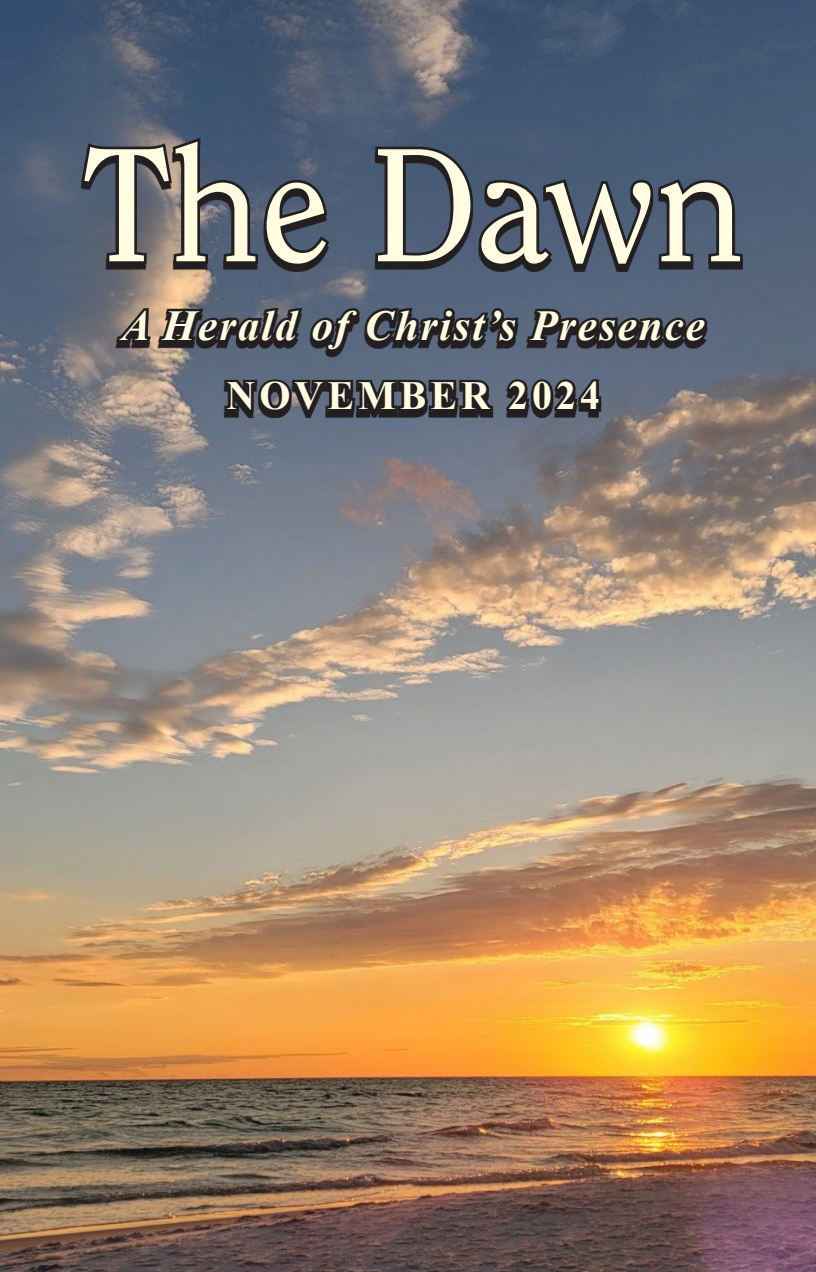
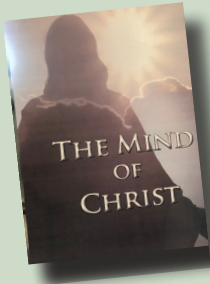


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A Sin-Sick and Dying World— God’s Remedy for It

“In the last days it shall come to pass, that the mountain of the house of the LORD shall be established in the top of the mountains, and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow unto it.”
—Micah 4:1

TODAY WE DO NOT NEED to belabor the point that the world is in a sin-sick and dying state. This present condition of mankind and earth’s institutions manifests itself in essentially every aspect of its affairs—political, religious, economic, social, and moral, both nationally and worldwide. Because of this, the earth is filled with sin, suffering, and, of course, the greatest enemy of all, death. As we near the end of another year, there seems to be no way to remedy the blighting effects of what is taking place all about us, despite the

best efforts of many of the world's leaders to turn the situation around.

This is the time foretold by Jesus when he said that there would be “upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth.” (Luke 21:25,26) As the world sees it, there is good reason to be perplexed and dismayed. The Greek word here translated perplexity literally means “no way out.” Indeed, mankind sees no way out of the present situation, no way out of the madness of human behavior in this time which Jesus described as one of “great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.” (Matt. 24:21) In this statement Jesus is quoting substantially from the prophecy of Daniel, where the same period is described as “a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation.”—Dan. 12:1

To emphasize how dire this period of trouble would be, Jesus adds, “Except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved.” He assures us, however, that these days would be shortened by divine power operating through himself and his church, “the elect.” (Matt. 24:22) In other words, Jesus agrees with the human viewpoint that there is no way out of the world's present trouble, but comforts us with the thought that God has provided a remedy, a way of salvation for the human race from its own evil course of sin and selfishness. It is this way out provided by God that we refer to in our title as his remedy for a sin-sick and dying world.

THE KINGDOM

In a word, God's remedy for the ills of fallen mankind is the kingdom, or government, which throughout his entire Word he has promised would be established. One of these promises concerns the coming of the great Messiah and King: "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this."—Isa. 9:6,7

God has recorded numerous prophecies to give us assurance that his kingdom will be established in the earth. In many instances this kingdom is referred to as a mountain—"the mountain of the LORD." In Daniel's prophecy, this mountain first appears as a stone which smites the unholy kingdoms and governments of this present world. These, the prophet says, will be broken in pieces and pass away. Then the stone which smote them becomes a great mountain to fill the whole earth. (Dan. 2:34,35) Verse 45 of this chapter gives us a wonderful assurance concerning the kingdom of God. "Forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter: and the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure."

BLESSINGS OF THE KINGDOM

The blessings of the kingdom are set forth with some detail in Micah 4:1-4. In verse 1, which is our opening text, it is fitting that the Lord's coming kingdom should be likened to a mountain. These prophecies were addressed in the first instance to the nation of Israel, and the nation of Israel was accustomed to being ruled from a literal mountain. Mount Zion in Jerusalem was the national headquarters of the government which ruled over Israel. It was here that David exercised his governmental control over the affairs of Israel, the chosen people of God. So when in this and other prophecies God speaks of his kingdom being established in "the top of the mountains," it would be easy for the devoted Israelite to realize that his God, Jehovah, was promising to set up a more powerful kingdom on earth than had ever been known before. This is exactly what God's coming kingdom will truly be.

In Micah's prophecy regarding the establishment of the kingdom, an additional point of explanation and interest is introduced. Here we read that this mountain is the "mountain of the house of the LORD." This also was familiar language to the Israelites. The Lord's ruling house in Israel was headed by David and his successors, but David and his fleshly successors will not be the ruling house of the future kingdom of God on earth.

Rather, God's ruling house will be composed of those chosen to be his sons, with Jesus being their Head. We read that when Jesus came at his First Advent, "He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God."

(John 1:11,12) These were the first members of God's ruling house under Jesus. However, in all Israel there were not enough who received Jesus to have this honor bestowed upon them. Thus in God's due time he turned to the Gentiles, through the preaching of the Gospel, to find those worthy of completing the foreordained number that would make up his ruling house.—Acts 13:46

Much is written in the New Testament about those who have become believers following Pentecost, and who through the power of the Holy Spirit become the children, or sons, of God. To these the promise is that if they continue faithful they will reign with Christ as God's ruling house. "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creature [creation] waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God."—Rom. 8:16-19

THE LORD'S WAYS

Micah's prophecy concerning the kingdom of God further declares that "people shall flow unto it." (Mic. 4:1) A similar prophecy in Isaiah 2:2-4 declares that "all nations shall flow unto it." In both of these prophecies we are assured that many from all peoples and nations who flow unto the kingdom of God will say, "Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of

Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.”—vs. 3; Mic. 4:2

In this prophecy Mount Zion represents divine authority in the kingdom of God. This would, therefore, represent the spiritual phase of that kingdom, made up of Jesus and his faithful and glorified followers, the sons of God. We are told that the word of the Lord shall go forth from Jerusalem. Here is mentioned a wider aspect of the functioning of God’s kingdom, that which comes into personal contact with the human race here on the earth. This contact will be through the ancient servants of God, such as the faithful prophets of old, and others who served God faithfully prior to the First Advent of Jesus. Jesus said that “many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom.”—Matt. 8:11

The expression in the Greek text which is translated “sit down” can be likened to pupils sitting in front of their teacher. So the faithful servants of God of ancient times will be the ones who will communicate the word, or laws, of God to mankind in his kingdom. These we could think of as the symbolic “Jerusalem” of Micah’s prophecy from which the “word of the LORD” comes. We have here, then, both the spiritual, or heavenly, and the earthly phases of the kingdom illustrated—those in the earthly phase being representatives of those in the spiritual phase and communicating to the people the law of God received through Jesus and his church.

The people and nations in Micah's prophecy of God's kingdom indicate their desire to know and to follow the Lord's way. In that time "he shall judge among many people, and rebuke [correct] strong nations afar off; and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more."—Mic. 4:3

It is interesting here to note the wide difference between God's ways and ways of mankind. Throughout the centuries misguided human philosophy has insisted that the only way to be assured of peace is to be prepared for war. Here, however, the Lord's way is seen to be different. When the people learn the Lord's ways they will give up planning and preparing for war. Instead, they will "beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks." Instead of continuing to build up large armies, missiles, and weapons for defense, as it is styled, to thus be assured of peace, "nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more."

Think of the enormous step forward this will be in solving the madness that is so prevalent in the world today! No longer will a mother feel that her child may be sent to the battlefield to be slaughtered. No longer will the resources of the world be drained in order to maintain vast military establishments, for they will learn war no more, neither will they practice war any longer. This is God's way, the way which will be instituted throughout the earth in his kingdom which will be established in the top of the mountains—that is, overseeing the affairs of all people. We rejoice in this aspect of

God's future remedy for this present troubled world!

Verse 4 of Micah's prophecy reads, "They shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree; and none shall make them afraid: for the mouth of the LORD of hosts hath spoken it." The vine and fig tree illustration pictures economic security for all mankind. One of the causes of so much fear in the world today is the lack of economic security. The hearts of many are filled with fear lest they lose their means of livelihood and be reduced to a welfare status, or even worse, homelessness. In the kingdom, however, none shall "make them afraid" through threats of being evicted from their homes, or through fear of hunger for themselves or their families. In fact, none shall make the people afraid for any purpose whatsoever, and we have the most blessed assurance that "the mouth of the LORD of hosts hath spoken it." What better assurance could we have than this of the workability and the success of God's remedy for the sin-sick world?

In the world today we occasionally hear someone say—even among those in high government positions—that if they could get people to do this or that, or if the government would pass this or that law, we would have peace and security. However, in God's remedy there is no place for any such uncertainties. God's solution is to be imposed completely, and by divine power—the "mountain of the house of the LORD"—upon all the people and nations. Obedience by all will be required. Mankind, though, will rejoice when they recognize how wonderful the Lord's ways really are, how after so many centuries of waiting and hoping and, on the part

of some, praying, God's way actually will be established in the earth!

MORE IS NEEDED

As wonderful as the blessings of the kingdom of God described in Micah's prophecy will be for a sin-sick and dying world, it would still come short of being a remedy for all human ills. Micah's prophecy shows that people will learn war no more, hence that there shall be no more war. It assures us that they will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks; that is, they will use the resources now devoted to maintaining war and its armaments to the promotion of peace and goodwill among the nations. It assures us that there will be economic security; that no one will fear being dispossessed of house and home, or go hungry. All will be blessed by prosperity and plenty in every aspect of human need.

Even with all these blessings, however, the human race would still be living under a terrible blight of sorrow and suffering, for it would still be a dying race. We would have a world with hospitals thickly spread everywhere in all nations, filled with the suffering and the dying. We would still have mental institutions, likewise filled to overflowing. Every home would be afflicted sooner or later with dread diseases, and eventually, death. This would not be an ideal world.

Jesus taught his disciples to pray, "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." (Matt. 6:10) We cannot imagine that in heaven there is carnal warfare, nor can we imagine hunger in heaven, nor can we imagine sickness and death. So

the kingdom of God will be a total remedy for the ills of mankind. The Bible assures us that this will be the case. Isaiah 25:6-9 portrays the kingdom of God as a mountain, or kingdom, and in it sickness and death will likewise be destroyed. Referring to many of the blessings which shall be provided by the Lord to satisfy the desire of the people, we are told that in this mountain the Lord of hosts will “make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined.”—vs. 6

Continuing, the prophet says that God “will destroy in this mountain the face of the covering cast over all people, and the veil that is spread over all nations.” (vs. 7) This would seem to be a reference to the lack of knowledge that the vast majority of mankind have experienced through the ages concerning God and his ways. A great veil of ignorance in this respect has been cast over all people, and over the nations as well. It is because the nations have this veil spread over them that they imagine they can establish peace while preparing for war. They cannot now see through this veil to understand and appreciate the Lord’s ways. However, other prophecies show that the veil will be removed, and then “the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.”—Isa. 11:9; Hab. 2:14

In this mountain or kingdom of God, “He will swallow up death in victory.” (Isa. 25:8) The phrase “swallow up” in this text means to destroy; death, the prophet says, will be destroyed. Here we are promised that man’s greatest enemy, death, will be struck down by the forces of the kingdom of God

and will no longer be permitted to blight the happiness of all mankind, as has been the case in every generation, and among every family, since man's creation.

Verse 8 continues: "The Lord GOD will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth: for the LORD hath spoken it." What a changed world it will be under the kingdom of God when tears are wiped from all faces! Tears are here used as a symbol of sadness, of sorrow, and of pain. All this will be done away with, however, and joy shall break out in every city, in every town, in every village, and in every countryside.

The "rebuke" of God's people mentioned in verse 8 has been one of the characteristics of the reign of sin and death. Satan has stirred up his cohorts against those who are serving God, and they are rebuked, persecuted, and misrepresented, so that few are really prepared and courageous enough to take a determined stand for God's ways at the present time. Nevertheless, in God's mountain, the rebuke of his people will be taken away.

In still another of the kingdom promises of the Bible we are told that "that old serpent which is the Devil, and Satan," the great deceiver and oppressor of the people, will be bound during that time. (Rev. 20:2) Satan is, in reality, the cause of the sin-sick and dying condition of the world, both past and present. In the kingdom, he will no longer be able to deceive, oppress, and rule over the people. He will "deceive the nations no more." (vs. 3) How wonderful, indeed, are the prospects set forth

in God's Word! How bright should be our hope because of the promises of God!

In verse 9 of Isaiah 25 we read, "It shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him, and he will save us: this is the LORD [Jehovah]; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation." It is true that the people have been waiting and longing for the very blessings which the kingdom of God will provide for them. They have not been aware of what the source of these blessings will be. Men have referred to better conditions using words such as "utopia" and other pleasing names, but when the blessings of the kingdom are showered upon them, one of the chief of these will be their understanding of the source.

Then, mankind will realize that the great God of love, who sent his Son to be the Redeemer and Savior of the world, is the Author and the Planner of this grand design which shall bring worldwide and lasting peace. This, together with health, everlasting life, and the knowledge of God himself and of his Son, will result in blessings that the world has not enjoyed since Adam and Eve were driven from Eden. Such will be God's remedy—permanent and for all people and nations—to cure the world of sin, sickness, death, and all of its past and present maladies. ■

*"And the work of righteousness shall be peace;
and the effect of righteousness quietness
and assurance for ever."*

Isaiah 32:17

The Great Shepherd

Key Verse: “*Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.*”
—*Psalm 23:6*

Selected Scripture:
Psalm 23:1-6

IN THIS MEDITATION, DAVID uses symbolic language about the God of Israel as he contemplates the relationship which exists between himself and the sovereign Creator. He employs the analogy of a shepherd and his sheep. Although this illustration applied originally to the Jewish people especially during Old Testament times, eventually it will pertain to all who

acknowledge the supremacy of the Heavenly Father.

David, a shepherd himself, speaks of how the Lord provides sustenance for those who manifest obedience by arranging for their care, comfort, and refreshment. “The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name’s sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.”—Ps. 23:1-5

Our Key Verse reflects the abundant provision of mercy that will be the portion of all who will come into harmony with the divine arrangement and standards on every plane of existence.

Much of the Bible is prophetic in nature, especially with reference to blessings that are promised, despite the turmoil that has surrounded the human family since sin entered the world following Adam's disobedience and expulsion from Eden. This helps us to understand one of the main objectives of the great Messianic purpose of God as expressed by the angels on the night Jesus was born: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." (Luke 2:14) This chorus of the heavenly choir was in keeping with the promise of Jesus' birth, which stated that he would be "The Prince of Peace," and that of the "increase of his government and peace there shall be no end."—Isa. 9:6,7

In another of the psalms, David again foretold the blessings of peace which would come to the nations under the administration of Messiah's kingdom. "The mountains shall bring peace to the people, and the little hills, by righteousness"—that is, by obeying the righteous rule of Christ's kingdom, which all will be obliged to do.—Ps. 72:3

On a still grander level, however, during this present Gospel Age, a spiritual class is being developed which will help to facilitate the promised peace and blessings for mankind during the Messianic kingdom. The Lord's consecrated people enjoy an inner sense of calm that only comes from having faith in the saving blood of Christ and confidence in the promises of God. The Apostle Peter describes one who has this Christian trait as possessing a meek and quiet spirit, or demeanor. He states, "Let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price."—I Pet. 3:4

How grateful we should be for the assurances that everlasting peace for all intelligent beings will be an outgrowth of God's magnificent plan of salvation throughout eternity! ■

A Song of Praise

Key Verses: “*Praise ye the LORD. Praise the LORD, O my soul. While I live will I praise the Lord: I will sing praises unto my God while I have any being.*”
—*Psalm 146:1,2*

Selected Scripture:
Psalm 146:1-10

whereas, God never fails to keep his promises. These verses read: “Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help. His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish.”

Disappointments often arise when even influential individuals use their professed knowledge and wisdom to forecast how matters will turn out in the future. For example, many who have sought to accumulate wealth based upon advice obtained from “experts,” have made monetary investments which have come to nought, thus causing much chagrin on the part of those who heeded such counsel. In fact, considering the brevity of human life, it is unwise to place total confidence in the opinions of others who are mere mortal beings.—Eccles. 12:7,8; I Tim. 6:17

THE EXHORTATION FOUND

in this psalm appears to be both a declaration of David’s own inner feelings as well as a call for others to magnify the name of the Creator.

Verses 3 and 4 of this psalm emphasize the propriety of not placing complete trust in human agencies, despite however reliable they seem to be, since contingencies might prevent them from fulfilling their intentions,

On the contrary, we can have complete confidence in the fulfilment of all God's promises as outlined in the Bible. The divine plan of the ages pertains to the redemption and deliverance of the human race from sin and death. As followers of Jesus, we are able to grasp and appreciate this assertion as supported by the testimonies of divinely inspired servants. Peter wrote: "Being born [begotten] again, ... by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever."—I Pet. 1:23

In the reestablished kingdom of the greater David following the completion of the church, divine rulership will not be limited to the nation of Israel, but will embrace all nations. We recall the oft-quoted words: "Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end." (Isa. 9:7) With the inauguration of this kingdom under the righteous rule of Christ Jesus and those called from Jews and Gentiles to be a people for his name, the present dispensation will close and the first age of the "world to come" will begin. (Heb. 2:5) This will be a thousand years in length; hence it is often called the Millennial Age. (Rev. 20:1-4,6) It is also sometimes referred to as the Messianic Age, or Kingdom Age.

Gentiles, as well as Jews, who did not respond to the Gospel call of self-sacrifice will need to be raised from the dead if they are to have an opportunity to seek after the Lord during the Millennial Age. We note these clear statements of the Bible to the effect that in God's coming kingdom all who have died will be awakened from the sleep of death. "The hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth." (John 5:28,29) Upon being awakened from death, all mankind will be given the opportunity through the educational process of the kingdom to gain everlasting life by developing the qualities of a godlike character.

As the originator of such an all-encompassing plan, God is surely worthy of all our praise each and every day of our life! ■

Thanksgiving to God

Key Verses: *“Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name. For the LORD is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations.”*
—Psalm 100:4,5

Selected Scripture:
Psalm 100:1-5

and with joy. In our lesson, the psalmist writes: “Make a joyful noise unto the LORD, all ye lands. Serve the LORD with gladness: come before his presence with singing.”
—Ps. 100:1,2

“Know ye that the LORD he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.” (vs. 3) In this verse we find the basis for our rendering praise to the Heavenly Father. It acknowledges that as sheep, we are totally dependent upon him for our sustenance and care.

There is an intimacy in terms of the fellowship that we enjoy with our God, which reflects a mutual love that, in turn, motivates us to render praise to such an exalted

THE EXPRESSED DESIRE

to thank and praise our Heavenly Father should be made manifest both verbally and through actions. The Prophet Jeremiah wrote the following: “Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by thy name, O LORD God of hosts.” (Jer. 15:16) Thus, in addition to obedience in following divine instructions, any service rendered to the Heavenly Father should be done both voluntarily

being. As elaborated upon in our Key Verses, those who have entered the narrow way through consecration and spirit begetting take great delight in laying down their lives in serving the cause of righteousness, knowing that God's mercy and truth endure forever.

During the coming kingdom of righteousness, mankind at large will rejoice and praise God for the unfolding of his plan that will eliminate sorrow, pain, and death. (Rev. 21:3,4) How marvelous it is that our God not only has great riches in store for the faithful members of the body of Christ, but also that each member of the human race will be given the opportunity to come to a full appreciation of our Creator and worship him forever, if obedient.

For the consecrated, during our present earthly sojourn, a higher level of gratitude implies that we are to be thankful and render praise not only for the good and pleasant experiences which come to us by God's providences, but also for the trials and difficult experiences which he permits in our lives. Giving thanks for these is not easy to do, especially at first. However, as we develop a faith based upon God's promises, we will be able to realize more and more that "all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." (Rom. 8:28) These "all things" may include difficulties, persecutions, financial troubles, health problems, or the death of a loved one. They may also include being slandered, evil-spoken of, or personally misrepresented by others.

When the kingdom has accomplished its intended purpose, however, the human family will then comprehend the blessings associated with God's plan. As they prosper under that arrangement, how much they too will increase in their ability and desire to praise our Creator. How different conditions will be at that time. "I will praise thee, O Lord my God, with all my heart: and I will glorify thy name for evermore."—Ps. 86:12■

The Lord's Promised Presence

Key Verse: “O LORD,
thou hast searched
me, and known
me.”
—*Psalm 139:1*

Selected Scripture:
Psalm 139:1-12

AT THE BEGINNING OF this psalm, our Key Verse brings to mind the thought that the Heavenly Father, being from everlasting to everlasting, possessed the foreknowledge to plan for eternity without the possibility of error. As such, he made provision for the recovery of

mankind from the scourge of sin and death even before intelligent beings were created.

The psalmist continues, saying, “Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thought afar off. Thou compassest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways.” (vss. 2,3) Included in these verses is the understanding that the Creator was not caught unawares when Adam disobeyed by eating the forbidden fruit in the Garden of Eden. God had already made provision to provide a ransom, as we note in the words of John the Revelator when he spoke of Jesus as “the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.”—Rev. 13:8

God's presence and overruling in man's affairs has been manifested throughout history as the various features of his plan have unfolded at different time intervals. For example, in Genesis chapter 6 it is recorded that God would destroy “all flesh” by a flood of waters. We read that the angels had seen the beauty of the daughters of

men. They took themselves wives, and the children born as a result of this unholy union became “giants,” “men of renown.”—vss. 1-7,13

Prior to the First Advent of Jesus, the Israelites were exclusively God’s chosen people. (Amos 3:2) Following their deliverance from Egyptian bondage, God entered into a covenant with them based on the Law which was given at the hands of Moses. During their forty years of wandering in the wilderness, Moses was the lawgiver and leader of the Israelites, assisted by counselors. Joshua was appointed by God to succeed Moses, and he led the Israelites across the River Jordan into the land of promise. Under his leadership, the land was divided among the various tribes according to the Lord’s direction. All of these provisions reflected further aspects of divine provision and presence with mankind.

During the Gospel Age, beginning at Pentecost, the Heavenly Father has revealed himself to, and has been present with, the comparatively small number of foot-step followers of Jesus—a “little flock.” (Luke 12:32) There are many texts that speak of both God and Jesus being present with true Christians during this time. To these, Jesus said, “Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world [age].” (Matt. 28:20) He also exhorted his disciples: “Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven.”—Matt. 18:10

It is clear also that the doctrine of the resurrection is set forth by both the Old Testament prophets and by Jesus and the apostles in the New Testament. This marvelous teaching speaks to God’s abiding presence with all those who will, in due time, become his people. These include all mankind—all who were redeemed by the precious blood of Christ. Paul wrote that Jesus gave himself “a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.” (I Tim. 2:5,6) What a blessed fulfilment of the Heavenly Father’s foresight and presence with mankind is thus provided! ■

Humbling Ourselves under God's Hand

“Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, so that at the proper time he may exalt you.”

*—I Peter 5:6,
International
Standard Version*

THE HISTORICAL ACCOUNT of Joseph's life is recorded in the book of Genesis, chapters 37-50, and contains valuable lessons of humility, faith, and trust in the Lord. When he was seventeen years old, his brothers hated him “so much

that they were unable to speak politely to him,” because their father loved Joseph more than them. (Gen. 37:2-4, *ISV*) Joseph then had two dreams, which he in turn related to his family. His brothers saw in these dreams a suggestion that Joseph would one day be ruler over them. Consequently, they “hated him even more.” However, his father Jacob “kept thinking about all of this.”—vss. 5-11, *ISV*

The Scriptures declare, “Jealousy is cruel as the grave.” (Song of Sol. 8:6) True to this statement, Joseph's brothers sold him to a group of Ishmaelites,

who in turn delivered him as a slave to Egypt. (Gen. 37:12-28) “But the LORD was with Joseph.” (Gen. 39:2,21; Acts 7:9,10) God’s providences continued with him, even during several harsh experiences over the course of several years. While Joseph was a slave in Egypt, his master’s wife falsely accused him. Joseph was then thrown into prison, and his “feet they hurt with fetters,” because “he was laid in iron.”—Gen. 39:20; Ps. 105:17,18

The several years of being wrongly imprisoned in Egypt brought to Joseph a rich experience of developing humility, patience, sympathy for others, and trust in the Lord. The psalmist describes this period of Joseph’s life: “The word of the LORD tried [refined] him.” (Ps. 105:19) Our Heavenly Father’s wisdom foresaw that Joseph’s character should be developed and his faith tested, thus training him for a future great work.

TRUSTING IN THE LORD

Although Joseph trusted the Lord, this did not hinder him from appealing to Pharaoh’s butler, who also was in prison. After Joseph had interpreted favorably the butler’s dream, he asked him, after he would be restored as the king’s butler, to speak to Pharaoh to secure his liberty. (Gen. 40:9-15) After being freed from prison the butler certainly would have had many opportunities to repay Joseph for the kindness he had shown to him while in prison. However, he “forgot” about Joseph for two years. (Gen. 40:23; 41:1) Nevertheless, Joseph maintained his trust in the Lord and with humility, waited patiently for the outworking of God’s plans. What a wonderful lesson this is for each of the Lord’s followers at the present time!

Similar to what happened with Joseph, all of our interests are in the Lord's hands, if we have presented ourselves to him wholly, unreservedly, and have been accepted as members of the body of Christ. Along these lines Jesus admonishes us, "Your Father knoweth what things ye have need of," and "The Father himself loveth you." Concerning his disciples Jesus further declared, "No man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand."—Matt. 6:8; John 16:27; 10:29

We should also continually remind ourselves of the Apostle Paul's admonition: "No temptation has overtaken you that is unusual for human beings. But God is faithful, and he will not allow you to be tempted beyond your strength. Instead, along with the temptation he will also provide a way out, so that you may be able to endure it."—I Cor. 10:13, *ISV*

It is proper for us to make use of any and every reasonable means for the securing of what we consider to be for our best spiritual interests. However, we are not to rely exclusively upon our efforts, but rather to trust in the Lord, and wait patiently for his time and his way for our deliverance from every evil condition, always in accordance with his will.—Lam. 3:25,26

WAIT PATIENTLY FOR HIM

The Lord's time and method for delivering Joseph from prison greatly exceeded all of his expectations. In a most remarkable way, Joseph was eventually taken out of prison and put into the palace of Egypt, the greatest nation at that time.

One day, the Pharaoh of Egypt had two dreams which impressed his mind deeply. In the first dream he saw "seven healthy, plump cows" come up out of

the River Nile and begin feeding on the bank. After that seven lean cows came up out of the river, and they devoured the seven healthy ones.—Gen. 41:1-4, *ISV*

In his second dream, the king saw “seven ears of plump, fruit-filled grain” which had grown up “on a single stalk,” indicating a most prolific yield. Then, came up “seven thin ears of grain that had been scorched by an east wind,” and they “ate up the seven plump, fruit-filled ears.” The next morning Pharaoh was greatly troubled and called for all the magicians and wise men of Egypt to explain his dreams, “but no one could interpret them.”—vss. 5-8, *ISV*

HUMILITY

The butler then remembered his own dream and how accurately it had been interpreted by a kind and sympathizing young Hebrew, who was a servant to the captain of the prison. When Pharaoh heard about the accurate interpretation of the dreams of his butler, he ordered to have Joseph brought out of prison and brought before him. Pharaoh said to Joseph, “I have dreamed a dream, and there is none that can interpret it: and I have heard ... that thou canst understand a dream to interpret it.”—Gen. 41:9-15

Here was a test of Joseph’s character. Would he boast about having such an ability? Joseph humbly replied, “It is not in me: God shall give Pharaoh an answer.” (vs. 16) Here was one of the lovely aspects of Joseph’s character—humility. He gave God all the honor and glory.

The Scriptures repeatedly emphasize the importance of humility. Jesus stated, “Everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the person who humbles himself will be exalted.” (Luke 14:11, *ISV*) In

the verse just prior to our opening text, the Apostle Peter writes, “God opposes the arrogant, but gives grace to the humble.” (I Pet. 5:5, *ISV*) In the Proverbs we are also admonished: “Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.”—Prov. 3:5,6

Concerning the importance of humility the Prophet Jeremiah wrote, “Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man glory in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the LORD.”—Jer. 9:23,24

While such an acknowledgment of the Lord is proper in all our experiences in life, it is especially appropriate as we study the Word of God and when we have an opportunity to share it with others. We should not speak as if it were our lesson, nor attribute the wisdom to ourselves. Rather, with our heart full of gratitude to the Lord for blessings received, let us acknowledge him, his Word, and his arrangements in connection with his Truth.—I Cor. 14:36,37; 4:7

INTERPRETATION AND A SUGGESTION

After Pharaoh related both his dreams, Joseph promptly gave the interpretation. “Pharaoh’s dreams are identical,” Joseph replied. “God has told Pharaoh what he is getting ready to do. The seven healthy cows represent seven years, as do the seven healthy ears.” The “seven gaunt cows” and the “seven gaunt ears” indicate that “there will be seven years of famine.”

(Gen. 41:25-27, *ISV*) Joseph explained, “Since Pharaoh had that dream twice, it means that this event has been scheduled by God, and God will bring it to pass very soon.”—vs. 32, *ISV*

A more self-centered person than Joseph would have felt that they had done a wonderful thing by interpreting the dreams, which the wise men of Egypt could not do. Some might have been so overwhelmed with a sense of their own self-importance that they would have gladly accepted to be admired as being wise. However, Joseph’s humility is shown by giving the Lord all the credit in interpreting the two dreams. He did not feel a sense of pride when he had delivered the Lord’s message.

Joseph then suggested to Pharaoh what might be the proper steps to take, so that the dreams might prove to be a blessing. “Let Pharaoh select a wise, discerning person to place in charge over the land of Egypt. Also, let Pharaoh immediately proceed to appoint supervisors over the land of Egypt, who will collect one fifth of its agricultural production during the coming seven years of abundance. Let them collect all the food during the coming fruitful years, store up the grain in cities governed by Pharaoh’s authority, and place it under guard. Let the food be kept in reserve to feed the land for the seven years of famine that will occur throughout Egypt, so the people don’t die during the famine. What Joseph proposed pleased Pharaoh and all of his advisors.”—Gen. 41:33-37, *ISV*

We cannot suppose that Joseph had even the slightest expectation that he would be the one that Pharaoh would appoint to this work. It would be highly unlikely to expect Pharaoh to take out of his

prison a man of foreign birth and exalt him to be above all the other officers in his empire. Yet this is just what Pharaoh did!

“CAN WE FIND ANYONE ELSE LIKE THIS?”

“Pharaoh asked his servants, Can we find anyone else like this—someone in whom the Spirit of God lives?” Not waiting to have the consent of the officers of his court, the king answered his own question and said to Joseph, “Since God has revealed all of this to you, ... there is no one so wise and discerning as you. So you are to be appointed in charge over my palace, and all of my people are to do whatever you command them to do. Only the throne will have greater authority than you.” Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, “I’ve put you in charge of the entire land of Egypt!”—Gen. 41:38-41, *ISV*

The exaltation of Joseph from having been a slave cast into prison, to now being appointed as the second highest person of power in the Egyptian empire, suggests to us a picture or image of an even higher fulfillment. The Apostle Paul explains how our Lord Jesus “stripped Himself of His glory, and took on Him the nature of a bondservant [Greek: slave] by becoming a man. ... He humbled Himself and even stooped to die; yes, to die on a cross.” (Phil. 2:7,8, *Weymouth New Testament*) Thus Jesus entered into the great prison house of death.

The experiences of Jesus, under God’s providences, tested and proved his faithfulness and prepared him for his great future work of blessing all mankind. As Joseph saved the lives of the people of Egypt, so too the greater Joseph, our Lord Jesus, will provide life to all mankind.

“UNTO HIM EVERY KNEE SHALL BOW”

When the time came for Pharaoh to introduce Joseph to the Egyptian people, he first “took off his ring from his hand, and put it upon Joseph’s hand.” In those days the king’s ring indicated his authority. Then Pharaoh “arrayed him in vestures of fine linen, and put a gold chain about his neck,” to indicate Joseph’s rank. Next, he made Joseph “to ride in the second chariot which he had; and they cried before him, Bow the knee,” and all the people humbly acknowledged him as the king’s representative.—Gen. 41:42,43

This reminds us of the Apostle Paul’s words respecting our Lord Jesus and his high exaltation after he willingly gave his life in sacrifice, dying upon the cross. “It is in consequence of this that God has also so highly exalted Him, and has conferred on Him the Name which is supreme above every other, in order that in the Name of JESUS every knee should bow, of beings in Heaven, of those on the earth, ... and that every tongue should confess that JESUS CHRIST is LORD, to the glory of God the Father.”—Phil. 2:9-11, *WNT*

As we think about the high exaltation of Jesus, let us also remember that his “bride” is promised to be “joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.” (Rom. 8:17) The privilege of becoming members of this bride class belongs to the “called, and chosen, and faithful,” whose faith is being developed and “tested” during the present Gospel Age.—Rev. 17:14; I Peter 1:7, *ISV*

Having this in our mind continually, let us consider what manner of persons we should be “in all

holy living and godly conduct.” (II Pet. 3:11, WNT) How trifling all earthly pleasures and sorrows, all earthly riches and poverty, all human weakness and debasement should seem to us! What desire we should have to make our “calling and election sure” by being “faithful unto death.”—II Pet. 1:10; Rev. 2:10

THE “BREAD OF LIFE”

Pharaoh then gave Joseph a new name, Zaphnath-paaneah. (Gen. 41:45) A footnote in the *Companion Bible* indicates that this word means, “abundance of life or food for the living.” So too, Jesus said of himself, “I am the living bread which came down from heaven. ... The bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world.”—John 6:51

The Apostle Paul states that the man Christ Jesus “gave himself a ransom [Greek: corresponding price] for all, to be testified in due time.” (I Tim. 2:5,6) Elsewhere Paul says, “We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.”—Heb. 2:9

Jesus is the “bread of life,” by which the whole world may be saved eventually from Adamic death, if they will “eat of this bread.” (John 6:51) In the Messianic kingdom all people will have the opportunity to eat of the “bread of life,” Jesus. In consuming this symbolic bread, mankind will first recognize and appreciate the sinless ransom sacrifice which Jesus gave. Then, each one will need to develop a personal faith in the fact that Jesus offered himself as “a ransom for all,” and to learn God’s principles of righteousness.—I Tim. 2:5,6

(Continued on page 36)

WITNESS OPPORTUNITY

If you or your class would like to take part in a witness effort in your community, you may request color posters which display the artwork below. The posters are 8½” x 11” and can be displayed in places such as neighborhood store fronts, public bulletin boards, senior centers, to name a few. Other sizes are also available upon request. All it takes is to ask permission of the business to place the poster, which is free of charge and at no obligation to them.

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(Continued from page 30) It will be necessary also that all come to recognize and accept the sacrifice of Jesus' perfect human life as satisfying God's justice for the disobedience of the perfect man Adam. Finally, each individual must appropriate and internalize into his heart and character the Word of God, including all the lessons, standards, and righteous principles contained therein.

The education, guidance, and discipline of mankind in God's kingdom, which will soon be established upon the earth, will be administered by the great King and Priest himself, Christ Jesus. Serving with Jesus will be his heavenly Bride, made of those "that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God." They will reign with Christ and will "be priests of God and of Christ," for the purpose of bringing as many of mankind who will be willing, back into harmony and obedience to God.—Rev. 20:4-6; II Pet. 3:9; Ps. 37:9

HATED WITHOUT A CAUSE

We see many events in Joseph's life fulfilled in the life of Jesus. Both were hated without a cause. We read in Psalm 69:4, "They that hate me without a cause are more than the hairs of mine head." Jesus quoted this statement and applied it to himself, saying, "They hated me without a cause."—John 15:25

Both were envied and despised by their brethren. The Jewish religious leaders condemned Jesus. They did this because his works were good, while theirs were not; because he taught the way of God more perfectly than they; and because he declared that the time would come when they and all others would recognize him as the Messiah.

The severe and trying experiences of Joseph, including his humiliation, prepared the way for his eventual glory and honor by Pharaoh, as the second highest on the throne of Egypt, and eventually to save all his brethren. So too with Jesus. He “humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross,” thereby providing the ransom sacrifice which redeemed all of mankind.—Phil. 2:8

LEARNING OBEDIENCE

Jesus’ humility enabled him to render perfect obedience to his Heavenly Father, demonstrating his utmost loyalty to God. Concerning Jesus we read that he learned “obedience by the things which he suffered,” and “being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him.” (Heb. 5:8,9) The expression “being made perfect,” is translated from a Greek word which means “to make complete, consummate.”

The Scriptures assure us that in God’s great plan, not only was Jesus to be exalted to the throne as the world’s Messiah, but there will also be a company of his faithful followers who will receive glory, honor, and immortality. These, in God’s great purpose, are required to pass through similar experiences to those of their Elder Brother and Master, Jesus. Their experiences, therefore, are also illustrated in those of Joseph. However, they are not on an equality with Jesus, who is designated as their “head” and the “captain of their salvation.”—Eph. 5:23; Col. 1:18; Heb. 2:10

TO SUFFER WITH HIM

As previously noted, those who have accepted the invitation to become members of the body of

Christ are told that if they “suffer with him,” they will “be also glorified together.” (Rom. 8:17) What does it mean to “suffer with him?”

The Apostle Peter writes, “If when you do good and suffer for it you endure, this is a gracious thing in the sight of God. For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps. He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly.” (I Pet. 2:20-23, *English Standard Version*) God counts the sufferings of the faithful ones as very precious, “a fragrance of Christ,” “a fragrant odor, ... truly pleasing to God.”—II Cor. 2:15; Phil 4:18, *WNT*

Having these promises before our mind, all our trials, difficulties, sufferings, and disappointments at the present time may be endured with cheerfulness if we have a proper faith, knowing that “all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.”—Rom. 8:28

Let us go continually to our loving Heavenly Father, who is the “fountain of life,” praying for his grace, wisdom, and truth, that we might develop our character from each experience which he permits us to have in life. (Ps. 36:5-10) Thus, ultimately we will become “more than conquerors [Greek: gain a decisive victory] through him who loved us,” and bought us with his “precious blood.”—Rom. 8:37; I Pet. 1:19 ■

Studying and Applying God's Word

“Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.”

—*Matthew 11:29*

IN ALL PROBABILITY, FEW individuals of rational mind would fail to appreciate the scriptural counsel, “Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding.” (Prov. 4:7) The dictionary

defines wisdom as the power of true and just discernment of a high degree of knowledge. Understanding is described as the sum of the mental powers by which knowledge is acquired, retained and extended; the power of apprehending relations and making inferences from them.

Although there are shades of difference between the terms wisdom and understanding, inherent in the acquisition of either is the process of diligent study. The attainment of success in virtually every secular field of endeavor depends largely upon the

degree to which one is committed to study. For the Christian, study is an important ingredient in following the Master's admonition, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."—Matt. 6:33

THE OBEDIENCE OF CHRIST

As consecrated followers of Christ, one of the important concepts that we must internalize is that of sacrifice. In a society such as ours where we are inundated with advertising about various creature comforts, the word "sacrifice" may not have too much real meaning. Yet, if we are followers of Christ and engaging in self-denial, we should be very wary about the accumulation of personal possessions or by cultivating earthly interests at the expense of the New Creature. (II Cor. 5:17) Many of the Lord's people have family responsibilities and obligations which cannot be sacrificed legitimately. With regard to our own personal time and needs, however, if done in a proper spirit, the Lord would be pleased to accept such sacrifices as a demonstration of our love for him. "Put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires."—Rom. 13:14, *Revised Standard Version*

There are many potential distractions all about us. These will tend to keep us from bending our energies towards maintaining our sacrificial course with regard to putting as much on the altar as we possibly can, especially the good things that are pleasing to the eye. Obviously, there are many pleasant things which each one who is rightly exercised has a right to enjoy. Perhaps one of the simplest guides that we can use to determine what we

should or should not do is by asking ourselves this: Will certain experiences that we desire and would like to participate in enhance our Christian walk or will they simply satisfy our flesh? If they are designed to promote our growth and development as a New Creature, we are surely doing what merits God's approval. With regard to our freedom in making these decisions, the following verses express the matter well. "All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not. ... Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God."—I Cor. 10:23,31

GODLY SUBMISSION

One of the many exhortations to guide Christians into doing the will of God is as follows: "Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, existing in the form of God, counted not the being on an equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross." (Phil. 2:5-8, *American Standard Version*) The matter of subjugating our personal wills to that of the Heavenly Father is an extraordinary accomplishment. We often have our own ideas about matters that are not necessarily supported by Scripture, in contrast with our Lord, who always yielded himself to divine authority and instruction.

Another practice worthy of emulation for consecrated believers relates to criticizing others. "For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn

the world; but that the world through him might be saved.” (John 3:17) We are to imitate the spirit of Christ as closely as we can, and although the Master could read the hearts of others, he died for all, including the Pharisees whom he rebuked for their hypocrisy. Our actions and attitudes should not be as the Pharisee toward the publican in terms of being self-righteous. (Luke 18:11) As long as we are in the flesh, we need continued striving against such a propensity and seek the prompt removal of any defilement upon the imputed righteous garment provided through the merit of Christ’s blood.—Rom. 5:8,9

SPIRITUAL GROWTH

Progress in the Christian way is dependent upon Bible study, for it is through this endeavor that we feed upon the precious promises of God which nourish and give us strength. (II Pet. 1:4) The Bible emphasizes that “every scripture inspired of God is also profitable,” and indeed is necessary, if all our needs as his children are to be supplied. (II Tim. 3:16, ASV) The word “scripture” simply means writing, and not all writing is inspired by God. However, all words inspired by God are profitable for the purposes the Heavenly Father designs for his people.

The apostles encouraged Christians in the Early Church to study the inspired Word of God. At that time the Old Testament was almost the only Scriptures they had, because various portions of the New Testament were just being written and circulated in the form of letters or epistles. However, the Old Testament contained God’s promises of the Messiah

and of the kingdom which he would establish. It also foretold the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow. Although not understood by the ancients, the Old Testament also proclaimed that the Messiah would have joint-heirs who would live and reign with him in the kingdom. (Dan. 9:25,26; Isa. 9:6,7; 53:1-12; Ps. 45:9-15) This is the great mystery which was kept hidden for ages but revealed to the Early Church by the apostles.—Eph. 3:4-6

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

At the onset of the present Gospel Age, truth seekers were encouraged to prove for themselves that what they were being told by the apostles was really true. We note the following account. “And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Berea: who coming thither went into the synagogue of the Jews. These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.” (Acts 17:10,11) Thus, those Jews who listened to Paul at Berea and heeded this admonition were complimented for it. Although the Thessalonian brethren were apparently not as close students of the Bible as those in Berea, nevertheless, they also proved to be very zealous in bearing witness to the Gospel message.—I Thess. 1:3-9

It is a mistaken notion, all too prevalent today, that zealous study of the Bible in order to know and to be established in the teachings of God’s plan is not important. The apostles did not have this viewpoint. Paul exhorted Timothy that he should “take heed” to himself and to “the doctrine,” that

by so doing he would save himself as well as those to whom he ministered. (I Tim. 4:16) This makes salvation itself dependent upon taking proper heed to the import of the Scriptures. Such a viewpoint is in harmony with Jesus' words when he prayed, "This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." (John 17:3) The only way to know God is through instruction in the divine Word which reveals his eternal purposes.

PURPOSEFUL STUDY

There is little spiritual profit in studying the Bible haphazardly. Paul admonished Timothy that in studying, or striving, to show himself approved to God, he should be "rightly handling the word of truth." (II Tim. 2:15, *RSV*) This admonition precedes a reference to an error which was being preached by some at that time; namely, that the resurrection had already occurred. (vss. 16-18) The Bible emphatically teaches the doctrine of the resurrection, both of the saintly and the world, but there is a due time in the plan of God for this to take place. (Acts 24:15; I Cor. 15:20-23) Those in the Early Church who diligently studied the Word of Truth could not be induced to believe that the promised resurrection was already past.

Not only are there time divisions in the plan of God which must be noted in our study of the Bible, but there is a different reward promised to the faithful of this age from that which will be offered to mankind in general during the coming Messianic kingdom upon the earth. The church is promised "glory and honour and immortality," while in the next age

those who obey will be restored to perfect life as human beings on the earth. (Rom. 2:7; Isa. 35:1-10; Rev. 21:2-4) If we fail to note this when we study the Bible, it will oftentimes seem to contradict itself.

Much of the language of the Bible is symbolic, while also a great deal of its testimony is presented without figurative significance. We need to discern the difference between literal and metaphorical language in our study of the Scriptures, or else again it will appear as though its testimony is contradictory. If we rightly handle the Word of Truth along these various lines, it will reveal God's wonderful plan to us in a harmonious manner. This, in turn, will induce healthy spiritual growth as we yield ourselves to the Bible's holy influence.

CHALLENGES TO OBEDIENCE

As consecrated believers we have the imputed robe of Christ's righteousness to cover our fleshly imperfections and tendencies. (Isa. 61:10; Rom. 4:7,8,16,23,24) Yet, our fallen sinful condition remains, except to the degree our new mind exercises self-control; and we may be sure that Satan will do all in his power to ensnare us. (I Cor. 9:27; I Pet. 5:8) Such testing may even be permitted to grow more intense as we near the end of our earthly sojourn. For example, the matter of not reacting in anger provides a severe test to believers when they are unjustly treated in an evil manner. Addressing this, Jesus said, "Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven."—Matt. 5:11,12

All of us occasionally receive ill-treatment at the hands of others. When we do what is right and are slandered because of it, do we feel blessed and joyful, or angry? Here is sage counsel: "This is thank-worthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully. For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously." (I Pet. 2:19-23) We have many challenging experiences, and our success in becoming a more than conqueror in large measure is dependent upon internalizing the fruits and graces of the Spirit as well as having clarity on intellectual aspects of the Truth.—Rom. 8:35-39; Gal. 5:22-25; II Pet. 1:2-12

OUR SOURCE OF STRENGTH

The Word of God is the source from which true Christians derive their strength. It commends itself by providing direction, hope, peace, and understanding to all who are spiritually enlightened and apply its precepts in their lives. Although the Bible has a generally elevating influence upon all who carefully read its pages, it is primarily designed to benefit those who have received its teachings and import to the intent that they have yielded their own will to that of seeking the Heavenly Father's

will in all of life's affairs. It is for this reason that we also read, "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."—I Cor. 2:14

Those who fully appreciate the importance of studying God's Word are engaged in the process of being changed from earthly to spiritual mindedness so that their lives can more nearly reflect the Christlike character. Such individuals, having accepted the present invitation to become disciples of Christ through self-denial and sacrifice, find the need to follow this admonition of Paul: "Be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."—Rom. 12:2

DOCTRINE

The importance of study is all encompassing and comprises the Christian's work of a lifetime. Four aspects related to this subject are: doctrine, prophecy, service, and imbibing divine principles. Doctrine refers to teaching, and if the believer is to be guided properly, he must refer to God's counsel as revealed in the Scriptures. During Jesus' ministry, the people marveled at his "gracious words." (Luke 4:22) He properly credited the heavenly Father as the fountain from which his words flowed. After expounding to the people at the Feast of Tabernacles, the Master declared, "My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me. If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself."—John 7:16,17

Thus it should be also with each faithful follower of Christ. To appreciate the attributes and character of God and to comprehend the harmonious grandeur of his magnificent plan of salvation, which includes such themes as the ransom, resurrection, justification, sanctification, the call of the church, the nature of Christ, and other fundamental teachings, one must first be emptied of self and demonstrate a meek and humble attitude. Under the Holy Spirit's influence, Christians will be directed to examine carefully what the Bible teaches on these subjects. While it is true that God has raised up human agencies since Pentecost such as apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers, for the "edifying of the body of Christ," individual diligence and personal study are necessary in order to make the Truth one's own.—Eph. 4:11,12

Among the many exhortations given by the Apostle Paul regarding doctrine, we read, "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good." (I Thess. 5:21) The assimilation of scriptural instruction was deemed necessary to be kept free from the errors promulgated by false teachers after the apostles fell asleep in death. The many conflicting ideas which presently exist among Christians demonstrate that in these "last days" believers must be circumspect and rely upon a "thus saith the Lord" as a basis for their faith.—II Tim. 3:1-5; Isa. 44:6

PROPHECY

The study of prophecy would surely be of interest to the child of God who yearns for the kingdom for which Jesus taught his disciples to pray. (Matt. 6:10) Prior to his crucifixion the Master gave many

signs concerning his Second Advent and the preparatory work which would be accomplished before this present social order would give way to a reign of righteousness. (Matt. 24:27-44; Luke 21:25-33) Under divine guidance, both Old and New Testament writers recorded future events. Since many of these were fulfilled in the past, believers today can have confidence that if they “watch” soberly and prayerfully, they will recognize prophetic unfolding at the time when they are due to be understood.—I Thess. 5:6; I Pet. 4:7

One prophecy which seems to be descriptive of our day relates to the time of the end when many would “run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.” (Dan. 12:4) Although Daniel desired to understand the meaning of his prophetic utterances, they were not due to be comprehended at that time but were reserved until our day for the benefit of faithful Christians who would be engaged in searching the Scriptures. God said to him, “Go thy way, Daniel: for the words are closed up and sealed till the time of the end. ... None of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand.”—vss. 9,10

The restoration of the Edenic paradise on a worldwide scale is a hope which Bible students have proclaimed as the answer to the misery and suffering which mankind has endured since Adam’s fall into sin. Recognizing that only a comparatively small number from among humanity will strive seriously to emulate the life which Jesus lived while he was on earth, consecrated believers rejoice that the Scriptures reveal the promised future opportunity of life on earth for every obedient individual, and not merely the saintly few which will live in heaven.

“He shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution [Greek: restoration] of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.” (Acts 3:20,21) Since all God’s holy prophets have declared there would be a time of restoration which would offer future blessings to mankind, the sincere Christian should certainly desire to proclaim these truths so that others might be comforted. A conviction based upon other prophecies, that the time for the fulfillment of these promises is close at hand, makes the study of these matters even more urgent. —Mark 13:29-31

SERVICE

Service in the cause of Christ is an indispensable privilege of all believers who desire to manifest an appreciation of the Heavenly Father’s love in giving his Son to be their Savior and Redeemer. The Lord’s followers, in studying the Scriptures, find many passages which indicate the responsibility and privilege of preaching the Gospel as a form of Christian service. (Isa. 52:7; Matt. 24:14; 28:19,20) Although the majority of the Lord’s people are not engaged in a public ministry, each believer will look for service opportunities on every suitable occasion in accordance with the Apostle Paul’s admonition, “As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.” —Gal. 6:10

The Scriptures give many examples of service which might be performed to assist others. A partial list includes: meeting regularly with fellow Christians

to encourage their faithfulness to God; sympathizing with those who are undergoing heavy burdens; being a good listener; pointing to scriptural references which might afford comfort; inquiring as to whether you can be of special assistance and following through on the offer; remembering to pray for others both in their trials and when the Heavenly Father blesses their endeavors along some line of service; testifying of personal experiences to encourage others to learn lessons which they can apply in their lives; and sacrificing in the use of resources to help further the cause of Christ. If any true follower of Christ feels he or she has no opportunity for Christian service, a prayerful consideration of what the Bible declares on this subject should prove most profitable.

DIVINE PRINCIPLES

The study of divine principles is a critical undertaking for all believers who wish to be conformed to the Master's image. Since we have a God who operates by a set of righteous principles, it is incumbent upon his people to probe the Scriptures in order to discover a lifestyle which would be pleasing to the Creator in accordance with his will as revealed by the Holy Spirit. Frequently the same principle is indicated in different parts of the Bible. One such example is that confession of sin is a prerequisite to forgiveness. (Ps. 32:5; Isa. 55:7; Prov. 28:13; I John 1:9) A few of the many other principles which the Scriptures reveal and commend themselves for the Christian's study include:

- Obedience is more acceptable than sacrifice.
(I Sam. 15:22)

- We reap what we sow. (Gal. 6:7)
- Justice is the foundation of God's throne. (Ps. 89:14)
- Humility precedes exaltation. (James 4:10)
- Cross bearing is required for discipleship. (Luke 14:27)
- Everyone is accountable to God. (Rom. 14:12)
- The merciful shall receive mercy. (Matt. 5:7)
- God is love. (I John 4:16)

The importance of study should be deemed as self-evident to Christians. It is not to be considered merely an academic venture for the purpose of acquiring factual information, but rather an integral feature of one's spiritual development and acceptability to the Heavenly Father. One Scripture in particular seems to encapsulate the motive which should spur each believer to engage in a comprehensive study of the many facets of the divine revelation as contained in the Bible: "Study and do your best to present yourself to God approved, a workman tested by trial who has no reason to be ashamed, accurately handling and skillfully teaching the word of truth." (II Tim. 2:15, *Amplified Bible*) What purpose for study could be loftier than that? ■

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 Verna Roguski, Portland, OR—October 4.
Age, 99

The Privilege of Thanksgiving

“It is a good thing to give thanks unto the LORD, and to sing praises unto thy name, O most High.”
—*Psalm 92:1*

EACH YEAR, STARTING IN 1863, one hundred sixty-one years ago, the fourth Thursday of November has been designated in the United States as a day of thanksgiving—this year that will

be November 28. True Christians are always glad to give thanks, and thus will be happy to render thanks to the Lord on this day. Indeed, if we are living up to our privileges, we will be giving thanks to the Lord every day. Paul wrote, “In everything give thanks,” and since we know that “all things” are working together for our eternal good, thankfulness will be welling up in our hearts and finding expression through our lips for every experience of life.—I Thess. 5:18; Rom. 8:28

All the Lord’s people appreciate the blessings which he continuously showers upon them. Giving thanks is one of the ways of expressing this appreciation. First, we give thanks to our Heavenly Father, but also, as a testimony of his goodness, we express

thanks among those with whom we come in contact. “It is a good thing,” our text declares, “to give thanks unto the LORD, and to sing praises” unto his name. Here the thought seems to be that we express our thanks to the Lord, and sing praises with others—and certainly our songs of praise are expressions of thanksgiving.

David wrote, “That I may publish with the voice of thanksgiving, and tell of all thy wondrous works.” (Ps. 26:7) This expression is found in a very interesting and revealing context. Opening the psalm, David wrote, “Judge me, O LORD; for I have walked in mine integrity: I have trusted also in the LORD; therefore I shall not slide.” (vs. 1) Neither David nor any other member of the fallen race has been capable of living up to God’s standard of perfection, but as the consecrated people of God it is essential that we maintain our integrity before him in the sense of always being willing and anxious to do right. Maintaining such an attitude before the Lord, we will want him to judge us, and to reveal to us those things in which we are not pleasing to him.

IN GOD’S STRENGTH

David knew that he could not maintain his integrity by his own strength. We, also, would fail in our own strength. It is only as we have faith in God’s willingness and ability to help us in our every time of need, and make use of his every provision to give us strength in him and in the power of his might, that, like David, we can have confidence that we will not “slide.”

David continues, “Examine me, O LORD, and prove me; try my reins and my heart. For thy lovingkindness

is before mine eyes: and I have walked in thy truth.” (Ps. 26:2,3) The psalmist was so desirous of being right in Jehovah’s sight that he invited him to examine and prove him. This was asking a great deal, for the psalmist would have no way of knowing what severe methods might be used to prove him, or what experiences the answer to this prayer might bring. However, he had two good reasons for making this request. (1) He was confident that God’s lovingkindness was before him. (2) He was walking in the Lord’s truth and knew that the truth would be his “shield and buckler.”—Ps. 91:4

The psalmist then expresses some aspects of his integrity. “I have not sat with vain persons,” he wrote, “neither will I go in with dissemblers.” (Ps. 26:4) With David, it was not a matter merely of refraining from fellowship with dissemblers, while at the same time secretly wishing that the law of his God did not prohibit him from doing so. It was more than this! “I have hated the congregation of evil doers,” he wrote, “and will not sit with the wicked.”—vs. 5

SHOULD HATE ALL EVIL

Not being acquainted with the circumstances which prompted this expression of hatred for evil, we can apply it only in principle to our own stand for God and for righteousness. We should apply this principle to all evil—to everything that is out of harmony with the Lord. We are not to have fellowship with any of Satan’s works of darkness, not merely because we are forbidden to do so, but because, like the psalmist, we hate evil. This is implied in being “conformed to the image” of God’s dear Son, of

whom it is written that he “loved righteousness, and hated iniquity.”—Rom. 8:29; Heb. 1:8,9

In Psalm 19:12-14 we find David praying, “Who can understand his errors? cleanse thou me from secret faults. Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression. Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer.”

The psalmist knew that the only way he could be truly innocent before the Lord was to have his God cleanse him from secret faults and keep him from committing presumptuous sins. His own part in this was in humbly and sincerely looking to the Lord to examine and prove him. Even then David could not be innocent in the sense of being free from all sin, but his heart could be pure. Upon the basis of this purity of heart intention, he knew that God would accept his devotions and his sacrifices. It was in such an attitude that he could “compass,” or embrace, the Lord’s altar; that is, offer the sacrifice of thanksgiving to the Lord.—Ps. 26:6

A HEART TUNED TO THE LORD

As David reveals, his thanksgiving to the Lord was the inevitable result of his longing desire and resolute determination to maintain his integrity before the Creator. This indicates—and we believe that every dedicated child of God will affirm it from personal experience—that true and spontaneous thanksgiving to God can come only from a heart that is in tune with him.

We cannot be in rebellion against the Lord's instructions, resisting his providences, and at the same time have our hearts running over with true thanksgiving to him. Thanksgiving is the overflowing of hearts that have been emptied of self, and filled by the Holy Spirit through the written Word and the providential love of God with which we are surrounded. If the love of God has thus been "shed abroad in our hearts," we will find that it is indeed a good thing—yea, a very delightful thing—to give thanks unto the Lord.—Rom. 5:5

Viewed in the proper light, every experience of life is an occasion for thanksgiving. We are thankful for God's keeping power in our lives; that he has not permitted us to fall. We are thankful for the assurance that he will never leave us or forsake us; that having begun a good work in us, he will finish that work in his own due time, and through whatever agencies he may deem wise to choose.—II Pet. 1:10; Heb. 13:5; Phil. 1:6

In this respect our thanksgiving is both retrospective and prospective. We thank God for past mercies and for the hope of future blessings—those which we know will continue to flow from him to "usward" in ever-mounting streams of his lovingkindness and grace.—Ps. 40:5

THANKFUL FOR SPIRITUAL VISION

As our minds turn back we thank God that he "inclined" unto us. He heard our cry for help, lifted us out of the "horrible pit," and set our feet upon a "rock." (Ps. 40:1,2) There are millions of sincere people in the world who are seeking after God who

will not, in this present age, find him. It will not be until the Messianic kingdom that he will “incline” toward these. That will be the time of their “visitation.” (I Pet. 2:12) It is only “a little flock” that the Lord is now seeking, and how thankful we should be if he has given us opportunity to be of this small company.—Luke 12:32

Think what this means! While in the horrible pit and the miry clay we were alienated from God through sinful works—originally the sinful works of Adam through which condemnation came upon all his progeny. However, the Lord opened the eyes of our understanding, and thus enlightened through the Truth, he extended to us the high and holy calling of this Gospel Age. (Rom. 5:12; Eph. 1:18) Through faith in the blood of Christ, which alone could make us acceptable—a faith that was demonstrated by a full consecration to do God’s will—we received the assurance of reconciliation with God, and of no longer being alienated from him. (I Pet. 1:2,18,19; I John 1:7) What a continuous cause for thanksgiving this should be!

FURTHER BLESSINGS

“Peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” opens the way to further blessings for which we should be daily thankful. Paul wrote concerning “this grace wherein we stand,” which causes us to “rejoice in hope of the glory of God.” (Rom. 5:1,2) Indeed, not only do we now have peace with God, and enjoy fellowship with him, but he has established our “goings” in the narrow way that leads to “glory and honour and immortality.” (Ps. 40:2; Rom. 2:7) We will, of course, have tribulations and trials, but this will help us to develop patience. If we continue

patiently to endure these experiences they will lead to a hope that “maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit which is given unto us.”—Rom. 5:3-5

Having peace “with” God through our Lord Jesus Christ, and by continued faith in his promises and their fulfillment, we gradually acquire the peace “of” God—that is, the same kind of peace God has. (Phil. 4:7) God enjoys peace, because he knows that his divine power and wisdom is in perfect control of every situation in his entire universe. We can have this same peace, this same tranquility of mind, through faith in his promises to love and care for us. We know that there is no circumstance in our lives that he is not capable of overruling for our highest good. We know, moreover, that while at times his providences may permit trials to come upon us, behind these is his smiling face of love which will not permit us to be tested above that which we are able to bear.—I Cor. 10:13

REJOICE IN THE LORD

Paul expressed a similar thought when he wrote, “Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”—Phil. 4:4-7, *English Standard Version*

The peace of God is a part of our present inheritance as Christians, and what a glorious portion it is! The world is filled with confusion and fear:

the strife of nations; the conflict of arms, real and threatened; economic insecurity; the uncertainty of friends; these all contribute to turmoil in the hearts of the masses of mankind.

It is not so, however, with those into whose hearts the Lord has shined with the Gospel and who have accepted this message and acted upon it. Just as God knows that in due time he will lead the world into its desired haven and that nothing can interfere with the outworking of his plans and purposes, so faithful Christians at this time know that he is fully capable, and abundantly willing, to give them bountifully of his love and care. Indeed, we can testify that day by day he is doing so. Is this not cause for the continual giving of thanks?

FOR EVERY EXPERIENCE

Our thankfulness should not be merely along general lines. Rather, each experience that comes to us affords an opportunity to give thanks. Let us continually avail ourselves of the provisions the Lord has made through his Word as well as the help of our brethren in Christ to increase our knowledge of his plans and purposes. Thus we will desire to give thanks to God for the better understanding we have thus acquired, and the better awareness of his will, all of which makes our fellowship with him more intimate and blessed.

If we have been faithful in the use of the various opportunities we have had to show forth the Lord's praises by making known the Gospel of the kingdom, we will be thankful for the experiences we have enjoyed in thus bearing witness to the Truth. (Matt. 24:14) Perhaps the Lord has used us to communicate

the Gospel to one who receives the message gladly. Truly, this would be a cause for thankfulness!

On the other hand, it may be that all our efforts to make known the glad tidings to others have seemed to fail. Perhaps those to whom we have shared the Gospel have turned away with indifference, or possibly have scorned or even persecuted us. This also is a cause for thankfulness, for such experiences are among the witnesses of the Spirit that we are the children of God. (Matt. 5:10-12; Rom. 8:16,17) Jesus explained that no one could come to him unless drawn by his Heavenly Father. (John 6:44) Therefore, if those to whom we witness do not show appreciation of the message, it is because they are not presently being drawn by God.

We can be thankful, however, for the realization that a time is soon coming in God's plan when all people will be enlightened and given an opportunity to walk up the highway of holiness—the return road to human perfection and to reconciliation with God. (Isa. 35:8) At the same time we can be especially thankful that the Lord has drawn us and that we have been given “eyes” to see and “ears” to hear the joyful strains of his harmonious plan of salvation.—Matt. 13:16

Truly, the Lord is good to all of his people! The psalmist wrote, “Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound: they shall walk O LORD, in the light of thy countenance. In thy name shall they rejoice all the day: and in thy righteousness shall they be exalted.” (Ps. 89:15,16) That we have been privileged to know the joyful sound of God's Holy Word is, in itself, an evidence that we are walking in the light of the Lord's countenance, and that his favor is upon us. Indeed, “it is a good thing to give thanks unto the LORD!” ■

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

Petite-Foret, France	Lamorlaye, France	10
November 2,3		
Paris, France	5,6	

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

T. Alexander

San Diego, CA November 23,24

N. Austin

Milwaukee, WI November 2,3

M. Kerry

Ghana, Africa November 30

B. Montague

Ghana, Africa November 30

H. Montague

New Haven, CT November 10

WEEKLY PRAYER MEETING TEXTS

NOVEMBER 7—“And I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God.”—Revelation 20:4 (Z. '00-285 Hymn 134)

NOVEMBER 14—“Take heed unto yourselves, ... for grievous wolves shall enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.”—Acts 20:28-30 (Z. '04-74 Hymn 293)

NOVEMBER 21—“My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations.”—James 1:2 (Z. '02-133 Hymn 275A)

NOVEMBER 28—“When he giveth quietness, who then can make trouble?”—Job 34:29 (Z. '96-259 Hymn 106)

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

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

NEW HAVEN CONVENTION, November 10—IN PERSON AND BROADCAST ONLINE—NEW LOCATION—Elks Lodge, 175 School Street, Hamden, CT 06518. Contact M. Lacombe. Phone: (203) 910-3091 or Email: merrilylacombe@hotmail.com

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

GHANA END OF YEAR CONVENTION, November 30—BROADCAST ONLINE ONLY—Contact N. Amoo. Email: yawnoah3n@yahoo.com

IBADAN THANKSGIVING CONVENTION, December 7,8—IN PERSON ONLY—Ibadan Place of Fellowship, Coca Cola Mokola, Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria. Contact C. O. Egbu. Phone: +2348033339949 or Email: egbucaje@gmail.com

CHICAGO CONVENTION, December 28,29—IN PERSON AND BROADCAST ONLINE—Doubletree by Hilton, 3003 Corporate West Drive, Lisle, IL 60532. Contact T. Blackwell. Email: secretary@chicagobible.org, or contact M. Neiman. Phone: (630) 740-0900

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

SACRAMENTO CONVENTION, February 14-16—IN PERSON AND BROADCAST ONLINE—Holiday Inn Express, 2224 Auburn Boulevard, Sacramento, CA 95821. Phone: (916)923-1100. Contact K. Freer. Phone: (916) 879-4657 or Email: winnerwear@aol.com

FLORIDA CONVENTION, March 1-3—IN PERSON AND BROADCAST ONLINE—Winter Park Masonic Lodge, 1495 Grand Road, Winter Park, FL 32792. Contact J. Benson. Phone: (860) 884-8168 or Email: jonathanandjewel@gmail.com

METROPOLITAN DETROIT CONVENTION, May 3,4—IN PERSON AND BROADCAST ONLINE—Milford Senior Center, 1050 Atlantic Street, Milford, MI 48381. Contact N. Hummel. Email: psa343nj@yahoo.com

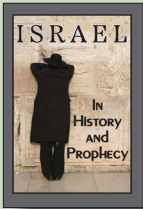
Render Thanks to God

*“O render thanks to God above,
The fountain of eternal love,
Whose mercy firm through ages past
Hath stood and shall forever last.
Who can his mighty deeds express,
Not only vast but numberless?
What mortal eloquence can raise
His tribute of eternal praise?
O may I worthy prove to see
Thy saints in full prosperity,
That I the joyful choir may join,
And count thy people’s triumph mine!”*
—Hymns of Dawn

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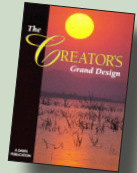


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To us the Scriptures clearly teach . . .

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

