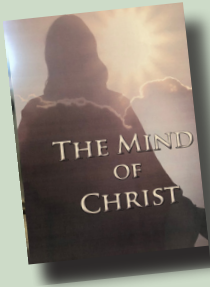


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TABLE OF CONTENTS

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HIGHLIGHTS OF DAWN

Death Destroyed, Life Restored 2

INTERNATIONAL BIBLE STUDIES

Christ Died Once for All 14

God's Love Manifested 16

Christ Is Risen 18

Worthy Is the Lamb 20

CHRISTIAN LIFE AND DOCTRINE

Paul's Ministry in Athens 22

The Symbolic Bread and Cup 35

Running and Fighting Lawfully 47

Weekly Prayer Meeting Texts 34

OBITUARIES 62

SPEAKERS' APPOINTMENTS 62

CONVENTIONS 63

Death Destroyed, Life Restored

“God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful.”
—*Revelation 21:4,5*

AT THIS TIME OF YEAR THE minds of millions throughout the world are turned toward the theme of Jesus’ resurrection from the dead. To these, the commemoration of the resurrection of Jesus does, to some extent, present a brief relief from the daily offerings of chaos, destruction, and death in the news, which shows the world in a state of darkness and hopelessness.

Today, it is estimated that about 150,000 people die worldwide each day. Many of these deaths are simply the result of the fact that all of mankind are members of a sin-cursed and dying race. (Rom. 5:12; I Cor. 15:22) However, we also have those tragic deaths resulting from war, revolution, accident, crime, drugs, and other specific evils of

the past and present. It is indeed a nighttime of sorrow and weeping, but we have the blessed assurance of God's Word that "joy cometh in the morning." (Ps. 30:5) That blessed morning of joy is to be ushered in by the rising of "the Sun of righteousness," who, "with healing in his wings," will heal the people of their diseases, physical and otherwise, and give peace, health, and life forevermore.—Mal. 4:2

In spite of the chaos and death with which we are surrounded and plagued, we have the assurances of God's Word that he will intervene in human affairs and do for the people what they cannot do for themselves. This means that the hope held out in the Bible for the world of mankind is as bright as the promises of God. These promises assure us not only that sickness and death will be destroyed, as well as all the other evils which now afflict the human race, but also that those who are asleep in death are to be awakened, that they also may participate in the joys of that new day—that morning of joy which is to follow the present dark night of sorrow.

The question arises in the minds of many as to God's ability to fulfill all the wonderful promises which he has caused to be recorded in his Word. It may seem an oversimplification of the matter, but to us it is obvious that the one who created life is abundantly able to restore life. Furthermore, to assure us of this the Lord has given numerous instances in the Bible in which he has, through his servants, used his life-giving power to awaken the dead to life. These instances we may consider as tokens of the divine purpose on behalf of all humans who are asleep in death. Some of these instances

took place during Old Testament times, and others in the days of Jesus, and in connection with his ministry; while later the Apostle Peter raised a Christian sister from the sleep of death.

THE WIDOW'S SON

The Prophet Elijah awakened the son of a widow from the dead and thus demonstrated the power of the Creator to restore life. The record states that Elijah “stretched himself upon the child three times and cried to the LORD, O LORD my God, let this child’s life come into him again. And the LORD listened to the voice of Elijah. And the life of the child came into him again, and he revived. And Elijah took the child and brought him down from the upper chamber into the house and delivered him to his mother. And Elijah said, See, your son lives.” —I Kings 17:21-23, *English Standard Version*

The use of the word “soul,” which appears in the *King James Version* and other translations of this account, does not substantiate the false notion that humans have within them something intangible called a soul, which escapes when the body dies. The word soul in this instance is used, as often in the Bible, simply to denote life, as noted in the translation quoted. This boy’s life had departed from him, and through the ministry of Elijah, and by the power of God, his life returned.

The important consideration in this account is that we have in it an example of the restoring power of God as it will yet manifest itself throughout all the earth, and on behalf of all who have fallen asleep in death—whether in war, by disease, in youth, or in old age. Moses revealed the plan of

God in this matter when, in a prayer, he said of God, “Thou turnest man to destruction; and sayest, Return, ye children of men.”—Ps. 90:3

THE SHUNAMMITE’S SON AWAKENED

The story of the Shunammite woman, and of her son who died, possibly as a result of sunstroke, is well-known to Bible readers. (II Kings 4:18-20) When the son died the mother summoned Elisha, who restored him to life. The account reads: “When Elisha was come into the house, behold, the child was dead, and laid upon his bed. He went in therefore, and shut the door upon them twain, and prayed unto the LORD. And he went up, and lay upon the child, and put his mouth upon his mouth, and his eyes upon his eyes, and his hands upon his hands: and he stretched himself upon the child; and the flesh of the child waxed warm. Then he returned, and walked in the house to and fro; and went up, and stretched himself upon him: and the child sneezed seven times, and the child opened his eyes. And he called Gehazi [his servant], and said, Call this Shunammite. So he called her. And when she was come in unto him, he said, Take up thy son. Then she went in, and fell at his feet, and bowed herself to the ground, and took up her son, and went out.”—vss. 32-37

There is an ancient saying, oft repeated, “While there’s life, there’s hope.” This limitation does not apply to God, however, for according to his promises, and according to the evidences furnished in his Word, there is hope for all who have died. It is true that the time had not yet come in the days of Elijah and Elisha for the general restoration of the dead. That still remains to be accomplished during

what the Apostle Peter described as the “times of restitution of all things.” (Acts 3:20,21) Those two boys restored to life by God’s ancient prophets went back into death again in later years, but this will not be so in the coming time of restoration. Then it will be God’s purpose that all who have died be raised from the dead and given the opportunity to live forever.—John 5:28,29; Rom. 5:18,19

IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

Through the ministry of Jesus others were awakened from the sleep of death. We quote the account of the young man in the city of Nain who was restored to life: “Now when he came nigh to the gate of the city, behold, there was a dead man carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow: and much people of the city was with her. And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not. And he came and touched the bier [coffin]: and they that bare him stood still. And he said, Young man, I say unto thee, Arise. And he that was dead sat up, and began to speak. And he delivered him to his mother.”—Luke 7:12-15

Then there was the case of the daughter of the ruler of the synagogue. She had died, “and all wept, and bewailed her,” but Jesus said, “Weep not; she is not dead, but sleepeth. And they laughed him to scorn, knowing that she was dead. And he put them all out, and took her by the hand, and called, saying, Maid, arise. And her spirit [Greek: breath] came again, and she arose straightway: and he commanded to give her meat. And her parents were astonished: but he charged them that they should tell no man what was done.”—Luke 8:52-56

LAZARUS ALSO

We also have the classic case of Lazarus, the brother of Martha and Mary. This little family of Bethany were special friends of Jesus. Lazarus became seriously ill at a time when Jesus was conducting his ministry in the area where John the Baptist had been baptizing, some distance from Bethany. (John 10:40) The sisters sent messengers to Jesus to tell him of their brother's illness, but Jesus did nothing about it for a number of days. He then explained to his disciples, "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby."—John 11:4

Jesus knew, of course, that Lazarus would succumb to his sickness and would fall asleep in death. When Lazarus did die, Jesus said to his disciples, "Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep." (vs. 11) The disciples failed to comprehend the meaning of Jesus' statement, thinking he meant that Lazarus was simply resting quietly in sleep; then he said to them plainly, "Lazarus is dead. And I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, to the intent ye may believe; nevertheless let us go unto him."—vss. 14,15

Lazarus was indeed dead, and in referring to it Jesus used sleep as a symbol of death. From sleep there is an awakening, and Jesus knew that the whole dead world of mankind would be awakened from the sleep of death in God's due time. The Master returned to Bethany, and to the home of Martha and Mary. When Martha saw him she said, "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. But I know, that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee." (John 11:21,22)

This was Martha's way of indicating her belief that Jesus would have been able to heal her brother had he arrived sooner, but more than this, it showed her belief that Jesus was able now to restore him to life.

This Jesus intended to do. He said to Martha, "Thy brother shall rise again," to which she replied, "I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day." (vss. 23,24) Martha had been a student of Jesus' teachings, and doubtless also of the Old Testament scriptures in which is set forth the hope of the resurrection. She believed in the promised awakening from the sleep of death which was to be brought about by divine power in the final period of God's great plan of redemption and restoration through Christ, referred to in the prophecies as "the last day." (Isa. 2:2; 25:6-9) Actually this "day" is a thousand years in length, and will see the whole dead world of mankind restored to life. —II Pet. 3:8; Rev. 20:4,6

Jesus replied to Martha, "I am the resurrection, and the life." (John 11:25) That is, Jesus was the one who in the time of resurrection would be used by the Heavenly Father to restore life. Jesus gave his own human life as a ransom for Adam and his race, and by virtue of this he has been given the authority and the power to awaken all who are asleep in death. (I Tim. 2:5,6; Matt. 28:18) He awakened Lazarus from the sleep of death at that time as a demonstration of what would be accomplished in the final age of God's plan for all who sleep in death. Lazarus had been dead for several days and his flesh had begun to decompose. His awakening was a vivid example of the fact that so far as divine power is concerned it makes no

difference whether one has been dead for a few moments, for four days, or for thousands of years; the life-giving power of him who is “the resurrection and the life” will prevail for their restoration.

CHRIST THE FIRSTFRUITS

Thus far we have noted a number of instances mentioned in the Bible pertaining to the awakening of certain ones from the sleep of death. These were not resurrected in the fullest sense of the word, but merely restored to partial life temporarily. While these instances impress us with the fact of divine power capable of raising the dead, it is not until the resurrection of Jesus that we have the first instance of a full, complete, and eternal resurrection from the dead.

In Jesus’ resurrection we have what the Apostle Paul refers to as the “firstfruits” of the resurrection. Paul wrote, “Now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept.” To this Paul adds, “For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.” (I Cor. 15:20-22) That is, all will be given the opportunity, based on obedience, for a full and complete restoration to perfect human life.

When Jesus was raised from the dead he was highly exalted to a heavenly home and to the divine nature. Paul refers to this in Ephesians 4:8. “Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men.” This verse refers to Psalms 68:18, which reads: “Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led in procession a body of captives.” (*Rotherham Emphasized Bible*)

This “body of captives” are the so-called “after-fruits” of the resurrection, as it is likened to the release of prisoners—in this case, the prisoners of death. What a multitude of captives this is!

They will be preceded by the footstep followers of Jesus, who are described in the Scriptures as being the “firstfruits” class because they will be associated with Jesus in the blessing of the remainder of the world of mankind. James wrote concerning these: “Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.” (James 1:18) The Revelator speaks of them as coming forth in “the first resurrection,” and that they shall live and reign with Christ a thousand years. (Rev. 20:4,6) These, then, are the first led forth from the prison of death by Jesus. They, like him, are exalted to a heavenly home, and to glory and honor and immortality.—Rom. 2:7

PRINCES IN THE EARTH

Another group of death’s captives to be led forth by Jesus in the resurrection are those referred to in Psalm 45:16 as the faithful ancient fathers. These are to be made “princes in all the earth.” In the 11th chapter of Hebrews the apostle mentions many of these by name and tells of their faithfulness under trial. He explains that they endured suffering in the Lord’s cause in order “that they might obtain a better resurrection.”—Heb. 11:35

These, we are informed, received the assurance that because of their great faith they were pleasing to God, which means that they proved worthy of a “better resurrection.” This will be an instantaneous

raising to perfection of human life, and as perfect humans these will be the visible earthly representatives of the divine Christ in the Messianic kingdom. (Heb. 11:39,40) The Prophet Isaiah informs us that at that time Jacob shall again see his children, and that his face shall no more wax pale with old age.—Isa. 29:22,23

Still another group of death's captives to be led forth to freedom and life by the great restorer of life will be what the Revelator describes as a "great multitude." Concerning these we read, "These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them."—Rev. 7:9,14,15

It should be noted that this great multitude class will not sit with the Lord "on" the throne, as will the firstfruits, Jesus' faithful footstep followers, but will be "before" the throne, and will serve God day and night in his temple. We do not know just what the nature of their service will be in the Messianic kingdom, but whatever it might be, there is first of all the necessity of their being raised from the dead.

THE GENERAL RESURRECTION

The final group of death's captives to be led forth from the tomb will be that large body of the remainder of all mankind who have ever lived. This group includes those who have died in unbelief, in partial belief, the criminals, the proud and selfish, the children, and those millions upon

millions who have died without an understanding of the basic fundamentals of the Bible's teachings. It will include those too who, though claiming belief in Jesus, have mostly paid lip service to that belief, but have been unwilling in this life to give themselves fully to God, nor to sacrifice.

The *Revised Standard Version* and many other translations state that these shall come forth from death "to the resurrection of judgment." (John 5:29) This means that when this group of death's captives are liberated from the sleep of death they will be brought to judgment, or trial, as the thought is in the Greek text, for in the plan of God, the Messianic kingdom and the promised Judgment Day of a thousand years run concurrently. It will be that "day" spoken of by the Apostle Paul when the Lord will judge the world in righteousness.—Acts 17:31

Isaiah 26:9 declares that when the judgments of the Lord are abroad in the earth the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness. The psalmist spoke of this as the Lord judging the people with his truth. What a happy time that will be: "Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad; let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof. Let the field be joyful, and all that is therein: then shall all the trees of the wood rejoice before the LORD: ... for he cometh to judge the earth: he shall judge the world with righteousness, and the people with his truth."—Ps. 96:11-13

THE RANSOMED RETURN

Jesus gave himself a "ransom" for all mankind. (I Tim. 2:5,6) It is this that makes possible his leading forth the captives of death. Isaiah wrote

concerning the happy time when the world of mankind is brought back from their captivity. He said, “The ransomed of the LORD shall return, ... with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.”—Isa. 35:10

The Hebrew word *sheol* in the Old Testament, and its Greek companion *hades* in the New Testament, are used in the Bible to denote the great prison, the sleep of death, into which all mankind pass when they die. In Revelation 1:18 Jesus speaks of his having been dead—having died, that is, for the sins of the world—and that now he is alive, and has the “keys of hell [*hades*] and of death.” Here again is the thought of the dead being released from captivity, for Jesus in due time uses those keys to unlock and swing wide open the gates of captivity to awaken and free the prisoners of death.

When all have been released, and those worthy of everlasting life have demonstrated their loyalty to the divine principles of righteousness, and have been restored to full human perfection, then it will be true that “there shall be no more death,” as noted in our opening Scripture. The “former things [shall] have passed away,” and the last of death’s captives will have been released and restored to their full liberty as earthly sons of God.—Rev. 21:4-7

This is the full meaning of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who was the firstfruits of them that slept in death. While in 2025 the world is still in chaos and darkness, the glad new day of liberation of mankind from death is drawing closer, yea, as the signs of the times indicate, is very near. Let us rejoice in this glorious prospect! ■

Christ Died Once for All

Key Verse: “*For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.*”

—**Hebrews 9:24**

Selected Scripture:
Hebrews 9:23-28

ished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Spirit.”
—Acts 10:44-48

“Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh:

FROM A HISTORIC PERSPECTIVE this epistle appears to have been written to the church during a transition period in the first century. At the time Jewish believers had great difficulty as a whole in accepting that following the outpouring of the Holy Spirit to Cornelius and his household, Gentiles could have access to the Abrahamic promises. “The Holy Spirit fell on all them which heard the word. And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Spirit.”

How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?”—Heb. 9:11-14

As the apostle to the Gentiles, Paul understood clearly the philosophy of Christian suffering that thereby we “fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ.” (Col. 1:24) Out of the suffering and death of Jesus come the blessings of lasting life for both the church and the world. Those who die with him and suffer with him are, in the divine arrangement, contributing to the lasting welfare of others—to the church now as we lay down our lives for the brethren, and to the world by and by, in the Messianic kingdom on earth.—Matt. 6:10

Additionally, with great clarity the Scriptures affirm the efficacy of how the sacrificial death of Christ through the shedding of his blood will be applied during God’s kingdom to remove the original sin of Adam through his disobedience in Eden.—Heb. 9:22,23

Our Key Verse asserts that Christ died once for all. Those who are presently his disciples, if faithful, have the hope of a heavenly reward. All others will be given an opportunity to gain earthly life through obedience and internalizing the principles of righteousness in the coming age.

God has a special place in his plan for those who live unto him at the present time. They become Spirit begotten New Creatures to whom is given the ministry of reconciliation. (II Cor. 5:17-20) The shed blood of Christ is the basis of reconciliation, and it is our privilege to point men to this as the only way which leads to life. This is to be the great work of the future when Christ’s kingdom is in operation, and when the saints are reigning with him. (Rev. 20:6) However, we are to do what we can now. Our sacrificial efforts now are training us for the larger opportunities later. Our worthiness of sharing in the great work of tomorrow is dependent upon our loving interest in our fellow men today. ■

God's Love Manifested

Key Verse: *“In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.”*
—I John 4:9

Selected Scripture:
I John 4:7-14

might he increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.”—Isa. 40:29-31

Any attempt to demean the Heavenly Father's care for his children would of necessity proceed from an evil source outside of the Bible. This is why consecrated believers are admonished to “try the spirits whether they are of God,” and accept as truth only those matters that square with holiness and the divine promises centered in his eternal plan of salvation.
—I John 4:1-6

“Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is [begotten] of God, and

THE OLD AND NEW TESTA-
ment accounts of the superlative care and magnificence of God are found on virtually every page of the Scriptures. He has existed from eternity past, is the source of life on every plane, and has forever been and will continue to be the great Immortal One.—Ps. 90:1-4; I Tim. 1:17

“He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no

knoweth God. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.” (vss. 7,8) Whatever we believe, whoever we are, no statement could be more profound as to the exalted status of the Creator in comparison to all of his subjects residing on any plane of existence.

Our Key Verse emphasizes the manifestation of God’s love which was evidenced in the sending of Jesus, his only begotten Son. (John 3:16) Jesus opened the way by which God, as the Creator, could be just while also justifying sinners who would accept Jesus Christ as their ransom price for the sin which Adam committed through disobedience.—Rom. 3:24-26

Our Heavenly Father makes every provision to deliver us from anything which might harm us as New Creatures. For example, he provides the fellowship and comfort of his people—our brethren in Christ. In his love, he permits only such experiences as will best serve to accomplish his divine purposes. He can even turn unfavorable circumstances into growth for his children, if we trust him, and allow him to work in us “to will and to do of his good pleasure.”—Phil. 2:13

God’s love for his people and his care over them can be seen in a more wonderful light when we take into consideration the exercise of his foreknowledge. He is always able to know in advance the outcome of the mighty works which he sets out to accomplish. This does not in any way destroy our free will. Our finite minds could not determine what another would do tomorrow unless we controlled his actions. Many of the Lord’s people reflect upon the wonderful way in which God was overruling their daily lives, even before they knew him.

Such a realization should cause us to respond with absolute confidence in our God. “There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love.”—I John 4:18, *New International Version* ■

Christ Is Risen

Key Verse: *“As they went to tell his disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail. And they came and held him by the feet, and worshipped him.”*
—Matthew 28:9

Selected Scripture:
Matthew 28:1-10

FOLLOWING THE CRUCIFIXION of Christ Jesus, and at the end of the Jewish sabbath, Mary Magdalene and some of the other women who had followed him during his earthly ministry arrived at his tomb early in the morning of the first day of the new week. They had come to anoint his body with aromatic spices as a symbol of their devotion to the Master.—Matt. 28:1

Prior to their arrival, there was an earthquake, and the angel of the Lord rolled away the heavy stone that sealed the tomb and the women were perplexed. “And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. And go quickly, and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead; and, behold, he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him: lo, I have told you. And they departed quickly from the sepulcher with fear and great joy; and did run to bring his disciples word.”—vss. 5-8

Our Key Verse indicates that as the women rushed to bring this most joyful announcement to his disciples, the risen Lord appeared in their midst. He greeted them in a body specially prepared for the occasion, and they

worshipped him with reverence and delight.

The doctrine of Christ's resurrection is fundamental to the hope and faith of every human who has ever lived. Divine foreknowledge has planned an opportunity for the recovery of the entire human family from death. This will include all of mankind's loved ones of every nation, each of whom have been plunged into the condition of sin and death as a result of Adam's disobedience in Eden. "By the offence of one [Adam] judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one [Jesus] the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life."—Rom. 5:18

In the Apostle Paul's letter to the church at Corinth, we read, "If Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen: And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ: whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not."—I Cor. 15:12-15

During this season many Christian people from around the world come together to celebrate our Lord's resurrection. Jesus instructed his disciples and faithful followers to commemorate his death on its anniversary date. They are to do this in memory of him after sundown on Nisan 14, which is the first month of the Jewish religious year, and is in compliance with their reckoning according to the Hebrew calendar.

The faithful members of Jesus' bride will share with him in the great work of his future Messianic kingdom. Thus, the human family will also come to know Jesus and the value of his ransom sacrifice. He "gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time." (I Tim. 2:5,6) What a glorious outlook for a world that needs peace, an end of suffering, and a glorious righteous government! ■

Worthy Is the Lamb

Key Verse: *“And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.”*
—*Revelation 5:9*

Selected Scripture:
Revelation 5:1-13

strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof? And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon. And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon.”—*Rev. 5:1-4*

Divine justice required a corresponding price to purchase Adam as well as all his progeny since no man was able to give a ransom for his brother. (Ps. 49:7) This fact also demonstrates why, as an act of love and

THE CENTRAL FIGURE IN God’s plan of redemption has been Jesus Christ, his “only begotten Son.” (John 3:16) He is mentioned throughout the entire Bible, and in its final book one of his identities is the “Lamb.”—*Rev. 5:6,8,12,13*

Reflecting upon the Abrahamic promise which was the means by which all the families of the earth would be blessed, we think of the following words of John. “I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne a book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals. And I saw a

compassion, God made a provision for sending forth his only begotten Son to redeem the human family, which otherwise would have been lost forever.—John 3:17

Several portions of Revelation chapter 5 are written in highly symbolic language. However, our Key Verse asserts Christ is the proven Worthy One who redeemed and purchased by his precious blood his beloved church. In verse 13 John the Revelator adds these words: “And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, ... heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.”

All who are striving to follow Christ have part in proclaiming the Gospel message. That this would be the case was prophesied by Jesus himself, when he said, “This gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations.” (Matt. 24:14) In Revelation 14:7, John tells us our message to others should be, “Fear [reverence] God, and give glory to him: ... worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.” God is to be the center of all our preaching—not ourselves, our ideas, our thoughts, our ways, but his only. Additionally, we should preach Jesus, the one who exercised the power of God his Father to create heaven, earth, the sea, and the fountains of waters. “All things were made by him [Jesus, God’s Son]; and without him was not any thing made that was made.”—John 1:3

Let us more fully appreciate the unfathomable love of God in giving his Son to be a ransom for all and the magnificent sacrifice Christ made in faithfully pouring out his soul unto death for his bride and for the whole world of mankind. “O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!”—Rom. 11:33 ■

Paul's Ministry in Athens

“They that conducted Paul brought him unto Athens: and receiving a commandment unto Silas and Timotheus for to come to him with all speed, they departed. Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was stirred in him, when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry.”
—Acts 17:15,16

THE APOSTLE PAUL'S

first visit to Greece, also called Achaia at that time, came during his second missionary tour. As he began this second journey with his traveling companion Silas, and a short time later joined also by Timothy, Paul first revisited several of the places where he had established churches during his first tour. These were all located in Asia Minor. Now, on his second journey, the apostle desired to continue his travels further north and east into that region.

Paul's plans, however, were changed by the Lord. “A vision appeared to Paul in the night; There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us.” (Acts 16:9) Paul and his companions

immediately changed course and headed west, sailing across the sea to Macedonia, and arrived at their first stop, Philippi.

EXPERIENCES IN MACEDONIA

The experiences of Paul in Philippi are recorded in Acts 16:12-40. The first of these was the conversion of Lydia and her household. Following this, Paul cast out an evil spirit from a young damsel, resulting in her masters' loss of income which they had enjoyed because of her soothsaying. Upon complaining to the town's leaders, Paul and Silas were severely beaten with rods and then cast into prison. This led to their miraculous deliverance by God and the conversion of the jailer and his family.

Upon leaving Philippi, Paul and Silas next came to Thessalonica. These experiences are recorded in Acts 17:1-9. There Paul went to the synagogue of the Jews on three consecutive Sabbath days and "reasoned with them out of the scriptures." Some believed and continued with Paul and Silas. Other Jews who believed not, were envious and created an uproar in the city. They captured a believer named Jason, thinking that he had kept Paul and Silas in safety. When the unbelieving Jews were not successful in finding Paul and Silas, they let Jason go. For safety's sake, the brethren in Thessalonica immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea.—vs. 10

Berea was Paul and Silas' final stop in Macedonia, the events of which are noted in Acts 17:11-14. The believers in Berea were spoken of as "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." Nevertheless, there soon was trouble. Unbelieving Jews from Thessalonica had found out that the Gospel was now being preached with good results in Berea, less than fifty miles away, so they came and stirred up more trouble. Once again, the brethren sent Paul away, though Silas and Timothy remained in Berea a while longer.

With the foregoing background of Paul's second missionary tour briefly stated, we now turn our attention more directly to our subject, Paul's ministry in Athens, Greece.

ARRIVAL IN ATHENS

Reasonable precaution was taken to help the apostle elude his persecutors who had stirred up trouble in Berea. When the brethren sent him away, it was in the direction of the sea, but actually, those who were conducting the apostle had him turn south and went by land to Athens. Arriving safely at Athens, and for a time safe from his enemies, Paul instructed his guides, when they returned to Berea, to inform Silas and Timothy to join him as quickly as possible.—Acts 17:15

Paul now waited in Athens until his companions joined him. However, the great apostle to the Gentiles could not be idle. "His spirit was stirred in him, when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry. Therefore disputed he in the synagogue with the Jews, and with the devout persons, and in the market daily with them that met with him."—vss. 16,17

Then "certain philosophers," for which the Greeks were noted, encountered Paul, and they took him to the Areopagus, also called Mars Hill, which could

be best described as an outdoor courtroom, reputed to be the court of highest authority in Athens. He was not put under arrest, but taken to this location and invited to set forth his “new doctrine.” “Thou bringest certain strange things to our ears,” they said, and “we would know therefore what these things mean.”—vss. 18-20

Some of the philosophers who had heard Paul in the marketplace charged that he was a “setter forth of strange gods: because he preached unto them Jesus, and the resurrection.” (vs. 18) These philosophers—even as most of the so-called wise men throughout the ages—did not believe in the reality of death. To them, therefore, the doctrine of the resurrection of the dead would seem strange indeed, for how could there be a resurrection of the dead if none were truly dead?

ON MARS HILL

Without question Paul welcomed this opportunity to present the Truth to the intellectuals of Athens. In doing so, he was at times diplomatic, but in some instances very forthright. The *King James Version* of his opening statement does not carry the proper meaning. Paul did not say to the Athenians, “Ye are too superstitious,” but rather, “I perceive that ye are very religious.”—Acts 17:22, *American Standard Version*

This was a compliment. Paul himself was very religious. He was so wholeheartedly devoted to the furthering of the Christian religion that he had given up every other interest in life. In his religious fervor he worshiped but the one God, and one Lord Jesus Christ, who had given his life for the sins of the

world. (I Cor. 8:6) In Paul's mind there was nothing wrong with being very religious. His mission in life was to preach the true religion—the Truth concerning the true and living God.

The error of the Athenians was in worshiping a multiplicity of gods, none of them real. Paul was vividly reminded of this as he stood on Mars Hill. Facing the area where the audience sat, just below the apostle was the great array of idols, each one ascribed to a different god. He probably passed even nearer to these idols as he walked along the road leading to the hill.

Towering above the apostle was a large and beautiful temple—the remains of which are there even today. Here the false gods of the Greeks were worshiped. Indeed, the Athenians were “very religious.” Although they knew the names of many gods and had set up idols to represent them, they thought it possible that there might be one which they did not know—an “Unknown God”—so they had built and dedicated an altar to it as well.—Acts 17:23

Paul took advantage of this situation, explaining that he was there to acquaint them with the “Unknown God” whom they ignorantly worshiped. This was a wise approach, well calculated to gain the attention of his audience, at least temporarily. Paul began to tell them some of the truths concerning the God who was unknown to them. He was the great Creator, the apostle explained, the God who “made the world and all things therein.” Having created the whole universe, it belongs to him, and is his domain, therefore he “dwelleth not in temples made with hands.”—vs. 24

In making this statement we can imagine Paul glancing up toward the Acropolis, where the great heathen temple stood above him, perhaps even pointing to it, with the implication that the true and living God of the universe could not be expected to dwell in such a place. Perhaps this was not too diplomatic, but it would certainly help the sincere among the Athenians to realize that their conception of deity was very limited.

Paul continued, “Neither is [God] worshipped with men’s hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us.”—vss. 25-27

To a large extent the gods of the heathen are visualized as being quite demanding. They have to be continually appeased by gifts, or otherwise. However, Paul told these “men of Athens” that the true and living God, who by their own confession was unknown to them, was quite the opposite. He did not need anything, since he “giveth to all life, and breath, and all things.”

Paul encouraged his audience to “look for God,” assuring them that he was not far away, for, after all, “we live, move, and exist because of him; as some of your own poets have said: For we are his children, too.” Agreeing with this quotation from one of the Greek poets, Paul continued, reasoning that “if we are God’s children, we shouldn’t think

that the divine being is like gold, silver, or stone, or is an image carved by humans using their own imagination and skill.” Even if they were not convinced by Paul’s eloquence, those listening could not refute this logic.—Acts 17:28,29, *International Standard Version*

IGNORANCE OVERLOOKED

Continuing his sermon, Paul referred to the past ignorance of humanity concerning the true God. He said, “The times of this ignorance God winked at.” (Acts 17:30) The Greek word here translated “winked at” means to overlook, and is so rendered in many other translations of this verse. God overlooks the ignorance of the people concerning him, holding them responsible only when they refuse, willfully, to be enlightened and to obey the light of Truth.

Human reasoning has often reached the conclusion that those who die in ignorance of God, and of Christ, will not be held accountable. It has been suggested that people will be saved in their ignorance. This is poor logic. If it were true, then it would be a mistake to preach the Gospel at all. Instead, it would be best to allow everyone to remain ignorant of God, and thus all would be saved.

Paul did not reach any such conclusion. He knew the plan of God and that in the divine arrangement a future time of enlightenment had been provided. He refers to it as the Judgment Day. While God overlooked the past ignorance of the people, now he “commandeth all men every where to repent: Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man

whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.”—vss. 30,31

The word “because” in this argument is related to two things. First, God overlooks ignorance “because” there is a future Judgment Day; and second, the command to repent is also “because” that future Day of Judgment has been appointed in his plan for mankind’s salvation.

The Scriptures bear out this reasoning. The Judgment Day is to be a time of enlightenment. The Prophet Isaiah wrote that when the Lord’s judgments are in the earth the people will “learn righteousness.” (Isa. 26:9) This enlightenment of the people during the Judgment Day is symbolized in Revelation 20:12 as the opening of “books.”

In Peter’s second epistle, he speaks of the time when this present sinful order of things will give way to a “new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.” (II Pet. 3:7-13) That new day of righteousness is the same period referred to in the foregoing words from the books of Isaiah and Revelation. Peter also equates this new day to a period of a thousand years, saying, “One day with the Lord is as a thousand years.” (II Pet. 3:8) By combining all of these words with Paul’s testimony on Mars Hill, we see that the Judgment Day he spoke of is to be a thousand years in length, and will take place during the same time period as the “new heavens and a new earth,” the Messianic kingdom day, which is also to be a thousand years in length.—Rev. 20:4,6

During that thousand year “day” all who have died without enjoying a knowledge of the true God

will be awakened from death and enlightened. Upon the basis of their obedience or disobedience to that enlightenment, they will be judged worthy or unworthy of everlasting life.

With the exception of the Jewish nation, which enjoyed God's special blessing, practically all mankind prior to Jesus' First Advent were in ignorance of these divine arrangements. Beginning at Pentecost, following Jesus' death and resurrection, a change took place. Paul and others of the apostles now preached repentance to all those desiring to be in covenant relationship with God. (Acts 2:38; 20:21) Jesus had explained to his disciples that "repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations." (Luke 24:47) In other words, the command to repentance was not to be limited to the Jewish nation, as it had been in the ministry of John the Baptist, but was now to be proclaimed among all nations.

However, this by no means implies that every individual in all nations has intelligently heard the command to repent. It simply implies that it had been God's will for the Gospel to be preached everywhere throughout the earth as a witness, regardless of nationality or race. (Matt. 24:14) The matter of how many, as individuals, have actually heard the message, and their degree of understanding and responsibility, are questions which can be determined only by the Lord.

The Scriptures do set forth certain principles which will help us to reach fairly accurate conclusions. For example, the Scriptures inform us that it is only through the enlightening influence of the Holy Spirit that one can really know the mind and

will of the Lord to a degree that makes them wholly responsible. Paul speaks of those who have been enlightened, have tasted the heavenly gift, have been made partakers of the Holy Spirit, have received the Word of God, and who know something of the world to come. (Heb. 6:4,5) Only those described in this passage of Scripture are wholly responsible before the Lord at the present time.

All others, even those who have heard the Gospel preached, are not now on trial for life. John the Baptist preached repentance to the Jewish nation. Jesus and the apostles did also, but very few repented. Yet, Paul wrote that “all Israel shall be saved,” referring to the future time of resurrection and judgment.—Rom. 11:26

Addressing a church conference at Jerusalem, the Apostle James, speaking also of the future, when the work of this Gospel Age will be complete, asserted that “the residue [Greek: the rest] of men,” and “all the Gentiles” upon whom the Lord’s name has been called—those to whom the witness has been given, many of whom having made some profession of belief—will then be given an opportunity, with full enlightenment, to “seek after the Lord.”—Acts 15:14-18

How thankful we should be that all the people, living in every age, who have been ignorant of God, as well as those who have been only partially enlightened, are to be wholly enlightened in the Judgment Day by that “true Light” that in God’s due time will enlighten every person who has, or will, come into the world! No one will be saved because of ignorance, but all will receive a knowledge of the Truth, and upon the basis of that

knowledge, be given an opportunity to accept Christ, obey the laws of his kingdom, and live forever.—John 1:9; I Tim. 2:3-6

Paul said to those gathered at Mars Hill that God has given assurance of this future day of enlightenment and judgment by raising Jesus Christ from the dead. (Acts 17:31) This proves that divine power can raise the dead. This affords hope, because the ignorant will have to be awakened from the sleep of death before they can be enlightened concerning God. Truly, Christ became the “firstfruits of them that slept” in death!—I Cor. 15:20

“SOME MOCKED”

Apparently Paul held the attention of his audience fairly well as he told the Athenians about the “Unknown God,” but it was different when he mentioned the resurrection of the dead. This was too much for many of them. “When they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked: and others said, We will hear thee again of this matter.”—Acts 17:32

The resurrection is a difficult doctrine for people to believe. Satan’s lie to mother Eve, “Ye shall not surely die,” has led to the assumption by many that there is no death. (Gen. 3:4) Apparently it is easier to believe that the dead are more alive than the living, than it is to accept the reality of death, and to believe that the Creator will restore life to those who have died.

We may not know why this is, except that it is a further delusion which has been foisted upon mankind by the Devil. Yet, this unwillingness to believe in the reality of the resurrection is just as prevalent

in the world now as it was when Paul preached to the Athenians. Try to tell anyone today about the “times of restitution of all things” and the usual response is, spoken directly or implied, one of doubt. —Acts 3:20,21

However, not all who heard Paul’s sermon on Mars Hill were doubters, for we read that “certain men clave unto him, and believed.” (Acts 17:34) Among the believers was “Dionysius the Areopagite, and a woman named Damaris, and others with them.” An Areopagite was a member of the court which held its sessions on Mars Hill. It was known as the “court of the Areopagites.” It is interesting to realize that one of the members of this court became a believer. This must have encouraged Paul, despite the fact that others in the audience mocked him. The Lord always gives his people the encouragement they need when they continue faithful in his service.

Thus ends the Bible account of Paul’s ministry in Athens. There is no further scriptural record that he returned there later, though we cannot be certain. From Athens, Paul traveled to Corinth, also in Greece. In contrast to his apparent short stay in Athens, the apostle remained in Corinth a minimum of eighteen months, and perhaps longer. (Acts 18:11) Many of his experiences there are recorded in Acts 18:1-17.

Upon leaving Corinth, Paul sailed back to Syria, stopping briefly in Ephesus while in route. From there he continued on toward Syria, finally landing at Caesarea, then traveled over land to his home base of Antioch. (vss. 18-22) Paul’s second missionary tour had now come to an end. While the record

does not so state, we may assume that he reported to the Antioch church the many blessings the Lord had showered upon him on the journey. The record does state that Paul spent some time in Antioch before embarking on his next and third missionary journey. (Acts 18:23) How thankful we are for the record of Paul's missionary journeys, in which he and those with him were so fully engaged in proclaiming the Gospel of the kingdom. ■

2025 MEMORIAL SUPPER DATE

The proper time for the annual observance of the Memorial Supper will be after sunset on Friday, April 11, 2025.

WEEKLY PRAYER MEETING TEXTS

APRIL 3—"The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light."—Romans 13:12 (Z. '03-122 Hymn 315)

APRIL 10—"Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time."—I Peter 5:6 (Z. '93-7 Hymn 277)

APRIL 17—"The anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you."—I John 2:27 (Z. '03-223 Hymn 91)

APRIL 24—"Let every one of us please his neighbour for his good to edification."—Romans 15:2 (Z. '03-406,407 Hymn 154)

The Symbolic Bread and Cup

*“Whenever you eat
this bread or drink
of this cup, you are
proclaiming that
the Lord has died
for you.”*

—I Corinthians

11:26, J.B. Phillips

New Testament

IN A FEW SHORT DAYS,

on April 11th after sunset, footstep followers of Jesus throughout the world will gather together in little groups to once again commemorate the anniversary of the Master’s death nearly two

thousand years ago. This Memorial Supper will be a simple service, consisting of two symbols, unleavened bread and the fruit of the vine, emblematic of the ransom offering provided by Jesus and its benefits to us now and in due time to the entire world of mankind. The comments which follow address the meaning and importance of these simple emblems.

JESUS—THE SYMBOLIC BREAD

When Jesus instituted the Memorial of his death with his disciples in the upper room, he said concerning the emblem of the bread, as recorded in Matthew 26:26, “Take, eat; this is my body.” What

did Jesus mean by this statement? Earlier in his ministry, he hinted as to the meaning when he said, quoting from John 6:33 & 51, "The bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world. ... 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."

In the above verses, Jesus makes three critical points: 1) he identifies himself as the bread of God, or the living bread; 2) he says that the bread represents his flesh, or body; and 3) he states that he will give his flesh, his earthly body, for the life of the world. Thus, when instituting the memorial of his death, and saying "take, eat; this is my body," Jesus was inviting his disciples, his footstep followers, to partake of the benefits represented in the "flesh" that he would soon give for the life of the world.

In the foregoing words from John 6, Jesus was speaking in advance of the ransom to be provided by the death of his flesh, his body, which would, in due time, provide life for Father Adam and for the entire world. This was to be a "ransom for all," Paul said in I Timothy 2:5,6. The Apostle John, when writing his Gospel account much later, said, as recorded in John 1:14, "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us." In I John 4:2, the apostle also declares, "Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God."

John realized, having been begotten of the Holy Spirit, the important truth that to provide a ransom for Adam and his race, it was necessary that the Redeemer be a man, "made flesh," but not only that, a perfect man, an exact corresponding price to

Adam before he sinned. Jesus, who was “holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners,” was the only human being, the only one of flesh and blood, who met these qualifications. (Heb. 7:26) As a perfect man, Jesus was not condemned to death as was the rest of the race. However, to provide the ransom price, he voluntarily gave up his perfect human life, his flesh, his earthly body, literally, in order that the opportunity for a restoration of life might be provided to Adam and all his progeny.

AN INTERMEDIATE WORK

In God’s plan, however, there was to be an intermediate work before the benefits of the ransom would be available for the world in general. Both Paul and Peter speak of this aspect of God’s arrangement. In Colossians 1:21,22, we read the words of Paul, “You, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreproveable in his sight.” In I Peter 2:24, the Apostle Peter states concerning Jesus, “Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness.”

These words are spoken to all those who have given themselves to the Lord in full consecration. When we partake of the emblem of the bread on the night of the Memorial service, we are acknowledging, by way of remembrance, the fact that in advance of the world, we have been given the great privilege of partaking of the benefits of Jesus’ redemptive sacrifice, as shown by the death of his perfect flesh, his body. Thus we have been enabled

to offer ourselves in consecration to God, and to stand before him, as Paul says, “unblameable and unproveable.”

By being begotten by God’s Holy Spirit and remaining in this blessed position for the development of the New Creature life which has begun in us, we have the hope of sharing with Jesus in the administration of the benefits of his redemptive sacrifice in the kingdom—that is, of assisting in the blessing and uplifting of all mankind. This understanding should be a part of our remembrance of Jesus as the symbolic “bread” of which we will partake.

SPIRITUAL FOOD

There is another important lesson connected to the symbolic bread, as represented in Jesus. Bread is food and provides nourishment. When Jesus instituted the Memorial supper as recorded in Matthew 26:26, the account states that he “took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples.” In olden times, when bread was served at a meal, it was not sliced as is mostly done today, but was in a loaf. The host would break off pieces of the loaf and give to his guests to eat. This points out that the bread served at a meal was not just to look at, nor to merely admire as a decorative item on the table. It was broken in pieces, and distributed, for the purpose of eating. It was food, nourishment, sustenance, in a very literal way.

Returning to John, chapter 6, we find that Jesus emphasized in numerous statements the great importance of our “eating his flesh,” this bread or food, as spiritual nourishment and life-giving

sustenance. Verse 27: “Labour not for the meat [food] which perisheth, but for that meat [food] which endureth unto everlasting life.” Verse 32: “Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven.” Verse 33: “The bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven.” Verse 35: “I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger.” Verse 51: “I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever.” Verses 53-58: “Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, ... ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, ... hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed. ... He that eateth my flesh, ... dwelleth in me, and I in him. ... He that eateth me, even he shall live by me. This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever.”

Then, to impress upon his disciples the fact that he was not speaking of eating his literal flesh, he says, as recorded in verse 63: “The spirit it is that is giving life; the flesh doth not profit anything; the sayings that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life.” (*Young’s Literal Translation*) It is the words Jesus spoke—his teachings, the record of his life, his example, his attitude and character, and everything else which proceeded from his perfect flesh that we can view and understand—which constitute the food, the bread broken for us to eat and be spiritually nourished thereby. When we pray, “Give us this day our daily bread,” in addition to its temporal significance, it speaks of our daily need to partake of the spiritual food that we find exemplified in

Jesus' life, words, and example. (Matt. 6:11) Symbolically speaking, our Lord is the carcass, the one upon whom we, as the eagles, gather together to feast upon.—Matt. 24:28; Luke 17:37

THE CUP—SYMBOL OF JESUS' BLOOD

In Exodus chapter 12 we have the instructions given by God to Moses and Aaron as to the keeping of the Passover, which was the means by which the Israelites would escape the tenth plague. We recall that this plague was to be the killing of all the first-born of every family in the land of Egypt. (Exod. 11:4-6) Various details are given as to the instructions to the Israelites in order to not be touched by this plague, but none were more important than the selection and killing of a lamb.—Exod. 12:3-6

As explained in verses 7, 12 & 13 of this account, blood from the slain lamb was to be put on the two side posts and the upper door post of their houses. When the angel of the Lord came through the land during that night, each house in which he saw the blood applied in this fashion, he would “pass over,” sparing the firstborn of that house.

Regardless of how the Israelites may have followed the other instructions recorded in Exodus 12, if they had failed, either to kill the lamb or to properly apply its blood, their firstborn would have died that night. In addition, as a nation, they most surely would not have been released by Pharaoh.

THE “LAMB OF GOD”

Many centuries later, when Jesus came to earth at his First Advent, at the age of thirty he came to John the Baptist to be baptized. John, whether familiar with the true significance of the Passover

or simply by divine revelation, as he saw Jesus coming to him, made one of the most profound statements of the Scriptures: “Behold the Lamb of God!”—John 1:29

By this statement, John announced that the antitypical, or greater, Passover Lamb was now on the scene. It was God’s purpose, and with full cooperation of his Son, that this greater lamb would be slain, and his blood, symbolically speaking, would be used to release a firstborn class from death during this present nighttime of sin. The lamb’s blood would then be subsequently used to free all mankind from their bondage to Adamic sin and death.

John the Baptist said this “Lamb of God” would accomplish this by “taking away the sin of the world.” That is, he would be a corresponding price, a ransom, for Adam. As a perfect human being, Jesus would voluntarily give up his life, thus redeeming Adam and his posterity, all mankind, from the penalty of sin and releasing them from its resulting bondage in due time.

When the time approached for Jesus, the Lamb of God, to be slain, he knew of its great significance in his Father’s plan, and so the night before his death he gathered his disciples together in an upper room. There he instituted a simple ceremony, in which by two symbols, “bread” and a “cup,” or “fruit of the vine,” a remembrance would be provided of his ransom sacrifice as the Lamb of God. Jesus asked his disciples to keep this simple ceremony as a Memorial of his death.—Matt. 26:26-29

After instituting the symbol of the bread, concerning which we have already addressed, Jesus established the symbol of the fruit of the vine, or cup.

Verse 27 reads, “And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it”; or, as the Mark account states, “and they all drank of it.” (Mark 14:23) “For this is my blood of the New Testament,” Jesus continued, “which is shed for many for the remission of sins.” (Matt. 26:28) Paul adds to the Gospel account these words of Jesus, “This do ye, ... in remembrance of me.”—I Cor. 11:25

THE VALUE OF JESUS’ BLOOD

The cup, which literally contained the fruit of the vine, Jesus said represented only one thing. He said that this juice was emblematic, not literally but in symbol only, of his blood, which was about to be shed for the remission of sins. Jesus here identified this blood as being that of the greater Passover Lamb, which in only a matter of hours would be slain, and which would provide the ransom merit or value, symbolized by his shed blood.

This value, when applied into the hands of God’s justice, would be the means by which, as John the Baptist had proclaimed three and one-half years earlier, the “sin of the world,” Adamic sin, would be taken away. As Jesus himself stated, his blood would provide “remission of sins.” Everyone in the loins of Adam, the entire human race, would in due time be the beneficiaries of this one ransom offering, this one slain Passover Lamb of God. As Apostle John later confirmed, Jesus “is the propitiation [atoning sacrifice, *International Standard Version*] ... for the sins of the whole world.”—I John 2:2

CHURCH OF THE FIRSTBORN

The due time for the benefits of this ransom merit to be received by mankind is to be in two parts.

First, a special class, not the literal firstborn as in the case of the Israelites' Passover, but the "church of the firstborn," would initially benefit from the blood of Jesus, the greater Passover Lamb. (Heb. 12:23) The Apostle Paul says that this called out firstborn class is "justified" by faith in the blood of Jesus, "by whom," he says, "we have now received the atonement."—Rom. 5:1,9,11

These "firstborn," in advance of the world of mankind, are the recipients of the imputed merit or value of Jesus' ransom sacrifice, which justifies them, releasing them from Adamic condemnation in God's sight. (Rom. 4:7,8,22-25) By a full and complete consecration, or dedication, to do the will of the Heavenly Father, these can be given a standing before him, and run toward "the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus," the calling of the present Gospel Age. (Phil. 3:14) What a privilege and responsibility it is for these to be of this special firstborn class, and to receive, in advance of the world, the imputation of Jesus' blood.

LIFE THROUGH THE BLOOD

In Egypt, when the blood was taken from the lamb, it signified two things. First, it showed the death of the lamb. Second, however, the blood meant life to the firstborn—immediately, during that night! Similarly, the merit of Jesus' sacrifice, symbolized by his blood, and emblematically shown in the cup, meant death to him as a man. To the "church of the firstborn," however, this blood means life because it has released these from Adamic condemnation in God's sight.

As stated in the law itself, it is life that is “in the blood.” (Lev. 17:11) This is what Jesus referenced when he spoke the words recorded in John 6:53-56. There he said to his disciples that if they did not drink of his blood, that is, receive of his ransom merit, “ye have no life in you,” but “whoso drinketh my blood hath eternal life.” Thus, “my blood is drink indeed.” “He that drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me.” That is, he belongs to Jesus, because Jesus has redeemed him. Paul likewise said concerning the church that Jesus “hath purchased [it] with his own blood.”—Acts 20:28

ALL TO BE DELIVERED

This cup, representing the blood of the Lamb, is not just for the firstborn, however. In the case of the Israelites, the entire nation, in the morning of a new day, was released from Egypt, and began their long journey to eventually reach the land which had been promised to their forefathers so many centuries before. As they began their journey, shortly after crossing the Red Sea, God established his law and his covenant with them, through Moses as their mediator, and Aaron and his sons as their priesthood.

Jesus gave indication of the greater significance to this when he said concerning the cup, as quoted earlier, that it represented the “blood of the new testament,” that is, a “new covenant.” (*ISV*) This statement by Jesus did not mean that the New Covenant would be immediately established. Just as the old Law Covenant did not come about until after the Passover night, after Israel’s release from bondage, and after the crossing of the Red Sea, so the New Covenant will not be set up until the end of

this nighttime of sin, and following man's passing through the sea of the time of trouble and into the kingdom arrangement.

Then, there will be a better Mediator and a better priesthood, Christ Jesus, the "mediator of the New Covenant," and a priesthood "after the order of Melchisedec." The "church of the firstborn" also, which are "written in heaven," will be part of the Christ class, and of the "royal priesthood," to bring blessings to all the families of the earth.—Heb. 12:23,24; 5:10; I Pet. 2:9; Gen. 22:18; Gal. 3:8

When Jesus said that this cup represented the blood of the New Covenant, he was indicating that this future prospect for all mankind would be assured by the blood of his ransom sacrifice. The New Covenant would surely come in due time. This is what Paul meant when he said that the sacrifice of Jesus constituted "the bringing in of a better hope, ... by the which we draw nigh unto God," and "by so much was Jesus made a surety of a better [covenant]."—Heb. 7:19,22

Therefore, as we approach the annual Memorial Supper, let us remember as we partake of the bread, the perfect human life which Jesus gave up in order that we and the entire world, might live; and also, the spiritual food, the bread broken for our nourishment, which we are to partake daily, of Jesus' words, teachings, life, and example. Let us also, soberly, but also joyfully, partake of the symbolic cup, remembering its significance for us and for all mankind, as the life-giving blood of Jesus, the Lamb of God, provided by the great love which our Heavenly Father and his Son have manifested toward us and toward all mankind.

Paul wrote: “Christ our passover is sacrificed for us: Therefore let us keep the feast.” (I Cor. 5:7,8) May these words represent our symbolic feasting on Jesus, the bread of life, and appropriating to ourselves the value of the life-giving blood of his sacrifice—not just one night in the year, but each day of our Christian walk, even unto death. ■

Remember Me

*According to thy gracious word,
In meek humility,
This will I do, my dying Lord,
I will remember thee.*

*Thy body, broken for my sake,
My bread from heaven shall be;
Thy testamental cup I take
And thus remember thee.*

*When to the cross I turn my eyes
And rest on Calvary,
O Lamb of God, my Sacrifice,
I must remember thee.*

*Remember thee and all thy pains
And all thy love to me;
Yea, while a breath, a pulse remains,
I will remember thee.*

*Then of thy grace I'll know the sum,
And in thy likeness be,
When thou hast in thy kingdom come
And dost remember me.*

—*Hymns of Dawn*

Running and Fighting Lawfully

*“I therefore so run,
not as uncertainly;
so fight I, not as
one that beateth
the air.”*
—*I Corinthians 9:26*

PAUL, LIKE JESUS, employed many illustrations in making clear the Word of God and its application in the Christian life. In our text and in the immediate context

he uses two illustrations: one, of running in a race, and the other, of fighting or the equivalent of what today would be called a boxing match. His lesson is that just as there is a right and wrong way to run a race or to fight in a boxing match, so there is a right and wrong way to serve God and to live the Christian life. Paul affirms his determination to “so run” and to “so fight” that he would be assured of victory. In verse 24 he admonishes us also: “So run, that ye may obtain.”

In the illustration of the runner we have emphasized the importance of giving total attention to the one thing at hand. This is true with the runner of a race not only during the comparatively short time of actually contending on the racetrack, but also during the much longer period of training for

the development of both speed and endurance. If one is to be victorious, he or she cannot afford to expend large amounts of time and energy with other things no matter how alluring or attractive they may be. Runners must be ready and willing to make any sacrifice necessary in order to do their very best. This may mean that during the training period they cannot eat what they might prefer to eat, but must keep strictly to a diet that is best suited to develop their physical strength and stamina. Runners must also be temperate in all things, forgoing certain luxuries and pleasures in which others might properly indulge. They must discipline themselves in all necessary ways to assure that at the time of the race they will possess the maximum degree of strength and endurance which is required to win.

When runners finally enter the race it must be with the determination that nothing will be permitted to stand in the way of the best performance possible. Before reaching the end of the racecourse they may feel tired, but there must be no yielding to the temptation to slow down or to take it easy. Every ounce of strength, every nerve, every muscle, must all be utilized for the one purpose of winning the race. Only thus could it be said that they so ran, as to obtain.

It is just such an undivided and uncompromising effort that Paul admonishes us to put into living the Christian life. In writing to the Philippians Paul expressed a similar thought saying, "This one thing I do." (Phil. 3:13) Today the world often describes this attitude as an all-out effort. For Christians to "so run" simply means that they exert the maximum

effort possible to make their “calling and election sure.” (II Pet. 1:10) If there is any holding back, any half-hearted endeavors, any efforts short of the very best we can make, we may not gain the victory for which we seek. Rather, as Paul admonishes: “Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them.”—I Tim. 4:15

PAUL’S APPLICATION OF THE LESSON

The apostle’s admonition to “so run” follows a revealing of his own attitude and determination with respect to his service to the Lord. In I Corinthians 9:4-6 Paul wrote: “Have we not power to eat and drink [what we please]? Have we not power to lead about a sister, a wife, as well as other apostles, and as the brethren of the Lord, and Cephas? Or I only and Barnabas, have not we power to forbear working?” Obviously both Paul and Barnabas needed to eat and drink in order to live. It is equally plain that the apostle is not criticizing his fellow apostles because they were married. His lesson seems to be that material and domestic things should not be permitted to unnecessarily interfere with our service to God.

The material side of life must be given proper consideration, not in the sense of making it the primary objective of all our efforts, but rather in order that we might utilize even the material things to further our spiritual interests. This becomes apparent in the 6th verse where Paul says, “Have not we power to forbear working?” Reading on through the chapter we learn what he means by this question. He points out both by reason and from the Scriptures that as a servant of the Gospel he had

the right to obtain his material living out of that service and thus to “forbear working.”—vss. 7-13

It could be reasoned that this would be ideal in that it would give the apostle his whole time and strength to devote to God’s service. However, Paul had another way of looking at it. He would devote practically all his time to the direct service of the Truth and the brethren—that is, he would make full use of all the opportunities available to serve in spiritual things. In addition to this, though, he would work with his hands to provide for his own food and clothing.—Acts 20:34

By a careful study of Paul’s words, there appears to be two reasons why he decided upon this course so far as his work in Corinth was concerned. He reasoned correctly that he would have more influence for the Gospel if no one could charge him with making his living out of it. Besides this, he felt that it would be better for his own spiritual welfare if he did not pamper his flesh by taking it easy between the occasions he served the brethren, by allowing them to feed and clothe him.—I Cor. 9:15-19

Paul was doubtless well aware of the evils to which such a temptation could lead. If the church supported him, it would be more difficult to preach the Word of God uncompromisingly to them; and conditions in the church at Corinth called for an unbending presentation of the Gospel and its proper application in the Christian life. Probably the opportunities for service were such under those circumstances that it did not detract from them in any way if Paul spent a certain amount of time in his occupation as a “tentmaker” in order not to depend upon the brethren for support.—Acts 18:1-3

In this lesson we get a close-up view of the real character of the great Apostle Paul. “I therefore so run, not as uncertainly,” he declares. (I Cor. 9:26) That is, there was nothing uncertain about what he intended to do, nor about the sacrifice he was willing to make in order to do it. He was happy to serve the Truth and the brethren, but if he took things too easy while thus serving, his flesh might someday become the dictator of how he should serve and what he should preach. Rather than to take this chance, Paul stated, “I discipline my body and to bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.”—vs. 27, *New King James Version*

Paul disciplined his body by making it do double duty, as it were. He served the church in spiritual things, and then, instead of permitting them, as was his right, to provide for his temporal needs, he put his body to work to provide his own temporal necessities. He did this to make his ministry to others more effective, and also to make sure of conquering any tendency towards selfishness or love of ease. He knew that no matter how effectively he preached to others, if he did not discipline himself, his efforts would be like one who runs “uncertainly,” lacking direction.

CIRCUMSTANCES VARY

Probably not many of the Lord’s people today are confronted with problems similar in detail to those described by the apostle. The value of this lesson, however, is in the manner in which Paul applied divine principles in meeting his unique situation. Even if Paul had decided it would not have

been best for him to spend time making tents, his approach to the matter would have been the same; that is, it would have been an unselfish approach. The deciding factor was not how he would be benefited according to the flesh, but what would be the best for the brethren and best for his spiritual welfare. His flesh was on the altar to be sacrificed, and it made no difference when, or by what means, it would be consumed.

In Paul we have an example of a victorious runner in the spiritual racecourse, a runner who permitted nothing to interfere with his victory. To what extent are we following his example? Are the decisions we are making of the sort that will result in the disciplining of our bodies, or the kind that are calculated to make it easy for the flesh? Each decision of the former kind is a step toward victory, while the latter represents a yielding to the desires of the flesh and a consequent slowing down of our speed along the racecourse toward the goal—the “mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.”—Phil. 3:14

“SO FIGHT I”

The illustration of the fighter is equally to the point in that it also emphasizes the necessity of self-discipline, application, and energy. In this connection Paul explains that “every man that striveth for the mastery [Greek: compete for a prize] is temperate in all things.” (I Cor. 9:25) The word “temperate” here has the thought of self-control. Victorious Christians are those who exercise self-control; that is, they endeavor to bring all of their thoughts, words, and deeds into line with the one great objective of

their consecrated lives. They endeavor not to permit any of their energies to get out of control.

Intemperance is often closely associated with intoxication. Christians should find it necessary to be on guard against the intoxication of pleasure, love of ease, worldliness, pride, selfish ambition, and other influences which would draw away from the “one thing” which they have undertaken to do, which is that of laying down their lives in the service of God.

There are also more subtle forms of intemperance. One might become intemperate in prayer, in Bible study, in witnessing for the Gospel, or in fellowship among the brotherhood. One might be intemperate in using the typical lessons of the Bible, such as the Tabernacle and its service, or in the study of Revelation. If the Lord had wanted us to devote nearly all of our time to one or two features of his Word, he would not have revealed so many other things to us, as he has so graciously done. Intemperance along any otherwise proper Christian line eventually results in an unbalance of Christian character—an unbalance which could easily display headiness and pride on the one hand, yet spiritual weakness and lack of development on the other.

The Christian’s enemies consist chiefly of the world, the flesh, and the devil. To successfully strive against these we need to have on the “whole armour of God,” not just a part of it. We need the “helmet of salvation,” representing an understanding of God’s Word. Head knowledge alone, however, no matter how accurate it may be, will not protect us against our enemies. We need the “shield of faith,” and the “breastplate of righteousness,” but these without the other parts of the armor will not fully

protect us, no matter how well we may have them polished.—Eph. 6:13-17

When face to face with the enemy we will need the preparation of prayer and of study and fellowship. However, prayer alone, or study alone, or fellowship alone, will not properly equip us for the warfare. The spiritually strong, wholesome, and growing Christian is the one who makes proper use of all the divine provisions of grace, not an over-use of one to the neglect of the others. Like the fighter or runner in training who must watch his diet, his rest, his exercise, and his recreation, in order to be in proper training; so we must be temperate in all things, using in proper balance all the provisions the Lord has made whereby we may grow strong in him and in the power of his might.—vs. 10

STRIVING LAWFULLY

In II Timothy 2:5 Paul draws another lesson from the fighter illustration. He says: "If a man also strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully," that is, according to God's law. This thought carries us even beyond that of being temperate. It indicates the possibility of fighting in unlawful ways. The Christian is under God's law, not that which was given to Moses at Sinai, but a new law, or "commandment," enjoined by Jesus upon all his footstep followers. The simple statement of that law is, "Love one another; as I have loved you." (John 13:34) Jesus laid down his life for us, hence we are to lay down our lives for each other. This means that our lives must be motivated by unselfishness, implying that we would rather die ourselves than do anything that would injure others.

It means that the interests of others lawfully come ahead of our own. If our striving is out of harmony with this principle, it is contrary to the law given by Jesus, and unless we become law-abiding we will not receive the crown of life.

The application of this principle touches every detail of Christian endeavor and searches out the most secret motives of our hearts. Jesus, in his sermon on the mount, mentions some of the details. There he tells us: “Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you.” (Matt. 5:44) Earlier, in verses 38-40, the Master says: “You have heard that it was said, an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. But I tell you not to resist an evil person. But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also. If anyone wants to sue you and take away your tunic, let him have your cloak also.”—*NKJV*

There are few things that stir up the indignation of the flesh more quickly than to feel that one’s just rights are being trampled upon. Jesus’ rights were trampled upon when he was arrested, falsely accused, and crucified, but he yielded to the injustice and redeemed the world. We profess to be following in his footsteps. Are we striving lawfully in this respect?

ELEMENTS OF LOVE

Other details of what it means to strive lawfully within the limitations of the divine principle of love are brought to our attention in I Corinthians, chapter 13. Here we are told that love “suffereth long.” (vs. 4) This means that it is unlawful for the Christian to be other than longsuffering and patient

toward others. Love is also “kind,” the apostle adds in the same verse. Do we realize that it is unlawful for the Christian to be unkind in his dealing with others? How do we measure up to this requirement?

Love “envieth not,” Paul continues in verse 4. Are we envious of others while we strive to make our own calling and election sure? If so, we are not following the divine rules of the contest. Our motives must be pure and unselfish. If we are envious of others, selfishness is still in our hearts, and if it is not purged out we will not be victorious in “the race that is set before us.”—Heb. 12:1

Love “vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up.” (I Cor. 13:4) The first of these elements of unlawful conduct on the part of a Christian reveals a desire to shine before others—to be “seen of men.” (Matt. 6:5) The latter is that of thinking too much of one’s own abilities and importance. In Romans 12:3, Paul speaks of it as thinking more highly of ourselves than we ought to think. Both of these elements of selfishness and pride are unlawful for the Christian. If we are unselfishly laying down our lives to the glory of God, we will not want to make a display of ourselves before others; nor will we have a “puffed up” opinion of our own importance.

Love does “not behave unbecomingly.” (I Cor. 13:5, *Weymouth New Testament*) This, apparently, is a reference to intemperate behavior, and might manifest itself in any of the ways already suggested, and along other lines as well. It is simply another way in which our fallen flesh may manifest itself, and if not properly dealt with may cause us the loss of victory. The Lord wants each of his people to be part of the brotherhood of Christ, and thus to lose

the importance of one's own individuality while contributing to the welfare of all, and to the glory of God. To be a hobbyist, an extremist, or a rugged individualist, or in other ways to call attention to self, is unbecoming behavior for a Christian, and represents unlawful striving for the mastery.

“Love seeketh not her own.” (vs. 5) If it did so, selfishly, it would cease to be love, for love is unselfish. If our Christian striving is in the interest of self it is unlawful, and if we continue in such an attitude we will not reach the “mark for the prize of the high calling.” How many times friction develops within the brotherhood which would not have occurred if there were no seeking of selfish interests, no desire to protect our so-called rights. May the blessed implications of this rule of the contest sink ever deeper into our consciousness and more thoroughly control our behavior. “Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus.”—Phil. 2:3-5

Love “is not easily provoked.” (I Cor. 13:5) The meaning of this is that love is not stirred to anger. It has no occasion to be. People get angry when things do not go the way they want; but true Christians are not interested in having things go their way. They want them to go the Lord's way, and they know that nothing should be allowed to interfere with his perfect will. So, while we should make every proper effort to do what we believe would be pleasing to the Lord yet, if our understanding of his will is thwarted by others, we will accept it, not as “disappointment,”

but as “his appointment,” and use it as a stepping-stone to greater trust in the Lord and in his providences for us.

Verse 5 concludes by saying that love “thinketh no evil.” This does not mean that Christians close their eyes to wrongdoing, either in themselves or in others. It does mean, though, that they do not surmise nor attribute evil where there is no proof that evil exists. It means that true love will induce us to think good rather than evil whenever and wherever possible. If we find ourselves habitually thinking evil of one or more of the Lord’s people, without undeniable proof that evil exists, then we may know that we are striving unlawfully. Hence, we cannot expect the fullness of divine blessings that we might otherwise be enjoying, and it will be necessary that we make the needed correction to our character.

Love “rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth.” (vs. 6) This is a wonderful touchstone to test the true condition of our hearts. Do we enjoy those things which are not in line with God’s justice and truth and love, or do we abhor such things, and rejoice in the Truth, and all things that are in harmony with it? What are the sources of our habitual rejoicing? Let us make sure that they are those things which are pure and noble and of good report, so that our striving for the mastery will be lawful. —Phil. 4:8

Love “covers” all things. (I Cor. 13:7, *The Emphatic Diaglott*) It was God’s love that provided the covering of Christ’s righteousness for us, and it is because of this covering that we stand justified before him. (Isa. 61:10; Rom. 5:17,18) This same covering of

love in our own hearts should enable us to cover over the imperfections of our fellow brethren in Christ. It is along this line that Jesus taught us to pray, “Forgive us our sins; for we also forgive every one that is indebted to us.” (Luke 11:4) The example of God’s love in this as well as along all other lines, is the perfect pattern for us. Let us strive lawfully by seeking to cover the imperfections of others rather than expose them.

Love “believeth all things.” (I Cor. 13:7) This does not mean that love believes evil rumors that may be circulated about another. It does mean that love believes the professions of others unless confronted with undeniable evidence that those professions are wrong. Love also believes all the promises of God—the promises to supply grace and wisdom and strength in every time of need in our fight against the world, our flesh, and the Adversary. By believing these promises we will not resort to human wisdom and human tactics in order to gain the victory. To do so would be striving unlawfully.

Love “hopeth all things,” Paul continues. Being ever hopeful, with expectation of divine providence and overruling, love enables us to rejoice in every experience. Hope pertains to that which we do not now possess, and love enables us to discard present advantages and present joys in order that we may lay hold more firmly upon the hope set before us in the Gospel, the hope that is centered in Christ. With such a hope we can say with the apostle: “For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not

seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.”—II Cor. 4:17,18

Love “endureth all things.” (I Cor. 13:7) Some things are easy to endure, but others are difficult. The difficult things are often those which run counter to the desires of the flesh. If we are treated unjustly, that is hard to bear. If we are ridiculed by family or friends because of our stand for righteousness, that may also be hard to bear. If we are called upon to suffer physically, that will likely be painful and difficult to tolerate. No matter what it may be, however, love endures all things because love is unselfish. Love does not compute values from the standpoint of self-interest nor temporary pleasures of the flesh. That is why love can endure all things with rejoicing until the victory is won!

Love “never faileth.” (vs. 8) Truly, if we are governed at all times by the great principle of love, trusting in the merit of Christ to cover our unwilling imperfections, the victory is sure. While running in the spiritual racecourse, and fighting the good fight of faith, let us not depend upon human wisdom and human strength. Rather, let us “run” and “fight” in harmony with the divine rules, that we may attain unto the “crown of life” at the end of the way.—Rev. 2:10

From the standpoint of the flesh, love’s way may often seem foolish and impractical. It will, indeed, lead at times to temporal loss and defeat. It did with Jesus. Let us remember, however, that we are striving for the unseen things, and that these are obtainable only at the expense of temporal, earthly blessings. Our progress in the Christian way is

determined by the extent to which we are able to lay down the things of the flesh in order that others may be blessed. Therefore, let us say with Paul, “I ... so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air.” ■

At The Cross There's Room

*Mourner, wheresoe'er thou art,
At the cross there's room.
Tell the burden of thy heart;
At the cross there's room.
Tell it in thy Saviour's ear,
Cast away thine ev'ry fear,
Only speak and he will hear;
At the cross there's room!*

*Haste thee, wand'rer, tarry not;
At the cross there's room.
Seek that consecrated spot,
At the cross there's room.
Heavy laden, sore opprest,
Love can sooth thy troubled breast,
In the Saviour find thy rest;
At the cross there's room!*

*Blessed thought! for ev'ry one—
At the cross there's room.
Love's atoning work is done;
At the cross there's room.
Streams of boundless mercy flow,
Free to all who thither go;
O! that all the world might know
At the cross there's room!*

—*Hymns of Dawn*

SPEAKERS' APPOINTMENTS

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

T. Alexander

Albuquerque, NM April 18-20

L. Griehs

Albuquerque, NM April 18-20

R. Goodman

Albuquerque, NM April 18-20

E. Kuenzli

Albuquerque, NM April 18-20

OBITUARIES

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

Brother George Kuzmin, Milwaukee, WI—February 2.
Age, 85

Sister Marie Murchie, Wetaskiwin, AB, Canada—February 25. Age, 88

Brother Leo Houlmont, Grand Rapids, MI—March 1.
Age, 92

Brother Tim Armstrong, Wilmington, DE—March 1.
Age, 84

Sister Tamara Usachenko, Tulun, Siberia—March 9.

“Father, I desire that they also, whom You have given Me, be with Me where I am, so that they may see My glory which You have given Me, for You loved Me before the foundation of the world. “O righteous Father, although the world has not known You, yet I have known You; and these have known that You sent Me; and I have made Your name known to them, and will make it known, so that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them.”

John 17:24-26, New American Standard Bible

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

WILMINGTON CONVENTION, April 5,6—IN PERSON AND BROADCAST ONLINE—Minquadale Fire Hall, 129 E Hazeldell Avenue, New Castle, DE 19720. Contact L. Armstrong. Phone: (302) 319-0434

ALBUQUERQUE CONVENTION, April 18-20—IN PERSON AND BROADCAST ONLINE—Sheraton Albuquerque Airport Hotel, 2910 Yale Boulevard SE, Albuquerque, NM 87106. Contact S. Thomassen. Phone: (505) 400-0416 or Email: srbt@juno.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

BELLEVUE CONVENTION, May 3,4—IN PERSON AND BROADCAST ONLINE—Hotel 116, a Coast Hotel, 625 116th Avenue NE, Bellevue, WA 98004. Contact N. Andrews. Phone: (425) 533-1900 or Email: nandrewsc@gmail.com

WEST NEWTON SPRING CONVENTION, May 3,4—IN PERSON AND BROADCAST ONLINE—Sewickley Grange Hall, 1011 Greensburg Pike, West Newton, PA 15089. Contact L. Mlinek. Email: lisa.mlinek@aol.com

HARTFORD CONVENTION, May 4—IN PERSON AND BROADCAST ONLINE—West Hartford Senior Center, 15 Starkel Road, West Hartford, CT 06117. Contact J. Slivinsky. Email: djslivinsky@sbcglobal.net

CHICAGO CONVENTION, May 24,25—IN PERSON AND BROADCAST ONLINE—Doubletree by Hilton, 3003 Corporate West Drive, Lisle, IL 60532. Phone: (630) 740-4367. Contact T. Blackwell. Email: secretary@chicagobible.org

VANCOUVER, BC CONVENTION, June 7,8—IN PERSON AND BROADCAST ONLINE—Aldergrove Kinsmen Community Centre, 26770 29th Avenue, Aldergrove, BC V4W 3B8. Contact B. A. Smith. Phone: (604) 250-2900 or Email: bas@telus.net

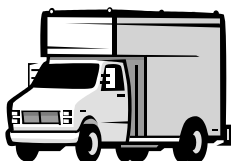
BOAZ, ALABAMA STUDY CONVENTION, June 13-15—IN PERSON AND BROADCAST ONLINE—Contact K. Getchel. Phone: (256) 744-9966 or Email: biblestudents@gmail.com

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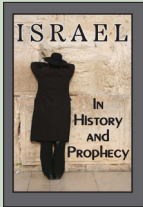
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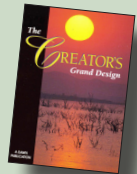


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To us the Scriptures clearly teach . . .

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

