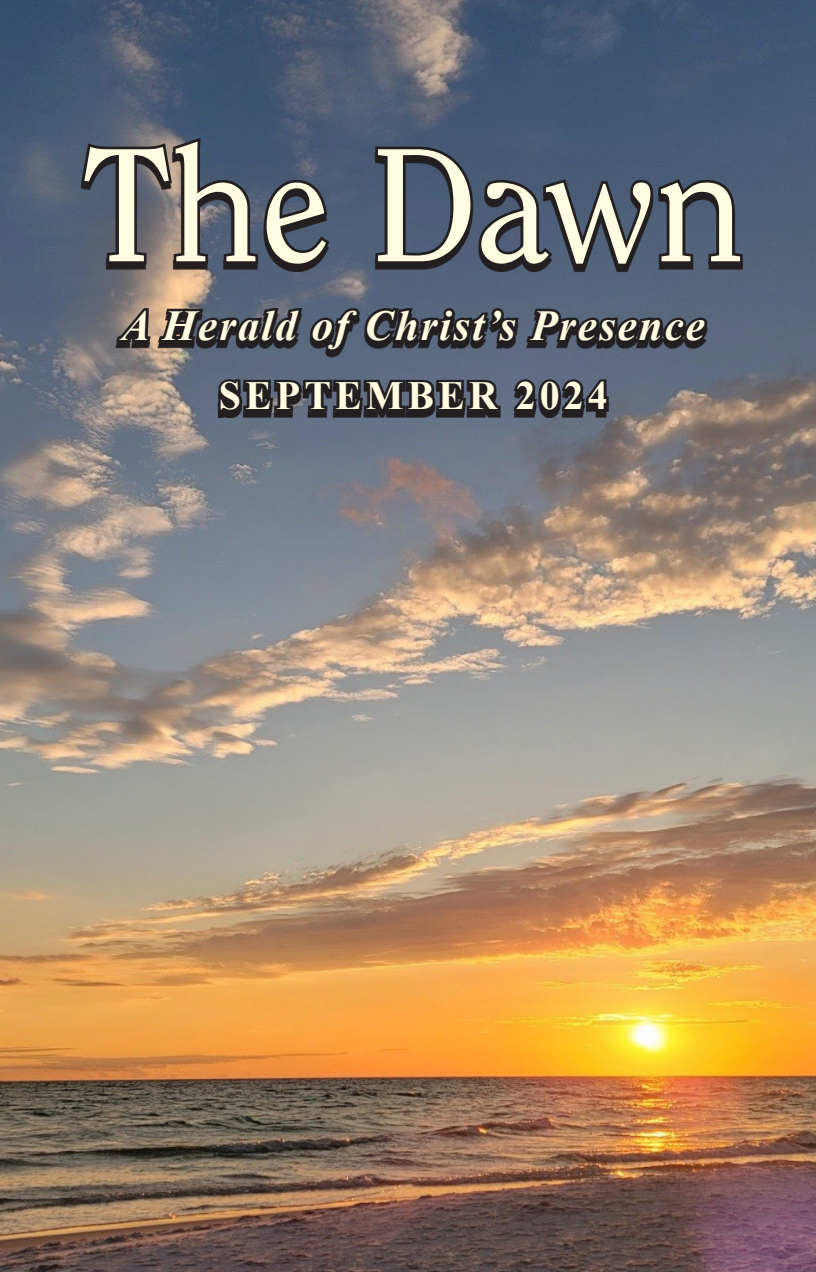
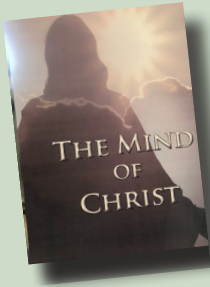


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“There Is a River”

*“There is a river,
the streams
whereof shall make
glad the city of
God, the holy place
of the tabernacles
of the most High.”*

—*Psalm 46:4*

THE FORTY-SIXTH PSALM

was written as an encouragement to Christians during the time since Pentecost, and particularly for today. Its symbolisms describe certain unique aspects of God’s dealings with his people in the troublesome experiences through which they pass at the present time.

The psalm begins: “God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; Though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof.” The comforting thought that God is our refuge is expressed many times in the Scriptures. One such place is Proverbs 18:10: “The name of the LORD is a strong tower: the righteous runneth into it, and is safe,” or as the *International Standard Version* says, “is lifted up above the danger.”

Pictured here is a strong tower, a place where the righteous, God’s people, come to him and, as a consequence, are made safe, or are lifted up. These

are indeed encouraging words. All who seek refuge in God have the additional promise of Psalm 91:9-12: “Because thou hast made the LORD, which is my refuge, even the most High, thy habitation; There shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling. For he shall give his angels charge over thee to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.” This last verse was quoted, and misapplied, by the devil in connection with the second temptation of Jesus in the wilderness. (Matt. 4:5-7) Our Heavenly Father did not call upon Jesus to recklessly endanger his life and then expect miraculous deliverance. Angels are certainly used to offer protection and oversight to all those who belong to the Lord, but only in accordance with the will of our Heavenly Father.—Luke 22:42

After Jesus was tempted of the devil in the wilderness we are told that angels came and ministered to him. (Matt. 4:11) Peter’s miraculous deliverance by an angel from prison and from an untimely death, is also recorded. (Acts 12:7-11) We, too, share the encouragement of Psalm 34:7, which says, “The angel of the LORD encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them.” This is a very inspiring truth which gives us strength and confidence as we walk in the Christian way.

God’s wisdom may determine that our deliverance from an experience or trial will be by its removal, such as in the case of Peter. At other times divine wisdom may determine our deliverance will be, not the removal of the experience, but instead by giving us his sustaining strength, so that we “may be able to endure,” the trial, such as in the case of James,

who was killed.—Acts 12:1-3; I Cor. 10:13, *English Standard Version*

HELP IN TROUBLE

God is a “very present help in trouble,” the psalmist says. He is always there; we need merely to call upon him for assistance. Since we are walking in the way that God’s Word describes as leading to trial and testing, it is comforting to remember that his help is always nigh. Although it is true that “we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom,” each of us can testify that during such trying experiences we have personally found God to be a helper in every time of need. (Acts 14:22) As we think back on our Christian walk from the first time we came to the Lord down to the present day, we are made aware that he has always given us grace sufficient.—II Cor. 12:9

When difficult trials come, we can think back upon God’s dealings with us in the past and remember how he has delivered us and helped us to overcome. Thus these lessons serve as building blocks, and we are made stronger for the tests of the moment. “Since God is on our side, who can be against us,” is another favorite text of many Christians, and it is also a bulwark to strengthen us in times of stress.—Rom. 8:31, *New International Reader’s Version*

PROPHETIC OF OUR DAY

The prophetic background of the forty-sixth psalm concerns the time of the removal of this symbolic earth. Verse two reads, “Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea.” The word translated “removed” means “changed.”

The psalmist is not speaking of the planet Earth, because we are assured in Ecclesiastes 1:4 that “the earth abideth for ever.” The word earth, as used in the psalm, is an apt symbol of the social order that exists among men on the earth. Now it is under the dominion of Satan, who is the god of this world—the social order Peter speaks of as “the heavens and the earth, which are now.” (II Cor. 4:4; II Pet. 3:7) The psalmist described this same order of things as it would exist near its end using the picture of “mountains” being “carried into the midst of the sea.” He continues this thought in the third verse, saying, “Though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof,” sketching before our mental vision a turbulent sea which is so powerful that it causes the mountains to fall.

Isaiah 17:12,13 identifies these raging waters as the troubled nations: “Woe to the multitude of many people, which make a noise like the noise of the seas; and to the rushing of nations, that make a rushing like the rushing of mighty waters! The nations shall rush like the rushing of many waters: but God shall rebuke them, and they shall flee far off, and shall be chased as the chaff of the mountains before the wind, and like a rolling thing before the whirlwind.” In this text, as in the forty-sixth psalm, the seas are descriptive of the turbulent masses of people in revolt. The mountains which are carried into the midst of the sea represent the kingdoms and governments of this world. Our psalm gives its own interpretation in verse six, saying, “The nations raged, the kingdoms were moved.” (*Revised Version*) We find that these

kingdoms have been, and are being, brought down by the subjects of their respective governments. Why are these restless masses bent upon destroying the old order? As one writer has so aptly expressed it, they seek "to gain their real and fancied rights." Some are legitimate, and some are not. This statement helps to explain the underlying force which is destroying the present world order.

INSTANT COMMUNICATION

Daniel wrote in the twelfth chapter of his prophecy about the great increase of knowledge in our day. (vs. 4) Ironically, this greater knowledge which man had hoped would deliver him out of trouble has in fact created more chaos. Because of the selfishness of man, much of this increased knowledge has been applied in a way detrimental to peace and the welfare of mankind, and has helped to bring about a time of trouble such as has never before been upon the face of the earth.—vs. 1

In analyzing the manner in which knowledge has increased, we note that tremendous changes in communications have been greatly involved. If it were not for these phenomena, especially the developments of the past several hundred years, many things which have come to pass in the earth today in fulfillment of prophecy would not have occurred. The very beginning of communication upgrading was the invention of the printing press in the fifteenth century. Since that time, improvements in communication have continued at an ever-increasing pace up to our day. Now we have electronic, computer controlled printers, many of which can produce more output in only a few

minutes than all of those early presses could in a year. Commonplace now are the mass media devices, not only of radio and television, but also pocket-size “smart” phones and many other types of portable communication devices.

These, together with worldwide access to the Internet, provide instant information of every sort around the clock, every day of the year. Such access to information has promoted unrest in people regarding present circumstances, by increasing their awareness of the underprivileged status of their lives. Indeed, improved communications have truly had an effect in bringing about dynamic upheavals in the society of earth.

PICTORIAL LANGUAGE

In the pictorial language of Psalm 46, this condition of upheaval is likened to the oceans roaring and being troubled, lashed into a foam. (vs. 3, *New Living Translation*) Thus all the discontent in the earth is depicted as a rolling ocean, breaking against the base of the mountains or kingdoms of this world, and shaking these to their very foundations—bringing about their destruction.—Hag. 2:6,7

Jesus used a similar figure in Luke 21:25,26. He said one sign of the end of this age, or social order, was that there would be “upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity.” The word translated perplexity contains the thought of “no way out.” Continuing his description of this time, Jesus spoke of “the sea and the waves roaring; Men’s hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming upon the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken.” We could ask,

do we see this sign that we are living in the time Jesus described? Are we living in the time when men's hearts are failing them for fear?

A WORLD OF FEAR

In times past, people were not so consumed with fear. Today, however, the concerns of mankind are overwhelming and unsolvable. As we observe world conditions we note there is much that is distressing people as they view everyday events. Many are deeply troubled by increasing political division and polarization. There is military activity and war emanating from numerous corners of the globe and its resulting fear among the people. There are the fears emanating from the tenuous relations between the world's superpowers as they each seek to gain the upper hand among the nations. There is pollution, climate change, and global warming causing fear in many. Constant fear of financial and economic uncertainty plagues nearly all of society. Fear of unforeseen disease, such as was witnessed in recent years as a result of the Coronavirus pandemic, continues to be in the back of the minds of many. Then there is the fear that "culture wars" will continue to increase, whether along the lines of morality, race, religion, or other areas, to the extent that society in general will become so fragmented and divided that it may soon collapse upon itself for lack of direction.

Can we say that people's hearts are failing them for fear? Most assuredly. There is great anxiety in the world today among both small and great. According to Jesus' own testimony, when we see these things occurring we should not succumb to fear,

but realize their great import! “When these things begin to take place, stand up and lift up your heads, because your deliverance is approaching.” (Luke 21:28, *ISV*) These events which we see coming to pass are an indication that the church will soon be glorified and that Christ’s promised kingdom of righteousness and peace will be established in the earth.—Isa. 9:6,7; Dan. 2:44; Luke 1:32,33

In analyzing Jesus’ statements in Luke 21 quoted in the foregoing paragraphs, we conclude it was God’s purpose that some of his people should witness a portion of this time of trouble, even as we who are living today see these things. However, we are not to be fearful; we are not to be discouraged; we are not to be perplexed; because we know the trouble must come and we know why it must come. This should stimulate our faith and cause us to redouble our efforts to be pleasing to the Lord. It should encourage us to study the Bible more diligently than ever, examining and considering God’s plan—the only plan that provides salvation for all mankind. It should cause us to faithfully gather together, making the Truth our own and building up the Christian brotherhood. It should stimulate us to continue our efforts to spread the message of the “gospel of the kingdom.” (Matt. 24:14) Above all, we should be inspired to buckle on the “whole armour of God,” our spiritual protection in this “evil day.”—Eph. 6:11-13

We are exhorted also to be rejoicing Christians during this time, to “rejoice in the Lord” always, even though we will have trials and experiences that are not joyful to our flesh. (Phil. 4:4) We must have these trials. Paul tells us that they are needful

in order for us to learn valuable spiritual lessons, and to prove our Christian character. (Heb. 12:5-11) It is through such adversity that we prove our supreme love for the Heavenly Father, and our faith in his plan and in his promises. This testing determines whether we have a genuine faith, or if it is superficial and in times of stress will fade away. Paul reminds us that if we are rightly exercised by these trials, they will strengthen us; they will work out in us the “peaceable fruit of righteousness.”—vs. 11

A REFRESHING RIVER

A sudden change of scene occurs in the fourth and fifth verses of the forty-sixth psalm. “There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacle of the most High. God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved: God shall help her, and that right early.” After all the strife and turmoil, the fear and the trouble described in the opening verses, this portion of the psalm speaks of tranquility and peace; here is calm and security in sharp contrast to the turbulent seas. The river and its streams which make glad the city of God symbolize the refreshing truths of the plan of God; the “city of God” is the New Jerusalem in preparation, the church in its final stages of development.—Rev. 3:12

The river represents God’s plan as it is centered in Jesus. Normally a river is fed by its tributaries which flow into the river, making the river grow as it wanders along its course. However, the psalmist does not seem to be speaking about this kind of river, but rather about a watercourse similar to an irrigation system. In such a system water is drawn

off, refreshes the land, and makes it fruitful. If the river the psalmist speaks of represents the plan of God, then the streams that branch from it could well represent the numerous features of that plan pictured in the various fundamental teachings of the Scriptures. Those who drink of this river are refreshed, and by knowing God's purposes they are enabled to bring forth much fruit.—John 15:5,8

In II Peter 1:3,4, we read that God's "divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature." It is only through a knowledge of God's plan and his precious promises that we can appreciate his glorious character, and his attributes of justice, wisdom, love, and power. We have the privilege of drinking of this river and its streams now, and this knowledge of his plan has, indeed, made us glad. Without faith in God's plan, our hearts would fail us for fear, just as the majority of mankind is fearful.

David wrote in Psalm 43:3, "O send out thy light and thy truth: let them lead me; let them bring me unto thy holy hill, and to thy tabernacles." Similarly, in Psalm 46:4, David speaks of the "city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the most High." This refers back to Israel's Tabernacle in the wilderness, especially the Holy Place of that structure, which pictures the condition of spirit-begettal. God's people are in this condition now. Paul describes this in Ephesians 2:6, when he says that we "sit together in heavenly places in Christ

Jesus.” We are seated together in heavenly places—in the Holy of a greater Tabernacle. We attain this position through full dedication, or consecration, to do the will of God, and by living a life sanctified by the Holy Spirit. While dwelling in this Holy Place, we receive the benefits of its furnishings. Our new mind, symbolically speaking, is enlightened by the light from the golden candlestick, and we feed upon the bread of truth which is on the golden table. Our prayers are acceptable and our hopes are valid because of the sweet incense penetrating into the Most Holy and before God, which Jesus provided and placed upon the golden altar.—Exod. 30:26-29; 35:10-15; Heb. 9:1-12

COMFORT FOR GOD’S PEOPLE

In verse five of Psalm 46, we read, “God shall help her, and that right early.” The *Rotherham Emphasized Bible* reads, “God will help her, by the turnings of the morning.” This rendering expresses the thought that at the end of this present Gospel Age, just before the Messianic kingdom, God will help the church; and special help has come to us at this present time. We have received the blessing of the increasing light of Bible truths, greater privileges for witnessing and other types of service, expanded opportunities for assembly, multiple helps for clarifying the language of the Bible, understanding the signs of the times, and much more. Without question, however, the greatest help of all comes in the “first resurrection,” which, when complete, will bring to fruition the age-long hope of the church to be glorified with Christ as co-inheritors of his kingdom.—Rev. 20:6; 3:21; Rom. 8:16,17

Psalm 46:6,7 states that God “uttered his voice, the earth melted. The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah.” Even in the midst of these raging, turbulent events all about us described as the earth melting, we need not fear because God is our refuge. He is our high tower; he is our fortress, and we shall not be shaken! Then the word *Selah* expresses the thought, “Pause, and calmly think.”

FINALLY—PEACE FOR ALL MANKIND

The psalm continues: “Come behold the works of the LORD, what desolations he hath made in the earth. He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth; he breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder; he burneth the chariot in the fire. Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth.” These verses help us to see what will be the conclusion of present world events. The Lord’s voice of authority will finally be heard; then he will speak of peace; then he will bid all mankind to enter the earthly kingdom of God.—Matt. 6:9,10

Isaiah 60:18 says, “Violence shall no more be heard in thy land, wasting nor destruction within thy borders; but thou shalt call thy walls Salvation, and thy gates Praise.” This is a description of the symbolic New Jerusalem. Another scripture speaking of that time says, “The loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of men shall be made low: and the LORD alone shall be exalted in that day.” (Isa. 2:17) By this verse we are assured that man’s selfish character will be taken away, and he will learn to worship and serve the living God.

The river and the streams of this beautiful prophetic forty-sixth psalm are also mentioned in the Book of Revelation. “The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.” (Rev. 22:17) What a wonderful prophetic view of the Messianic kingdom when all mankind is brought to an accurate knowledge of God’s plans and purposes. (I Tim. 2:4-6) Zephaniah 3:9 tells of the harmony of that day: “For then I will turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the LORD, to serve him with one consent.” The pure, clear river will then flow from underneath the throne of God to bless all people. (Rev. 22:1) This is the same stream that we can, in prospect, drink from now—“a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God.”—Ps. 46:4 ■

WEEKLY PRAYER MEETING TEXTS

SEPTEMBER 5—“Jealousy is cruel as the grave: the coals thereof are coals of fire, which hath a most vehement flame.”—Canticles 8:6 (Z. ’03-330 Hymn 130)

SEPTEMBER 12—“In your patience possess ye your souls.”—Luke 21:19 (Z. ’03-361 Hymn 279)

SEPTEMBER 19—“Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.”—John 17:17 (Z. ’03-377 Hymn 238)

SEPTEMBER 26—“Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth into an holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.”—Ephesians 2:20-22 (Z. ’03-443 Hymn 58)

Gladness Will Come to Stay

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

—Hymns of Dawn

Abram and Lot Separate

Key Verse: *“Abram said unto Lot, Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen; for we be brethren.”*
—Genesis 13:8

Selected Scripture:
Genesis 13:1-18

they wanted. However, Abram did just this in dealing with his nephew Lot.

Abram’s desire for peace was genuine, and the various viewpoints of fallen human wisdom which usually affect such matters did not concern him. He was rich, but because of his faith in the promises which God had given him, he was not anxious concerning the maintaining or increasing of his flocks. (Gen. 12:1-3) Living in peace with his nephew was of greater value than flocks. Consequently, he said to Lot, “Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, ... for we be brethren.”

Abram suggested that Lot survey the whole land, decide which section suited him best, and then take possession of it. Abram further stated his willingness to

ABRAM’S AND LOT’S

herdsmen had been quarrelling because of insufficient grazing area for their respective flocks. (Gen. 13:2-7) This called for a peace treaty, and Abram, Lot’s uncle, was in a position to dictate those terms. Throughout history, few individuals or nations which were in a position to dictate the terms of peace have voluntarily suggested that those who were situated less favorably should have first choice in what

occupy what was left. (Gen. 13:8-12) For Abram, it was well worth making costly concessions in order to have peace with his kinsman.

Abram's example is a valuable lesson for us. We should endeavour to dwell together with others in peace. The extent to which we succeed depends largely upon our willingness to forego our personal rights and preferences, and our willingness to give others their choice.

Paul admonishes: "If possible, so far as it depends on you, live in peace with all people." (Rom. 12:18, *International Standard Version*) However, it may not always be possible. The Christian may find, at times, that it is necessary to take a firm stand for godly principles. We must be loyal to God, to the Truth, and to righteousness, regardless of the cost. (James 3:17) We should contend for these principles; yet, not with carnal weapons nor with bitter words, but with love and kindness. Self-advancement, self-enrichment, or self-glory are not principles for which any Christian should strive.

Lot chose the well-watered plain of Jordan, but the evil cities of Sodom and Gomorrah were located there. He chose the "best" so far as material advantage was concerned. However, he was "tortured in his righteous soul" to daily hear and see the "immoral conduct of lawless people" in Sodom and Gomorrah. Ultimately, it also cost Lot the loss of his wife and his earthly riches.—II Pet. 2:6-8, *ISV*

Nevertheless, God "rescued Lot, a righteous man." Peter points out a comforting lesson, stating: "the Lord knows how to rescue godly people from their trials." (Gen. 19:1-29; II Pet. 2:7,9, *ISV*) Thus, if as one of the Lord's followers we make an unwise choice in life, yet strive to remain faithful to the Lord and his principles, God is willing and able to overrule our experiences for our eternal, spiritual interests. Paul assures us, "We know that for those who love God, that is, for those who are called according to his purpose, all things are working together for good."—Rom. 8:28, *ISV* ■

Solomon Asks for Wisdom

Key Verse: “*Lo, I have given thee a wise and an understanding heart.*”

—*I Kings 3:12*

Selected Scripture:
I Kings 3:1-15

WHILE ISRAEL'S KING

Solomon was engaged in religious matters at Gibeon, the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Ask what I shall give thee.” Solomon’s reply shows he was full of appreciation of the great work which God had committed to his care. He acknowledged God

was the real King and that he merely sat upon “the throne of the kingdom of the LORD.” This is shown by his words, “O LORD my God, thou hast made thy servant king instead of David my father.”—*I Kings 3:1-7; I Chron. 28:5*

What strength it must have given Solomon to realize he was in God’s hands, and it was not merely because of his father David’s foresight and wisdom that he had come to the throne. Similarly, what strength it should give to the Lord’s people today, realizing they have come into grace, mercy, and peace, not by their own wisdom, nor by that of others. Rather, these qualities come “from God the Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father.”—*II John 1:3*

King Solomon’s humility is shown by his declaration to the Lord, “I am but a little child: I know not how to go out or come in.” Although placed in the midst of God’s chosen people as their leader, he felt incapable of such a

high and responsible duty. Notice Solomon did not say “my people,” but rather “thy people which thou hast chosen.”—I Kings 3:7,8

Solomon’s declaration continued: “Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and bad.” (vs. 9) Solomon recognized the utmost importance of having righteous judgment concerning the various issues pertaining to the Jewish nation, as well as in individual matters. God was pleased with Solomon’s request, answering affirmatively, and also stating he would give Solomon that which he had not asked for, “both riches, and honour.”—vss. 10-13

Why, during the present Gospel Age, do those who are seeking the wisdom of God rarely receive earthly riches and honours? (James 3:13-18) It is because at Solomon’s time, during the Jewish Age, the Lord’s dealings with natural Israel were along natural fleshly lines.—Deut. 28:1-13

At the present time, however, the Lord’s followers are promised “spiritual blessings.” They are “sealed with the Holy Spirit,” and given the “spirit of wisdom.” (Eph. 1:3-18) Jesus instructed his disciples to “lay not up ... treasures upon earth,” but “treasures in heaven.” “For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.” (Matt. 6:19-21) Paul states that the wisdom which God’s people are to seek is not the “wisdom of men,” nor the “wisdom of this world,” but rather “the wisdom of God,” which “God hath revealed unto us by his Spirit.”—I Cor. 2:4-10

When Solomon awoke and realized it was a dream from the Lord, he returned to Jerusalem and offered burnt and peace offerings. (I Kings 3:15) He realized that God was prospering him in the matter to which he had called him, and this filled him with joy and peace.

So, too, it should be now with all of the Lord’s people. The proper way to show our appreciation to the Heavenly Father is by manifesting our faith in him, confidently trusting and rejoicing in his “exceeding great and precious promises.”—Rom. 8:17; I Pet. 1:3-8; II Pet. 1:2-8■

Hezekiah's Prayer

Key Verse: *“O LORD our God, I beseech thee, save thou us out of his hand, that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that thou art the LORD God, even thou only.”*
—II Kings 19:19

SENNACHERIB, KING OF Assyria, had previously invaded the northern ten-tribe kingdom of Israel and taken its people captive. Eight years later, he determined to invade the two-tribe kingdom of Judah. Sennacherib first sent letters to Jerusalem, and subsequently his general Rabshakeh with an armed host, demanding the full surrender of the kingdom of Judah.—II Kings 18:17-35

Selected Scripture:
II Kings 19:14-37

These letters boasted of Assyria's power and of having conquered many nations already. They also falsely claimed that Israel's trust in the Lord their God was useless, because other nations which Assyria had conquered had trusted their own gods in vain. When Hezekiah heard this “he rent his clothes, and covered himself with sackcloth, and went into the house of the LORD.” He also sent men to tell the Prophet Isaiah all about this, and to ask him to pray “for the remnant that are left.”—II Kings 19:1-5

The Prophet Isaiah said to Hezekiah's men, “Thus saith the LORD, Be not afraid of the words which thou hast heard, with which the servants of the king of Assyria has blasphemed me. Behold, I will send a blast upon him, and he shall hear a rumour, and shall return to his own land; and I will cause him to fall by the sword

in his own land.”—vss. 6,7

Hezekiah went into the house of the Lord, laying before God the letter received from Sennacherib. He beseeched the Lord to have mercy upon his covenanted people and to grant them deliverance from this enemy. (vss. 14-19) Then Isaiah sent word to Hezekiah, saying, “Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, that which thou hast prayed to me against Sennacherib king of Assyria, I have heard.” The Lord’s judgment upon Sennacherib was then stated.—vss. 20-34

It required great faith and courage on the part of Hezekiah and the people of Judah to resist the great power of Assyria. Soon afterward they beheld the fulfillment of the Lord’s declaration respecting Sennacherib and the Assyrians.—vss. 35-37

The Lord’s followers today may draw valuable lessons from this account. We should not lose sight of God’s power on our behalf, no matter how bleak our experiences may appear to be. We should rely upon his promises and seek his aid. The psalmist writes, “Cast your cares on the LORD and he will sustain you; he will never let the righteous be shaken.” (Ps. 55:22, *New International Version*) The Apostle Peter admonishes, “Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.”—I Pet. 5:7, *NIV*

Israel recognized that the overthrow of Sennacherib’s forces was because of God’s power and intervention. So too we at the present time should fully trust the Lord and recognize his overruling hand in response to our prayers. “Without faith it is impossible to please him.” “This is the victory [Greek: the means of success] that overcometh the world, even our faith.”—Heb. 11:6; I John 5:4

We should not only trust the Lord for his goodness and providential care, but also remember his promises, claiming them before him in our prayers. In addition, we should seek to recognize, in every experience of life, how God’s providence is directing our way and causing all our experiences to work together for our eternal good.—Rom. 8:28■

The Book of the Law Found

Key Verse: *“The king went up into the house of the LORD, ... and all the people, great and small: and he read in their ears all the words of the book of the covenant that was found in the house of the LORD.”*
—II Chronicles 34:30

Selected Scripture:
II Chronicles 34:1,2,8-21,29-33

JOSIAH BECAME KING OF Judah when he was eight years old, reigning thirty-one years in Jerusalem. He “did that which was right in the sight of the LORD.” In the eighth year of his reign, he began to “seek after the God of David his father.” Four years later he purged all the carved images in Judah and Jerusalem, and he also destroyed all the idols throughout the land of Israel.
—II Chron. 34:1-7

In the eighteenth year of his reign Josiah sent Shaphan, governor of the city of Jerusalem, and Joah to repair the Temple.

They went to Hilkiah the high priest, delivering money that was in the Temple treasury, to begin the work of restoring the house of God.—vss. 8-12

At this time the high priest found in the Temple a copy of the Book of the Law and gave it to Shaphan to take back to Josiah. Idolatry had supplanted the worship of the true God to such an extent that even the Jewish high priest had only by accident, and for the first time,

seen the Book of the Law. Apparently, he did not realize the significance of this book.—vss. 14-17

As Shaphan read the words of the Law in the book, Josiah became sorrowful and “rent his clothes,” because he realized the extent to which the Israelites had departed from the laws and statutes of the Lord. Josiah ordered a further investigation of the matter, asking Hilkiah and others: “Go, enquire of the LORD for me, and for them that are left in Israel and in Judah, concerning the words of the book that is found: ... because our fathers have not kept the word of the LORD.”—vss. 18-21

Those the king had appointed went to a prophetess of Judah, named Huldah, to inquire. She confirmed that the people were guilty of gross sin in departing from the worship of the true God, and his wrath would surely fall upon the nation. However, the Lord had said that because of the tenderness of Josiah’s heart and his humility and desire to please the Lord, he would be permitted to die in peace and would be gathered to his fathers before calamity came upon the nation.—vss. 22-28

Josiah went up to the house of the Lord, along with all the people, and read to them “all the words of the book of the covenant that was found in the house of the LORD.” Then he made a covenant before the Lord, promising to walk according to his commandments, testimonies, and his statutes, “with all his heart, and with all his soul.”—vss. 29-31

Josiah is a wonderful example of those who seek after the Lord and become dedicated to doing his will, once they are enlightened sufficiently to know what he wants them to do. This principle has always been true, whether in the past Jewish Age, the present Gospel Age, or during the future Messianic kingdom. Those who progress in the grace and knowledge of the Lord must make faithful use of the understanding that is revealed to them.—Luke 12:48 ■

The Song of Moses

Key Verse: *“Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the LORD, and spake, saying, I will sing unto the LORD, for he hath triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea.”*
—*Exodus 15:1*

Selected Scripture:
Exodus 15:1-21

the plague of death. However, all the firstborn of Egypt died. (Exod. 11:1-10; 12:1-14; 14:25-27) The next day all of the Israelites were released from bondage.—Num. 33:3

Paul explains that Israel’s Passover symbolized “Christ, our Passover Lamb,” who “has been sacrificed” for us, and he refers to the Lord’s followers as the “church of the firstborn.” (I Cor. 5:7, *New International Version*; Heb. 12:23) The “church of the firstborn” are first delivered from death during the nighttime of the present Gospel Age. This is to be followed by the future deliverance of all mankind from sin and death in the promised kingdom on earth.—Matt. 6:10

TEN PLAGUES CAME

upon the land of Egypt prior to Israel’s release from bondage. The last plague was the most severe—the death of all the firstborn. Prior to this plague the Lord instructed the Israelites that a “Passover” lamb was to be slain and its blood sprinkled upon the doorframe of their houses. The lamb was to be roasted with fire and then eaten. The firstborn of Israel inside any house where the blood was found that night were “passed over,” spared from

After Israel left Egypt, the Lord led them with “a pillar of a cloud.” (Exod. 13:21) When they reached the Red Sea, there seemed no way of crossing it. Soon after, Pharaoh and his army reached them, and the Israelites became afraid. Moses said to the people, “Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD. ... The LORD shall fight for you.”—Exod. 14:7-14

The Lord instructed Moses to lift up his rod, stretch it out over the sea, and divide it. A strong east wind blew that night, dividing the waters, enabling the Israelites to cross over on dry land. When the Egyptian army tried to follow, the waters closed in on them, destroying Pharaoh with all his warriors. (vss. 15,16,21-31) A song of thankfulness for deliverance was then sung by Moses and the Israelites. It begins with the words, “The LORD is my strength and song, and he is become my salvation.”—Exod. 15:2

Moses and the mighty works accomplished by God through him point to Jesus, the “Lamb of God,” and the much larger, eternal deliverance to be accomplished by him. This deliverance is from sin and death, first for the church of the “firstborn” during the Gospel Age, and later for all mankind during the Messianic kingdom.—John 1:29; I Pet. 1:18,19

The Israelites gave glory to God for their deliverance from Egyptian bondage. How much more should the Lord’s followers today recognize their greater deliverance from the power of Satan and the bondage of sin, accomplished for us through the blood of the Lamb of God, who died for our sins. (John 8:31-36) We “should shew forth” our praise to God in our words and deeds.—I Pet. 2:9; Matt. 5:16

The overcoming church class is elsewhere shown as being with the “Lamb,” Jesus, on Mount Zion, the heavenly phase of God’s kingdom. They are pictured as singing a new song—a song of thankfulness to God for the mighty deliverance he will have accomplished for all mankind.—Rev. 14:1-4; 15:2,3

Blessed Are They

“Now when Jesus saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him, and he began to teach them.”

*—Matthew 5:1,2,
New International
Version*

WHEN JESUS APPEARED

to his disciples for the last time before returning to the heavenly courts, he said to them, “Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and

unto the uttermost part of the earth.” (Acts 1:8) In II Corinthians 5:20 the Apostle Paul describes the followers of Jesus as “ambassadors for Christ,” and explains that there has been given to them “the ministry of reconciliation.” (vs. 18) Later, John the Revelator testified concerning those who would give their lives in service and sacrifice “for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God.”—Rev. 20:4

From these and other scriptures, it is evident that the faithful followers of Jesus are looked upon by him as his representatives in the earth. With reference to this, Jesus instructed his followers: “Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. ... Let your light so shine

before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.”—
Matt. 5:14,16

Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, of which the foregoing text is a part, seems designed to set forth in considerable detail the righteous standards of conduct to which Christians are expected to hold. In verses 3-12 of Matthew chapter 5, which contain what are often described as the Beatitudes, we find a summary of the entire sermon. There is very little in the Sermon on the Mount dealing with the doctrinal features of God's plan of salvation, but, as we have suggested, its subject matter concerns mostly the way of life and the heart condition of those who, in their faithful ambassadorship, will be the proclaimers of these doctrines.

In a small way the scribes and Pharisees of Jesus' day temporarily occupied this position, although they had already lost the favor of God. Because a new age was dawning in which an entirely different work would be carried out, Jesus deemed it important to instruct those who would be his representatives in the new way of life so beautifully set forth in his Sermon on the Mount.

POOR IN SPIRIT

The first beatitude reads, “Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” (Matt. 5:3) Being poor in spirit is not related to poverty along material lines. One might be destitute of the ordinary comforts of life and yet not be poor in spirit at all. On the other hand, one might be wealthy according to the standards of this world and yet be poor in spirit. We are poor in spirit when

we recognizes our undone condition as a member of the sin-cursed and dying human race. The thought is expressed very well in the question that is usually asked one who is about to be baptized. That question is whether or not there is a recognition on the part of the candidate that he is a sinner, and that apart from Christ he has no standing with the Lord.—Rom. 3:10,23; John 15:5; Acts 4:12

A recognition of this basic fact, upon which we are brought into the divine family through Christ, must continue with us throughout our entire life. It is not enough that we express it once at the time of our baptism in water, but it should be one of the guiding principles of our Christian walk. “Blessed are the poor in spirit.” Only those who recognize their poverty of spirit apart from God can have hope of participating as a joint-heir with Jesus in the kingdom of heaven.

THE MOURNERS

The second beatitude reads, “Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.” (Matt. 5:4) Taking this statement literally, it is not true. There are millions of people who mourn that are not comforted. Even followers of Jesus frequently encounter situations which cause them to mourn, and they continue to mourn—at least for a time. Paul speaks of rejoicing with those who rejoice and weeping with those who weep, so even those who do not have immediate cause for mourning themselves, weep because of the difficulties encountered by their brethren in Christ.—Rom. 12:15

The mourning here referred to by Jesus is, in fact, our expression of sympathy toward those who

are suffering affliction. In this Jesus is our greatest example. We think of the time when his friend Lazarus became ill and died. He returned to Bethany and mingled with those who were mourning. (John 11:1-33) Realizing the heartbroken condition of those present, and that scenes of this nature were taking place every day and would continue to do so until his kingdom was established, Jesus' own heart was touched, and in the shortest verse of the Bible we read, "Jesus wept."—vs. 35

However, Jesus did more than just weep. He used the occasion to do something that must have truly comforted the hearts of Martha and Mary, and all the friends of Lazarus. He awakened Lazarus from the sleep of death. Can we doubt that in this situation Jesus' own heart was comforted? The fact that he could and did help those who were sad must have done much to remove the Master's own tears in this situation of mourning.

What a noble example of mourning for others we have in Jesus! If we take this example to heart we will want to do all we can to comfort others. Indeed, this is a part of the commission of the Holy Spirit—not only to Jesus, but to all his followers. We are to "bind up the brokenhearted," and to "comfort all that mourn." (Isa. 61:1,2) This work of comforting is accomplished through the proclamation of the Gospel of the kingdom. There is no more effective way of removing sorrow from the hearts of those whose families have been visited by that great enemy, Death, than to assure them of the future blessings of the kingdom—health and life; even the blessing of the resurrection of the dead.—Isa. 33:24; Rev. 21:4; Acts 24:15; I Cor. 15:21,22

In doing this we find that we are made glad, because the sorrows of the moment are superseded by the joy that has come into our own hearts through the effort we have thus made to sympathize with and comfort others. This is the thought set forth in Proverbs 11:25. The *English Standard Version* reads: “Whoever brings blessing will be enriched, and one who waters will himself be watered.”

THE MEEK

The third beatitude is, “Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.” (Matt. 5:5) To be meek is to be mild, gentle, teachable, in particular concerning the things of God as revealed in his Word. It is especially important to be teachable, because we need to know the Lord’s will as clearly as possible in order that we may do it. The thought is set forth by Paul when, in writing to Timothy he said, “Study and do your best to present yourself to God approved, a workman who has no reason to be ashamed, accurately handling and skillfully teaching the word of truth.” (II Tim. 2:15, *Amplified Bible*) Our striving to rightly handle and use God’s Word is in order that we may be workmen who have his approval.

An important aspect of being meek and teachable as it relates to rightly handling the Word of Truth is the realization that as followers of Christ at the present time we are not promised a home on earth. We will not “inherit the earth” in that sense, but the earth is our present field of service. In a limited sense we enter into this field of service now by preaching and giving witness to the Gospel throughout the earth. (Matt. 24:14; 28:19) Herein lies the importance of meekness—teachableness.

Otherwise we might find ourselves in the position of the scribes and Pharisees who, lacking meekness, instructed others in the wrong thing rather than serving as true ambassadors to help reconcile the people to God.

The promised inheritance of the earth by the footstep followers of Jesus spoken of in this beatitude is truly a large one. It applies principally to the future, when the church will be living and reigning with Christ for the blessing of all mankind. (Rev. 20:4,6) None but those who possess the quality of meekness at the present time will enter into that glorious future inheritance. What we do today in bearing witness to the Truth is preparing us for the future time when, together with Jesus, we will have the privilege of causing the knowledge of the Lord to fill the earth as the waters cover the sea.—Isa. 11:9; Hab. 2:14

HUNGERING FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS

The fourth beatitude reads, “Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.” (Matt. 5:6) There is no misunderstanding the expression “hunger and thirst.” There is nothing hypocritical about being hungry and thirsty, and it is this genuine desire for righteousness that Jesus is talking about.

In one of Jesus’ judgments pronounced upon the scribes and Pharisees of his day, he notes their desire to quibble over details rather than having a true thirst after God and his righteousness. We quote: “Woe unto you, ye blind guides, which say, Whosoever shall swear by the temple, it is nothing; but whosoever shall swear *(Continued on page 36)*

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(Continued from page 31) by the gold of the temple, he is a debtor! Ye fools and blind: for whether is greater, the gold, or the temple that sanctifieth the gold? And, Whosoever shall swear by the altar, it is nothing; but whosoever sweareth by the gift that is upon it, he is guilty. Ye fools and blind: for whether is greater, the gift, or the altar that sanctifieth the gift?"—Matt. 23:16-19

This is simply describing the custom of Jesus' day in the relationship of the scribes and Pharisees to the people. It indicates their willingness to make proverbial mountains out of mole hills in order to reveal their supposedly great wisdom. This was not pleasing to the Lord. They did not indicate a true desire to know and to do his will; and they did not "hunger and thirst" after righteousness.

Let us not think that there is no danger today for any of us to be led into a situation of this kind. When we attend a Bible study, what is the real motive of our hearts? In what we say at those meetings, and the questions that we ask, are we truly seeking to be filled with the righteousness of God, or merely attempting to show others how much knowledge we have, or how well we can discuss minute details?

Are we truly hungering for righteousness, not only in our meetings, but in our fellowship and association with fellow Christians generally? These are questions of which the beatitude concerning hungering and thirsting might well remind us, as we pursue our efforts at getting better acquainted not only with the particulars of God's plan, but with God himself, as he reveals himself through his plan.

THE MERCIFUL

The fifth beatitude, “Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy,” is fundamental among God’s requirements of all his people. (Matt. 5:7) So important is it that Jesus incorporated it in his model prayer: “Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.” Then he adds: “For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.”—Matt. 6:12,14,15

How much we need the mercy of God! There is not a day that passes in which we do not come short of the complete doing of his will. If we did not obtain mercy from him, we would soon be outside of his favor entirely. Thus let us endeavor to exercise mercy; and this includes mercy toward those who truly transgress against us, not mercy toward misunderstandings. Where there is merely a misunderstanding there is no call for mercy, because those misunderstandings can and should be cleared up. However, when we experience the efforts of another really to injure us, then we need to exercise the quality of mercy. God does not misunderstand us. Let us remember that we actually transgress against him, and yet he forgives and shows mercy. We should endeavor to be like God in our exercise of mercy toward our own debtors.

HEART PURITY

The sixth beatitude is, “Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.” (Matt. 5:8) Purity of heart is well illustrated in another one of Jesus’ judgments upon the scribes and Pharisees. He

said: “Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess. Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first that which is within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also.”—Matt. 23:25,26

The thought here clearly is inward purity rather than an outward profession of purity. Jesus said that those who are pure in heart shall see God. There is a sense in which the Christian sees God at the present time—that is, through the glorious Truth of his Word which reveals the attributes of his character: wisdom, justice, love, and power. (II Cor. 4:6; Eph. 1:17-19) In a still fuller sense, however, those who are faithful in doing his will now, especially along the lines of heart purity, shall have the inestimable privilege of being with him, of beholding his glory throughout all the ages of eternity. What a blessing indeed this will be!

PEACEMAKERS

The seventh beatitude is, “Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God.” (Matt. 5:9) There are two senses in which all of God’s people should endeavor to be peacemakers. We should endeavor to radiate the quality of peace and good will wherever we go, among all with whom we come in contact. We know that there are those in the world who are of a contrary disposition. They are known to be troublemakers almost anywhere they go.

We are not to be like this. We are to be peacemakers, even at the cost of being misunderstood and perhaps misrepresented. We are to be of such a

disposition that our brethren in Christ will know that whenever we associate with them there will radiate from us the spirit of peace, of good will, of kindness; for surely this was true of Jesus, and we are to be like him. He said to his disciples and to us, “Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you.”—John 14:27

We are to be peacemakers also in the sense of being ministers of reconciliation through our witnessing to the Gospel of Christ, which is “the power of God unto salvation.” (Rom. 1:16) To the extent that the Lord blesses our efforts there may be one here and one there who will be brought into harmony with God—into the state of peace with him—because they have accepted the provision he has made through Christ, and have dedicated themselves to the doing of his will. Paul wrote, “Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”—Rom. 5:1

All those who qualify for a position of joint heirship with Jesus in his kingdom will be called the children of God. (Rom. 8:16,17) The statements of these beatitudes do not mean that the rewards promised are limited to one who adheres to a certain beatitude. All of the poor in spirit shall enter into the heavenly kingdom, shall be comforted, shall inherit the earth, shall be filled, shall obtain mercy, shall see God, and shall be called the children of God, and all such will receive that promised reward in heaven.

PERSECUTED

The eighth and final beatitude reads, “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: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.”—Matt. 5:10-12

Persecution in its various forms has been the common lot of all the true followers of the Master. It is an evidence of the enmity of the seed of the serpent against the seed of the woman. (Gen. 3:13-15) To whatever extent we are persecuted—not for our own faults, but for righteousness’ sake—we have great cause for thankfulness, because it means that we are in the mainstream of experiences which the Scriptures outline will be theirs who walk in the Christian way of sacrifice.

The prophets of old, because of their faithfulness to the Lord, were also persecuted, Jesus says in this beatitude. We can rejoice that we are sharing with them in their experiences. Since it is “through much tribulation” that we will “enter into the kingdom of God,” whatever of persecution may come upon us will be one of the witnesses of the Spirit that we are the children of God. (Acts 14:22; II Tim. 3:12) It will thus be manifest that the Lord is dealing with us, and finally, if we continue faithful, will exalt us to live and reign with Christ, for the blessing of all the families of the earth in his Messianic kingdom.—Gen. 12:3; 22:18; Acts 3:25; Gal. 3:8 ■

Trials Essential

*“My brethren,
count it all joy
when you fall into
various trials.”*

—James 1:2, New
King James Version

ALL THOSE WHO HAVE been invited by God to be his people during this present Gospel Age are called with what the Apostle Paul describes as the “high calling,” or “heavenly calling,” which is an invitation to share with Jesus in his “glory and honour and immortality.” However, the call is not the end of the matter; it is merely an invitation with certain definite conditions.—Phil. 3:14; Heb. 3:1; Rom. 2:7

Christians are called not only to righteousness, but to walk in the Master’s footsteps of suffering, self-sacrifice, and service. Those are the only terms on which any are received as disciples of Christ. We understand the Scriptures to teach that during the future Messianic Age there will be other terms of acceptance that God will offer to the world. Nevertheless, there are no conditions offered now other than those of becoming followers and disciples of Jesus, and to walk “in newness of life” as he walked.—Rom. 6:4

The Apostle James in our opening text intimates that trials and temptations will be allowed to come into the life of the followers of Christ, into which

they will “fall” [Greek: be surrounded with]. Although God does not cause these trials, he allows the great Adversary, Satan, to bring these about in our lives, but only by divine permission and providence. Satan is more than happy to oblige, and he will make every attempt to misguide our minds and to lead us away from proper conceptions of truth and righteousness. We should be very careful to avoid his snares.

Temptation is not sin, but every temptation, trial, test, persecution, and difficulty in life, permitted to come upon us who have made the covenant of sacrifice with the Lord, is intended to prove us. They are to test our love, to see whether or not our characters are fixed, rooted, and grounded in righteousness, and are being built up in love. To realize this should put all these trials, difficulties, and temptations in a new light before us and greatly assist us in fighting a “good fight of faith,” and in gaining the “victory that overcometh the world.”
—I Tim. 6:12; I John 5:4

When we find ourselves suddenly in trials, we should say: If by these trials God is proving my love and devotion to him, then, however trifling they may be, or however severe, I will diligently use them as favorable opportunities to demonstrate to my Lord the fullness of my love and devotion to him and his cause. I must fight a good fight against this thing—the world, my fallen flesh, or the Adversary—whatever it might be that brought the trials to me.

We can rejoice because we know that if we overcome under such trials our characters will make advancement towards crystallization. We can rejoice also because we know that God would not let us fall into any temptation which he would not cause

to work out for us a blessing if we are wholly loyal.—Rom. 8:28

Let us dwell often upon these additional words of the apostles: “Greatly rejoice, though now for a little while, if need be, ye have been grieved by various trials, that the genuineness of your faith, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it be tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ.” “Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him.” “Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory”—if we are rightly exercised by these experiences.—I Pet. 1:6,7, *NKJV*; James 1:12, *English Standard Version*; II Cor. 4:17

ENDURANCE REQUIRED

We are assured that those who love the Lord, and who because of this will receive the kingdom, will be those whose love will have been tested by trials and temptations. Those who do not love the Lord with all their heart—in whom self, or some other idol, has first place—will be seduced by the world, their flesh, or the Adversary into some form of rebellion against God’s will or divine providence.

They will have schemes and theories that they will prefer to the Lord’s plan. These, when analyzed, will usually be found to be based either upon selfishness, ambition, or a spirit of lethargy and slothfulness. The Heavenly Father’s leading and words lose their attraction to such, and they lose their interest correspondingly. They perhaps even

become as some of Jesus' followers, who "went back, and walked no more with him."—John 6:66

As there are some substances that are soft, weak, or brittle, so are there those which have fiber, strength, and endurance. God chooses for himself such characters as have the strong, enduring qualities—fortitude, patience, and long-suffering. These desire to walk close to the Lord and will not be driven from him by any of the arts and wiles of the Adversary. They are such whose heart is fully the Lord's—not their own. They follow wherever the Heavenly Father may lead, because they have no will except the will of God. These will follow the Lord in the narrow way of trial, discipline, and testing during the present life, and by and by, as he has declared, "They shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy."—Matt. 7:14; Rev. 3:4

Any who attempt to avoid all trials, temptations, and difficulties have reason to question their relationship with God as sons. All such should go to the Father and make sure that there is no impediment on their part, and to make sure that they have put themselves in the proper attitude in which they can be prepared for the kingdom. "The Lord corrects the people he loves and disciplines those he calls his own."—Heb. 12:6, *Contemporary English Version*

All of us will rejoice when the tests are over and we are accepted as overcomers, to share with the Lord in his throne. (Rev. 3:21) First, however, patience, trust, and love must do a refining work in our hearts, making us submissive and obedient to God. Let the good work go on! Let us rejoice if our trials have made us stronger in character, more humble

and Christlike, more aware of our blemishes and imperfections, more watchful and earnest in our endeavors to correct them as far as possible.

STEPPING STONES

The conflicts in which we have perhaps had only partial victory may have resulted in blessings to us. Even in those experiences where we feel we have suffered absolute failure, there may be, through a resulting greater development of humility, a strengthening of our character, a firm determination for greater watchfulness, and a more fervent prayer for the Lord's sustaining grace, the need of which has been more deeply impressed upon our hearts. Thus partial defeats and even failures can become "stepping stones" by which we progress through our experiences under the divine influence of God's providence. Only through "much tribulation" shall we enter the kingdom of heaven at all, the Apostle Paul states.—Acts 14:22

If, therefore, Christians find themselves involved in temptations, trials, and tests, instead of feeling downcast they are to rejoice and say: These are evidences that the Lord is preparing me for a place in the kingdom. This should give us courage to fight the good fight against the world, the flesh and the Adversary. The flesh is suffering; but the new mind, the new will, has the joy of the end result. Therefore, we can rejoice, knowing that these trials are not for our harm, but for our eternal good.—I Pet. 4:12,13

A WAY OUT

The apostle states, "No trial has overtaken you that is not faced by others. And God is faithful: He

will not let you be tried beyond what you are able to bear, but with the trial will also provide a way out so that you may be able to endure it.” (I Cor. 10:13, *New English Translation*) The Heavenly Father will direct every trial to its full completion. Hence, when we find ourselves in difficulty, we are to say, The Heavenly Father is permitting this trial, and so I will rejoice in the fact that he will not allow me to be overthrown; for he has promised that all things shall work out for my good, because I love God and seek to know and do his will.—Rom. 8:28

Our text says that we are to “count it all joy” when we encounter various trials. Our joy is largely dependent upon our study of the Scriptures, and our knowledge of the precious promises contained therein for those who overcome. The Lord wants those who will endure a “great fight of afflictions,” who will endure patiently, though the trials continue long and the tests become more severe. (Heb. 10:32) All our previous good resolutions and standing for what is right would not make us overcomers, if we should lose our faith.

“ADD TO YOUR FAITH”

To those who are of this anointed company, and who are striving to attain the glory promised to the faithful followers of Christ, the Apostle Peter issues a very definite word of instruction. In the opening chapter of his second epistle, he urges Christians to add various qualities of character that thus they may be fitted for the glorious things that God has promised to the faithful. He specifies faith as the primary qualification. To this he says that we are to add virtue [moral excellence], knowledge, self-

control, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and love [Greek: *agape*, a broad, generous love] for all mankind. The reason the Scriptures declare that our measure of progress will be according to our faith is that while in the flesh we shall never be able to perform works such as would be up to God's perfect standard.—II Pet. 1:4-7, *American Standard Version*

What God approves is our heart intentions and sincere efforts to develop these qualities to the best of our ability. By exercising faith, and by demonstrating loyalty, we will be able to please him, and to work out the proper character as enjoined in his Word, developing the fruits and graces of the Holy Spirit. "If ye do these things," says the apostle, "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."—vss. 10,11

Faith is necessary all along the Christian way. Without it we could not have courage or the inner strength to go on. We have been called to be "heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ." (Rom. 8:17) If we are obedient to his instructions, and are properly exercised by the experiences which are given us in the school of Christ, we shall gain divine approval. "He who calls you is utterly faithful and he will finish what he has set out to do."—I Thess. 5:24, *J.B. Phillips New Testament*

SELF EXAMINATION

Some will fail to utilize their trials and tests to the full extent necessary to attain the "prize of the high calling." (Phil. 3:14) Perhaps they will have not sufficiently turned their back on the world, or have allowed their fallen flesh to stunt their growth in

Christ. Others may not manifest sufficient zeal in serving the Lord and thus fail to take advantage of the many opportunities afforded them along this line.

If, in examining ourselves, we see any tendencies in these directions, let us be reminded of these words of Paul: “Beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation.” “It is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we [first] believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light.”—Heb. 6:9; Rom. 13:11,12

Let us not be discouraged if we find ourselves making insufficient progress in gaining the needed lessons from our trials and tests. Rather, let us go “boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.” Let us also recall the many promises of the Scriptures which encourage us to continue onward in the Christian way even when we come short. “A just man falleth seven times, and riseth up again.” “Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the LORD upholdeth him with his hand.”—Heb. 4:16; Prov. 24:16; Ps. 37:24

Many years ago, a faithful student of the Bible would often say: “Trials are worth millions. Don’t waste any!” How true that is. May we evermore recognize that trials are an essential part of our spiritual development, without which we would be unable to enter the kingdom of heaven. Above all, let us remember what Paul states: “All things”—including trials—“work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.”—Rom. 8:28 ■

Filled with the Spirit

“Be filled with the Spirit; Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.”
—*Ephesians 5:18,19*

THE EXPRESSION, “FILLED with the Spirit,” is used a number of times in the New Testament, but not always with the same meaning. It was first spoken by an angel in a proclamation to Zacharias concerning his wife Elisabeth, assuring him that in answer to his prayer she would bear a son, and that

his name should be called John, commonly known as John the Baptist. (Matt. 3:1-3) The angel further said, “Thou shalt have joy and gladness; and many shall rejoice at his birth. For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother’s womb. And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God.” (Luke 1:14-16) Here the thought simply is that John the Baptist would be endued with God’s power and blessing to enable

him to accomplish a special work of reformation in Israel.

In Luke 1:41, we are told that when Mary, the mother of Jesus, visited Elisabeth and heard her salutation, "the babe leaped in her womb; and Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit." This denotes Elisabeth's great rejoicing over the miraculous events that were occurring in connection with herself and Mary. The Spirit, or power of God, was being exercised through both of these women, and to their great joy.

Luke 1:67 informs us that Zacharias was "filled with the Holy Spirit, and prophesied." Here is a work of the Holy Spirit similar to what occurred during Old Testament times, when the prophets "spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit." (II Pet. 1:21) Zacharias was undoubtedly in harmony with God and enthusiastic over the prophecy that the Holy Spirit enabled him to utter, but the Spirit did not beget him to a new life, neither did it fill him with the fruits of righteousness.

In John 3:34, it is said concerning Jesus, "He whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him." This surely implies that Jesus was filled with the Holy Spirit. He was so filled, and so overwhelmingly controlled in his every thought, word, and deed, that everything he said, and every act of his consecrated, Spirit-filled life, expressed the mind or will of his Father who sent him. Jesus' filling with the Spirit occurred at Jordan, although even before this there was a certain preparation, in that he doubtless had acquainted himself well with the Spirit-inspired testimony contained in the "volume

of the book”—that is, the Old Testament scriptures.—Ps. 40:7

The Spirit of God came upon Jesus as a miraculous revealing power, enabling him to understand the meaning of the Old Testament scriptures. The Spirit which filled Jesus' life empowered him to perform miracles, cast out devils, open blind eyes, cleanse lepers, heal the sick, and raise the dead. Not all the Lord's followers may expect to be filled with the Spirit in this sense.

When the promise to send the Holy Spirit upon Jesus' disciples was fulfilled at Pentecost, there were miraculous manifestations of the holy power of God. One of these is mentioned in Acts 2:4, which reads, "They were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other tongues [Greek: languages], as the Spirit gave them utterance." Here, being filled with the Spirit denotes another miraculous exercise of divine power, enabling those who were filled to speak in foreign languages without the necessity of previous study. Later, the apostles performed miracles other than speaking with tongues by the power of the Holy Spirit.

In Acts 9:17, our attention is called to another instance involving a filling with the Spirit. In this case, it is Saul of Tarsus who, struck down by a blinding light on the way to Damascus, heard the question, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" (vs. 4) By divine direction, Saul had gone to a certain home in Damascus to await further instructions from the Lord. Those instructions were sent to him by a disciple named Ananias. Entering the room where he found the converted persecutor of the church, Ananias said, "Brother Saul, the Lord,

even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Spirit.” Saul, whose name the Lord later changed to Paul, was appointed by God to take the place of Judas Iscariot. (Acts 13:9; I Cor. 15:9,10) It was essential, therefore, that he be filled with the Spirit even as the other apostles were at Pentecost. He was thus filled, and he was able to perform miracles and speak in other languages, even as they.

One of the powers given Jesus and the apostles by the miraculous infilling of the Spirit was the ability to read the hearts of those with whom they came in contact. It was upon this basis that Jesus was able to call the Pharisees hypocrites. Paul was also given this ability. In Acts 13:6-11, we are presented with a very interesting example of this. “Elymas the sorcerer” undertook to interfere with Paul’s work, especially his effort to interest a certain “deputy” in the Gospel of Christ. We read, “Then Saul, (who also is called Paul,) filled with the Holy Spirit, set his eyes on him [the sorcerer], And said, O full of all subtilty and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord? And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season. And immediately there fell on him a mist and a darkness; and he went about seeking some to lead him by the hand.” Paul was able to execute this punishment upon the sorcerer because he was filled with the Holy Spirit.

A further miraculous manifestation of the infilling of the Holy Spirit is recounted by Paul in his

letter to the church at Rome, writing, “I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ hath not wrought by me, to make the Gentiles obedient, by word and deed, Through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God; so that from Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ.” (Rom. 15:18,19) Every ambassador of Christ should preach the Gospel by the power of the Holy Spirit, but it was given only to the twelve apostles to proclaim the message on a background of “mighty signs and wonders.”

ALL DISCIPLES MAY BE FILLED

While Jesus and the apostles were the only ones of the New Creation class who were filled with the Spirit in the sense of being given miracle-working power from God, all the true disciples of the Master may be filled with the Spirit in the sense that God’s thoughts and plans as revealed in his Word, and his will for them, become the all-absorbing, all-consuming, overwhelming power in their lives. It is this that is indicated in our opening text.

Immediately preceding this admonition, and in contrast with it, Paul writes, “Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess.” (Eph. 5:18) Clearly the reference here is to the intoxicating effect of strong drink. To be “drunk with wine” means to be brought fully under the control of its intoxicating power. One who is thus intoxicated is unable properly to exercise his own mind. This is wrong, Paul indicates, and instead of this, the Christian should endeavor to be “filled with the Spirit.” The thought is that if we are filled with the Spirit, our fleshly

minds will also be rendered subservient, not to the stupefying effect of strong drink, but to the will of God. God's thoughts, revealing his will through his written Word, will take control so that our chief concern, our only concern in all things, will be to do his will.

FILLING THROUGH FELLOWSHIP

Having written this exhortation to be filled with the Spirit, Paul then suggests one of the many ways it can be accomplished. It is through "speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord." In a general way this suggests the privilege and the value of Christian fellowship in terms of being filled with the Spirit. In a more literal sense, this text describes the practice of singing songs and hymns of praise.

The inspirational power of music is well known, and the psalms and hymns and spiritual songs of Christians have a stimulating value in their lives. When sung together, as in an assembly, the result is most wonderful, helping all who participate to be energized to a greater devotion to the Lord.

From an even greater standpoint, the entire plan of God for his consecrated people and for the world is as a melodious, harmonious song. Indeed, it is designated the "song of Moses" and "of the Lamb." (Rev. 15:3) In Psalm 40:3, and also in Revelation 14:3, it is described as a "new song." This marvelously harmonious unfolding of God's eternal purpose through Christ Jesus, as set forth by the Holy Spirit throughout God's written Word, when understood and appreciated, eclipses every other

consideration of life. To know it, to believe it, to obey it, to have our lives consumed by it, is to be filled with the Spirit.

Sincere, energetic Bible study is, then, one of the potent means of being filled with the Spirit. Because of our faulty memories we cannot expect to read the promises of God once and retain them in our minds. Besides, the Bible is so written that each time we open its Spirit-inspired pages we see some rare gem of Truth never before noticed. The poet has well said,

“ ’Tis a mine eye deeper too,
Than can mortal ever go.
Search we may for many years,
Still some new rich gem appears.”

As we plumb ever deeper into the revealing thoughts of God recorded in his Word, and our minds and hearts yield in a rejoicing desire to bring our lives into harmony with each ray of light that beams forth from it, we become increasingly filled with the Holy Spirit. Jesus received the Spirit without measure. He was perfect. We are imperfect, and the “motions of sins” in our fallen flesh bar the complete infilling of the Spirit for which our hearts yearn. (Rom. 7:5) Thus we should strive to be more emptied of self, and that we might be filled more and more with the Holy Spirit, and more fully control our thoughts, words, and actions.

FILLED THROUGH PRAYER

Jesus said to his disciples, “If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?” (Luke 11:13)

Here is an important promise, for it assures us that one of the means of being filled with the Spirit is through prayer. Through prayer, we claim the promises of God, and since we know he wants us to be filled with his Spirit, it is proper, and needful, that we earnestly petition him to this end.

We should not expect, however, a miraculous answer to our prayers for the Holy Spirit. The miracle-working power of God has already operated in furnishing us with his written Word, the source of his thoughts for all the footstep followers of Christ. It is true that God still uses his unlimited power in shaping his providence for us, that we might be brought into contact with his Word. He has given his angels charge over us to see that nothing can happen which will defeat his purpose in our lives. (Ps. 91:11) Nevertheless, in asking him for his Spirit, we must not expect that God will miraculously fill our minds with his thoughts.

When we ask God for his Holy Spirit, we must cooperate with him in the zealous use of the provision he has made whereby we might be filled. We must go to his Word. If we could but fully realize, as the consecrated people of God, that when we open the pages of the Bible and read its wonderful messages, we are looking into the mind of our Heavenly Father, and there discovering his will for us, and his thoughts toward us, how much more precious would be the hours spent in the study of his Word! Actually, they are hours spent with God. David wrote that God's thoughts to "us-ward" are "more than can be numbered." (Ps. 40:5) They are all in the written Word, put there

by the power of God, so that in studying it we may be filled more and more with his Spirit.

FRUITS OF THE SPIRIT

The infilling of the Holy Spirit in the lives of the children of God is manifested in the fruits of righteousness. Paul wrote to the brethren at Rome, “The God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Spirit. And I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another.” (Rom. 15:13,14) Here we observe that being filled with “joy and peace” is a result of the indwelling Spirit of God, by which also we are to be “full of goodness” and “filled with all knowledge.”

Paul describes being filled with the Spirit as being “filled with all the fulness of God.” Obviously, God does not personally enter into his people, but his Spirit does, his holy mind and influence, which he has caused to be mirrored through his Word. Paul also speaks of Christ dwelling in our hearts. We here quote this whole revealing passage: “That he [God] would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And to know the love of Christ, which passeth [human] knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.”—Eph. 3:16-19

In Philippians 1:9-11, Paul, without using the words Holy Spirit, nevertheless reveals some of the qualities of a Spirit-filled life. He states, "This I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment; That ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of Christ; Being filled with the fruits of righteousness, which are by Jesus Christ, unto the glory and praise of God." We cannot be filled with the "fruits of righteousness" without being filled with the Spirit, for the fruits of righteousness are the fruits of the Holy Spirit of God—the result of the Holy Spirit of Truth working in our hearts and lives.

In Colossians 1:8-11 we further read from the apostle, "Who [Epaphras] also declared unto us your love in the Spirit. For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness."

This is a remarkable summary of many of the things that result from being filled with the Spirit. It means to be "filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding." If we are thus filled, we will "walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing." We will also be "fruitful in every good work." Being filled with the Spirit likewise results in an increasing knowledge of the Lord, through the Word of Truth, which, in turn, will

lead to our being “strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power.” This strength of the Lord, if it be the daily portion of the Spirit-filled life, enables the Christian to be patient in trial, and long-suffering in the face of every difficulty, not merely in the sense of enduring what cannot be changed, but “with joyfulness.”

The Holy Spirit of Truth with which all children of God may, and will, be filled if they are living up to their privileges, is a most wonderful divine gift. Paul mentions some of its characteristics in his second letter to Timothy. He speaks of stirring up the “gift of God” that was in Timothy. (II Tim. 1:6) Then Paul adds, “For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.”—vs. 7

As we have seen, the Spirit of God is a spirit of power. His Spirit-inspired Word is a mighty power in the lives of those who yield to its directives and are strengthened by its promises. Through whatever agencies God may choose to shape his providence in our lives, his Spirit is a mighty force. He alone, through the instructions of his Word, and in whatever other ways his wisdom may choose, is able to cause “all things” to “work together” for the good of his people. (Rom. 8:28) His record of achievement always has been, is now, and ever shall be, perfect. Can we doubt his mercy, his ability, who through life has been our guide?

The Spirit of God with which his people are filled is also one of love. It displaces selfishness, and all of its characteristics of “anger, wrath, malice, slander, and foul talk.” (Col. 3:8-10,12-14, *Revised Standard Version*) It leads to self-sacrifice on behalf

of others and kindness in association with them. Christians who lack these qualities may question the extent to which they are filled with the Spirit.

Paul says that God has also given us the Spirit of a “sound mind” [Greek: discipline, self-control]. This is because he has given us his own thoughts, his own mind, by which in our consecration we have agreed to be governed. The Holy Spirit of God does not change the contour of the brain to give us soundness of mind. It is simply that we have renounced our own will and ways, and are endeavoring to be guided in our thoughts, words, and actions by the holy thoughts of God as he has miraculously caused them to be recorded in his written Word.

The mind and will of God that guides the Christian may not seem sound in the judgment of the world. In fact, the reverse is true. When the Apostle Paul reasoned on the Truth before King Agrippa and Festus, this latter Roman ruler of Judea replied, “Paul, thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad.”—Acts 26:24

Evidently Festus recognized that Paul’s reasoning was based upon the sacred writings of the Old Testament, and his claim was that these had made Paul “mad.” Surely Festus did not consider that the study of the Scriptures had given Paul the spirit of a sound mind. Paul’s reply was, “I am not mad, most noble Festus; but speak forth the words of truth and soberness.” (vs. 25) All the Spirit-inspired words in the Bible are “words of truth and soberness.” To the extent the Lord’s people set aside their own reasoning and their own preferences and ways, and are governed by the inspired words of Truth and soberness, they will have the spirit of a sound mind.

The Christian's mind is not sound according to human standards. Peter, before he had received the Holy Spirit, did not think Jesus was being guided by a sound mind in voluntarily surrendering himself to his enemies to be put to death. Paul's friends did not think he was acting wisely by insisting on going to Jerusalem where he knew that bonds and imprisonment awaited him. (Matt. 16:21,22; Acts 21:12,13) It is true, nevertheless, that the Holy Spirit of Truth does direct those who are controlled by it to lay down their lives in sacrifice. Paul admonished that we present our bodies a "living sacrifice," explaining that this is our "reasonable service"—Rom. 12:1

In concluding our lesson, we turn again to the words of Paul, as he sums up beautifully what it means to be filled with the Spirit. He says, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Spirit teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. ... But we have the mind of Christ."—I Cor. 2:9-14,16 ■

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, PO Box 521167, Longwood, FL 32752. A visit will be arranged whenever possible.

T. Krupa

Washington, DC September 22
Florence, Italy September 28,29

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

G. Balko

Grand Rapids, MI
September 28,29

M. Costelli

New York, NY
August 31, September 1

O.B. Elbert

Seattle, WA
August 31-September 2

R. Goodman

Columbus, IN September 21,22

L. Griehs

New York, NY
August 31, September 1

M. Kerry

Huntsville, AL September 6-8

B. Montague

Huntsville, AL September 6-8

H. Montague

Huntsville, AL September 6-8

D. Rice

Huntsville, AL September 6-8

T. Ruggirello

Seattle, WA
August 31-September 2

J. Slavich

Grand Rapids, MI
September 28,29

J. Trzeciak

New York, NY
August 31, September 1

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 Barbara Wądolna, Niepolomicy, Poland—July 1.

Age, 85

Sister Joan Christy, Pittsburgh, PA—August 6. Age, 84

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, PO Box 521167, Longwood, FL 32752-1167

EAST & CENTRAL AFRICA GENERAL CONVENTION, August 31, September 1—BROADCAST ONLINE ONLY—Contact E. Jjuuko. Email: eliezer1874@yahoo.com

NEW YORK CONVENTION, August 31, September 1—BROADCAST ONLINE ONLY—Contact K. Weber. Email: kfweber@optonline.net

SEATTLE CONVENTION, August 31-September 2—IN PERSON AND BROADCAST ONLINE—Scottish Rite Center, 1207 N 152nd St., Shoreline, WA 98133. Contact C. Becker. Email: christie@christiebeckerviolin.com

TENNESSEE VALLEY CONVENTION, September 6-8—IN PERSON AND BROADCAST ONLINE—Comfort Inn, 4725 University Drive (HWY 72), Huntsville, AL 35806, phone (256) 562-2525. Contact R. Satheesan. Email: rosaliasatheesan@gmail.com

COLUMBUS, IN HARVEST CONVENTION—September 21,22—IN PERSON AND BROADCAST ONLINE—Harvest Hall, 2620 Valley Branch Road, Nashville, IN 47448. Contact R. Mee. Phone: (812) 603-6205 or Email: columbusinecclesia@gmail.com

GRAND RAPIDS CONVENTION, September 28,29—IN PERSON AND BROADCAST ONLINE—Little Pine Island Camp, 6889 Pine Island Drive NE, Comstock Park, MI 49321. Contact K. Osterman. Email: kenosterman@gmail.com

ITALIAN CONVENTION, September 28,29—IN PERSON AND BROADCAST ONLINE—Hotel Delta Florence, Via Vittorio Emanuele, 3 - 50041 Calenzano (Florence), Italy. Hotel Phone: +39 055 887 4606

AGAWAM CONVENTION, October 13—IN PERSON AND BROADCAST ONLINE—Agawam Senior Center, 954 Main Street, Agawam, MA 01001. For hotel accommodations, contact M. Wardak. Phone: (413) 789-6198 or Email: mtwardak@verizon.net. For all other information, contact F. Sansom. Phone: (860) 861-6881 or Email: elshaddai144k@sbcglobal.net

ORLANDO CONVENTION, October 26,27—IN PERSON AND BROADCAST ONLINE—South Seminole Masonic Lodge, 122 Triplet Lake Drive, Casselberry, FL 32707. Contact J. Kuenzli. Phone: (321) 442-1862 or Email: jkuenzli@cfl.rr.com

MILWAUKEE CONVENTION, November 2,3—IN PERSON AND BROADCAST ONLINE—Lake Lodge, 1235 East Howard Avenue, Milwaukee, WI 53207. Contact D. Farchione. Phone: (414) 324-9667 or Email: debfarchione@aol.com

SAN DIEGO CONVENTION, November 23,24—BROADCAST ONLINE ONLY—Contact R. Brand. Email: blatbrand@aol.com

CHICAGO CONVENTION, December 28,29—More information to follow.

PHOENIX CONVENTION, January 18,19—IN PERSON AND BROADCAST ONLINE—Fountain Hills Community Center, 13001 N. La Montana Drive, Fountain Hills, AZ 85268. Contact A. Mengos. Phone: (480) 390-3767 or Email: samengos@yahoo.com

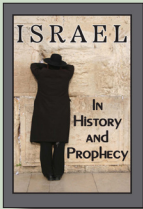
AUSTRALIAN GENERAL CONVENTION, January 24-26—BROADCAST ONLINE ONLY—Contact R. Charlton. Phone: WhatsApp +61429172606 or Email: randscharlton@bigpond.com

“Make every effort to keep yourselves united in the Spirit, binding yourselves together with peace. For there is one body and one Spirit, just as you have been called to one glorious hope for the future.”
Ephesians 4:3,4, New Living Translation

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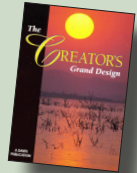


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To us the Scriptures clearly teach . . .

THAT THE CHURCH IS “THE TEMPLE” OF THE LIVING GOD

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

THAT MEANTIME THE CHISELING, SHAPING AND POLISHING

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

THAT THE BASIS OF HOPE FOR THE CHURCH AND THE WORLD

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

THAT THE HOPE OF THE CHURCH

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

THAT THE PRESENT MISSION OF THE CHURCH

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

THAT THE HOPE FOR THE WORLD

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

