have presented to us, from yet another standpoint, the precious truth of our partnership in God's family. "I am the vine," Jesus said, "ye are the branches." "My Father is the husbandman." (John 15:5,1) In this parable is represented the unity of the divine partnership. It is a unity made possible, not because of our worthiness of the position to which we are called, but by the grace of God exemplified through Christ. Here, the Father himself is represented in this partnership, as he is in the position of obtaining fruit from the vine through the branches.

The branches bear fruit by abiding in the vine, and the vine provides the needed nourishment to the branches for the fruit bearing to take place. The husbandman has supreme oversight in this illustration, in that he exercises the privilege of cutting off the branches that bear no fruit and pruning those whose fruitage can be increased. Thus, the Father and the Son and his church together constitute a glorious partnership arrangement whereby the divine purpose of blessing all mankind buds, blossoms, and bears much fruit to the glory of God.—vss. 1-8

As a climax to all the other remarkable teachings of the Master pertaining to our partnership in God's family, John records the prayer of Jesus that was uttered near the close of his ministry. (John 17:1-26) In this prayer, Jesus first of all conveys to the Father that he has finished the work of his earthly

ministry. No small part of that work was the selection and instruction of those who were to carry on the ministry after he returned to the heavenly courts. Fundamentally, this instruction consisted of manifesting his Father's name and glory to his disciples. This was essential because they, like Jesus, were to reflect God's glory in their ministry, and later to partake of that glory themselves.

The means by which Jesus instructed his disciples was largely through the words of his Father. He had received these words himself and was guided by them. If the disciples were to become truly one in the divine partnership, they, too, would need the words of God that they might be inspired and guided thereby. Jesus explains in this prayer that he was sanctified by God's truth, and prayed that his disciples might, likewise, be sanctified by the same truth. (vss. 17,19) From this we see that the oneness of God's family is based upon a common understanding of the divine will, and a dedication on the part of Jesus and his disciples to do that will.

Jesus had said, "I and my Father are one." (John 10:30) They were one, not because both had agreed to forego certain of their plans in order to find a common ground for cooperation, but because Jesus, the Son, was fully consecrated to do the whole will of the Father. There is no other way by which we may hope to share in this partnership except that of being one with the Father and with the Son, even as they are one. It is, simply stated, oneness in the plans and purposes of the Father. What a blessed unity of purpose this is! Jesus explains it, saying, "As thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe

that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me. Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.”—John 17:21-24

“THERE YE MAY BE ALSO”

Previous to this, Jesus had promised his disciples that when he returned at his Second Advent he would receive them unto himself, that where he was there they might be also. (John 14:3) Knowing his Father’s plan, that his followers were also to become sons of God on the divine plane, and partake of the heavenly glory, Jesus knew that this promise was in keeping with the Father’s will. Hence, in his prayer, he asked on behalf of his disciples that they might indeed be rewarded with the privilege of being with him and sharing in his glory.

In order that we might comprehend to some slight extent the transcendent height of glory to be occupied by God’s heavenly family, Jesus said to his disciples, “In my Father’s house are many mansions.” (vs. 2) This is a reference, undoubtedly, to the many planes of existence already created by God through the *Logos*. Jesus would know of these, because “without him was not any thing made that was made.”—John 1:3

Jesus did not, however, promise one or more of these many existing “mansions” to his disciples. He

merely alluded to them in connection with the promise that he was about to make in order that they might appreciate more fully the surpassing love of God manifested in calling them into the divine partnership. In this promise, it is as though Jesus was saying to his disciples that although there were many mansions in his Father's house, none of them was sufficiently exalted or glorious to be suitable for the position that they, as his bride, were to occupy with him and with the Father.

So Jesus promised, "I go to prepare a place for you," a place on the divine plane, and a position that none other than the Creator himself had ever previously occupied. (vs. 2) Indeed, Jesus, upon his resurrection and ascension, went to the Father. He appeared in God's presence with the blood of his sacrifice, which makes the members of his church acceptable for this high position if, like their Master, they too lay down their lives in sacrifice.—Heb. 9:24; Rom. 8:16,17; 12:1

Jesus did not attempt to explain the details of the glory to which his followers were invited. He knew that men and women with finite minds could not possibly comprehend any description that he might give of heavenly glory. New Creatures in Christ Jesus may, and do, understand spiritual things up to a point, but these prospective members of the church are unable to peer beyond the present life to glimpse the realities of future glory. Only through the "precious promises" of God are they presently able to gain a glimpse of what it will mean to be "partakers of the divine nature."—II Pet. 1:4

John himself was unable to visualize the grandeur of our home beyond the veil, and the limitless powers

of those who become partakers of the divine nature. “It doth not yet appear,” John said, “what we shall be: but we know that ... we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.” (I John 3:2) In this wondrous assurance John was content to rest and work and wait. He already knew more about God than he ever thought possible for mortal man to know. Most importantly, he had learned of God’s love, a love so boundless that it defied description. “Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God.” ■

OBITUARIES

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

Sister Esther Yanella, Phoenix, AZ—July 28. Age, 89

The LORD will give strength unto his people; the LORD will bless his people with peace.—Psalm 29:11

If you have trials and temptations which you are able to overcome, and which are working out in your character patience, experience, brotherly-kindness, sympathy and love, rejoice and offer the prayer of thanksgiving and acknowledgment of divine mercy and help. If your trials seem heavier than you can bear, and likely to crush you, take the matter to the great Burden-bearer, and ask his help in bearing whatever would do you good, and release from all that would do you no good, but which would injure you.

—*Daily Heavenly Manna, September 16*



In Memoriam

Brother Sidney Jones

December 27, 1932

June 19, 2018

IT IS WITH loving memories and joy in the Lord that we remember our dear Brother Sidney Jones, who recently finished his consecrated walk at the age of 85. He was much loved among our Bible Student fellowship and was a devoted servant of the Heavenly Father.

Brother Sid, as most of us knew him, was born and grew up in Sandy Creek, New York. As a young man he was interested in the Truth and was an active member of the local Bible Students ecclesia which was originally established during the days of Brother Russell.

He was the son of John Paul Jones and Mabel Jones. Sid's father, John Paul, was originally from New York City. Sid's grandfather, Albert Barnes King, was a minister, and authored a number of books, one of which was entitled *The Purple and Scarlet Woman*, based on Revelation 17:4,5.

Brother Sid was a long-time member of the Dawn Bible Students Association. In 1972, he became a contributing writer to *The Dawn* magazine. In 1996, Brother Sid became a Trustee of the Dawn, serving

in that capacity for over twenty years. He also served as a Dawn pilgrim, traveling throughout the United States, Canada and Europe. Later, Brother Sid became a full-time member of the Dawn's Editorial Committee and served as its chairman for nearly ten years.

In recent years, Brother Sid was in declining health, and was no longer able to travel. He maintained his work on the Editorial Committee for a time, but finally was not physically able to continue that work. In all these circumstances, he was a faithful example of service to the Heavenly Father, the Truth and the brethren, carrying on as long as he could, and in whatever capacity he was able.

Two of Brother Sid's favorite scriptures were:

"One thing have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to enquire in his temple."—Ps. 27:4

"It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the LORD."—Lam. 3:26

Brother Sid will be greatly missed by his loving wife, Sister Joan, his family, brethren, and friends. Our thoughts and prayers go out to his family, especially Sister Joan. We pray that she will receive the needed strength and peace from the Lord to bear up under this experience.

We rejoice and trust in the promised hope that Brother Sid had of being with the Lord beyond the veil. Although we will miss his labor and ministry in the Lord's vineyard, it is our prayer that his faithfulness will spur each of us onward to be faithful to our covenant of sacrifice, and to be good stewards in the service of our loving Heavenly Father and his Son, Christ Jesus. ■

ENCOURAGING LETTERS

SOURCE OF INSPIRATION

DawnBible: Hello, and thank you for the website, it has been a blessing, and source of inspiration to me for sometime now. Please keep up the LORDS work!—MI

LESSON IN EPHESIANS

DawnBible: The lesson from Ephesians 1, verses 1 to 14, has been wonderful, claiming our blessings theme of the lesson. [July 2000, *The Dawn*, “Claim Your Spiritual Blessings”] Paul deeply explained those direct from God spiritual blessings. I appreciate this and God bless you. —MALAWI

LONG-TIME READER

DawnBible: I have long been a reader and student of *The Dawn*. I get great comfort from your wonderful work. Please keep it up! Many blessings.—CA

JEHOVAH'S CARE

DawnBible: Gratitude for the publications sent to my

address. May Jehovah our Father bless. Jehovah takes care of his children in every land. Somehow we will get to his Holy Mount. Psalm 43. [*Translated from Portuguese*—BRAZIL

SEARCHING

DawnBible: I was wanting to know about the comparison between Zacchaesus and the rich young ruler, when I found this site, and I find it very helpful.—KS

THANKS

DawnBible: Thank you for all the interesting and spiritual content.—HOLLAND

LITERATURE REQUEST

DawnBible: I am very gratefully receiving your wonderful magazine and am gratefully feasting every month for the last few years. Now I request you to kindly gift me *Treasures of Truth*, *Heavenly Call*, *Photodrama of Creation* and other free literature, including all sample tracts for our study and free distribution for which I shall be ever thankful to you.—INDIA

LOVE FOR THE TRUTH

DawnBible: There is no Christian site like The Dawn Bible Students Association.

We love the convention lectures and the studio lectures, which were like the old days 100 years ago. We love *Frank and Ernest* too.

We were raised devout Catholics and were an altar boy, then went to a non-denominational church. In the early 1990s found the Dawn and were greatly influenced. Pastor Russell himself said in the *Photodrama* that “old superstitions die hard.” This has literally been our case. Yet we come back to the Truth site.

We thank you very much for your propagation of the Truth since the early 1930s. Num. 6:24-26—OH

RESPONSE HEAVEN-SENT

DawnBible: I have had some pamphlets sent to me and the response was so Heaven sent from the people in nursing homes and other places. They were free but I would be so grateful to

help with the processing with a donation. God bless your training to God’s people.—MO

EX-JEHOVAH’S WITNESS

DawnBible: The site has good views about the Bible. It teaches about God. I am an ex-Jehovah’s Witness.—INDIA

FIRM IN FAITH

DawnBible: The articles are encouraging, they stimulate us to true worship and bring back original Christianity.

I’ve been following your publications since 2015 and learned a lot. I’ve corrected the wrong concepts and I’m firming myself in faith along with you. Heavenly Father bless us! [*Translated from Portuguese*]—Brazil

SPANISH LITERATURE

DawnBible: I strongly seek the book *The New Creation* and would like to know if it is possible to have it physically in Spanish?

The magazine *El Alba* I receive in the mail address that you have, but I would appreciate to have in my hands that book also. Thanks.—COLOMBIA

SPEAKERS' APPOINTMENTS

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

T. B. Alexander Columbus, IN September 15,16	T. Krupa New York, NY September 1,2
M. Costelli Tennessee Valley, AL September 8,9	E. Kuenzli Seattle, WA September 1-3
M. Ensley Seattle, WA September 1-3	B. Montague New York, NY September 1,2 Tennessee Valley, AL 8,9
A. Fernets Seattle, WA September 1-3	H. Montague Seattle, WA September 1-3
R. Goodman New York, NY September 1,2 Jacksonville, FL 23	R. Sconyers Portland, OR September 16
L. Griehs Jackson, MI September 1,2 Columbus, IN 15,16	B. Sweeney Seattle, WA September 1-3
K. Humphreys Seattle, WA September 1-3	J. Trzeciak Seattle, WA September 1-3

“Draw nigh to God and he will draw nigh to you.”

—James 4:8

Let us cultivate the Lord’s acquaintance more, drawing near to him in prayer, in the study of his precious Word, in meditation upon all his goodness, his providential care, the marked manifestations of his grace in our own individual experiences, and his precious promises which are all yea and amen in Christ Jesus. Thus “draw nigh to God and he will draw nigh to you.” He will manifest himself to you and take up his abode with you.”

—*Exceeding Great and Precious Promises*

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.

JACKSON CONVENTION, September 1,2—FaHoLo Camp and Conference Center, 3000 Mt. Hope Road, Grass Lake, MI 49240. Contact M. Davis. Phone: (517) 414-4509 or Email: harb37@gmail.com

NEW YORK CONVENTION, September 1,2—Double-Tree Hotel Mahwah, 180 Route 17 South, Mahwah, NJ. Contact G. Passios. Phone: (201) 939-3196 or Email: gpassios11@verizon.net

SEATTLE CONVENTION, September 1-3—*New Location*—Seattle Scottish Rite Center, 1207 N 152nd Street, Shoreline, WA 98133. Contact L. Flinn. Phone: (206) 518-2678 or Email: laurie@flinn.us

OGUN STATE CONVENTION, September 8—Ogun State, Nigeria. Contact J. Isife. Phone: +2348035220141 or Email: johnisife@yahoo.com

TENNESSEE VALLEY CONVENTION, September 8,9—Comfort Inn, 4725 University Drive, Huntsville, AL 35806 Contact T. Allen. Phone: (360) 910-4451 or Email: timallen6768@gmail.com

QUEENSLAND CONVENTION, October 5-7—Alexandra Park Conference Centre, 13 Mari Street, Alexandra Headland, QLD 4572, Australia. Contact D. Greenhalgh. Phone: 617-5483-1946 or Email: darryn-greenhalgh@hotmail.com

LAGOS CONVENTION, October 6—Sure Foundation Schools, #16 Akintojoye Street, Orioke Bus stop, Ejigbo, Lagos State, Nigeria. Contact C. Oledibe. Phone: +2347033693841 or Email: oledibe@yahoo.com

PITTSBURGH AREA CONVENTION, October 6,7—Sewickley Grange Hall, Route 136, West Newton, PA 15089. Contact L. Mlinek. Email: lmlinek@verizon.net

COLORADO CONVENTION, October 6-8—Holiday Inn Express & Suites, 17140 West Colfax Avenue, Golden, CO 80401. Phone: (303) 278-2388. Contact D. Moss. Email: deb.moss@comcast.net

AGAWAM CONVENTION, October 7—Agawam Senior Center, 954 Main Street, Agawam, MA. Contact F. Sansom. Phone: (860) 861-6881.

GRAND RAPIDS CONVENTION, October 13,14—Kenowa Hills Middle School, 3950 Hendershot Avenue NW, Grand Rapids, MI 49544. Contact T. Malinowski. Email: malinowski.tim@gmail.com

ORLANDO CONVENTION, October 27,28—South Seminole Masonic Lodge, 122 Triplet Lake Drive, Casselberry, FL 32707. Contact J. Kuenzli. Email: jkuenzli@cfl.rr.com

MILWAUKEE CONVENTION, November 3,4—Lake Lodge, 1235 East Howard Avenue, Milwaukee, WI 53207. Contact D. Farchione. Phone: (414) 324-9667 or Email: debfarchione@aol.com

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

SAN DIEGO CONVENTION, November 23-25—Alpine Community Center, 1830 Alpine Boulevard, Alpine, CA 91901. For reservations, contact B. Bach. Phone: (619) 249-5238 or Email: bbach619@gmail.com

IBADAN THANKSGIVING CONVENTION, December 1—Ibadan Ecclesia place of worship, #24 Bola Faremi Street Coca Cola Mokola, Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria. Contact C. Egbu. Phone: +2348033339949 or Email: egbucaje@gmail.com

CHICAGO CONVENTION, December 29,30—Alta Villa Banquets, 430 N Addison Road, Addison, IL 60101. Contact J. Farrell. Phone: (630) 469-9511