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The Christian's Declaration

*“If the Son
therefore shall
make you free, ye
shall be free
indeed.”
—John 8:36*

DURING THE LATE EIGH-
teenth century, there devel-
oped among the thirteen
British colonies on the
American Continent a grow-
ing desire to separate from

the governing rule of the mother country and establish a free and independent state. Foremost among the factors contributing to this end was the authoritarian attitude of King George III of England, and especially the British government's practice of “taxation without representation.” Such domineering could not be endured long by men who had sacrificed much to begin life anew and to escape the oppression of the Old World.

Accordingly, the American colonies called a Continental Congress in 1774 to consider possible courses of action. Within two years, a committee of five prominent colonial leaders was appointed to draw up an official statement of independence to be ratified by all the colonies. Thomas Jefferson was assigned the task of composing the document. The result

was the historic statement which came to be known as the Declaration of Independence.

This document set forth in masterful and concise language some of the basic needs and desires of all people the world over. School children and statesmen alike have thrilled at contemplating some of the thoughts expressed: “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness. That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed.”

After listing in detail the outstanding grievances against the British Crown, the document has a final paragraph which begins: “We, therefore, the Representatives of the united States of America, in General Congress, Assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions, do, in the Name, and by Authority of the good People of these Colonies, solemnly publish and declare, that these united Colonies are, and of Right ought to be Free and Independent States; ... And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes, and our sacred Honor.” The declaration was signed by fifty-six members of the Congress.

A WANING FAITH

We today who read this document and others which pertain to the original establishment of our nation, cannot help but be impressed with the

reverential spirit in which they were written. Most of our founding fathers had a deep reliance upon the overruling providence of God and demonstrated this in their lives and words. Many of the colonies had been established by deeply religious men who sought a refuge from the political and religious persecutions then prevailing in Europe. A free system of public education was set up to ensure that all would be enabled to read the Bible, which, together with the English primer, became the first textbook.

What a change, however, has been wrought in less than two hundred and fifty years, and especially in the last few decades! Today we are witnessing an ever-increasing deterioration of faith in God and belief in spiritual things. Whether it be in high levels of government, in the education systems, in society at large, or even within the province of the churches themselves, the result has been the same. One must look far and wide to find God-fearing individuals who have not lost their integrity or their confidence in God, and who still stand for the principles of truth and righteousness.

One notable exception to this condition of spiritual and moral decay which is sweeping our land and the world today is to be found in the lives of a relatively few individuals who might be termed "footstep followers of Christ Jesus." These are those of an honest and upright heart to whom the Lord has been pleased to reveal himself and to entrust them with an understanding of his plans and purposes. They are his lights and witnesses in a rapidly darkening and degenerating society. They have not let go their faith and trust in God.—Rom. 6:4; Col. 2:6; I John 2:6

In the face of the massive unbelief and materialism which threatens to engulf all, and as a source of spiritual strength in this special day of testing, it would be well for all believers to affirm their faith by setting forth their own “Declaration of Independence.” By this we mean a declaration of independence, or freedom, from both the spirit of the world and the cares and anxieties which press upon them, and which threaten to overwhelm even the most ardent believer. Such a declaration would prove helpful because it would take them back to the Word of God as the source of inspiration and help.

Let us consider, then, what might be said in the Christian’s Declaration of Independence, to be constructed as a summary not of our grievances or dissatisfactions, but of our causes for gratitude. Let it serve also as an inventory of the reasons for our hope and confidence in God. In place of the signers of the Declaration of 1776, we shall append a listing of Bible texts, some of the most precious and uplifting to the believing heart. Grammatically, we will use the first person, singular, to highlight the privilege of our personal relationship with the Father.

THE CHRISTIAN’S DECLARATION

1. The Bible declares that upon the basis of the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ, all consecrated believers in him enjoy a standing of reckoned perfection in the Father’s sight, called in the Scriptures, “justification.” Through the study of God’s Word and by the leading of the Holy Spirit, I have accepted this basic truth and am now also covered by Jesus’ righteousness. I therefore have

had Adamic condemnation, which rests heavily upon all, lifted from me, and have been forgiven of all my inherited and unintentional sins and shortcomings. “Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”—Rom. 5:1

2. Having come to appreciate that it was the Father’s will for me to consecrate my life to his service, I have renounced my former ways and have come to him in full surrender. I have endeavored to heed God’s call: “My son, give me thine heart, and let thine eyes observe my ways.” (Prov. 23:26) “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.” (Rom. 12:1) I desire, by the Heavenly Father’s grace, to continue this work of sacrificing the flesh and its interests, that I might eventually attain a heavenly inheritance. I shall endeavor not to be conformed to this world, nor allured by its transitory pleasures, for my life is no longer my own. It belongs to God and to his Son, my Redeemer. “They which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.”—II Cor. 5:15

3. The Bible further declares that the common experiences of those who have chosen to walk the Christian pathway would be twofold: special blessings accruing from the Lord, but hardship and persecution coming from the world. “All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution.” (II Tim. 3:12) “In the world ye shall have tribulation.” (John 16:33) Counterbalancing this, the Scriptures abound with precious promises to the people of God, giving assurance of divine protection and

care. These promises are the mainstay of the believer, his touchstone of confidence and hope. Having come into intimate relationship with the Father through faith and consecration, I am thoroughly convinced that it is my privilege to reach out and embrace these promises, to make them my very own, and to watch for their fulfillment in my life.—II Pet. 1:4

4. With great joy, I realize that the way has been prepared for me to live a victorious life in Christ, possessed of his peace and his assurance. No longer must I be bound either by worldly temptation or by the shackles of anxiety and care which before have confounded me. My life is “hid with Christ in God.” (Col. 3:3) I therefore now resolve to accept with gratitude the inner strength, peace, and joy which my Lord has made the heritage of all who place their trust in God. In so doing, I hereby declare my full independence from all worldly desire, fear, or distress which otherwise would weigh me down. “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, ... and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”—Matt. 11:28-30

5. I understand from the Bible that the acceptance of this divine legacy of strength and peace is not a passive matter, and that it requires continual, conscious effort on my part. “Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest,” which is provided for “the people of God.” (Heb. 4:9-11) I thus resolve also to renew my determination to “fight the good fight of faith.” (I Tim. 6:12) I will strive to repel all the anxious thoughts, discontent, and discouragement which the Adversary daily thrusts against me. Implicitly trusting God’s daily care, I will seek to

neither murmur nor resist what his providence may permit, knowing that faith can firmly trust him in every experience of life.

6. In place of the former cares which crowded my mind, I will substitute the higher thoughts that center on spiritual truths. "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above." (Col. 3:1) "Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things." (Phil. 4:8) In addition, I will direct my energies in the service of the Lord, the Truth, and the brethren to the extent of my abilities and opportunities. I will also try to keep the vision of the coming kingdom so strongly before me that no room will be left for the former concerns.

7. The basis of this Declaration of Independence from all worldliness and the cares of this life is to be found in the precious promises of God's Word, the Holy Scriptures. In them are contained the assurances of the nearness of the Heavenly Father, of his great love, and of his power working in me. Added below are those very special promises and exhortations which have stood as a bulwark of divine comfort and strength, especially in my times of need. I desire not only to be reminded of them, but to permit them to exercise their full sanctifying influence upon my heart and mind. Thus confident of God's power operating in my life and strengthened with spiritual food, I shall rise above the cares of the present and be transported to the expectant joys of sharing the ages of eternity with my Heavenly Father and

his dear Son, and being privileged to partake in the uplifting and blessing of the groaning world of mankind during Christ's Millennial Kingdom.—Rom. 8:18-22, *New American Standard Bible*

THE SCRIPTURES—OUR SOURCE OF STRENGTH

1. “Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee.”—Isa. 26:3

2. “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.”—John 14:27

3. “Do not worry over anything whatever; tell God every detail of your needs in earnest and thankful prayer, and the peace of God which transcends human understanding, will keep constant guard over your hearts and minds as they rest in Christ Jesus.”—Phil. 4:6,7, *J. B. Phillips New Testament*

4. “Be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.” “Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world.” “This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.”—Rom. 12:2; I John 2:15; 5:4

5. “Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.”—Prov. 3:5,6

6. “We know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to his purpose.”—Rom. 8:28, *NASB*

7. "For this reason I charge you not to be over-anxious about your lives, inquiring what you are to eat or what you are to drink, nor yet about your bodies, inquiring what clothes you are to put on. ... For all these are questions that Gentiles are always asking; but your Heavenly Father knows that you need these things—all of them. But make his kingdom and righteousness your chief aim, and then these things shall all be given you in addition."—Matt. 6:25,32,33, *Weymouth New Testament*

8. "My God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus."—Phil. 4:19

9. "Casting the whole of your care [all your anxieties, all your worries, all your concerns, once and for all] on him; for he cares for you affectionately and cares about you watchfully."—I Pet. 5:7, *The Amplified Bible*

10. "The Father himself loveth you."—John 16:27

11. "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try [Greek: prove] you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy." "Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."—I Pet. 4:12,13; II Cor. 4:17

12. "No trial has assailed you except what belongs to man; and God is faithful, who will not permit you to be tried beyond your ability; but with the trial, will also direct the issue, that you may be able to bear it."—I Cor. 10:13, *Wilson's Emphatic Diaglott*

13. "He has said to me, My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness. Most gladly,

therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong."—II Cor. 12:9,10, *NASB*

14. "Since God is for us, who can be against us?" "For God is he who is working effectually among you, both to will and to perform, on account of his benevolence." "Having this same confidence, that he who commenced a good work among you will continue to complete it till the day of Christ Jesus."—Rom. 8:31; Phil. 2:13; 1:6, *Diaglott*

15. "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."—Rev. 2:10 ■

WEEKLY PRAYER MEETING TEXTS

JULY 4—"Who hath believed our report? And to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed?"—Isaiah 53:1 (Z. '99-10,11 Hymn 79)

JULY 11—"Whosoever is begotten of God sinneth not, ... but keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not."—I John 5:18 (Z. '99-58 Hymn 208)

JULY 18—"In the last days perilous times shall come. men shall be traitors, heady, ... lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God."—II Timothy 3:1,4 (Z. '99-102 Hymn 306A)

JULY 25—"There is one lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy: who are thou that judgest another?"—James 4:12 (Z. '99-139 Hymn 136)

Fulfilling the Law

Key Verse: “*Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.*”
—*Matthew 5:17*

Selected Scripture:
Matthew 5:17-20

WHEN JESUS BEGAN HIS ministry following his baptism at the Jordan River, he did so as a Jew. He was therefore bound to keep the commandments of the Mosaic Law as every other of his kinsmen. Our Key Verse, however, says in addition that he was going to “fulfill” the law. The Law Covenant had been added to the Abrahamic Covenant because of sin. (Gal. 3:19) God delivered the terms of the covenant through Moses on Mount Sinai saying, “If ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine.” (Exod. 19:5) However, it took a perfect man to keep the covenant. Speaking of this weakness of the Law arrangement, the Apostle Paul states, “If a law had been given which was able to impart life, then righteousness would indeed have been based on law. But the Scripture has shut up everyone under sin.”—Gal. 3:21,22, *New American Standard Bible*

The Law was a temporary arrangement, to last until the arrival of the promised seed. (Gen. 22:18; Gal. 3:1,19) During this period, every Jew under the Law was trapped in sin by its very commandments. This delay offered Israel an opportunity to learn the nature of sin. The apostle describes it this way: “We know that whatever the Law says, it speaks to those who are under the Law,

so that every mouth may be closed and all the world may become accountable to God; because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in his sight; for through the Law comes the knowledge of sin.”—Rom. 3:19,20, *NASB*

The Law was also given to provide important types and shadows which pointed to Christ. Citing one of many notable examples, the Apostle Paul points out that the continual sacrifices offered by the Aaronic priesthood on behalf of the sins of the people, were shadows of better things to come. He says Jesus was a High Priest according to the order of Melchisedec. Of the typical sacrifices the apostle says, “It is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins,” but the sacrifice of Jesus took away sin “once for all,” after which he was exalted to sit “on the right hand of God.”—Heb. 5:1-6; 8:1-6; 10:1-18

These were things Israel should have been looking for under the Law Covenant. However, as a nation they failed to see that the spirit of the commandments was based on love instead of rote memory. The failure to appreciate this principle obscured their vision when Jesus arrived as the long awaited Messiah. The Apostle Paul told the early Jewish converts: “The law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster. For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.”—Gal. 3:24-26

This change from works to faith is what Jesus accomplished by fulfilling the Law. Since the Law could not permanently take away sins, a new and better sacrifice was needed. The Apostle Paul described this process in Colossians 2:13,14: “You, ... hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross.” ■

A Higher Law

Key Verses:
“Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.”
—Matthew 5:23,24

Selected Scripture:
Matthew 5:21-26

to the law against killing, Jesus told his Jewish audience there was a greater law than the one given to Moses. All Jews knew killing was a crime, but Jesus expressed a new principle. He told them that if they had made the pilgrimage to the Temple to leave offerings for the priests to sacrifice, and then remembered that they were angry with any of their brethren, they should leave the gift “before the altar,” and first go to be reconciled with their brother. Then they could return to the temple and present their offering acceptably.—Matt. 5:21-24

This higher law of brotherly love is elaborated on by

OFFERING OF SACRIFICES

was an important part of Israel’s worship of Jehovah. The bringing of various offerings to the priests at the Temple in Jerusalem was a requirement of three annual feasts. Every able Jewish male made these pilgrimages for the Feast of Unleavened Bread or Passover, the Feast of Weeks or Pentecost, and the Feast of Tabernacles.—Deut. 16:16

With the importance of these sacrifices in mind, Jesus gave a message to the Jews, as recorded in our Key Verses, which introduced a higher standard than the Law Covenant. Making reference

the Apostle Paul many times in his epistles. For example, in Gal. 5:13,14 he says, “Brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.” Jesus proclaimed this deeper understanding in answer to the question of a Pharisee who asked, “Which is the great commandment in the law?” Jesus answered, “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. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.”—Matt. 22:37-40

The first commandment Jesus mentions in his answer actually served as a reprimand to the Jews for not appreciating that everything God had done for them was based on love, and they should be faithful in returning that love to him. The second commandment was a reminder that the High Calling of the incoming Gospel Age would require Christ’s followers to serve one another in love. Jesus demonstrated this when he washed his disciples’ feet in the upper room the night before he died. His words that night should inspire all of us to love one another through service.

“When He had washed their feet, and taken His garments and reclined at the table again, He said to them, Do you know what I have done to you? You call Me Teacher and Lord; and you are right, for so I am. If I then, the Lord and the Teacher, washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet. For I gave you an example that you also should do as I did to you. Truly, truly, I say to you, a slave is not greater than his master, nor is one who is sent greater than the one who sent him. If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them.” (John 13:12-17, *New American Standard Bible*) Let us practice the higher law of love through service to our neighbors and even more so to our brethren. ■

Love Your Enemies

Key Verses: *“You have heard that it was said, You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy. But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.”*
—*Matthew 5:43,44,*
English Standard Version

Selected Scripture:
Matthew 5:38-48

IN TODAY’S LESSON, THE

Lord describes the transition from the Law Covenant to a higher standard for God’s chosen people. Indeed, Jesus satisfied the requirements of the Law for all Jews who were condemned under its ordinances. “Having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us, which was hostile against us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.” (Col. 2:14, *New American Standard Bible*) A higher law now came into view where love for others

would be more important than the letter of the Law.

In today’s lesson we hear the Master telling his disciples that they are to take their love for friends and brethren and extend it to even their enemies. We can only imagine the confused thoughts of his Jewish audience. God had told them, “You only have I known of all the families of the earth.” (Amos 3:2) Surrounding nations had persecuted them for their entire existence, and many were intent on destroying them. Now, Jesus says, they were to love their enemies.

By contrast, Israel was accustomed to protecting itself from surrounding enemies, lest they be destroyed. When Jesus said, as recorded in Matthew 5:38, “Ye have heard

that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth,” the disciples no doubt felt he would confirm their favored relationship with God. However, they were probably perplexed when he continued in verse 39, saying, “But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.” This was not a course of action they had ever known or lived by.

Jesus knew these Jewish disciples did not yet understand this commandment. We see in hindsight that he was instructing them as to the character which would lead the true Christian into the kingdom. This understanding would only come after he had fulfilled the Law through his death on the cross, after which the begetting power of the Holy Spirit would come upon those who the Father would draw to him. It was imperative, however, that Jesus instruct his disciples while he was present with them concerning the kind of love which would be required of them. It would exceed the love which should have made them appreciate and keep the Law Covenant. It would also exceed brotherly and neighborly love because “if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye?”—vs. 46

Jesus finished his lesson on this subject by saying, “Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.” (vs. 48) This instruction must have been bewildering to the Master’s audience. The apostles would later clarify how that God has set himself as the grand copy that we are to emulate. We must love all without exception. “God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” (Rom. 5:8) The Apostle John said, “God is love.” (I John 4:8) Just as God’s perfect standard of love includes all sinners, or enemies, we are to likewise develop that heart quality as his children. We cannot do this perfectly, but God makes up for our shortcomings in this regard by clothing us with the “garments of salvation” provided through the redemptive merit of his Son’s ransom sacrifice.—Isa. 61:10 ■

Discerning Fruitage

Key Verses:
“Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?”
—*Matthew 7:15,16*

Selected Scripture:
Matthew 7:15-23

OUR LESSONS THIS MONTH have focused on Jesus’ fulfillment of the Law, thereby freeing Jews from its condemnation. Since Gentiles were never under its authority, all who would be henceforth drawn to the Gospel calling, whether Jew or Gentile, were free from the Law’s stipulations. The new requirements for all those dedicating their life wholly to God would not be according to works, but by faith in Jesus Christ. Hence, the church throughout the Gospel Age has been instructed to develop selfless love of the brethren and of

all mankind, as demonstrated by the Heavenly Father.

Having established the standards that apply to each one of us, Jesus turns his attention in today’s lesson to the danger of following those who would divert us from our goal through deception. This warning seems to be especially applicable to the church at this end of the age, and is very similar to Matthew 24:24, which is part of Jesus’ great prophecy of our day.

One example of false prophets in Jesus’ day were Gnostics, who preached salvation through special knowledge instead of through the blood of Jesus Christ. A similar example in our day can be found in those who preach a

“prosperity gospel,” claiming that God rewards faith with increases in health and wealth. Both of these are false teachings, disguised in sheep’s clothing of proclaiming salvation, and appeal to earthly thinking. However, they are contrary to Jesus’ teachings, which state, “Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.”—Matt. 6:19-21

Such false prophets of our day mostly appeal to fleshly curiosity and fancy. The Apostle Paul warned of this, saying, “The time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears.” (II Tim. 4:3) Most who engage in this work seek fame, prominence, and honor among men for their own aggrandizement. The footstep followers of Christ must continually be on the lookout for false teachers, and call the attention of the sheep to such.

As God’s children, we each have an individual responsibility to watch out for each other’s spiritual well-being. As noted in our Key Verses, part of this is found in looking for, and in promoting, the fruits of the spirit in one another. This is in contrast to the fruitage of false prophets, which are along the lines of sin and degradation. Paul identifies the proper spiritual fruitage: “Love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.”—Gal. 5:22,23

The Apostle Peter also espouses that the development of the fruits and graces of the Holy Spirit is an assurance of making our “calling and election sure.” Referring to this, Peter states with surety, “If ye do these things, ye shall never fall: For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.”—II Pet. 1:10,11 ■

The Beginning of God's Creation

*“These things saith
the Amen, the
faithful and true
witness, the
beginning of the
creation of God.”
—Revelation 3:14*

JESUS IS REFERRED TO in John 3:16 as God's “only begotten Son.” In our text he is described as “the beginning of the creation of God.” Concerning Jesus, the Apostle Paul wrote, “By him were all

things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him.” (Col. 1:16) In Ephesians 3:9 we read that God used Jesus Christ to create all things, and John 1:3 reads, “All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.”

The united testimony of these texts of Scripture reveals clearly that there was a time in the dim and far distant past when God, the almighty Heavenly Father, was alone, and that his first creative act was the bringing into existence of the one referred to in the Bible as his beloved Son. After this, as the Scriptures reveal, God used his Son as his active

agent in all the remaining works of creation, and “without him was not any thing made.”

The Scriptures additionally reveal that from the very beginning the beloved Son of God was always in very close association with his Father and Creator. In Genesis 1:26 this is emphasized, in which God speaks, saying, “Let us make man in our image.” The use of the pronouns “us” and “our” indicates that in making this statement God applied it to himself and his Son, who worked with him in connection with the creation of man. Thus, these words are in harmony with the later testimony of the Apostles Paul and John already noted.

In John 1:1-3, Jesus is referred to as the “Word” of God. In the Greek text it is *logos*, which is defined as “words uttered by a living voice, which embody a concept or idea.” (*Thayer’s Greek Definitions*) In ancient times kings would speak to the people while concealed behind a lattice, addressing their remarks quietly to a mouthpiece who stood in front of the lattice, who then relayed them to the audience. This spokesman was called a “*logos*.” Jesus is the *Logos* of the Creator, acting as well as speaking for him.

CORRECT MEANING OBSCURED

The meaning of the information set forth in John 1:1-3 is obscured by the *King James* translation, particularly in verse 1, which states that “the Word [*Logos*] was God.” This incorrect translation has helped to support the tradition that the Heavenly Father and his “only begotten Son” are one and the same person. However, a more correct translation of the Greek reads, “In a beginning was the Word,

and the Word was with the God, and a God was the Word.”—*Wilson’s Emphatic Diaglott*

In the New Testament the Greek word translated “God” is *theos*, but it does not always apply to the Creator. In II Corinthians 4:4, for example, *theos* is applied to the Devil, who is described as the “god of this world.” *Theos* simply means a deity, a god or goddess, or a mighty one, the identity of the being to whom it is applied being determined by the context in which it is used. The *Logos*, or Word, was a mighty god, but not the Supreme Deity, not the great and Almighty God of the universe. As the Greek text in John 1:1 indicates, the definite article “the” [Greek: *ho*] is used to describe God, the Heavenly Father. The definite article is not used, however, with regard to the Word. Thus the correct rendering that the Word was “a god.” When the definite article “the” is used in the Greek [*ho*], it means some special, or particular person, place or thing. When it precedes *theos*, as in this instance, it refers singularly to God Almighty.

Just as the Word, or *Logos*, was with “the God” in the beginning, and served under him as the creator of all things, so he gladly came to earth on the mission of redeeming and saving the sin-cursed and fallen human race from death. The Scriptures inform us that “the Word was made flesh,” to which John adds, “We beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.” (John 1:14) The use of the word “glory” in this text does not mean that Jesus was divine while on earth. Paul explains that there is a terrestrial, or earthly glory. This was the glory that was given to Adam when he was created perfect,

and Jesus was the exact counterpart of Adam.—Ps. 8:4,5; I Cor. 15:40

A CORRESPONDING PRICE

It was necessary that Jesus be made flesh, else he could not have been the Redeemer of fallen man. It was his “flesh,” his perfect humanity, which he gave for the “life of the world.” (John 6:51) In I Timothy 2:3-6, the Apostle Paul refers to this as a “ransom,” or corresponding price. The only life that could correspond with the perfect life of father Adam, was another perfect human life. It was his perfect human life which Jesus voluntarily laid down in sacrifice, consummated on Calvary’s cross.

Contrary to human traditions which have come down to us from centuries past, Jesus never claimed that he was the Heavenly Father, nor did he claim to be equal with the Father. On the contrary he said emphatically, “My Father is greater than I.” (John 14:28) This could not be true if Jesus and the Father were one and the same person.

A mistranslation of Philippians 2:5-8 has been used to bolster the false tradition that Jesus was equal with the Father. The *King James Version* states in this passage that Jesus “thought it not robbery to be equal with God.” Numerous other translations give the opposite thought. Among these, *Wilson’s Emphatic Diaglott* says that Jesus “did not meditate a usurpation to be like God.” We will quote the entire passage in order to see how much this corrected rendering is in keeping with the spirit of Paul’s admonition.

“Let this disposition be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, who, though being in God’s form, yet

did not meditate a usurpation [to seize without authority] to be like God, but divested himself, taking a bondman's form, having been made in the likeness of men; and being in condition as a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."

With these words, Paul admonishes the Christian to follow Jesus' example of humility. Though before coming to earth he was a mighty god, the *Logos*, he did not aspire to be equal with the Almighty Creator. Instead, in his desire to do his Father's will, he gladly submitted to the humiliation of becoming a man to suffer and to die for the human race. As a man, Jesus continued to exhibit this same spirit of humility. He said, "I can of mine own self do nothing." "I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak."—John 5:30; 12:49

ONENESS OF FATHER AND SON

Jesus declared to the Jews, "I and my Father are one." (John 10:30) This statement has been misused in an attempt to prove that Jesus and the Heavenly Father were one and the same person. However, all will concede, we believe, that there are forms of oneness other than that of person. Jesus proved this to be true when later, in praying to his Heavenly Father on behalf of his disciples, he asked, "That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us."—John 17:21

It is obvious that Jesus was not asking his Heavenly Father to make his disciples one with him in person, yet he did pray for the same kind of oneness as existed between himself and the Heavenly

Father. The thought clearly is oneness of purpose, so complete that the Heavenly Father's will was Jesus' supreme rule of life, and a "delight" for him to do. (Ps. 40:8) He prayed that his followers might likewise be sanctified, or set apart, to know and delight in the divine will.

Knowing and doing the will of God is fundamental to being a faithful Christian in his sight. No one will ever gain everlasting life, either in heaven or on earth, who even in the slightest degree is in opposition to the Heavenly Father's will. It is in keeping with this that Jesus taught his disciples to pray, "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven."—Matt. 6:10

Even now, the true disciples of Christ, despite the imperfections of their flesh, seek to have the will of God done in their hearts and lives. It will require the thousand years of Christ's earthly kingdom to establish the will of God in the hearts of all mankind. However, when that great task is accomplished, the Son himself will continue to be subject to the Father, being second to him in order of rank.

Paul explains it thus, saying that Christ Jesus "must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For he [God] hath put all things under his [Jesus'] feet. But when he saith all things are put under him, it is manifest that he [God] is excepted, which did put all things under him [Jesus]. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him [the Father] that put all things under him, that God may be all in all."—I Cor. 15:25-28

Having such a clear statement of Scripture as this, who can justifiably argue that God and his beloved Son are one and the same person? How could a person be subject to himself? On the other hand, these words of the Apostle Paul reveal further the perfect oneness of purpose which exists between the Father and the Son. It is a oneness which will extend even beyond Christ's thousand-year reign. For all eternity, he will continue to be subject to the Father, delighting in all of his purposes.

IN GOD'S IMAGE

Jesus said to Philip, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." (John 14:9) This is another text which is used in an effort to prove the tradition that Jesus and the Father were one in person. However, we know that this is not what Jesus meant, for God said to Moses, "There shall no man see me, and live." (Exod. 33:20) Additionally, the Apostle John wrote, "Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him."—John 1:17,18

Jesus "declared" the Father, John says in the above text. Thus, we have explained what was meant by the words, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." Jesus, like the perfect Adam, was in the image of God, and his perfect and glorious personality reflected the characteristics of God. Moreover, in a very special sense, he represented God in the earth. He spoke the words which God gave him to speak. His miracles were performed by the power of God and as a manifestation of the love of God. He taught his disciples the will of God.

The Son so completely “declared” the Father that had God himself been personally present with the disciples, they would have heard nothing different, seen no greater miracles, and witnessed no greater manifestation of patience, kindness, and mercy than that which was displayed by Jesus, the beloved Son of God. Thus, it was true that those who saw Jesus in the sense of knowing the virtues of his perfect character, and of being influenced by his teachings, had been brought into contact with the Father in as full a sense as it will ever be possible for any member of the fallen human race.

When we accept the clear teachings of the Bible that Jesus is the beloved Son of God, and not God himself, we are no longer faced with unexplainable mysteries. For example, Jesus frequently prayed to his Heavenly Father. If he and the Father were one in person, this would mean that he prayed to himself. When he cried on the cross, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” it would mean that he had forsaken himself.—Matt. 27:46

While hanging on the cross Jesus also said to his Father, “Into thy hands I commend my spirit,” my life. (Luke 23:46) He believed that his Heavenly Father would raise him from the dead. On the day of Pentecost, Peter testified that God did raise Jesus from the dead. (Acts 2:31,32) How untrue and bewildering all this would be if Jesus and the Father were the same person. It would mean that God did not raise his Son from the dead, for how could he raise himself? This, in turn, would mean that Jesus must not have actually died at all. How, then, could the ransom price be provided?

How thankful we should be that there is no necessity for trying to understand such “mysteries” as these. Rather, we rejoice in knowing the simple truth that Jesus was the beloved Son of God who humbled himself and became obedient unto death. He was actually “made flesh,” and did not merely assume a human form. He gave his humanity in death to redeem the world of mankind. He did not feign death. Everything about Jesus was genuine and sincere, just as it was with his Heavenly Father.

JESUS EXALTED

On the night before he was crucified, Jesus prayed to his Father, saying, “Glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.” (John 17:5) It was a marvelous glory that Jesus had as the *Logos* in his prehuman existence. In humility, he simply asked the Father to restore this glory to him when he had finished his mission on earth as the world’s Redeemer.

However, when Jesus was raised from the dead he was exalted far above the glory and office which he enjoyed before humbling himself to become a man. The Apostle Paul wrote, “God ... hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, ... And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”—Phil. 2:9-11

The Apostle Paul speaks of Jesus as the “last Adam,” explaining that by his resurrection he was “made a quickening,” or life-giving, spirit being. (I Cor. 15:45) Actually, Jesus was exalted to the divine nature, and made “the express image” of the Father.

(Heb. 1:3) The phrase “express image” is described in the *Companion Bible* as meaning “the exact impression as when a metal is pressed into a die, or as a seal upon wax.” It is because of this highly exalted position of office and nature that Christ will provide the opportunity of life to those for whom he died as man’s Redeemer. To this end, he is referred to by the Prophet Isaiah as the “everlasting Father,” because he will give everlasting life to all the willing and obedient in his coming kingdom.—Isa. 9:6

It is in keeping with this that Jesus said, “As the Father raiseth up the dead, and quickeneth them; even so the Son quickeneth whom he will. For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son: That all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father. He that honoureth not the Son honoureth not the Father which hath sent him.”—John 5:21-23

Not only does the Heavenly Father want us to honor his beloved Son, but, as the Apostle Paul wrote, he has commanded the angels to worship him. (Heb. 1:6,7) As the Prophet Isaiah wrote, Jesus in his highly exalted position is now the “mighty God,” to be worshiped by angels and men. However, he is not the Almighty Creator, and, as we have seen, at the close of his thousand-year earthly kingdom, he will himself continue to be subject to the Father.

Isaiah further prophesied concerning Jesus that he would be a “Wonderful Counselor,” and “The Prince of Peace.” (Isa. 9:6) These titles relate to aspects of the work to be accomplished during his coming kingdom reign. As Counselor, and through the various agencies of the kingdom, mankind will be instructed in the ways of truth and righteousness. As the

Prince of Peace, he will establish harmony between God and men, the outgrowth of which will be peace and good will in all human relationships, as promised by the angels to the shepherds at the time of Jesus' birth over two thousand years ago.—Luke 2:13,14

It was because “God so loved the world” that he sent his Son to be the Redeemer, Savior and Restorer of the people. Jesus was motivated by the same love and was willing to suffer and die that mankind might live. Let us continue to give honor to the Father and to the Son, rejoicing that they have revealed themselves to us through the Word of Truth: “That God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.”—I Pet. 4:11 ■

*“In My Father’s house are many dwelling places;
if it were not so, I would have told you;
for I go to prepare a place for you.
If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come
again and receive you to Myself,
that where I am, there you may be also.”*
—John 14:2,3

New American Standard Bible

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 Margaret June Pearson, Los Angeles, CA—May
16. Age, 86

Sister Wanda Pascaretti, Detroit, MI—June 13. Age,
104

Gain Through Loss

*“What things were
gain to me, those
I counted loss
for Christ.”
—Philippians 3:7*

THE FIRST CHRISTIAN
church organized in Europe
by the Apostle Paul was at
Philippi, in the region of
Macedonia. In our studies of

the Philippian epistle, which Paul wrote years later while a prisoner in Rome, we learn that he especially loved this church. We know also of the sweet fellowship the new converts enjoyed as they held meetings in the home of Lydia.—Phil. 1:3-5; Acts 16:14,15

The Apostle Paul and his companions in the ministry left Philippi under difficult circumstances, as recorded in Acts 16:16-40. The following paragraphs contain the scriptural record of these experiences, and though they were very trying to the flesh, they had a most blessed outcome according to the Spirit, in which the brethren rejoiced.

“And it came to pass, as we went to prayer, a certain damsel possessed with a spirit of divination met us, which brought her masters much gain by soothsaying: The same (Continued on page 36)

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(Continued from page 31) followed Paul and us, and cried, saying, These men are the servants of the most high God, which shew unto us the way of salvation. And this did she many days. But Paul, being grieved, turned and said to the spirit, I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And he came out the same hour.”—Acts 16:16-18

“And when her masters saw that the hope of their gains was gone, they caught Paul and Silas, and drew them into the marketplace unto the rulers. ... And the multitude rose up together against them: and the magistrates rent off their clothes, and commanded to beat them. And when they had laid many stripes upon them, they cast them into prison, charging the jailor to keep them safely: Who, having received such a charge, thrust them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks. And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them. And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened, and everyone’s bands were loosed.”—vss. 19,22-26

“And the keeper of the prison awaking out of his sleep, and seeing the prison doors open, he drew out his sword, and would have killed himself, supposing that the prisoners had been fled. But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, Do thyself no harm: for we are all here. Then he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas. And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house. And they spake unto him the word

of the Lord, and to all that were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway. And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house.”—vss. 27-34

“And when it was day, the magistrates sent the serjeants, saying, Let those men go. And the keeper of the prison told this saying to Paul, The magistrates have sent to let you go: now therefore depart, and go in peace. ... And they came and besought them, and brought them out, and desired them to depart out of the city. And they went out of the prison, and entered into the house of Lydia: and when they had seen the brethren, they comforted them, and departed.”—vss. 35,36,39,40

The foregoing is a heart-stirring account of the events which concluded Paul’s ministry in Philippi. It would be most interesting to consider these experiences at length, if space permitted. Indeed, Paul would not have had the opportunity to bring salvation to the jailer and his household except through the trouble that brought them in contact with each other, and by the miraculous deliverance accorded through the providence of God. With this background of Paul’s experiences while in Philippi, we now wish to examine in detail some of the lessons the Apostle provided in his epistle to this beloved ecclesia, with a focus primarily on Philippians chapter 3.

REJOICE

Verse 1 of chapter 3 reads: “Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. To write the same things again is no trouble to me, and it is a safeguard for you.”

(New American Standard Bible) One of the primary instructions in this letter is that every follower of Christ should “rejoice in the Lord.” The word “rejoice” in its various forms appears twelve times in this epistle, more than in any other of Paul’s writings. To rejoice is sometimes not easy. Indeed, when things go our way we can rejoice without difficulty, but in trials and tests it can be challenging. In this epistle, however, we are told to be “always” in an attitude of rejoicing.—Phil. 4:4

The secret of rejoicing in tribulation, in sorrow, in all things, and being cheerful in the hard and difficult experiences, is that the Christian has hope. We know this is the key to our rejoicing and cheerfulness, for Paul tells us so. He says that we “rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; And patience, experience; and experience, hope: And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which is given unto us.” (Rom. 5:2-5) If our hope is strong we will be able to “rejoice in the Lord” and be cheerful in every experience which he knows is necessary to prepare us for the fruition of that “hope for the glory of God.”

JUDAIZING TEACHERS

Philippians 3:2,3 read: “Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision. For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.” Even in Philippi, which was a long distance from Jerusalem, it did not take long for Judaizing teachers to find the new converts to

Christianity. These Judaizers were a group who accepted Jesus as the Savior, but only of Israel. Thus, they insisted that a Gentile could be saved only by entering divine favor through the gate of the Jewish Law. As part of this, they taught that only circumcised converts could be accepted by God.

This group is mentioned in Acts 15:1,2: “Certain men which came down from Judaea taught the brethren, and said, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved. When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question.”

It is not surprising that Paul was the object of their animosity, for he disagreed with their teaching. Paul taught the real circumcision of the heart through Christ, and that the circumcision of the flesh was of no importance to the Christian’s salvation. “He is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.” —Rom. 2:28,29

Paul’s point in these verses is that only those fully consecrated to God, whether Jew or Gentile by birth, are the truly circumcised, the truly clean, the truly justified, in their hearts. Such circumcision is not according to the “letter,” but the “spirit” of God’s law, and comes to us only through the merit of Christ’s redemptive work. This is why Paul said in the verse quoted earlier that we “rejoice in

Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.” (Phil. 3:3) That is, we have no confidence in fleshly things such as circumcision in order to attain salvation, but our confidence is only in Christ Jesus. Hence, our rejoicing is in him.

PAUL’S HERITAGE

“Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more.” (Phil. 3:4) Because Paul did not agree with the Judaizers, it would appear that they challenged his birth, some perhaps even insisting that he was a Gentile or, at best, not fully of Jewish heritage. He therefore answers their charges, and most categorically, as shown in the portions of verse 5 quoted below.

Paul said he was “circumcised the eighth day.” Why the eighth day? Converts to Judaism were circumcised after they became converts. Ishmaelites, who were sons of Abraham, but not Jews, were circumcised at thirteen years of age. Unconverted heathen or Gentiles were not circumcised at all. By stating that he was circumcised the eighth day the Apostle was proving that he was born a Jew.—Gen. 17:12,25; 21:4

“Of the stock of Israel,” Paul continued. Had he said, “Of the stock of Abraham,” that could mean he might have been an Ishmaelite, but “the stock of Israel” was pure Jewish stock. Thus, he was not a proselyte, nor an Ishmaelite, but an Israelite. Furthermore, he was “of the tribe of Benjamin.” Israel’s King Saul was from this tribe, and Paul, whose original name was “Saul, of Tarsus,” was likely named after him. (I Sam. 9:1,2; Acts 9:11)

The tribe of Benjamin, along with the tribe of Judah, were also more favored by God.

“An Hebrew of the Hebrews.” That is, Paul was a Hebrew from Hebrew parents. He spoke Greek, but he also spoke Hebrew as proven by the account found in Acts 21:40 and 22:2 in which is recorded that he spoke “in the Hebrew tongue” to the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem. “As touching the law, a Pharisee.” Those who criticized Paul often claimed that they were upholding the validity of the Law. None professed to uphold the Law more than did the Pharisees, and so he emphasized that he was a Pharisee. In Acts 23:6, Paul further confirmed this, saying, “Men and brethren, I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee.”

GAIN THROUGH LOSS

After presenting these proofs of his Jewish heritage, Paul said in effect, “Yes, I am circumcised, and of Israelitish stock, from the tribe of Benjamin, but none of this matters.” We note his exact words, recorded in Philippians 3:7,8: “Whatever things were gain to me, those things I have counted as loss for the sake of Christ. More than that, I count all things to be loss in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may gain Christ.”—*NASB*

As followers of Christ we also must learn the lesson of “gain” through “loss.” Our relationship with God may mean the loss of worldly friends, aims and ambitions. However, it also means the gain of fellowship with our Heavenly Father and with his Son, Christ Jesus, and with our brethren in the

Lord's spiritual family. (I John 1:3) The Apostle's words to the brethren at Philippi indicate that all of this has to do with how we measure values. The Christian's sense of values is one thing; the world's sense of values is quite another.

RIGHTEOUSNESS WHICH COMES FROM GOD

In Philippians 3:9, Paul continues his personal testimony, stating his desire to "be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." Bible students have come to understand that the words "righteousness" and "justification," as used in the New Testament, imply a similar thought. The apostle taught that Christians are "justified by faith" in the blood of Christ. (Rom. 5:1,8,9) This means, then, that justification is not through one's own righteousness. Similarly, for Paul, and other Jewish believers of his day, justification was not through the Mosaic Law, for no one could keep it since all were imperfect. Indeed, then as well as today, there are "none righteous," neither Jew nor Gentile, for "all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."—Rom. 3:10,23

The Apostle Paul desired to be "found in him." The thought is to be found in union with Christ. This would not be possible through his own righteousness, the apostle said, but only through faith in the righteousness of Christ. To have the Lord's righteousness as the basis for his justification, Paul could be in union with Christ, "found in him." All of this, the apostle concluded, was based on the workings of the Heavenly Father—it was "of God

by faith.” In another place Paul stated much the same thing, saying, “It is God that justifieth.” (Rom. 8:33) Certainly we can rejoice with Paul in the knowledge that such a standing belongs to the consecrated of God.

“THAT I MAY KNOW HIM”

Paul’s earnest desire was to know the Heavenly Father and his Son Christ Jesus as fully as possible. He expresses it in this way to the Philippian brethren: “That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.” (Phil. 3:10,11) Note the result of having this justification or righteousness from God through faith in Jesus: “That I might know him.” Unless one is reconciled to God, it is not possible to really know him or his beloved Son.

The apostle also wanted to know and participate in the “fellowship” of Christ’s sufferings. All the consecrated followers of the Lord have the privilege of sharing in the sufferings of Christ. (Rom. 8:17; Col. 1:24) To be made “conformable” to Jesus’ death, as Paul adds, does not necessarily mean undergoing physical death in the same manner that he did, nor that we must suffer physical martyrdom. Rather, it denotes conformity to the spirit of our Lord’s sacrificial death resulting from his unselfish love and complete devotion to his Heavenly Father.

This is the same thought expressed by the Apostle Peter: “Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: But rejoice, inasmuch as

ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy." (I Pet. 4:12,13) It is interesting to know that all this comes to the followers of Christ as a result of having the righteousness, or justification, which is from God through faith in Jesus Christ.

Paul desired, too, to know the full power of Christ's resurrection, the "first resurrection," which would include being made "priests of God and of Christ," and reigning with him in his Messianic kingdom for the purpose of blessing the entire world of mankind. (Rev. 20:6; 21:2-4) The *Rotherham Emphasized Bible* translation of Philippians 3:11 seems to convey the full import of the apostle's desire: "If by any means I may advance to the earlier resurrection, which is from among the dead."

PRESSING TOWARD THE MARK

The Apostle Paul makes it clear in our lesson that he did not consider himself to have reached the goal of his consecration. "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." (Phil. 3:12-14) *Wilson's Emphatic Diaglott* translates verse 14 using these words: "I press along the line, towards the prize of the high calling of God by Christ Jesus."

Here a racecourse is pictured, which has parallel lines to mark the area where a person should run. Thus, the Apostle said he ran and pressed along the line of full devotion to God, toward the “mark” of mature Christian love. Only by doing this, unto death, could he reach the prize of the high, heavenly calling—the prize of an incorruptible crown of life.—James 1:12; Rev. 2:10

The prize is bound up with the calling. It is promised when the call is issued and given after the call is complied with and fulfilled in the first resurrection. Quoting again Philippians 3:13,14 from the *Rotherham* translation: “The things behind forgetting, and unto the things before, eagerly reaching out, With the goal in view, I press on for the prize of the upward calling of God in Christ Jesus.”

WALKING PROPERLY

Not only does Paul liken our life in Christ to a racecourse, but he also speaks of it as a “walk.” He states, “Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you. Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing. Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample.” (Phil. 3:15-17) Paul’s reference to “as many as be perfect” refers to maturity in Christ. (see *Rotherham* and *Weymouth New Testament* translations) Let us grasp the lesson of this exhortation and seek to be “followers together” of the apostle, imitating and walking according to the example he set for us, just as he walked and followed after Christ.—I Cor. 11:1

We must be vigilant and ever watchful in our walk. “Many walk,” Paul says, “of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.”—Phil. 3:18,19

Here is another exhortation. Let us never oppose the Truth, and let us not exalt self. Those who do are enemies of the cross of Christ. Let us also not focus on earthly things. Rather, as Jesus said, let us “seek ... first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness,” and all the things needful to our flesh—our food, our clothing and our shelter—will be added unto us through the overruling providences of God’s care.—Matt. 6:33

OUR CITIZENSHIP

The concluding words of Philippians chapter 3 are these: “For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ: who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself.”—vss. 20,21, *NASB*

In order to attain maturity in Christ, we must remember that our “country,” the commonwealth of which we are citizens, is in heaven. Keeping that in mind will be of great assistance to us as we walk in the footsteps of Jesus, for that is where his citizenship lay. (John 17:16; 18:36) Let us rejoice in the privileges of this status and make sure that our full allegiance is towards our heavenly country.

It is our Lord Jesus who will “change the body of our humble state.” Our present body is humble in the sense that it is a body of imperfection, disesteem, and inadequate ability to glorify God as we would like. If faithful, however, think of what our change will be, for the Apostle Paul says: “It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: It is sown in dishonour; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body.”—I Cor. 15:42-44

Paul’s exhortation to the Philippians, and also to us, is this: If we are mature Christians, if we are faithful to our citizenship, the body of our humiliation will someday have served its purpose, and ere long we will have a body in “conformity with the body of His glory.” The Apostle John presents the matter using these encouraging words: “Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.”—I John 3:1,2

In the last verse of our lesson, Philippians 3:21, the apostle says that the work of God, through Christ, is not merely to transform us into the image of his Son, but also to subdue, or make subject, “all things to himself.” The *James Moffatt* translation states that the Lord will “transform the body that belongs to our low estate till it resembles the body of his Glory, by the same power that enables him to make everything subject to himself.” This includes not only the work of subjecting the body of Christ,

the church, but also that of eventually subjecting “all things,” in heaven and on earth, to his rule of righteousness. “That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him.” (Eph. 1:10) We thank our Heavenly Father for the messages given to us by him through the Apostles of Jesus Christ! ■

Savior, Like a Shepherd Lead Us

*Savior, like a shepherd lead us,
Much we need Thy tender care;
In Thy pleasant pastures feed us,
For our use Thy fold prepare.*

*We are Thine, do Thou befriend us,
Be the guardian of our way,
Keep Thy flock, from foes defend us,
Let us never go astray.*

*Fully let us have Thy favor,
Fully we would do Thy will;
Blessed Lord and only Savior,
With Thy love and likeness fill.*

*Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus,
Thou hast loved us, love us still;
Blessed Jesus, blessed Jesus,
Thou has loved us, love us still.*

—*Hymns of Dawn*

Seeking First the Kingdom and God's Righteousness

*“Take no thought,
saying, What shall
we eat? or, What
shall we drink? or,
Wherewithal shall
we be clothed? ...*

*But seek ye first
the kingdom of
God, and his
righteousness.”*

—Matthew 6:31,33

THROUGHOUT HUMAN

history it has always been necessary to expend significant effort to provide for oneself and those dependent upon us. Earning a living has seldom been easy, and for many it has become more difficult with the constant changes in our modern world.

Years ago, people might have worked at only one company their entire life. In today's business environment that is rare. Globalization has resulted in the relocation of many factory and office jobs to other places in the world where wages and benefits are significantly less, causing job losses at home.

Another potential impact to future employment may be Artificial Intelligence, known also as “AI.” This technology began in the 1950s and was founded on the claim that human intelligence can be so precisely described that a machine can be made to simulate it. AI uses computer systems to mimic human brain functions such as learning and problem solving. During the 21st century AI has experienced a resurgence, and some experts herald the future benefits of AI for many applications, such as speech recognition and autonomously driven vehicles. Other experts believe AI may result in mass unemployment. Globalization, AI and perhaps many other factors could cause us to have much anxiety regarding our ability to earn a living.

A LESSON FOR OUR DAY

In a portion of Jesus’ teachings, commonly referred to as the Sermon on the Mount, he told his followers, “Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?” (Matt. 6:31) The use of the word “therefore” implies that Jesus was connecting these words with something he had just previously said.

Similar words to the above are also noted in Luke 12:29, and in the beginning of that chapter an event is recorded which we believe prompted Jesus to give this admonition. A large crowd had gathered, and after Jesus gave three lessons for their benefit, someone in the crowd asked the Master a totally unrelated question, “Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me.” Jesus used this opportunity to teach an important

concept, and he said to them all, “Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man’s life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.”—Luke 12:13,14, *New International Version*

PARABLE OF A RICH MAN

Jesus then gave a parable to emphasize this lesson. He said, “The ground of a certain rich man produced a good crop. He thought to himself, What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops. Then he said, This is what I’ll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I’ll say to myself, You have plenty of good things laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry. But God said to him, You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?” Jesus then summarized the lesson of the parable, saying, “This is how it will be with anyone who stores up things for himself but is not rich towards God.”—Luke 12:16-21, *NIV*

Returning to Matthew chapter 6, we find recorded these words of Jesus, which he said after giving the parable: “Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.”—Matt. 6:19-21

OUR TREASURE

Our “treasure” is quite likely those things which we think or talk about the most, and which give us the most inward satisfaction and joy in life. Such

“treasure” could be our job, the place where we live, the car we drive, money, possessions, prestige, the admiration of others, and various other aspects of our present fleshly life which bring us satisfaction. Truly, if such temporal things are our “treasure,” that is where our hearts will be mostly focused. Jesus, however, instructed us to store up “treasures in heaven.” Let us, then, consider what heavenly treasure is, and how we are to gather and store it up.

When we die and, if found faithful, are resurrected to the spirit nature, we will bring none of our earthly goods with us to the heavenly realm. Our clothes, dwelling place, automobile, bank accounts, and all other temporal possessions will be left behind. Instead, the only thing related to this life which we will bring with us is our consecrated heart, mind and character. The question we should thus ask ourselves at the present time is: What are we storing up, or developing now, as it relates to these all-important matters of our Christian life?

The heavenly treasures which our Father is pleased to have us gather are briefly summarized in the Apostle Paul’s listing of the fruits of the Spirit, which are stored up as we develop them in our hearts and minds and demonstrate them in our daily life. This fruitage includes the character qualities of love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance. (Gal. 5:22,23) The laying up of these eternal treasures is not the work of a day, but continual effort and diligence throughout our Christian walk are required.

The Apostle Peter adds to the list of heavenly treasure which we should store up, saying: “Giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity [love].” (II Peter 1:5-7) Peter then adds: “For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. ... For if ye do these things, ye shall never fall.” (vss. 8,10) Indeed, it is a life-long work to develop these treasures of Christian character.

OUR “EYE”

Returning to the words of Jesus recorded in Matthew chapter 6, he says: “The eye is the lamp of the body. So if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light. But if your eye is evil, your whole body will be full of darkness. Therefore, if the light within you has turned to darkness, how great is that darkness! No one can serve two masters, because either he will hate one and love the other, or he will be loyal to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and riches.”—vss. 22-24, *International Standard Version*

Here we believe Jesus used the word “eye” symbolically to refer to our singleness of purpose in life. How important it is for us to adjust our vision as to how we “see” our aims and hopes in the present life. If we have healthy spiritual eyesight, we will place more value upon spiritual things and upon our future, in comparison with our present life, and thereby set our priorities appropriately.

As we do so, we will be more and more enabled to look upon the issues and concerns of the present and view them from the standpoint of our eternal spiritual welfare.

DO NOT BE ANXIOUS

Then Jesus said, "Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing?" (Matt. 6:25, *English Standard Version*) Worry and anxiety will not change the facts of a situation or problem and thus accomplishes nothing worthwhile. Most importantly, anxiety can be detrimental to our Christian development because it can undermine and erode our faith in God and his promises, and it can also cause discouragement.

Some have mistakenly concluded that Jesus meant we should be completely careless regarding our future needs. However, God has not given us this principle in his creation nor in the Scriptures. In nature, for example, God has arranged seasons for the various plants to begin life, grow, produce fruitage, and finally to harvest. In order for a farmer to have a crop to harvest, first the soil must be carefully prepared, then appropriate seeds must be planted in a correct manner, followed by adequate watering and sunshine. Adverse weeds must also be carefully and continually removed.

God has intended that we recognize similar principles in our life. Most of us probably do not grow all the food we eat, nor do we build our own houses or make our own clothes. Therefore, we need to

buy food, which requires a certain amount of money. Necessary funds are also required to have a place in which to dwell, and to have clothes to wear. In order to provide these things consistently for ourselves and our families, we need income and, therefore, must work at some type of job.

PROVIDING FOR FUTURE NEEDS

We should reject the idea that Jesus was teaching us to be careless or thoughtless regarding our daily and future material needs. Jesus never instructed his disciples along these lines. For example, after Jesus miraculously fed a great multitude using only five barley loaves and two small fishes, he instructed his disciples, saying, “Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost.” The disciples gathered and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves.” (John 6:1-13) Here Jesus gave an important lesson, in that the fragments helped provide food for the next day. It is also encouraging to our faith to notice that as a result of following Jesus’ instructions, each of the twelve apostles had a basket filled with fragments of the barley loaves—not one of them was forgotten!

Another example, from the Old Testament, is the account of Pharaoh’s two dreams, recorded in Genesis 41:1-36. In the first dream, seven fat cattle first appeared, but were then eaten by seven thin cattle. The second dream was similar—seven fat ears of corn first appeared, but were then eaten by seven shriveled ears of corn. God permitted Joseph to interpret the meaning of Pharaoh’s dreams, which indicated that there would be seven years of bountiful harvest in Egypt, followed by seven years of

famine. Joseph advised Pharaoh to store one-fifth of the harvest during each bountiful year, so there would be adequate food during the seven years of famine. Here we see again the important lesson of not being careless or thoughtless concerning future needs.

What then did Jesus mean when he said we should not worry or be anxious about our life, what we will eat or drink, or what we will wear? We believe the Master meant we should not worry or be anxious about these things in the sense of letting material or earthly matters become our primary focus in life—that is, our “treasure.”

Before we gave ourselves in full consecration to serve God, we may have thought of all our possessions on earth as our own. However, when we dedicated our lives to God and the doing of his will, we gave him our “all.” He, then, became the owner of everything in our possession, and we were made “stewards,” or “custodians,” over all these things, to use them to the greatest extent possible in his service, and for our eternal spiritual interests.

Consecrating ourselves to God does not mean that we should have no possessions, nor that we cannot love any of our fellow human creation. Jesus did not mean that a husband should not love his wife, nor a wife her husband. He did not mean that parents cannot love their children, nor children their parents. He did not tell us that we should not appreciate and love the beauties found in nature. On the contrary, in the verses which follow Jesus draws our attention to lessons learned by observing nature. Jesus simply meant that none of these earthly things should become our “treasure.”

LESSONS FROM NATURE

Jesus then proceeded to give examples from nature. He said: “Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life? And why do you worry about clothes? See how the lilies of the field grow. They do not labour or spin. Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendour was dressed like one of these. If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? So do not worry, saying, What shall we eat? or What shall we drink? or What shall we wear? ... Your heavenly Father knows that you need them.”—Matt. 6:26-32, *NIV*

Finally, in verse 33 Jesus tells us, “Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness.” The Greek word translated “first” in this text is defined by *Strong’s Greek Dictionary* as first “in time, place, order, or importance.” In other words, Jesus admonishes that the work of first or primary importance in our life should be that of seeking the kingdom of God, and seeking his righteousness.

SEEK FIRST THE KINGDOM OF GOD

One way we can seek first the kingdom of God is by becoming like a little child. Jesus taught his followers, saying, “Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child shall in no wise enter therein.” (Luke 18:17) This does not mean we should keep ourselves in a child-like state with

regard to knowledge and wisdom, nor to remain with an undeveloped character. Rather, Jesus meant we should become childlike in the sense of learning to trust God completely and with simplicity, thereby becoming humble, teachable and obedient towards him. As the psalmist wrote, “When I am afraid, I will put my trust in you. In God, whose word I praise, in God I trust; I shall not be afraid.” (Ps. 56:3,4, *ESV*) The Scriptures also tell us, “Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.”—Prov. 3:5,6

Another important element in seeking first the kingdom of God is that of having cheerful endurance when going through persecutions, tribulations, or difficulties in life. The Apostle Paul spoke from personal experience regarding persecutions and tribulations. After being nearly stoned to death in the city of Lystra, he departed the next day with Barnabas to the town of Derbe and preached the gospel in that city, teaching many. Then Paul did something quite remarkable. He returned to Lystra, where he had recently been stoned, and exhorted the brethren there to “continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.” (Acts 14:1-22) How this must have encouraged and strengthened the brethren in Lystra!

SEEK FIRST RIGHTEOUSNESS

It is not enough that the Lord’s followers seek the kingdom of God, because one might have wrong motives for doing so, such as selfishly seeking to

attain honor and glory, or desiring to have power and authority. Therefore, Jesus said that we should not only seek the kingdom, but also seek righteousness. (Matt. 6:33) Jesus taught at the beginning of his sermon on the mount, “Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.” (Matt. 5:6) This thought includes the development of a deep and lasting desire to follow righteous principles in our daily life, striving in both little and big matters to be righteous, just, loving, and peaceable.

One practical example of seeking righteousness is learning to speak evil of no one. We are not to join in, nor be sympathetic towards, slander, gossip, or evil surmising. On the contrary, we are to think upon and rejoice in those things which are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, and of good report.” (Phil. 4:8) Much of our time should be devoted to self-examination as to whether we are truly seeking first the righteousness which comes from God and from his Son, Christ Jesus. Such righteousness is not to be merely in terms of dollars and cents, but also in words and actions. Additionally, we are to be righteous in our thoughts—towards our Heavenly Father, our brethren, our neighbors, and even ourselves. Paul said that the weapons of our spiritual warfare are “mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds; Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.” —II Cor. 10:4,5

Another way to seek righteousness is by having the proper reaction when persecuted or ostracized

because of striving to follow after that which is right and good. As Jesus taught, “Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness’ sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven.”—Matt. 5:10-12

To seek God’s righteousness means to develop that which would “exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees.” (vs. 20) Many religious leaders during Jesus’ earthly ministry were careful to outwardly follow certain rules and traditions, but inwardly they had not developed a proper heart attitude. (Matt. 23:25-28) In the book of Hebrews we are admonished: “Exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.” (Heb. 3:13) Here the word “hardened” comes from a root word in the Greek language which means “hard, tough, harsh, severe.” Let us examine ourselves each day and make every effort to avoid having a spirit or heart attitude which is hard or severe, but instead develop the spirit of love, which is a Godly spirit.

The righteousness we are to seek is that “which is of faith.” (Rom. 10:6; Phil. 3:9) A love for such righteousness must originate from within our heart. As the apostle further wrote, “With the heart man believeth [has faith] unto righteousness.” Then, Paul continues, by our words and accompanying actions “confession is made unto salvation.”—Rom 10:10

FAITHFUL IN ALL THINGS—TEMPORAL AND SPIRITUAL

As noted earlier, most of us are faced with the necessity of making a living during a good portion of our lives. Regardless of how we do this, we must give proper attention to it. If employed by someone else, whether an individual or a company, we should render faithful service. If we have our own business, we should give proper attention to it, in order to provide whatever service we have committed to others. There are no set rules given in the Bible regarding exactly how much time and effort we should devote to our material needs. Each follower of Christ must determine this himself, according to individual circumstances, realizing that all matters of life, whether temporal or spiritual, are to be under the guidance and direction of the Lord.

Our need to eat, to clothe ourselves, and to have a place to live is very real. This being the case, it can become a severe test of our faith to rise above these things and to “seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness.” The strength which will help us in this struggle emanates from our faith, and “faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” (Rom. 10:17) This means that in order to have the faith necessary to seek first the things of God, we must study his Word and believe it.

Finally, we call to mind this all-important admonition of Paul: “Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”—Phil. 4:6, *NIV* ■

SPEAKERS' APPOINTMENTS

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

S. Jeuck

Kansas City, MO July 1
Boise, ID 26
Casper, WY/Denver, CO 28

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

T. N. Alexander

New Brunswick, NJ July 6,7

G. Balko

Prince Albert, SK June 29-July 1

W. Dutka

Prince Albert, SK June 29-July 1

J. Freer

Prince Albert, SK June 29-July 1

B. Jakubowski

Prince Albert, SK June 29-July 1

A. Oystryk

Prince Albert, SK June 29-July 1

R. Shahan

Chicago, IL July 7

B. Sweeney

Prince Albert, SK June 29-July 1

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.

PRINCE ALBERT/SASKATOON CONVENTION, June 29-July 1—Siwak Farm, RR 1, Prince Albert, SK, Canada S6V 5P8. Contact B. Siwak. Phone: (306) 960-5526 or Email: bswk77@gmail.com

BIBLE STUDENTS GENERAL CONVENTION, July 20-25—New Location—University of Idaho, 709 Deakin Avenue, Moscow, ID 83843. Contact E. Kuenzli. Phone: (407) 670-4189 or Email: ekuenzli@cfl.rr.com, or visit BibleStudentsGeneralConv.org

BENIN REPUBLIC CONVENTION, July 26-28—Semekpodji Porto Novo, route pk 16klm, Benin Republic. Contact E. Okorie. Phone: + 229 65505568, + 229 97059452 or Email: bbsecclesias@yahoo.com

RED DEER CONVENTION, August 9-11—Golden Circle Senior Centre, 4217 50 Avenue, Red Deer, AB, Canada. Rooms available at Super 8 Hotel, 4217 50 Avenue. Phone: (403) 358-7722. Mention Alberta Bible Students when booking. Other information, contact J. Neumeier. Email: jbnemeier@live.com

JACKSON CONVENTION, August 17,18—**New Location**—Jackson College, Bert Walker Hall, 2111 Emmons Road, Jackson, MI 49201. Contact L. Davis. Phone: (517) 414-5544 or Email: lydadav@gmail.com

NIGERIA GENERAL CONVENTION, August 23-25—Central School Obudi Agwa Owerri, Imo State, Nigeria. Contact C. O. Egbu. Phone: +2348033339949 or Email: egbucaje@gmail.com

NEW YORK CONVENTION, August 31-September 1—Doubletree Hotel Mahwah, 180 Route 17 South, Mahwah, NJ. For reservations, phone: (201) 529-5880. Deadline for reserving rooms at subsidized rate is August 16. Other information, contact G. Passios. Phone: (201) 939-3196 or Email: gpassios11@verizon.net

SEATTLE CONVENTION, August 31-September 2—Seattle Scottish Rite Center, 1207 N 152nd Street, Shoreline, WA 98133. Contact L. Flinn. Phone: (206) 518-2678 or Email: laurie@flinn.us

TENNESSEE VALLEY CONVENTION, September 7,8—Comfort Inn, 4725 University Drive, Huntsville, AL. Contact T. Allen. Email: timallen6768@gmail.com

WASHINGTON DC CONVENTION, September 14,15—Hilton Garden Inn BWI Airport, 1516 Aero Drive, Linthicum Heights, MD 21090. Phone: (410) 691-0500. Contact M. Earl. Email: washingtonbiblestudents@gmail.com

COLUMBUS HARVEST CONVENTION, September 21,22—Ledwinka Farm, 10004 E 550 N, Columbus, IN 47203. Contact E. Ledwinka. Email: ledwinka@hughes.net

NAMBOUR CONVENTION, September 27-29—Alexandra Park Conference Centre, 13 Mari Street, Alexandra Headland, QLD, Australia 4572. Contact D. Greenhalgh. Email: darryngreenhalgh@hotmail.com

COLORADO CONVENTION, October 4-6—Holiday Inn Express & Suites, 17140 West Colfax Avenue, Golden, CO 80401. Contact D. Moss. Email: deb.moss@comcast.net

WEST NEWTON CONVENTION, October 5,6—Sewickley Grange Hall, Route 136, West Newton, PA 15089. Contact L. Mlinek. Email: lmlinek@verizon.net

GRAND RAPIDS CONVENTION, October 12,13—Kenowa Hills Middle School, 3950 Hendershot Avenue NW, Grand Rapids, MI 49544. Contact T. Malinowski. Phone: (616) 304-7691 or Email: malinowski.tjm@gmail.com

ORLANDO CONVENTION, October 26,27—South Seminole Lodge, 122 Triplet Lake Drive, Casselberry, FL 32707. Contact C. Goodman. Phone: (407) 695-6815 or Email: clmgoodman@gmail.com

SAN LUIS OBISPO CONVENTION, October 26,27—Masonic Hall, 859 Marsh Street, San Luis Obispo, CA. Contact M. Allard. Phone: (805) 773-2962 or Email: medlallard@juno.com

MILWAUKEE CONVENTION, November 2,3—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 3—Italian-American Club, 85 Chase Lane, West Haven, CT. Contact A. Suraci. Phone: (203) 248-3793/(203) 430-5770 or Email: annasuraci@comcast.net