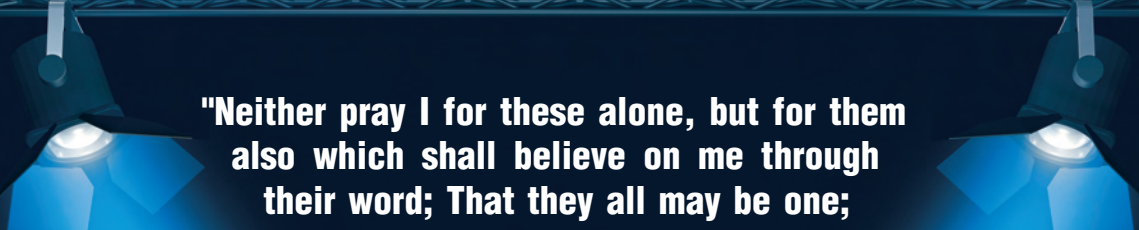


The Way of Truth

Vol. 75

“Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.”

No. 6



**"Neither pray I for these alone, but for them
also which shall believe on me through
their word; That they all may be one;
as thou, Father, art in me, and I in
thee, that they also may be one
in us: that the world may
believe that thou hast
sent me."**

John 17:20-21



See inside:

What Is the Church of God?

Page 7

Is Christ Divided?

Page 10

June 2017

THIS WORLD NEEDS MORE GODLY FATHERS

WE READ in Proverbs 17:6, “The glory of children are their fathers.” I thank the Lord for the father He gave me. My father was a godly man! He was a farmer, a preacher, and a praying man. I suppose one of the things I remember most about him was his prayer life.

After we lost our cotton farm during the Great Depression, we moved to a rented farm that had two barns on it. One had been a dairy barn which was not used for that any more, but my father used it for prayer. We boys would play in the barnyard in the evenings, and I would see Dad come out, headed for the barn for prayer, and I would say to myself, “I hope he doesn’t ask us to go in there with him to pray.” How foolish I was! I did not realize how blessed I was having a praying father.

According to the Bible, man was created in the image and “glory of God” (I Corinthians 11:7). Therefore, man needs to listen to God as to the role he is to fill. God saw that it was not good for the man to be alone, so God formed a helpmate for him. He made this helpmate a woman, not another man. God brought this woman to Adam and gave her to him, so He performed the first wedding. We read in Genesis 2:24, “Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.” Of course, the woman is to do the same thing. It is God’s will that they “cleave” together and be “one flesh” as long as they both shall live.

God told this husband and wife to “be fruitful, and multiply.” So Adam became a father.

What is the father’s place in the home? When things are normal, he is the head of the household. This does not mean he is to be a boss! But there is to be government in the home. The father should command obedience and respect by his actions and deeds. Children need such fathers who teach and enforce respect for the law of the home, and also the law of the land. In this the father needs to be an example, as long as the civil laws do not, or would not, require him to disobey the Word of God.

Mothers need him to properly fill his place. Disobedience should be punished in love. A father who is all upset at the children is not in a frame of mind to properly correct them. The wife and mother should not give the children permission to disobey the instructions of the father. They need to work in harmony with one another, and, of course, the mother can administer correction as well as the father.

A father’s place in the home is **AT HOME**. By his labor, he should provide the necessities of life. “If a man provide not for his own, he has denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel” (I Timothy 5:8). Since the father is absent from the home while he is working to provide for the family, that is all the more reason he should spend much of his evenings at home.

The kind of fathers needed? Those who are ready and willing to assume the responsibilities of real true husbands and fathers. Those who take time and interest in their children. And it does take time to be a real true father. Be a friend. Show an interest in the things they are interested in. The kind of fathers needed? Those who set a godly example before their children. Remember, you teach what you do. I remember reading some years ago the story of an unsaved father who, at times, went to the bar for a drink. One evening as he started across the yard, he heard something behind him. He turned to see his little son walking behind him. He asked him, “Where are you going?” And the little son said, “With you, Daddy.” The father looked at him for a moment. Then he picked him up and carried him back into the house, and said to him, “You will never follow me to the bar,” and he never went again. Again, we teach what we do.

Fathers need to be the kind of fathers the children can confide in and get close to. Take time to listen to them and answer their questions, even if they do sound simple. Remember, you were a child one time.

Have family worship. Read the Bible and Bible stories to them. That is another thing I remember well about my childhood. We would gather around the old fireplace in the winter with the old oil lamp burning. Daddy read the Bible and had prayer with us before going to bed. It will take time and patience to carry out these things, but it will pay immensely in building a happy home, and in eternal matters as well.

All of my children are grown and have their own homes, but from what they say now, it is not the toys we bought them, but the things we did together as a family that they remember and appreciate most. We went out some Sundays after service for a picnic where the children could play. We played with them at times. And there were other things we did together. I had family worship with them, reading a Bible story before prayer.

Let us consider the **WRONG** kind of father for a moment: ungodly, disinterested, profane, irreligious, disrespectful to wife and mother, lazy, a gad-about, more time for “buddies” than for the family, mealtime being the only time the children see him, etc.

A good father’s responsibility:

Set a godly example to the entire household in prayer, sincerity, and piety. Do not **SEND** your children to Sunday school and church service—**TAKE** them, and take them where they can hear the true gospel taught. Know what kind of friends your children have. Do not allow them to have friends that would lead them into sinful things. Keep a check on what they are reading. There is a lot of trash that should never be found in a Christian home. This goes for pictures they may put on the walls of their bedrooms. Help lighten mother’s burdens.

As the children come to the knowledge of right and

ABOUT THE COVER

One of the unique teachings in the Word of God is the understanding that God wants His disciples to provide a united front to the world by “endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Ephesians 4:3). This we are earnestly striving to do.

THE WAY OF TRUTH

(Registered Trademark)

Vol. 75 June 2017 No. 6

Devoted to the gospel of our loving Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who gave freely His life-blood, to save us from our many sins, to sanctify our fallen nature and to bring into one body all true believers, by whose stripes we are healed.

Published the fifteenth of the month prior to the date of issue by the Church of God which assembles at 12819 Point Salem Road in Hagerstown, Maryland. Publishing office: 12811 Point Salem Road, Hagerstown, Maryland, U.S.A.

The Way of Truth is published without any given subscription price, and is supported by freewill offerings from our readers and funds supplied by the local congregation. It is sent out free to anyone who is interested enough to ask for it. We shall continue this policy as long as God sees fit to make it possible. FOREIGN READERS are requested to write us at least once a year if they wish to continue receiving the paper the following year. Address all correspondence to: The Way of Truth, P. O. Box 88, Hagerstown, Maryland 21741, U.S.A. Always when writing, give your name and address clearly, please.

—Alvin A. Craig, Editor

Our telephone number is 301-739-2980

Our fax number is 301-739-7173

Our e-mail address is truth@fred.net

Visit our website at www.wayoftruth.org

wrong, be vitally interested in their salvation. With the Lord's help, do your best to build real godly homes that will help the church, the community, state, and nation. Out of all the roles a man may play in life, the role of father is the most fulfilling and cherished. As one grows older, the thoughts involved in fatherhood are among the most cherished. †

OUR SERVICES ON CD'S

CD's of our services are available for purchase. These are \$3.00 each; however, orders of 10 or more are only \$2.50 each, postage paid. Please write in the blank how many you would like to receive. Send check or money order to: The Way of Truth CD Ministry, P. O. Box 88, Hagerstown, MD 21741-0088 U.S.A.

- ___ CD #755 Godly Instructions *Paul Wilson*
- ___ CD #756 Life's Longest Journey *A. A. Craig*
- ___ CD #757 Building on a Good Foundation *Mick Akers*
- ___ CD #758 Ladies' Day Service
- ___ CD #759 The Puzzle of Life *Doug Shenberger*
- ___ CD #760 The Translation *G. E. Tyler*
- ___ CD #761 New Life in Christ *Brian Richards*
- ___ CD #762 Evidence of a Spirit-filled Life *A. A. Craig*
- ___ CD #763 Reasons Why I Believe in Christ *G. E. Tyler*
- ___ CD #764 The Path of True Righteousness *A. A. Craig*
- ___ CD #765 Behold the Lamb of God *Mick Akers*
- ___ CD #766 Earthen Vessels *Doug Shenberger*
- ___ CD #774 The Church of God Is Unique *A. A. Craig*
- ___ CD #775 Is the Bible the Word of God? *A. A. Craig*
- ___ CD #776 Why I am a Christian *A. A. Craig*
- ___ CD #777 Be Still and Know that I Am God *Paul Wilson*

GOD SEES FACES

When God looks upon this world, He sees in the foreground of the human picture, not ideas, not things, but faces. And to His all-seeing eye these billions of faces do not resolve themselves into a nebulous blur. They are not represented by statistics on a page. In each face a loving heavenly Father sees mirrored life's dreams and disappointments, life's pains and pleasures, life's work and worship. The more like God we become, the greater will be our concern about people.—Norval F. Pease

IF A MAN

If a man be gracious and courteous to strangers, it shows he is a citizen of the world, and that his heart is no island cut off from other lands, but a continent that joins to them.

If he be compassionate toward the afflictions of others, it shows that his heart is like the noble tree that wounds itself when it gives the balm.

If he easily pardons and remits offences, it shows that his mind is planted above injuries, so that he cannot be pained.

If he be thankful for small benefits, it shows that he weighs men's minds, and not their idle talk.

—Francis Bacon

IN THIS ISSUE:

Fatherhood

and What It Entails

Page 2

Radio message by James Arch

Bible Lesson of the Month

Page 3

"The Comfort of the Scriptures"

The Question Box

Page 5

Our monthly feature

The Poetry Page

Page 6

Especially for children & fathers

What Is the Church of God?

Page 7

Article by G. E. Tyler

Is Christ Divided?

Page 10

Article by Darrell Sanford

Young People's Page

Page 14

"How to Keep Out of Trouble"

God Is the Answer—

Trust Him!

Page 16

Full-length sermon by Leston Mann

The Children's Corner

Page 20

"The Missing Penny"

What About This?

Page 21

"Equality of Men and Women in the Church"

Radio Log

Back Page

Stations airing The Way of Truth Broadcast

FATHERHOOD AND WHAT IT ENTAILS

Radio Message by Bro. James Arch

(aired on Radio Cayman - 06/16/91)



TODAY is Father's Day, and I extend a very special greeting to every father. I will endeavor, by the help of God, to speak to you on "Fatherhood and What It Entails."

I will read two verses of scripture: Genesis 1:27, "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them." Genesis 2:24, "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh." There we have the basis of the family unit that God designed in the very early beginning of man.

In the few minutes that we have on a broadcast as this, it is insufficient to deal properly with such a vast subject as fatherhood. However, I will endeavor to bring to you a few points that I feel will be beneficial to us as fathers.

It is a very special day to honor those who are fathers. I think the concept behind Father's Day, as well as other days, such as Mother's Day, etc., is commendable. I trust those of you under the sound of my voice who still have your fathers with you, that you will make this a very special day for them, and that you will indeed honor them.

I will bring during this message, a few excerpts from a little book called, "A Father's World," written by Leroy Brownlow: "Fatherhood is more than a name on a certificate." It is much more than that. Someone has said: "Anyone can be a father, but it takes someone special to be a dad."

I believe too little emphasis is being placed on fatherhood today. I believe that it plays a much greater role, a much more important role than many people are thinking. I trust that we will look at these things and see more clearly the important role that is played by a father.

An unknown author penned these words—

*A careful man I want to be;
A little fellow follows me.
I do not dare to go astray
For fear he'll go the self-same way.*

*I cannot once escape his eyes,
Whate'er he sees me do, he tries.
Like me, he says, he's going to be;
The little chap who follows me.*

*He thinks that I am big and fine,
He believes in every word of mine.
The base in me he does not see;
The little chap who follows me.*

*I must remember as I go
Through summer's sun and winter's snow,
I'm building for the years to be;
The little chap who follows me.*

*O Lord, if I his guide must be,
O let the little children see
A teacher leaning hard on Thee.*

God designed that dads be looked up to, emulated, and trusted.

We are living in a very materialistic world, where it seems that many have time for everything besides the home and the family. I would like to tell you, My Beloved Friends, if that is your case today, you're making a mistake. Don't allow the materialistic trend of the world to deprive you of your relationship with your children.

There are those who also believe that giving a child all that he wants is love. That is not so. If you give a child all that he wants, you'll spoil that child. There are those who are relying on teachers and other institutions, such as churches, etc., to give the child all that he needs. That is the wrong concept. The child must be taught at home. The home is where it must come from and stem from. I believe that because of a lack of home-training, we have the problem of discipline, and other problems as well. So many times the poor little children are suffering innocently for the causes of others.

We are told that in this affluent society, and of course in others, that child abuse is on the increase. Incest is on the increase. I trust that as fathers today, you will pause for a few moments and look into the face of that little child whom you have fathered, and give him the very best that you can.

Fatherhood entails a lot more than providing for the family, although that is included. It includes and entails a responsibility to care for, and to provide for those children. "The happiest and most efficient worker sees the wonder and beauty of labor. He sees more in his toil than a living. The baker sees not only the paycheck at the end of the week, or the weariness of the job, but he sees the human family in countless homes, seated about tables and eating that bread in the joy of human companionship. The most contented shoemaker is the man who has a view beyond leather and tacks and stitches, and sees the young and the old wear a necessity he provides. This takes the drudgery from labor and makes it satisfying and pleasant. So it is with a father's work, regardless of the vocation, but to a much greater degree. He sees in his toil many blessings for his family. Beyond his labors, he sees a picture which defies a brush of any artist to reproduce, and more than challenges the pen of any author to describe."

Fatherhood entails teaching. You are to teach your children the principles of honesty, integrity, and respect for others, which is fast leaving us in these Islands that we live in. I have said it before, and I'll say it again: I am not despising this age, for we have all lived in our own age, but I am glad that I was born when I was born.

There are things that young people are involved in today that we never heard of when we were children,

and it places a greater responsibility on parenthood, because parents, especially fathers, need to be more alert and more aware of what their children are exposed to. "The loftiest of all duties is to so shape the child's mind that he may do his bit to make the world inviting for faith, hope, and love. The Bible words it this way: 'And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.' Father has a job of teaching to do by speaking; but not by speaking alone, by action; but not by action alone, by hoping, and by sharing that hope, by courage, and by instilling that courage in the heart of the child. Just to ponder these thoughts is the beginning of an education for both father and child. There is nothing that so educates the parent as the child. It entails spending time with your children, causing them to see that you are interested in them. No beautiful character ever grew disassociated of wise teaching and a part from uplifting influences. Words and deeds of others build character into that life. Characters are built as temples are. Someone had to work at it. Each stone was laid in its place by toil and effort, and stone by stone the building rose, and so it is of the noble edifice of character. That person you admire so much did not dream himself into truth and love and purity. He was built skyward by effort. Building character is a matter of workmanship. It is the parent's duty to assist the child in choosing the best of materials, to be watchful of companionship, to be wise in his pleasures, and to be cautious of his habits."

Fatherhood entails counsel and advice. Do you know that we are told in the Bible that the great King David gave some counsel to his son? Before he left this world, David said: "I go the way of all the earth: be thou strong therefore, and shew thyself a man; And keep the charge of the Lord thy God, to walk in his ways, to keep his statutes, and his commandments, and his judgments, and his testimonies, as it is written in the law of Moses, that thou mayest prosper in all that thou doest, and whithersoever thou turnest thyself: That the Lord may continue his word which he spake concerning me, saying, If thy children take heed to their way, to walk before me in truth with all their heart and with all their soul, there shall not fail thee (said he) a man on the throne of Israel."

We are told that Manoah sought God for his child that was to be born. He entreated the Lord and said, "O my Lord, let the man of God which thou didst send come again unto us, and teach us what we shall do unto the child that shall be born." So many people today are concerned about whether their little one will be a male or a female. They better ask God to give them a normal child, a healthy child, a child that will be strong in intellect, a child that will be obedient and good to them.

Fatherhood entails some example. We must walk like we would want our children to walk. My Beloved Friends, one of the most important jobs there is in the world today is building a home. There is a need of increased awareness of this. I trust that as fathers, we will spend a little more time with our children. Teach them about God. Take them to church services. Teach them to pray. God formulated the family unit, and in

the proper form and manner, it is the most beautiful structure that there is on Earth today.

May the Lord bless you and give you strength, wisdom, grace, and knowledge to rear those little ones that He has given you. †

BIBLE LESSON OF THE MONTH

GEMS FROM THE BOOK OF ROMANS THE COMFORT OF THE SCRIPTURES

Scriptures: Romans 15:4; John 5:39; Acts 17:11; II Thessalonians 2:16, 17; II Timothy 3:14, 15; II Corinthians 1:3, 4; 13:11; John 14:27; I Thessalonians 4:18.

Romans 15:4 For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.

John 5:39 Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.

Acts 17:11 These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.

II Thessalonians 2:16 Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlasting consolation and good hope through grace,

17 Comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work.

II Timothy 3:14 But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them;

15 And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

II Corinthians 1:3 Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort;

4 Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.

II Corinthians 13:11 Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you.

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

I Thessalonians 4:18 Wherefore comfort one another with these words.

Memory Verse: For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.—Romans 15:4.

Aim: To examine how the Christian receives comfort from the written Word of God.

INTRODUCTION

The Book we call the Bible is estimated to have been written over a period of fifteen hundred years. The number of men used of God in writing the books of the

Bible is not known for certain, but scholars have estimated that between thirty-five and forty men had a part in writing them. The men came from various walks of life—kings, shepherds, fishermen, and other occupations.

D. O. Teasley in his book, *The Bible and How to Interpret It*, says: "The fixing of the canon [of the Old Testament], having been a gradual process, no exact date for its settlement can safely be given. The settlement of the New Testament was a gradual process. Each book was tried—not only by the usual methods of ascertaining the genuineness of a book, but in the fires of human need and experience." One thing we know for certain is that the books of the Bible were inspired by God, and in that sense we can say that God is the author.

Another quote from Teasley: "The Bible is the greatest book in the world. Ever since there has been a Bible, men have endeavored to fathom its unfathomable depths of knowledge. What we do know of the Bible is so extremely satisfying that we constantly thirst for more.

"Even though no man has ever known all about the Bible, yet we never tire in our efforts to understand it."

The Old Testament was written mostly in the Hebrew language with a very small portion written in the Aramaic language. The New Testament was written in Greek.

I trust the study of this lesson will help you to be able to find comfort in the Scriptures. "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." "Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart."

MEDITATIONS

AN IMPORTANT MESSAGE—Romans 15:4—Written aforetime—Paul refers to the Old Testament Scriptures, for at that time not all of the New Testament was written and gathered into one book. There is much in what we call the Old Testament that is good for us today. The Old Covenant expired at the death of Jesus, but the Old Covenant was a small part of the Old Testament Scriptures. What Christian has not gained much comfort in reading the Psalms and the victories of various Old Testament heroes?

IMPORTANT TO DO—John 5:39—They are they which testify of me—Again, Jesus speaks of the Old Testament Scriptures, for that is all they had at that time. There is much in those Scriptures about Jesus Christ, especially Isaiah. Eternal life was taught in the Old Testament. For instance: Ezekiel 33:15, 16, "If the wicked restore the pledge, give again that he had robbed, walk in the statutes of life, without committing iniquity; he shall surely live, he shall not die. None of his sins that he hath committed shall be mentioned unto him: he hath done that which is lawful and right; he shall surely live." If we are to have eternal life, we must do what Ezekiel said.

PAUL GOES TO EUROPE—Acts 17:11—Searched the Scriptures—Paul had ministered in Philippi, and from there he went to Thessalonica, where he won some to the Lord, but he also met with much

opposition. From there he went to Berea, and he found those who were ready to listen to what he taught. Even so, they searched the Scriptures daily to see if what he was saying was the truth. Everyone not only has a right to do that, but are instructed to do it! "Let no man deceive you with vain words" (Ephesians 5:6).

TRUTH IS IMPORTANT—II Thessalonians 2:16—Hath loved us—The Lord loved us so much that He gave His life for us. God our Father loved us so much that He gave His only begotten Son. And they have given us everlasting consolation through their grace. **Verse 17**—The above facts should be a comfort to us and to help us to be established in the work we are striving to do for the Lord.

DO NOT DEPART—II Timothy 3:14—Continue—Paul is encouraging Timothy to continue in the things which he had learned. Demas had left Paul, for he loved this present world. Doubtless others had departed from the faith. Timothy had learned much truth from Paul who had faithfully lived the gospel before him. Now Paul was admonishing Timothy to continue in what he had learned.

A RELIGIOUS BACKGROUND—II Timothy 3:15—From a child—Timothy had a God-fearing mother and grandmother, and they had exposed him to the Scriptures. Just how much truth he knew we are not able to say. It seems that Timothy was converted when Paul passed through that area on his first missionary trip. Paul had Timothy to start traveling with him on his second missionary trip.

LIVING IN A TROUBLED WORLD—II Corinthians 1:3—Blessed be God—John said in his day, "The whole world lies in wickedness," and the city of Corinth was no exception. Paul, in his second letter to the Church of God, opened his second letter with a warm and loving greeting: "Grace be to you and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ" (verse 2). He went on to say that God was the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort. If it were not for the mercy of God, where would we be today? But He is not only the Father of mercies, but "the God of all comfort." *Webster* says, in part, for the word *comfort*: "to soothe in distress or sorrow; ease the misery or grief of; bring consolation or hope." So it is good to know this "God of all comfort."

HELP OTHERS—II Corinthians 1:4—Comfort them—God comforts us in all our tribulations so that we may comfort those who are in trouble! We live in a real world. There are many who are in trouble, and where it is possible it is the duty of the Christian to lend a helping hand. When you pass through some trial, test, or trouble, you are in a better position to help others.

LIVING THE GOSPEL—II Corinthians 13:11—Finally, brethren—Paul lists a number of things in this verse that is a very important part of a Christian's life: be perfect—meaning be mature; be of good comfort—see comments on verse 3; be of one mind—be in unity, speak the same thing; live in peace—peace with God and peace with all saints. In fact, as far as it lies in you, live peaceably with all men. Do these things, and the God of peace will be with you.

PEACE IN THE STORM—John 14:27—Peace I leave with you—The world cannot give that which it does not have! Jesus Christ was preparing to return to the Father and promised to send them another Comforter. He also said, “I leave my peace with you.” What a blessing peace is, and the Christian has it in real salvation!

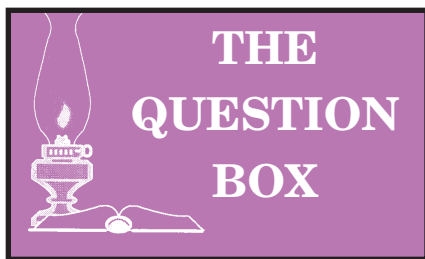
CHRIST WILL RETURN—I Thessalonians 4:18—Comfort one another—The saints in Thessalonica were troubled because some of their loved ones were dying and Christ had not returned as they had expected. Paul told them that they had nothing to worry about, that they would not be left behind, there would be a resurrection, all would be caught up together, and since this would happen, “comfort one another with these words.”

CONCLUSION

Since the Word of God offers us comfort and hope, we need to study it, hide it in our hearts, and use it in our daily lives. Men through the ages have tried to destroy the Bible, to prove it is full of lies, mistakes, and is unreliable. Those who have accepted it for what it is, the inspired Word of God, have found it to be true and have been comforted by it in many trying times of life. Let us remember that Jesus Christ is the living Word of God—John 1:1-14—and He is full of grace and truth.

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

1. How do Christians receive comfort from the Word of God?
2. What are some of the promises in the Scriptures that have been a comfort to you?
3. What does II Corinthians 1:4 tell us to do after the Lord has comforted us?
4. Why were the saints at Thessalonica troubled?
5. Do you think Timothy was a comfort to Paul? †



Answered by the Editor



QUESTION: When do a man and woman become married in God's sight?—J. D., Alabama

ANSWER: As far as I know, God recognizes a couple married when they take their vows. In Bible times, an engagement was as binding as the marriage vows were. [In Matthew 1:18, it is called “espoused,” and also “betrothed.” In regard to the word *betroth*, **Cruden's Concordance** says: “In Bible times, a betrothal was considered as binding as a marriage, and there were formal ceremonies to celebrate it.”] That is why Joseph considered putting Mary “away.” I suppose you could say that they become “one flesh” when they first have relations.

QUESTION: Please explain I Corinthians 16:2.

—J. D., Alabama

ANSWER: Paul was instructing the saints to gather an offering for the poor saints in Jerusalem. “Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gathering when I come” (I Corinthians 16:1, 2).

QUESTION: Please explain II Corinthians 9:7.

—J. D., Alabama

ANSWER: “Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; for God loveth a cheerful giver.” This verse is still talking about the special offering for the poor saints at Jerusalem. It has nothing to do with the tithe you are to pay. Your tithe belongs where you get your soul fed. This would be the Church of God congregation you are a part of, if you are in a local congregation.

QUESTION: How does one know that God has called him into the ministry?—G. C., North Carolina

ANSWER: God has more than one way to let someone know He has called him to preach. He can impress him by His Holy Spirit. He can give him a real soul burden with a desire to share the gospel (although it does not mean that everyone who has a soul burden is called to preach. Every saint should have a burden to win souls to the Lord.) The Lord could reveal it to a godly pastor. Other spiritual saints could recognize the hand of the Lord on someone.

QUESTION: At what point does God give the gift of preaching to someone He has called?

—G. C., North Carolina

ANSWER: If God calls someone to preach, He will give him the gift when He calls him. This does not mean he will be a mature minister at that moment. There will be room and time to grow and gain experience.

QUESTION: I know that when someone is sanctified that the Spirit of God is in him. It is my understanding that when someone is saved and not sanctified that the Spirit of God is with him, but not in him. Is that correct?—G. C., North Carolina

ANSWER: Yes, that is why you can say a justified person has the Spirit. He is WITH him. Jesus told the disciples that He is with you, but the time will come when He will be in you. That came to pass on the day of Pentecost. What you say is correct. †

VIEW OUR WORSHIP SERVICES LIVE!

As many of our readers know, we can be found on the internet at www.wayoftruth.org where in addition to reading past issues and other information, you can view our general services every Sunday LIVE at 10:40 A.M and 6:00 P.M. E.S.T. Enjoy Spirit-filled singing and preaching. Also, our mid-week service at 7:00 P.M. Wednesdays is aired live. There is a chatroom where you can interact with us and share your prayer requests. Tune in and worship with us!

THE POETRY PAGE

Children's Day, June 11
Father's Day, June 18

CHILDHOOD MEMORIES

Effie Crawford

Carefree and treasured are those happy days—
Home, meadow, orchard, school, and childish plays.
Into the long ago I look, and see
Loved ones now gone, yet, still precious to me.
Dear mother, waiting, our pleasures to share,
Hands always ready to smooth away care.
Our father's thanks to God for winter's store;
Old Rover resting, asleep on the floor—
Days of the past, seen through memory's door.

WILL YOU?

Anonymous

Will you give your heart to Jesus
This happy Children's Day?
Will you promise you will serve Him
As you go on your way?

Will you be loyal to your Lord,
And constant, firm and true?
Will you follow in His footsteps,
As He would have you do?

Then you'll be very happy,
And best of all, I say,
You'll make your Savior happy,
For you'll be His always!

WHEN FATHER PRAYS

Author Unknown

When father prays he doesn't use
The words the preacher does;
There's different things for different days,
But mostly it's for us.

When father prays the house is still,
His voice is slow and deep.
We shut our eyes, the clock ticks loud,
So quiet we must keep.

He prays that we may be good boys,
And later on good men;
And then we squirm, and think we won't
Have any quarrels again.

You'd never think, to look at Dad,
He once had tempers, too,
I guess if father needs to pray,
We youngsters surely do.

Sometimes the prayer gets very long
And hard to understand,
And then I wiggle up quite close,
And let him hold my hand.

I can't remember all of it,
I'm little yet, you see;
But one thing I cannot forget,
My father prays for me!

DADDY KNOWS

J. W. Foley

Let us dry our tears now, laddie,
Let us put aside our woes;
Let us go and talk to daddy,
For I'm sure that daddy knows.
Let us take him what we've broken,
Be it heart or hope or toy,
And the tale may bide unspoken,
For he used to be a boy.

He has been through all the sorrows
Of a lad at nine or ten;
He has seen the dawn of morrows
When the sun shone bright again;
His own heart has been near breaking,
Oh, more times than I can tell,
And has often known the aching,
That a boy's heart knows so well.

I am sure he well remembers,
In his calendar of days,
When the boy-heart was December's,
Though the sun and flowers were May's.
He has lived a boy's life, laddie,
And he knows just how it goes;
Let us go and talk to daddy,
For I'm sure that daddy knows.

Let us tell him all about it,
How the sting of it is there,
And I have not any doubt it
Will be easier to bear,
For he's trodden every byway,
He has fathomed every joy,
He has traveled every highway
In the wide world of a boy.

He will put aside the worries
That his day may follow through,
For the great heart of him hurries
At the call of help from you.
He will help us mend the broken
Heart of ours or hope or toy,
And the tale may bide unspoken,
For he used to be a boy. †

**"And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath:
but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the
Lord."—Ephesians 6:4.**

WHAT IS THE CHURCH OF GOD?

By Bro. G. E. Tyler

IN AN AGE where there are so many different organizations in nominal Christianity, one may wonder whether they are all right, or on the other hand, whether any of them are right. As we step back and look at the picture being displayed to the world by the denominations of Christianity, we honestly must conclude the former cannot be true. The Bible clearly points out that God is not the author of confusion (I Corinthians 14:33). One sure thing about modern day professed Christendom is that it is very confusing. Different organizations are teaching contrary things about the Christ and His Word. Many throw up their hands in confusion.

At the outset, I want to make it clear that Jesus Christ is indeed the Son of the living God. He is the true Messiah, the Savior of the world. "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). Christ proclaimed, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6). The world has many religions, but only one is ordained and approved of God the Father—the one established and organized by Jesus Christ. But there are so many organizations who claim to be right, who claim to be *Christian*. To see the truth, we must understand that everyone who professes to be a Christian is not necessarily one.

Furthermore, everyone who claims to be a minister of Christ is not necessarily what he claims to be. "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world" (I John 4:1). One might conclude from that verse that it refers to those who deny Christ as Savior. And it does! But *false prophets* are not confined to that number. Notice these verses: "For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works" (II Corinthians 11:13-15). Therefore, we must conclude that among all ministers who claim to be representatives of Christ, in reality, many are not. Likewise, every organization who claims to be Christian cannot be right, and most are, of a truth, man-made organizations.

THE UNIQUE CHURCH

Now, let us look at the latter part of our original query. Inasmuch as it is certain that every professed Christian church cannot be right, then one might wonder whether *any* of them are right. To answer this, let me say emphatically, YES! In this age of confusion and immorality, there is one organization that rises above the din and strife. But to see this truth, a person needs

a spiritual vision which is received from God the Father. It cannot be carnally discerned.

I call your attention to Matthew, chapter 16: "When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am? And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Verses 13-18). Notice, "flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven."

God revealed to Peter and the disciples many things, but here I want to emphasize two. First, God revealed the fact that Jesus Christ was not just a prophet, or another John the Baptist, or Isaiah. He was and is the Son of the living God! He is divine! He is God made flesh! He is the Redeemer of all humankind! What a blessed knowledge. He is the only One; not Buddha, not Confucius, not Mohammed. Jesus is the Christ!

Secondly, God revealed that this Jesus Christ is building a church and nothing can or will destroy it. In this scripture reading, Christ proclaims it to be His—"I will build my church. ..." All glory be to God! Christ is building a church (singular) and it is His, and the gates of hell shall never prevail against it (singular). Can you grasp it, Dear Reader? There is an unique church that stands alone as belonging to Christ. "There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all" (Ephesians 4:4-6).

WHAT IS ITS NAME?

Hopefully, you can see that Christ has a church and He is building it, but what is its name? Its name is God-given. "For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named" (Ephesians 3:14, 15). It is named after the Father! The word *church* comes from the Greek *ecclesia*, meaning, "a called-out people." The word *of* denotes possession or "belonging to." Therefore the name *Church of God* means, "a called-out people belonging to God." It is the only church bought with the blood of Christ. Acts 20:28, "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood."

When the apostle Paul referred to the church of Christian believers, he called them the *church of God*. Notice the following verses:

I Corinthians 1:2, "Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours."

I Corinthians 10:32, "Give none offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the church of God."

I Corinthians 11:22, "What? have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? or despise ye the church of God, and shame them that have not? What shall I say to you? shall I praise you in this? I praise you not."

I Corinthians 15:9, "For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God."

II Corinthians 1:1, "Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, unto the church of God which is at Corinth, with all the saints which are in all Achaia."

Galatians 1:13, "For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it."

From here forward, I will take the liberty to follow the Bible example and refer to the church that Jesus is building as the *Church of God*.

Before I go on, let me say that it takes more than the true name to be the true church. Many who go by the name *Church of God* are not in reality. Let me also say that we do not believe we are the only ones with this truth. It is not our truth—it is God's truth. We don't think we are "it." But, thank God, we are part of "it"!

WHAT MAKES THE CHURCH OF GOD UNIQUE?

Let us look at a few of the things which differentiates the Church of God from other organizations. First, *Christ* is her Head, not man. All organizations have a head of some kind. Secular organizations have their boards, presidents, and CEO's. Religious organizations have their popes, founders, etc., but there is an organization which knows no earthly master. The Head of the Church of God is Jesus Christ, and its headquarters is where its Head is: heaven. "For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence" (Colossians 1:16-18). Jesus Christ is its Head, its Builder, and He alone has the preeminence!

HOW DOES ONE BECOME A MEMBER?

Another unique characteristic of the Church of God is its membership. All organizations have a mode of membership, whether it be the paying of dues, signing a decision card, shaking a preacher's hand, voting approval, or repeating a creed. In the Bible church, members are added by only one way. "Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved" (Acts 2:47). Salvation makes anyone a member of the Church of God. It is the only way into His church! By being saved, one automatically becomes a part of God's family or church. Everyone on the face of the earth who

is genuinely saved is a member of God's church. This is the experience of the new birth. So then, *the only way into the Church of God is to be born into it; that is, spiritually born.*

John 3:1-7, "There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him. Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again."

Being born again and being saved are one and the same. God Himself writes the newborn Christian's name in His Lamb's Book of Life. Psalm 87:5, 6, "And of Zion [the church] it shall be said, This and that man was born in her: and the highest himself shall establish her. The Lord shall count, when he writeth up the people, that this man was born there." The Church of God has no earthly headquarters and has no earthly church book. God alone keeps His book in heaven. It is important that your name be written there, for Revelation 20:15 says concerning the judgment, "And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire." When Jesus gave power to His disciples, they were amazed. He said, "Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven" (Luke 10:20).

HOW IS A PERSON "BORN AGAIN"?

Since being saved or born again is the only way into the Church of God, and ultimately the only way to heaven, let me take a moment to outline how this experience is gained.

First, let us understand that all have sinned and need a Savior (Romans 3:23). What is sin? "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law" (I John 3:4). Sin separates from God. "But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear" (Isaiah 59:2). When the Bible speaks of iniquities, it speaks of *known* or *willing* transgressions. "...Where no law is, there is no transgression" (Romans 4:15). God does not hold a person responsible for what he does not know. "Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin" (Romans 4:8). So then, what we are talking about is the fact that all are guilty of imputed sin and need to be forgiven. When a person knowingly does wrong, he spiritually dies. "Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die" (Ezekiel 18:4).

A child, when he is born, is alive physically *and* spiritually. Because he is innocent, he has spiritual life. When that child comes to the knowledge of right and

wrong in the sight of God, and chooses to disobey God, he dies spiritually. He is separated from God. He needs to be *born again*.

John 5:24, 25, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life. Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live." This is the new birth.

Once an individual sins against God, he is lost, and like the prodigal son, he needs to be reclaimed. God sends His Holy Spirit to convict each sinful soul; that is, He brings the individual to the knowledge of his lost condition and his need for a Savior. When Saul of Tarsus met Jesus on the road to Damascus, the Lord said, "It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks." In other words, God dealt with Saul's heart and he fought against it. That is conviction, and so many fight against it. I did for awhile. You need to understand that no man can come to Christ, except the Father draw him (John 6:44). Saul cried out, "Lord, what would you have me to do?" He finally yielded to conviction and was born again. So, to be born again, a person must yield to conviction.

In yielding, he must repent of his sins; that is, to be genuinely remorseful and sorry that he has sinned against God. He must forsake the old sinful life and allow Christ to transform him. "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (II Corinthians 5:17). He must believe that the Father has forgiven him for Christ's sake. Without faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, no man can be saved. There is nothing a person can do to make things right with God of his own merit. He must accept His proffered grace and the gift of God. When these conditions of the Word of God are met, a person is truly born again—yielding to conviction, repenting, forsaking, believing.

RETAINING MEMBERSHIP

As long as the newborn Christian retains favor with God, his membership in the Church of God is secured. Only sin can cause anyone to lose membership in the Church of God. God put me in the Church when He saved me, and only imputed sin can ever cause God to put me out. When the Israelites made a golden calf in the wilderness, God was of a mind to destroy them. But the man of God interceded in their behalf. Exodus 32:32, 33, "Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin—; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written. And the Lord said unto Moses, Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book." That is the same Book of Life to which I have already referred. So, only sin can cause one to lose membership and die spiritually, in which case the individual needs to be born again. Since the membership is controlled by God Himself, and is made up of only the saved, there are no sinners or hypocrites in it. No other organization can make such a claim! Some unsaved may attend services with a congregation (perhaps even profess to be saved), but God alone controls the membership.

Also, in connection with this is the fact that the Church of God has a standard of conduct. God does not

want us to continue the sinful life after we are converted. "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" (Romans 6:1, 2). The standard of living in the Church of God is holiness. Hebrews 12:14, "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord." I Peter 1:15, 16, "But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy." *Holiness* is sinlessness. Holiness is simply living to all you know of the Word of God. Righteousness is doing right. What's wrong with doing right?

Let us understand that no person can live holy outside the power of Christ. Our own righteousness is as filthy rags in God's sight. But once a person is saved, he receives power from God to overcome the wicked one. John 1:11-13, "He [Christ] came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." I John 4:4, "Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world." This is the only way any man can live without sin.

GOD ORGANIZES HIS CHURCH

Another unique characteristic of the Church of God is that God sets the members in this body as it pleases Him—I Corinthians 12:12, 18-20, 24-27, "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. ... But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him. And if they were all one member, where were the body? But now are they many members, yet but one body. ... For our comely parts have no need: but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that part which lacked: That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it. Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular." The members in the Church of God are organized and placed by the Holy Spirit. That includes the ministry. It is a calling, not a vocation. "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood" (Acts 20:28). What a marvelous organization!

HER RULE OF FAITH IS THE WORD OF GOD

All religions have their rules of faith which are different from one to another, thus different religions. The Church of God claims no creed but the Holy Bible. Now we need to understand that when the Word of God is revealed by the Holy Ghost, it is truth—one Lord, one faith, one proper understanding. People often use the Bible and put their own interpretation to it. But I believe when the Spirit of God reveals the truth of a scripture to you, and He reveals it to me, we will see eye to eye. The Spirit of God will not tell you one thing and tell

me something contrary. The Holy Spirit will unite believers into one body. He will reveal the truth to all who desire it. If there is a variety of interpretations of a verse of scripture, someone is mistaken; for again, when the Holy Spirit reveals it, nothing remains but truth. And truth does not contradict itself. So when a verse of scripture is properly interpreted, it works in harmony with every other verse of scripture. Again, God is not the author of confusion. If everyone received God's revelation concerning the Holy Bible, there could only be one clear universal message for all people. Sects and denominations would cease to exist. But, alas, the modern state of professed Christianity confuses the message and diminishes the glory of Christ's teachings.

AN APPEAL

These are only a few of the unique qualities of the Church of God. You can become a part of God's church by being saved. This is the will of God, for the Bible says, "[He] will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth" (I Timothy 2:4).

If you are saved, may I challenge you to assemble with God's people, for God is drawing His people together. Jesus prayed, "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me" (John 17:20, 21). †

Is Christ Divided?

"... Upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."—Matthew 16:18.

"Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth. Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me."—John 17:17-23.

"And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all."—Ephesians 1:22-23.

"I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, With all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love; Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all."—Ephesians 4:1-6.

THE TRUTH of God's divinely built church and the message for all who are truly saved to renounce sectarianism, join together in the one body of Christ and present a unified church of God to the world has been publicly proclaimed by the proponents of this

"reformation" movement for nearly 140 years now. It is a powerful message and, just like the truth of overcoming temptation and living a holy life, it makes perfect sense. Yes, all the saints of God *should* be one people united together in the body of Christ, for that is what the Bible teaches.

At some point early on in my salvation experience, I received my individual revelation of the church and saw plainly what the church was and was not. I realized that there is only one true divinely built church in this world and that all "churches" and Christian denominations which were established after it, were not it. Indeed, God's church stands alone and apart from everything else. I saw clearly that when Jesus said, "Upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matthew 16:18), He intended that it would be permanent, and that there was no need for any other. I understood that when Paul told the elders to "feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood" (Acts 20:28), that he was speaking of that one and the selfsame church which Jesus built and that any true Christian minister should be able to feed any true Christian with the same food (doctrine). I also became aware that when we were "called unto the fellowship of his Son" (I Corinthians 1:9), and when we were commanded "by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment" (1 Corinthians 1:10), that there was to be only one fellowship which would teach the same doctrine and would not be divided. That is the message of the "Unity of God's People" which I have heard proclaimed many times since my conversion in the church of God nearly 40 years ago and which I believe to be true with all my heart. But, unfortunately, and I am going to be perfectly frank and honest with you here, there is a blight upon this beautiful message, and it is this: Though we enjoy unity within our congregations and even within our "fellowships," the body as a whole has been schismatized time and again over the past 100 years. How often have ministers and saints been divided over some issue resulting in both groups continuing on apart from one another, yet teaching and preaching the same basic and essential doctrines and producing the same basic and essential results which they had before the split? Saints are separated, families divided, friendships destroyed, and the witness of the church of God diminished in the world. Such divisions are a sad commentary and a great reproach on the beautiful truth of unity which we so gloriously, devotedly, and lovingly declare.

The concept and acceptance of different "fellowships" is antithetical to the one body of Christ

Since the message is that there is only one united church, then the only way the existence of these various "fellowships" of the church of God can be explained is to designate all those other than our own as apostate or backslid. This is an unfortunate position which some, though not all, have taken. On the one hand, it is an understandable position, considering that we preach a message declaring that there is one undivided church

to which all the saved belong. Yet, on the other hand, it is an impossible one to maintain when we honestly survey the landscape of these various church of God “groups,” and discover that many of them are filled with faithful saints, as well as with true ministers preaching the same message of deliverance, sanctification, and holiness that we do.

If we would accept, as some already have, that many of these disconnected, opposing fellowships are no more apostate or backslid than our own, then we would be forced to admit that such a condition as this is not in harmony with God’s design for our oneness in Christ. This condition of what I term, “Division Unity,” is the elephant in the room which has been ignored or worked around for too long. My prayer is that we may all beseech God to remove this from our midst and restore unity in it’s scriptural fullness.

How Is a Solution Possible?

Now, practically speaking, how can we mend such a situation? The wounds created by these splits are too tender among many, the animosities too strong, and in some cases, the differences *perceived* as too great to reconcile. Well, quite honestly and quite obviously, it is not something we can do ourselves. I do not believe that human agency alone can negotiate or arbitrate itself out of this condition. It will take the head of the church to heal this, but as with any other healing, we must step forward in faith and trust to earnestly seek God to move. There is certainly a part for us to play, and the first thing we must do is to acknowledge the problem. We must all honestly ask ourselves if we really believe that our 20 congregation fellowship or “their” 10, 30 or 40 congregation fellowship is the totality of the church of God in this world. We already know, of course, and admit that along with “our fellowship,” the church contains all the unknown saved people on the planet wherever they are. (Those, by the way, are very easy to have fellowship with, because we never have to know them or endeavor with them or differ with them on some minor or not so minor issue.)

Once we acknowledge that there is a problem, we must burn the following scripture into our minds and pray that God will brand it upon our hearts: “*That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.*”—John 17:21.

This is not about us, Saints of God, it is about the cause of Christ! It is about souls and the effectiveness of the church to win them! It is about the world believing that Jesus is true! The work of Christ has been hindered by these divisions; that is inarguable. Can we imagine what a force we would present to the world if we were unified? Not necessarily due to our combined numbers, because our *total* numbers will not be seen in the localities in which we labor. But what *will* be seen is the power of God in our midst once we have gotten the divisions out! Is it not apparent that Jesus cannot place his *full* approval upon us as long as we tolerate such a condition? Brethren, I fear we have taken the focus off Christ and put it on ourselves! A divided church cannot properly represent the undivided Christ.

Our Contentedness With the Status Quo Is the Greatest Impediment to Solving the Problem

It is generally dissatisfaction with the status quo which prompts a reformation or correction in any matter—be it political, social or religious. Usually, it is only a dynamic defection from truth which stirs people enough, and stirs enough people, to the point that they can finally tolerate it no longer. As long as the vast majority are content, there is little call to address the problem. In our case, there is no massive defection from truth. We uphold the clear truths on justification, sanctification, and the one church, though concerning the latter, we are not fully following the scriptural injunction of John 17:21. This status quo of “Division Unity” is, in reality, a glaring inconsistency with true scriptural oneness, and unfortunately, it is one to which we have grown accustomed.

It is evident that most of us are very comfortable in the “our fellowship” state of affairs. In fact, it seems clear that the concept of the group or “fellowship” has largely displaced the church in the minds of many, even though we quite innocently don’t see it that way. We still see the church in it’s glorious, singular, timeless, universal sense (and it is, for the foundation stands sure!), but we live and experience the church at a much more diminished and encapsulated level. We have grown to accept this condition as normal. How can that be? The answer is quite simple ...

We Are Blessed!

We have good congregations filled with faithful saints of God. We have our friends and family in our own and our “sister” congregations. We have good spiritual experiences, and we are richly blessed. God is working with us and we are producing saved, sanctified people. We are preaching truth; we are having great services, revivals, fellowship meetings, camp meetings, and conventions. We are still seeing people healed from time to time. It is all very real and genuine, therefore, with so much positive among us, the obvious questions would be, 1) If God were not pleased with us, why would He still be working with us? And, 2) Since things are as good as they are, why should we disrupt our comfortable, familiar routine in an effort to obtain what seems a very difficult objective?

In answer to the first: The Lord has continued to work with us in the great measure He has because 1) our message is true and He honors His message, 2) our hearts are true and He honors our hearts, and 3) our individual faith is true and He honors faith. But, we are not seeing the great manifestations of His power and outpouring of His Spirit that we *could* see, and that has *been* seen in times past; namely, in the apostolic age and the opening of the Sixth Seal age. Could it be because He is hesitant to “sign His name” to the division which exists among us? Consider this example: Will not God yet save an honest, repentant soul who seeks salvation in denominationalism, even though He doesn’t want that soul to remain there? Why does He do it? Because He honors His Word of truth and the sincerity of the seeker’s repentant heart. So, will He not also honor us in all that is right, good and true, even though there is more that He desires of us and things with which He is not fully satisfied?

As to the second: We should put forth the effort because it is the right thing to do. It is clearly evident by the Word of God that we are not, as a whole, fulfilling the teaching of oneness exhibited in John 17:21 and many other scriptures. We are simply not where we need to be concerning the teaching and the command to be one. Perhaps, God has “winked” at this for a time due to various circumstances known only to Him, but now calls upon us to repair it.

He That Is not Against Us Is for Us

“And John answered and said, Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name; and we forbad him, because he followeth not with us. And Jesus said unto him, Forbid him not: for he that is not against us is for us.”—Luke 9:49, 50.

God help us that we would receive this admonition in Luke 9:50 as though it were spoken personally to us from the Lord Himself! Jesus was not speaking of accepting someone teaching falsehood, nor am I. Neither is this a justification for sectarianism, as some in denominationalism would try to frame it. This man could not have been working in Jesus’ name were he not true in his heart and spirit, and the Lord knew this. The Lord knows them that are HIS. And let every one that names the name of Christ depart from iniquity (II Timothy 2:19). That is the foundational test for they who are of the truth. We should ask ourselves if the people in that other “fellowship” are against us? Are they preaching and living the same gospel we are? Would Jesus forbid them? If He would not, then neither should we.

We *must* eradicate the walls of these divided fellowships and be one body. In reality, there are no “fellowships” or “groups” within God’s church, there is only God’s church. The entire concept of being separated into different fellowships, while quasi-accepting any or all from whom we are separated, is unscriptural. It is simply not characteristic of God’s church *and* places us in an awkward position when preaching against sectarianism. Again, this is the reason that some have taken to designating everyone outside of their own fellowship apostates or backslid. But, as before stated, *that* is an unrealistic and untenable position, and one which practical experience simply does not support. One may say of me all day long, that I and the people with whom I worship are apostates, but I, by practical experience, know better. I know what we are preaching and teaching according to the Word of God is true. I know what we are living by the Spirit of God is pure, and I know that we could not be doing so without the grace of God in our presence.

Saints, we must accept who God accepts. While no saint or minister would reject this principle in theory, in reality, it often is not supported by our actions. Our fellowship with God is the basis of our fellowship with one another as children of God, regardless of our individual knowledge or understanding. That fellowship is obtained at the moment of conversion, and is not dependent upon how a person looks or what he knows or don’t know. We have all seen it many times in our congregations. A lost soul enters our service, heeds the call to repentance, rises from prayer at the altar believing the work is done, and then we welcome him into the family

of God as our new brother or sister in Christ. We may not immediately be one together in all the tenets of the faith, but at that moment we are one in the Spirit, and in time, the clear teaching of the Word of God will bring him into the unity of the faith. Our own hymnal testifies to the condition which has come upon us—

“We reach our hands in fellowship to every blood washed one.” Yes, this principle has been abused by some who, perhaps, have reached out to some they shouldn’t have, but it has been equally neglected by others.

“There’s a mighty reformation sweeping o’er the land, God is gathering his people by his mighty hand.” Where is this mighty reformation sweeping o’er the land? It should pain all of us that, in large part, the world doesn’t even know we exist.

“Christians all should dwell together in the bonds of peace, All the clashing of opinions, all the strife should cease; Let divisions be forsaken, all the holy join in one, And the will of God in all be done.” No comment ...

Forgive me saints and brethren, for I do not mean to strike or offend, but I have a passion for the church to be one. I have a passion to see the love of God shed abroad in our hearts—all of our hearts—by the Holy Ghost and not blocked by the walls of “fellowships.” Fellowship is a word that should signify the relationship we all have with one another, but it is being used instead to designate the myriad fenced cities dotting the church of God landscape. I am not naive; I realize that everyone who claims to be saved or claims to be “church of God” are not spiritually sound, but I believe many, many are and it should be our burden to see “all the holy join in one.”

The Experience of Salvation Is Evidence of Salvation

I know the experience I received when I came to the church of God, and therefore I have confidence that others who came to different fellowships which taught the same essential truths were able to get that same salvation. We should accept one another as such. It has taken 100 years to get in the state we are in and, while it is not likely that it will all be mended tomorrow, we can at least start. If we can accept one another as saved based upon our testimony, the fruits of salvation in our life, the pureness of our doctrine and the trying of our spirit, it will be a good beginning. To love one another is the first order of business. Is that not what Jesus said? “By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples,”... and we all know the rest.

Let us work with what we *can* work with. Fellowship cannot be forced and I do not advocate trying to do so. Let us who are willing seek to know one another, and then allow Jesus to guide us, or as the case may be, prevent us, in the further pursuit of unity. Whatever the outcome, we will have tried. Does not the Lord command us to do as much? One thing is certain, this present state of “division unity” is not where we need to be. There are no “Fellowships” of the church of God, there is only fellowship in the church of God.

Addressing Obvious Differences

There are apparent differences in certain practices between various “fellowships.” Within a congregation

our peculiarities and customs must be observed in order to maintain congregational unity, but beyond our walls we must exercise some tolerance, patience and forbearance with one another. As an example, our congregation has always included hand clapping as part of our praise. Psalm 47:1 says, "O clap your hands, all ye people; shout unto God with the voice of triumph." As far as I know, this is the only scripture which directly addresses saints clapping, however it does support the practice. Now, there are "fellowships" who do not clap in their services. However, neither they nor we, should deny fellowship with one another based on such. If I am in their services, I can abide by their custom by refraining and if they are in mine, they can be accepting of us and yet refrain themselves if they choose. We should not judge one another in such matters. Granted, there are matters lesser and greater than this one, but if it is not sin, we should endeavor with one another whether we accept it into our own practice or not. Sin alone breaks fellowship with God.

For Such a Time as This

We are at a unique time in church history. Never before has such a condition existed among God's church. We have seen the pristine and glorious, although tumultuous, age of the apostles, the long dark day of papal persecution, the scattered condition of sectarianism and finally the call out of Babel confusion and return to visible unity. This last is the beautiful message we yet joyously herald, but do not so fully heed. May God help us to heed it fully toward all of God's children.

All Separations Have not Been Wrong— the Sword Separates

The sources of division over the course of the last 100 years are many and there is no "one size fix all" solution. Some cannot be healed for they were caused due to obvious false doctrine and, or, moral compromise which yet exists. However, there have been others due to issues which, in reality, have not risen to the level of false doctrine or sin, though they may have been treated as such. Care must be taken to determine such matters based upon the Word of God rather than our own perceptions, preferences, or customs. The Word is the true standard by which we must judge and shall be judged.

Consider this example concerning two different church of God fellowships: one wears neckties, but preaches against beards as worldly; the other wears beards, but preaches against neckties as worldly. Which is it? In all honesty, Brethren, I do not site this example to belittle, strike, or justify either one—it is merely a statement of fact. Various things have been made an issue to the point of division, which the Bible does not directly address. We realize that the Bible doesn't address everything in particular, but that it also supplies us with scriptural principles. So we have some standards which are indisputable. John broadly classifies the "lust of" and the "pride of" as "of the world" in I John 2:16, but Paul names many of them clearly in Galatians 5:19-21. Adultery, hatred, drunkenness, and the others found there all fit into those classifications of the lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. No question there. But, there are other

standards which must be raised in order to address activities we will encounter in this life for which there is no direct command, and therefore must be supported by scriptural principles. In addition, there are practices (I hesitate to call them "standards") sometimes instituted which may be inspired by one's traditional, cultural, or personal influences. It is quite likely that many, if not all, of us may hold such practices within our congregations. The difficulty appears when we hold these as universal law, that being, the minimum which must be done to continue fellowship, rather than as our own customs or traditions. Such "standards" may function fine within a congregation or even a small group, but when an attempt is made to bind them upon the entire body problems will arise—and have. Therefore, though applying principles is proper and necessary, we must take great care in their application. If we hold to the position that everyone else must conform to our exact practices and "standards," particularly this latter class of standards, before we accept them as saved, we will never experience the unity God desires for us to have within the body of Christ.

I'd like to offer a familiar passage from Romans 14, where Paul addressed a matter between the Jewish and Gentile brethren. I realize it may not be a perfect comparison to our situation, but it should prove useful in our assessment and treatment of one another. No one was more different in their customs and ways than the Jews and Gentiles, yet God built one body and placed them both in it. They did not have the option of whether or not to inhabit that one body.

Paul's counsel—

"Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth: for God hath received him. Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand. One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks. For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord: whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living. But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God. Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling block or an occasion to fall in his brother's way. I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean."—Romans 14:3-14.

May the Lord help us to have godly tolerance for one another.

Other Causes of Separations & Various Concerns

In addition to those things already mentioned, divisions have come about due to personal strifes, differences in teachings not essential to salvation, and probably a few things which no one can really explain just why “we no longer fellowship them.”

Now, sadly, we know there are some groups who are outright hostile to others. Unity cannot be forced. We must have the Spirit and the spirit of unity for it to function. No one expects any minister to expose his flock to dangers from hostile and malicious people whether they tout the name “church of God” or not. “A man that has friends must show himself friendly” (Proverbs 18:24), and “the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace” (James 3:18).

I also want to emphasize that I am not advocating for every person who has wrongly left a congregation to be immediately accepted, or every accusation registered against someone to be summarily dismissed. This is not a call for true offenses to be overlooked or serious violations of scriptural principles to be disregarded. Within these many fellowships there may be matters which must be corrected or healed that only those involved can prayerfully, diligently, and honestly address. True, pure and holy unity should not be a hiding place for iniquity.

Is the Time Right to be One?

“To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under heaven” (Ecclesiastes 3:1).

“It is not for [us] to know the times or the seasons which the Father hath put in his own power” (Acts 1:7).

I do not believe that God will accomplish what He wants to accomplish in these last days without a serious change in our present state. Can we really be the church He describes in Ephesians 5:27 with this condition overshadowing us? That is not to say that our individual experiences or our congregations are not vigorous, blessed, and accepted of Him, but this condition of “division unity” certainly is not. It is a blemish which must be wiped away, an unsightly wrinkle which must be ironed out.

I fully believe in the message of the one church and the unity of God’s people. The church of God is established in the Word, lived in the Spirit, and present in the world today. I know that she has many detractors and they will seize every opportunity to further mock and defame our message, but we must not be distracted by such. We have a great work to do and “cannot come down” from our labor of building back the one continuous wall about the holy city. God’s church has been through many trials and battles in centuries past, and the faithful saints of those ages fulfilled their duty to stand for the truth they knew. Now, it is our turn! This is our day and our battle and we must see it through! It is time to cease building walls between us, and work to mend the breeches and, together, build back the one wall which surrounds us.

Closing Thoughts:

Every question cannot be answered nor a solution for every problem offered in this article. This is not meant to be a comprehensive schematic showing every move to make—that is the Lord’s work. My purpose here is to express in a public manner what I truly believe Jesus has been laying upon my heart and the hearts of many others for some time now. This is not an attack upon the church of God, any fellowship or any individual, alive or dead, and any attempt to mischaracterize it as such is simply wrong. We are all participants in this condition, though many unwittingly, and many more unwillingly. I know this writing will not be well received by some, but my prayer is that, in time, Jesus Christ, the Head of the church, will bring us all into the bond of peace and love as one body in Him.

In a matter of such magnitude there will be much trepidation, concern and doubt, but we owe it to ourselves, our congregations, and our Lord to consider these thoughts with humility and soberness. †

In the love and grace of our Lord,
Pastor Darrell Sanford
The Church of God at Bellevue
Hattiesburg, Mississippi



Dear Young People,

I hope that this finds each of you encouraged in the grace of God. Isn’t it grand to be a Christian? We have the privilege and honor of being delivered from this present evil world. Titus 2:11, 12 says, “For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men,

Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world.” This is the true grace of God! His grace is sufficient for every one of us.

Following is another chapter from Bro. Naylor’s amazing book. May the Lord help each of us to, “Study to be quiet.”

Please send your testimony to be published in this column. Share what the Lord has done for you!

In His service,

Bro. Greg Tyler

HOW TO KEEP OUT OF TROUBLE

From “Heart Talks,” by the late C. W. Naylor

ULD Uncle John was not so spry as he had once been. There were only a few black hairs left among the many gray ones. His limbs were shaky and his steps faltering. He was “no good for work any more,” he said; but there were two things that he kept on doing right along: he seemed to be always smiling and he seemed to be always praising the Lord. “Happy John,”

people called him, and he certainly deserved the name. He did not seem to have much of this world's goods to make him glad. His lot in life did not appear to be more than usually pleasant, nor was there anything in the way of external evidence to show whence his happiness came. I had often sat and gazed upon his placid face lifted in devotion to God. He never seemed to get into trouble. No matter what happened, Uncle John seemed to have no part in the trouble. With others, troubles came and troubles went, but Uncle John still smiled and praised the Lord.

One day I was standing outside the meetinghouse with a little company of brethren, when Uncle John came walking out, smiling as usual and praising the Lord. One of the brethren said to him, "Uncle John, how does it come that you are always so happy and never seem to get into trouble?" He stopped and looked at the speaker with a broad smile, and answered, "I just praise the Lord and mind my own business." He turned and walked away, but his words lingered in my ears and were indelibly impressed upon my memory. His secret was very simple, but very effective. And thus he went on smiling, praising the Lord and minding his own business, and he was "happy John" even to the end. Many years ago he went to his reward, but the lesson that I learned that day has never been lost.

Uncle John's rule for keeping out of trouble seemed very simple. It looks very easy to mind one's own business, but it is one of the hardest things in the world to do, because it is one of the hardest things in the world for us to be willing to do. The Scripture says, "Every fool will be meddling," and it is so hard for some folks not to act like fools, anyway in this particular respect, even though they are ever so wise. The affairs of others are so interesting to them! This is a very human trait, but it sometimes leads to unpleasant consequences.

God knew the failing of people on this line, so he said, "Study to be quiet, and to do your own business" (I Thessalonians 4:11). You have, no doubt, studied a great many lessons, but have you studied this particular one? It is evident that many have not yet learned this if they have studied over it. Probably they did not know that it requires studying. Possibly they never thought of it as being an object for study. But it is. We shall never graduate in the school of wisdom until we study this lesson and learn it thoroughly. "Study to be quiet, and to do your own business." That is the lesson. Have you learned it? Some folks are always talking, talking, talking. There seems to be no end to their talk. When people talk so much they are sure to talk of some things that should not be talked of. Some people cannot keep an experience of salvation because they talk too much, and as a result they have a great deal of spiritual trouble that might be avoided. But, then, they are so interested in their friends and neighbors! How can they help talking about them? Why, just let them spend their time in studying to be quiet. Let them give themselves a few lessons in minding their own business.

Peter had that human trait. He was interested in what John was going to do. When he asked the Lord, "What shall this man do?" he received an answer. He did not have to wait for it. It was this, "What is that to thee? Follow thou me." I have known many good Chris-

tian people who became mixed up in neighborhood or family affairs and got into a great mess of trouble because they failed to mind their own business. If there is a dog-fight going on, all the dogs in the community seem to want to join in it. There seems to be something in humanity that is very much the same. If there is trouble in the community they want to mix into it some way or another. Trouble is a thing that is much easier to get into than it is to get out of.

More people get into trouble through the wrong use of their tongues than through any other means, I suppose. The Wise Man says, "He that keepeth his tongue keepeth his soul from trouble." He also says, "The beginning of strife is as when one letteth out water." You know how it runs in every direction, so that you cannot gather it up again nor confine it. Never meddle with the strife of others. You are sure of an abundant crop of trouble if you do. It is written, "He that passeth by and meddleth with strife belonging not to him is like one that taketh a dog by the ears." You know how that is: if he holds fast he will get into trouble, and if he lets go he will get into trouble.

There are some people who are religious and who seem to get along pretty well until their children get mixed up in trouble with some one. Just as sure as that happens they are in the trouble, too. They think that their children could not be to blame. They take the children's part, and trouble is the result. And when they have gotten out of the trouble, if they do get out, they have dishonored both themselves and their religion. There are others who can never let trouble alone if their friends or neighbors are in it. They will mix in. They feel that they must defend their friends, and they are often so partial in their feelings toward them that they cannot believe them to be in the wrong. They become all heated in the thing, and before they know it they have a big case of spiritual trouble on hand in addition to the other trouble.

When people get into trouble, they like to tell others about it. If you have sympathetic ears for trouble, you can hear plenty of it. When you hear such things, it is very easy to pass them on to someone else. Never let yourself be a news-carrier for trouble. You will have trouble of your own if you do. The only business that a Christian has in relation to such troubles is as a peacemaker, and even then he must be very cautious and wise, or he will become involved.

Few people want to take God's way out of trouble. They will do anything to have their own way out. We are told to leave off strife before it is meddled with. That is the only safe way. While you are out, keep out; and the only way to keep out is to mind your own business. Try Uncle John's rule. It will work very well. It is a splendid preventive of trouble. Would you be happy? Would you have the confidence of your neighbors and associates? Would you be free from worldly entanglements? Would you have a contented heart and a cheerful mind? Would you be worthy of the esteem of the people? Would you be different from worldly people? Would you be a sunshine-bearer for your neighborhood? There is just one way to do it. You must do as "happy John" did—smile, praise the Lord, and mind your own business. †

GOD IS THE ANSWER—TRUST HIM!

2016 Cayman Convention Message by Bro. Leston Mann



IT HAS become my duty this morning to preach to you the gospel. By the help of the Lord, I'll endeavor to do so. I need your prayers and your help that as I speak, I will speak as an oracle of God. I want to encourage the church. It is a beautiful theme that we have: "In Tough Times, In All Times—God." I think what Bro. James had in mind was, that regardless of what happens, we need to trust in God.

I want to speak to you on the thought, "God Is the Answer—Trust Him." As I thought about trusting the Lord, I thought, *before you can trust something, you need to know it.*

Before you can put that trust and faith in God, you need to know who God is. Sometimes we can say to the unsaved "trust in the Lord," but if they don't know Him, how can they really trust Him? Now, the more you know God, the better you can trust God. In order to trust God, we have to sometimes go through some things to prove Him, to know that He is God, and that He is able.

In thinking about trusting, I thought about my son. As a little child, we would put him on a table and just tell him to jump. He would jump with confidence that his father would catch him. I believe that is the kind of faith we need to have in God. We must have confidence in Him. Sometimes after school my son would be playing outside, and the bus would leave him, so he would run to his teacher and ask to let him call me. Then he would go back outside to play. He didn't worry, for he knew his dad would come for him. So we need to trust in God. We don't know how He's going to come through for us, but we need to have the confidence that He will come through for us. He will make a way when there seems to be no way. To trust in God, we need to have faith, because we have not seen God at any time. "He that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently [trust in] him" (Hebrews 11:6).

I invite you to take your Bibles and turn to St. John 6. I want to read verses 66-69: "From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him. Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away? Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God."

What a blessing it is to know that we can trust in the Lord! There will certainly be times when we need to trust God a little bit more than at other times. There comes some difficult times in our lives when we need to trust God on another level that we haven't experienced before. I believe as I look at the theme for this convention that it is not just for this convention, but it is for down the walk of life, where we will learn that in tough times we can trust in God. I'll tell you some-

thing, God is a God in whom we can trust. It doesn't matter how big the problem is, or what the circumstances in our lives may be, we can learn to trust in God. I also know that this is something we don't learn overnight. The apostle Paul said, "I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content."

Someone has said, "The Lord gives the greatest battles to His strongest soldiers." Sometimes we wonder why God allows some things to fall in our pathway. We ask the question, "Why me, Lord? You could have given this to Bro. Garry, or to someone else who could deal with the matter"; but we are encouraged by the Word of God that "God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it."

We need to trust God. I know there are times situations in our lives seem like "I just can't make it through this," but if God allows us to go through a trial, it is because He knows that we can make it. I know sometimes we feel like we can just give up and cry, "Lord, this is more than I can bear," but if God allows us to pass through that place in our lives, He knows that we can make it. We have to trust God in spite of what comes our way. We have to learn to trust God in spite of who falls away on the journey.

When Jesus preached the gospel, the people misunderstood Him. They asked, "Who can eat this Man's flesh and drink His blood?" The Bible says, "From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him." On this journey, many a soldier will fall and give up, but we need to learn to keep on trusting. When we see soldiers, who have been in this army longer than some of us, fail, and give up, we sometimes wonder if we will make it. When we see people fail, whom we assumed were stronger than us, we wonder if we will make it, but the grace of God is sufficient to keep us, Brethren. I don't know what you face here in the Cayman Islands, but I know God is able to see you through. We may be facing something this year that we didn't last year, but I can assure you that next year we may have something different to face, but the God who stood with us in 2016, is the same God who will stand with us in 2017. If God brought us to this point, He is able to take us through. We can trust the Lord today.

I want to encourage the church to put their trust in the Lord. Sometimes it seems like we are too weak to make it, but the Lord told the apostle Paul, "My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness." You know, the most weakest time in our walk with God is where we experience the greatest strength. We need to learn to trust in the Lord. We need

to learn to draw near to God when we feel like we can't make it. We need to learn that there is a Source from whence we can draw strength. There is a Fountain that will never run dry. I'm so glad that I learned to trust in Him. He is our Savior, Friend, and Guide. When we trust in the Lord, He will not forsake us. We may feel forsaken. We may even look forsaken sometimes, but we need to know that the Lord of hosts is with us, and that the God of Jacob is still our refuge. Thank God that we can trust in the Lord today.

We can trust the Lord in our sickness. When we feel like we can't make it, we can trust in the Lord. It is God who brings us through every situation in our lives. It is Him who brings us through every battle that we face. It is not in our own strength; it is not in our own power; it is not in our own ability. It is not because we are more educated, or because we have more than others. It is only the grace of God that enables us to stand. Sometimes God doesn't bring us out of the situation that we are in. He just gives us the grace to make it in that situation. Paul declared, "For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me." Sometimes God doesn't take us out of some things, because those things in our lives are there to balance us.

Some things keep us humble. The Apostle said, "Lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure" (II Corinthians 12:7). He besought God to take it away, but God said, "I will keep it there, because that is what will keep you balanced on this journey." I have learned that responsibility keeps you balanced in the service of God. A lot of people run from responsibility, but when you have a responsibility, it puts you in a place where you begin to say, "I can't do certain things, because I have an office to fill." When you don't have anything to do, the enemy uses that to take greater advantage of you.

Responsibility does help to balance us in this Christian race. I can speak from experience with what I went through last year. I feel that if I wasn't where I was with God, and if it wasn't for the responsibility that I had, I may have taken a different journey. I may have taken a different path. You may sometimes feel that you have so many situations in your life to deal with, but God allows these to keep you balanced.

I am not a navigator, but I've heard people say that when a boat has a heavy load, it travels much better in storms. Sometimes we don't understand why God lays things on us, but they enable us to deal with situations in our lives, and it keeps us balanced. At times it seems like these things come to hold us back, but on the other hand, they help to keep us stable in the work of God. Don't be afraid to take on responsibility. Again, the Lord said to Paul, "My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness." So sometimes these things balance us in the service of God.

If you are a preacher, you will say, "I can't do certain things because I'm a preacher." If you're a song leader, you will say, "I can't do certain things because I have to get before the congregation, and I need to be an example." These things help us in our lives. I'm speaking from experience. It helps me, and I know I can't do

certain things because I have to stand before a congregation and tell them what to do. Since I preach to others, I can't be a castaway from the gospel. We can't preach one thing and live something else. We have to live what we preach, and preach what we live. It is very important in this race that our lives be an example in whatever we do and wherever we go. The better example we set, the more people we can reach for the Lord. Jesus said to His disciples, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

The better you live, it will draw more people here to this congregation. The better life you live out there just touches the lives of people. Some people say, "If she's a Christian, I want to be one, too," but some people say, "If he's a Christian, I don't want to go to that church where he goes." Some have a right to say that, because some people don't live how they really ought to live. I'm speaking to the people of God. We are to be a living testimony of the Word of God. Our lives are to back up what we stand for. It doesn't matter where we go. We are Christians everywhere we go.

I am amazed at times to learn how many people know that you are a Christian. Sometimes I meet people who say to me, "I enjoyed that message. Didn't you see me in the congregation?" I answered, "I didn't see you." Sometimes I'm ashamed to tell people "I didn't see you," but it happens. People watch your life. They watch every step you take. Someone has said, "The only Bible some people read is our lives." People may say, "If Bro. James does it, it has to be right, 'cause he's a Christian." We can't save the people around us, but our lives can touch them. The apostle Paul encouraged Timothy by saying to him, "Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee." We touch people's lives by the lives that we live.

In this Christian journey, we face difficult times, but I want to encourage the church in saying that the Lord will bring us through. I do not know what you're facing, but the Lord will bring you through, for He promised, "I will not leave thee nor forsake thee; lo, I will be with you always, even unto the end of the world."

We have a story in the book of Acts that tells us about Paul and others who were sailing to Rome, and they met with difficult times on the journey, but Paul knew God. I'll tell you one thing today, when you know God, it makes a difference in your life. It makes a difference with how you deal with the problems in your life. The way we deal with problems depends on where we stand with the Lord. If you are a spiritual person and grounded in the truth of the Word of God, you will act different than someone who is on the surface. It depends on where you stand with the Lord. When they were caught in that storm and had nowhere else to go, they felt that all hope was gone. In fact, they said so. In the 27th chapter of Acts, verse 20, it says, "And when neither sun nor stars in many days appeared, and no small tempest lay on us, all hope that we should be saved was then taken away."

There are times in our lives when it seems like there is no hope, no sun nor stars in sight, and everything seems dark and hopeless. These moments come in our lives when everything around us seem as if they would just fall apart, and we will just crumble beneath the burdens. We need to know our God. Thinking about God is one thing, preaching about God is another thing, but knowing God is the real thing. You need to know God for yourself. Do you know that there are people in this audience who can have greater experiences with God than some people on the rostrum who are preaching the gospel? When we know God for ourselves, it is very personal. No one can know God for you. You need to know Him for yourself. This is an experience and a relationship that we have with God ourselves. When those on the boat were broken and torn apart, Paul stood still and knew that God would take him through that situation in his life. In the midst of the storm, God appeared to him and said, "Fear not, Paul; you will stand before the king. I will see you through." When we have that kind of hope and assurance, we need to exercise our faith. Sometimes it seems like some unsaved people have more faith than some Christians.

We need to have faith in God in order for us to trust in Him and to know Him. We need to know that if He brought us through yesterday, He is able to take us through today. If He was able to bring us through battles last year, He is able to take us through battles this year. We need to trust in God and take Him at His promises. When we take God at His promises, we can always depend on Him, for He will never fail us. He will never fail us! Others will fail us, but God will never fail us. When things go wrong on this Christian journey, what do we do? When it seems hopeless, where do we turn? I turn to the Rock that the builders rejected. I turn to the Rock of my salvation. I turn to God in whom I've placed my hope and confidence and trust in. Sometimes on this journey, it feels like turning back is the answer. I heard people say that when they started serving God, everything began to fall apart. They felt like if they went back, everything would fall back into place, but the devil is a liar.

We need to know that when we stand with God, He will stand with us. In Acts 27:31, Paul said to the centurion and to the soldiers, "Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved." Regardless of how hard it may become, don't give up on God. Regardless of what you might have to face, don't give up on God. If we're going to make it, we need to stay on the winning side. Paul said, "We will make it; just don't jump off the ship." Brethren, we're going to make it. The devil may give us a hard time, people may persecute us, but we're going to make it. The Old Ship of Zion will lead us safely into the harbor. We may face some battles and difficulties, but our faith and our trust are in the Lord. God is going to bring us through, once we place our trust and faith in Him. Paul let them know that God would bring them through: "It may feel hopeless and seem hopeless, but God is going to bring us through." Acts 27:44 says, "And the rest, some on boards, and some on broken pieces of the ship. And so it came to pass, that they escaped all safe to land." You see, sometimes if God even has to bring you through on broken pieces, He is

going to bring you through. One songwriter said: "I lost my flag in battle, My staff is in my hand, I'm taking it to Jesus, Over in the Glory Land." Yes, we may be battered in the storm, but let us not give up.

We need to be like Jacob. He said to the angel, "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me." We have to hold on to God. Just don't let go. Jacob's thigh was out of joint, but he didn't give up. The angel said, "What is thy name?" And he said, "Jacob." "Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed." Brethren, when we hold on, a blessing is certain to come in our lives. They who trust in the Lord shall never be ashamed. I know there are many obstacles on this journey that will cause us to question our faith. Great men of the faith have come to the place where they questioned God on their journey. They felt like God would not come through for them.

There are people around you who seem to prosper. They seem to be going forward, and it just seems like God has forgotten all about you. "God, you've blessed this and that one. Even the unsaved, You have blessed." The writer of Psalms said, "When I saw the prosperity of the wicked, my feet almost slipped." Sometimes when you see others coming ahead and you're struggling, you begin to question, "Am I really saved? Am I really doing the right thing?" God hasn't left you because you're doing good, or because you're not in line, but sometimes we all have to wait on the Lord. David said, "I had fainted, unless I had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. Wait on the Lord: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord." Wait on the Lord!

When you feel like you're forgotten, do what David did. He said, "I went into the sanctuary of God, and He made me to understand." We need to draw near to God when we don't understand some things. When things are going wrong, draw near to the Lord. Find your refuge in the Lord. "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble" (Psalm 46:1). Run to the place of refuge! There's a place of shelter. The shelter doesn't look for you, you know; you need to look for the shelter. You are to find your refuge. At times we want everything to come to us, but we have to go that extra mile. We need to learn to draw near to the Lord. "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths" (Proverbs 3:5, 6). God knows how to direct when things are difficult.

Is there anyone here who has to face difficult times, hard times, tough times on your job? Sometimes there is no job, and the bills begin to rise. Where do we turn? "My neighbor is giving me trouble. Where do I turn? The bills are more than I can really handle." Some people find themselves in that place. I have learned that when we get in that place, the devil opens a door for us. The enemy opens a door of opportunity. He hands us the bait to see if we will take it. So many times the enemy offers us a way out, and we need to know God. The Word of God says, "There is a way that seemeth right unto a man." It feels right, it looks right, but it isn't right. So many times you know it is not right, but if you come to the conclusion, "I will take it anyway,"

the end of that way is death. If God is in it, you can take it; but if God is not in it, be like Job who said, "I will wait till my change come."

Hebrews 6:10, "God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love." He is not forgetful. Sometimes He might make us suffer a long time, but He doesn't forget us. When it seems like He'll never come, He always comes on the scene. We can trust in the Lord. Do you know what happens when we trust God? We can encourage someone else to trust the Lord. We can tell them, "Sister, I know God will bring you through, because I was in the same place, and God brought me through." There is a cloud of witnesses surrounding us. What God does for Bro. Shaw, He can do for me. If God did something for my sister, He can also do it for me. Do you know that God is no respecter of persons? Peter said, "Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him." We have to have that confidence in God, which only comes as we learn of Him. What you are going through today is to help someone else tomorrow. It is also to help yourself tomorrow. The battles that we face on this journey are to help us to go forward.

What do we do in difficult times? What do we do when everything seems to be falling apart? What do we do? Where do we turn? Galatians 5:1, "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage." Stand fast! You who are falling apart, stand fast. You may be facing difficult times, but you have the Lord. Stand fast! What a privilege it is today to know that we can stand fast! God will come through for us. If you haven't trusted in the Lord today, I want to encourage you to trust Him. If you're going through a difficult time, I want to encourage you to trust in the Lord with all of your heart. Do not lean to your own understanding. In all of your ways, acknowledge Him. Brethren, He will direct our paths.

Do you know when you learn to trust in God, you also have to wait on Him. It involves waiting on God. When you have to wait, do not grumble. Some people wait and grumble. Again, Psalm 27:14 says, "Wait on the Lord: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord." Carry a smile. Just say to yourself, "Even though I may not know how God will do something for me, I know for certain, He is going to do it, so I can carry a smile. I know He will come through for me; therefore, I am going to stand fast in the liberty, and not entangle myself with the yoke of bondage." If God has set you free from an entanglement in your life, do not go back to it. "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage."

When we go through some things in our lives, there is a price to pay. What do we do when people forsake us? We must still stand fast. Sometimes people do forsake us. Paul said, "All men forsook me." Our children forsake us when we need them the most. Sometimes our wives and husbands forsake us. What do we do? Where do we turn? We turn to the Rock of our salvation; we turn to the Lord. Do you know what David said?

June 2017

"When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up." When those around us forsake us, God has a way of coming to our rescue.

There is a difference between leaving and forsaking. Some people can forsake you without really leaving you. They're by your side, but they forsook you a long time ago. Some people are still by you, but they're not with you. Also, it doesn't necessarily mean if someone leaves you, he has forsaken you. People can leave you, but they don't forsake you. They will always give you a call. They will always send you a text message. They will always encourage you. Just because people may sometimes leave your circle doesn't mean they have forsaken you. Do you know your mother and father are usually the last people to really forsake you? Many times in life, your husband forsakes you, your wife forsakes you, but your parents are there for you.

David said that even when it comes to the point of his mother and father forsaking him, the Lord would take him up. When everything around us fails, God will come to our rescue. Our faith is in God. In tough times, and in all times in our lives, we are to fully trust in the Lord. Psalm 27:3-6: "Though an host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear: though war should rise against me, in this will I be confident. One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in his temple. For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion: in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me; he shall set me up upon a rock. And now shall mine head be lifted up above mine enemies round about me: therefore will I offer in his tabernacle sacrifices of joy; I will sing, yea, I will sing praises unto the Lord."

When God brings us through, do you know what it gives us? A testimony. We have a testimony. David said, "Deliver me, O Lord, then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee." What a blessing it is to trust in the Lord! The Psalmist declared, "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning." We may be facing difficult times, and "weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning." We have started in the Lord, and by the grace of God, we must be determined to make it through.

You need to know God in these times. I know He will come through for me. Regardless of how I feel and what I'm going through, God is going to come through for me. Where do we go? People get discouraged and run from the Lord. Things become worse, for that old demon goes to and fro. Luke 11:25, 26, "When he cometh, he findeth [that house] swept and garnished. Then goeth he, and taketh to him seven other spirits more wicked than himself; and they enter in, and dwell there: and the last state of that man is worse than the first." Therefore, if you want to see things get better, you have no other choice but to stay with the Lord. Proverbs 3:5, 6, "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths."

May the Lord bless you. †

Page 19

THE CHILDREN'S CORNER



THE MISSING PENNY A Bible Lesson by Sis. Rebecca Bland

“Are you ready to walk up to the church with me?” Grandma called from the top of her apartment stairs. “Prayer meeting will start in ten minutes.”

“Yes,” I answered. “I’m ready.”

“I’ll be down in a minute,” said Grandma.

While I waited, I walked underneath the steps that came down the side of the apartment building where my grandmother lived. I stooped to touch the smooth, round stone I had laid there just a few minutes earlier. I squeezed my eyes shut tightly and whispered another prayer to God, reminding Him of what I had asked Him to do for me. “Dear God,” I said, “please put a penny under this stone. I will look for it after prayer meeting. I know You can do it.”

The words of a song my father sometimes sang in church echoed in my mind.

*Whatsoever you desire when you pray,
Whatsoever you desire when you pray;
If you only will believe,
Jesus says you shall receive
Whatsoever you desire when you pray.*

“God can do anything,” I had often heard the ministers say in the messages they preached in church. “All we need to do is have faith in Him.”

I have faith, I whispered to myself.

Just then, I heard the sound of Grandma’s footsteps on the stairs. I hurried to join her.

“What were you doing under the stairs?” she asked me as I ran to grab her hand and walk with her.

“I was praying,” I told her.

“Well, we can pray to the Lord from anywhere,” she said with a smile. I smiled, too, and skipped happily up the sidewalk, swinging my grandmother’s hand. *Won’t she be surprised when I show her the penny God gave me!* I thought to myself. *I can’t wait until prayer meeting is over!*

I didn’t hear anything the prayer meeting leader said that evening. I was too busy imagining the excitement I would feel when I found the penny under the stone! I didn’t hear any of the prayers the adults prayed, either. Over and over, I whispered to myself, *I have faith! I have faith!*

Finally, the last prayer was prayed and we arose from our knees. The prayer meeting was dismissed, and Grandma and I walked down the sidewalk to her apartment. “You are in a hurry this evening!” Grandma remarked. “I can hardly keep up with you!”

I smiled, but I didn’t tell Grandma why I was so excited. I didn’t want to admit it, even to myself, but a little worry was beginning to tug at my mind. *What if I lift the stone and there is no penny?* I wondered to myself. My steps began to slow.

“Grandma, is it hard to have faith in God?” I asked.

“Well,” Grandma said, “it depends.”

It depends. That was an answer I had gotten from adults lots of times. It always meant that the answer to my question was a complicated one.

“Are you trying to have more faith in God?” she asked.

“Yes,” I told her. “But I think it’s hard.”

“Sometimes it is hard,” she agreed. “But it helps if we stay close to the Lord and ask Him to help our faith. And we need to make sure we are praying for His will to be done.”

By this time, we had reached the bottom of the apartment stairs. *I’ll look under the stone a little later,* I said to myself. *Maybe the penny isn’t there yet.* I climbed the stairs with my grandmother, my thoughts busy with something my grandmother had just said. *We need to make sure we are praying for His will to be done,* she had said.

I wonder if it is the Lord’s will for me to have a penny, I thought to myself. I wasn’t sure about that. All I had been trying to do was to figure out if I had faith in God.

The sun had begun to set by the time I worked up the courage to slip down the apartment stairs to check for the penny. Slowly I lifted the stone and looked beneath it. There was nothing.

With a lump in my throat, I put the stone back in its place. I sat there on my heels, thinking hard about the missing penny. I was glad I had not told Grandma about my prayer. How disappointed she would be to find out how little faith I really had!

I never told Grandma about my prayer for the penny. But I know now what she would have said if I had. I can hear her words in my imagination as surely as if she had said them, because I have learned a little more about faith since the day I prayed for that penny.

“Honey,” my grandmother would have said, “that is not the way we demonstrate that we have faith. We don’t ask God for things just to see if He will do them. That is not the purpose of faith. First of all, there has to be a real need. We don’t ask for miracles that we don’t even need, just to see if they will happen. Next, our prayers need to be in the will of God. Even Jesus, when He prayed, said, ‘Thy will be done.’ Once we have prayed for a real need, and have asked that God’s will be done, we can exercise our faith by reading the promises He has made in His holy Word and standing on them. It is not always easy, but the closer we stay to God, the more answers we will see to our prayers.”

One of God’s promises is found in Proverbs 15:29, which says, “The Lord is far from the wicked: but he heareth the prayer of the righteous.” When we read this verse, we are reminded of the importance of staying close to God so that He will hear and answer us when we pray in His will.

Activity

Think of some words that are related to prayer. See if you can think of at least one for each of the letters of the word P-R-A-Y-E-R. I have started the activity for you:

P - patience, promises, praise

R - receive, respond

Answer to Last Month’s Activity

Did you find another verse in the book of Proverbs that is very similar to Proverbs 7:3? It is located in Proverbs 3:3, which reads, “Let not mercy and truth forsake thee: bind them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart.” †

WHAT ABOUT THIS?

EQUALITY OF MEN AND WOMEN IN THE CHURCH

This is a feature which, of all the religions of the world, belongs to Christianity. In heathenism women are regarded as greatly inferior to men and generally have little or no place in religion, unless, indeed, it is in some dishonorable connection, as in some of the licentious orgies. But among the Jews [Hebrews] even the laws of Moses made special provision for women, and they were honored and respected; some of them even rose to positions of prominence, as Deborah, who held an official position in Israel. "And Deborah, a prophetess ... she judged Israel at that time" (Judges 4:4). She also led the armies of Israel to victorious conflict (Judges 4). Christ delivered one of His greatest sermons to a single woman by a well-side in Samaria (John 4); and a woman was the first messenger sent to proclaim the great fact of the resurrection. The apostle Paul distinctly recognized the equality of women with men, in the words, "*There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus*" (Galatians 3:28).

WOMEN IN OFFICIAL POSITIONS

This equality of women with men in the apostolic church extended even to official positions.

1. *As deaconesses.* The original Greek of Romans 16:1 clearly shows that Phebe, a woman, was a deaconess of the church at Cenchrea. Now, "the office of a deacon" was a distinct, public *official position* in the church, and its candidates were publicly ordained by the laying on of the hands of the apostles (I Timothy 3:8-13 with Acts 6:1-6).

2. *As ministers.* Nor was the ministry of women limited to temporal affairs. We read in different texts of Priscilla and her husband Aquila (the name of the woman usually standing first), and find that on one occasion they jointly took Apollos, a powerful minister of the gospel, and "expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly" (Acts 18:26). The first sermon concerning the Christ was preached in the temple to the people of Jerusalem by Anna the prophetess—a woman (Luke 2:36-38). The Samaritan woman whom Jesus met at the well-side went into her city and proclaimed Christ to the people with the result that "many of the Samaritans of the city believed on him *for the saying of the woman*" (John 4:39). ... Philip the evangelist "had four daughters, virgins, which did prophesy" (Acts 21:8, 9).

Now, what does it mean to prophesy? The primary signification of the term is *to speak forth, to tell out the message or the mysteries of God.* Its secondary meaning (in some respects the outgrowth of the first) is *to foretell future events.* Paul clearly shows that the "gift of prophecy" is to "understand all mysteries, and all knowledge" (I Corinthians 13:2). To prophesy, then, is to proclaim the mysteries and knowledge of God. The same apostle declares that redemption itself was a "mystery," "the hidden wisdom ... which none of the princes of this world know"; and yet it is revealed to us by the Spirit of God: "*which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth*"; for "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him:

neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (I Corinthians 2:7-14).

To preach the gospel of Christ, then, under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost is to proclaim the "mysteries," the "hidden wisdom" of God—to *prophesy.* This is the application which the apostle himself makes of it; for he says, "He that prophesieth *speaketh unto men to edification, and exhortation, and comfort*" (I Corinthians 14:3). This prophecy is the public proclamation of the gospel." ... No one can deny, without twisting the Scriptures, that the prophecy of which Paul speaks is nothing else than the Holy Ghost public preaching of the gospel itself when the church is "come together in one place" (I Corinthians 14:23, 24).

Now, the prophet Joel declared, "On my servants and on my *handmaidens* I will pour out in those days of my Spirit, and *they shall prophesy*" (Joel 2:28, 29). [On the day of Pentecost, when some said of the apostles, "These men are full of new wine," Peter responded, "These are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day, but this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel."]

From many considerations it is evident that Paul recognized women's place in the gospel; for he wrote to the Philippians, "Help those women *which labored with me in the gospel,* with Clement also, and with other my fellow laborers, whose names are in the book of life" (Philippians 4:3).

NECESSARY EXCEPTIONS

In this connection it is necessary to notice some exceptions to this general standard. In planting the gospel among different nations, varying in customs and social conditions, the apostle Paul on many occasions found it necessary as a matter of expediency to accommodate himself to their particular ways and social standards. ... "Unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; ... I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some. And this I do for the gospel's sake" (I Corinthians 9:20-23).

In this same Epistle, Paul admits that he wrote some things to the Corinthians that were, in his opinion, "good for the present distress" (7:26); hence these things were not a standard for all people and for all ages. One of the things which he found it necessary, as a matter of expediency, to accommodate himself was their social standard concerning women. This church was in a heathen environment, to the social standards of which some deference had to be paid if the church hoped to win souls to Christ. In this heathen city women were regarded as vastly inferior to men and had no honorable place in the heathen religion; but, as Strabo informs us, one of their temples had one thousand consecrated prostitutes. Now, with such a social standard and such public sentiment concerning women's place in religion, what course could the apostle take other than what he did take—command the Christian women *there* to "keep silence in the church" (I Corinthians 14:34)?

I Timothy 2:11-13 does not cover the subject of women's official position in the church as set forth in other Scriptures. It applies in the proper relationship of the woman with her own husband. †

—F. G. Smith, *What the Bible Teaches*, Copyrighted, 1914.

Church of God (Universal), Inc.
The Way of Truth
P. O. Box 88
Hagerstown, MD 21741-0088 U.S.A.

Non-Profit Organization
U. S. POSTAGE PAID
Mercersburg, PA
Permit No. 15

Radio Log

The Way of Truth Broadcast

Alvin A. Craig, Radio Minister

Check the following listing to find a station near you that airs the truth and then tune in!

(Aired on Sundays unless otherwise noted.)

Alabama, Mobile, WIJD 1270, AM & 97.9 FM 6:00 A.M.

Arkansas, No. Little Rock, KMTL 760, 10:30 A.M.

Listen live—Go to www.kmtl760am.com

Georgia, Augusta, WFAM 1050, 8:00 P.M. Wednesday & 11:30 A.M. Sun.

Illinois, Carmi, WROY 1460, 9:00 A.M.

Kentucky, Prestonsburg, WDOC 1310, 7:30 A.M.

Louisiana, Ball, KWDF 840 & 99.7 FM, 9:00 A.M.

North Carolina, Mooresville, WHIP 1350, 6:30 A.M. Sat.

Listen live—tunein.com/radio/whip-1350-s29320/

Oklahoma, Marlow, KFXI-FM 92.1, 7:00 A.M.

Listen live—Go to www.kfxi.com

Oklahoma, Sulphur, KFXT-FM 90.7, 8:30 A.M.

Pennsylvania, Altoona, WFBG 1290, 9:00 A.M.

Pennsylvania, Martinsburg, WJSM 1110, 11:03 A.M.

Listen live—Go to www.wjsm.com

Pennsylvania, Martinsburg, WJSM-FM 92.7, 11:03 A.M. & 7:30 P.M.

Listen live—Go to www.wjsm.com

Tennessee, Chattanooga, WLMR 1450, 3:00 P.M.

Tennessee, Chattanooga, WLMR-FM 103.3, 3:00 P.M.

Virginia, Blacksburg, WKNV 890, 8:00 A.M.

Virginia, Lynchburg, WKPA 1390, 1:30 P.M. Fri., 5:30 P.M. Sat. & 6:00 A.M. Sun.

Virginia, Lynchburg, WKPA-FM 106.7, 1:30 P.M. Fri., 5:30 P.M. Sat. & 6:00 A.M. Sun.

Virginia, Roanoke, WKBA 1550, 1:30 P.M. Fri., 5:30 P.M. Sat. & 6:00 A.M. Sun.

Listen live—Go to www.wkbaradio.com

Virginia, Smithfield, WKGM 940, 6:30 A.M.

West Virginia, Summersville, WCWV 92.9, 8:30 A.M.

INTERNATIONAL

PHILIPPINES, Malaybalay, Valencia, Bukidnon, Mindanao

DXWS-105.3 FM, Saturdays at 1:30 P.M. & Sundays at 2:30 P.M.

PHILIPPINES, Baguio, Luzon, DZBS-1368 AM, Saturday 7:30 A.M.

Heard throughout central Luzon

JAMAICA, MELLO-FM, 88.1, 88.3, 88.5, 7:00 A.M. Sundays

Heard throughout Jamaica; *Listen live—Go to www.mellofmjamaica.com*

SHORTWAVE

WWCR, Nashville, Tennessee 4.840 on SW band

Sunday, 7:30 A.M. Eastern Time—12:30 G.M.T.

Listen live—Go to www.wwcr.com

WINB, Red Lion, Pennsylvania 9.320 on SW band

Friday, 9:30 P.M. Eastern Time, Saturday, 9:30 P.M. Eastern Time—2:30 G.M.T.

Listen live—Go to www.winb.com



COMING MEETINGS

2017 INTERNATIONAL CHURCH OF GOD CONVENTION

Hagerstown, Maryland U.S.A.

July 4-9, 2017, Lord willing

Bro. Alvin A. Craig, Host Pastor



2017 CAYMAN CONVENTION

83A Walkers Rd.

George Town, Grand Cayman

November 21-26, 2017, Lord willing

Bro. James Arch, Host Pastor



REVIVAL SERVICES

Miami, Florida, July 12-16, 2017

Sis. Margerie Allen, Pastor



Jamaica Youth Revival

Grants Mountain, St. Ann, July 25-30, 2017

Sis. Linette Jutan, Pastor