

The Way of Truth

Vol. 77 “Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.” No. 8

*Who Has the Authority to
Modify the Scriptures?*

See Page 10

**August
2019**



A CHARGE TO KEEP



NUMBER of years ago, former President George W. Bush, wrote a book entitled, “A Charge to Keep.” In it, he talked about the responsibility of the one filling the oval office to defend the constitution. The Presidential Oath of Office has just 35 words: “I do solemnly swear that I will faithfully execute the Office of President of the United States, and will to the best of my Ability, preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States. (So help me God.)”

In essence, the president is charged by the American people to lead the nation on the right path.

The word *charge* means: “(verb) to lay a command or instruction upon; to instruct authoritatively; to ascribe responsibility for; (noun) care or custody; a duty or responsibility entrusted to someone.”

The president is not the only one to receive a charge! As a minister I charge young people standing before me in a marriage ceremony to be true to their vows—for better for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health, mean something!

The Bible uses the word *charge* 102 times. God charged Moses and children of Israel to obey the commandments of the Lord. For instance, in Leviticus 8:35 we read, “Therefore shall ye abide at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation day and night seven days, and keep the charge of the Lord, that ye die not: for so I am commanded.”

God’s charge passes down to the ministry of the Church of God! “I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine” (II Timothy 4:1, 2). We ministers have a charge from God to preach the Word, the whole Word, and nothing but the Word. We are not to preach our own ideas, but rather the gospel of the Lord. II Corinthians 4:5, “For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus’ sake.”

We are charged to preach evangelism of repentance and forgiveness. I Corinthians 1:21, “For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.”

No man has ever been charged by God to preach a sin-you-must message or a once-saved, always-saved gospel; rather, the ministry is charged to preach righteousness using righteous examples: “I have preached righteousness in the great congregation: lo, I have not refrained my lips, O Lord, thou knowest” (Psalm 40:9). “For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 5:20).

We are charged to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ. “Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ” (Ephesians

3:8). Among these riches is the experience of sanctification. This is the infilling of the Holy Ghost, which is an experience subsequent to that of conversion. In Acts 19:1, 2, we read, “And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples, He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost.” Notice these were disciples. They were saved. If they automatically received the Holy Ghost at conversion, Paul’s question would have been foolish. He wanted to know if these Ephesian brethren had been sanctified SINCE they believed. This is a truth that God’s ministers are charged to preach and teach!

The ministry is charged in Ephesians 4:1-3, “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 longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.” This we are to do without sacrificing the cardinal truths of the Bible.

We are charged to warn people. Colossians 1:28, “Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus.”

As the ministry receives a charge from God, so they are to charge the people to keep God’s commandments. In I Timothy 6:13, 14, we read, “I give thee charge in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things, and before Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession; That thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ.” This is from whom we have a charge to keep: the Lord God Almighty! As we read on, “Which in his times he shall show, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the **King of kings**, and **Lord of lords**; Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom be honour and power everlasting. Amen” (I Timothy 6: 15, 16). We must be true to Him!

We preachers must charge the rich according to I Timothy 6:17, “Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy.”

We are charged to hold fast to the truth. The future of the work of God depends on our being true to the charge we have received. As the apostle Paul charged Timothy, so he charges us all, “O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called: Which some professing have erred concerning the faith. Grace be with thee. Amen” (I Timothy 6:20, 21).

ABOUT THE COVER

The Bible is the inspired Word of God and Revelation 22:18, 19 says, “... If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life ...”

THE WAY OF TRUTH

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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.

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—Gregory E. Tyler, 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

A CHARGE TO KEEP I HAVE

by Charles Wesley

A charge to keep I have,
A God to glorify,
A never-dying soul to save,
And fit it for the sky.

To serve the present age,
My calling to fulfill:
O may it all my pow'rs engage
To do my Master's will!

Arm me with jealous care,
As in Thy sight to live;
And O Thy servant, Lord, prepare
A strict account to give!

Help me to watch and pray,
And on Thyself rely,
Assured if I my Lord betray,
I shall forever die. †

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!

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.

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- ___ CD #1030 Mother's Day—Various Speakers
- ___ CD #1031 Remember Now Thy Creator—G. O. Tyler
- ___ CD #1032 Coming Up Short—G. E. Tyler
- ___ CD #1033 Give of Your Best to the Master—Nancy Little
- ___ CD #1034 Him With Whom We Have to Do—G. E. Tyler
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- ___ CD #1036 Is the Lord Among Us?—G. E. Tyler
- ___ CD #1037 Surrender—Paul Wilson
- ___ CD #1038 Children—Doug Shenberger
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- ___ CD #1040 Father's Day Service—Various Speakers
- ___ CD #1041 Following Jesus—Thomas Harris
- ___ CD #1042 Following Hard After God—G. E. Tyler
- ___ CD #1043 The Church of God—Brian Richards

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THE POETRY PAGE

WHAT IS PEACE?

R. L. Austin

A rest wherein all discords cease
And tranquil joys with love increase;
A concord of God's will and mine,
Where He bears rule and I resign;
Cessation of all worldly strife;
The product of a holy life.

A conscience like the cloudless sky
When to the West the sun draws nigh
And streams of golden glory cast,
Without a shadow on the past;
For all my wrongs, though like a flood,
Were swallowed up in Jesus' blood.

O peace, sweet peace! serene and mild,
Without a single sin beguiled,
Allaying sorrows, soothing pains,
And making all the losses gains;
Sweet thy temper, calm thy voice;
Of blessings all thou art my choice.

HIS SWEET WILL

Frederick William Faber

I have no cares, O blessed Will!
For all my cares are thine;
I live in triumph, Lord, for thou
Hast made thy triumphs mine.

And when it seems no chance or change
From grief can set me free,
Hope finds its strength in helplessness,
And calmly waits on thee.

Man's weakness waiting upon God
Its end can never miss,
For men on earth no work can do
More angel-like than this.

Ride on, ride on, triumphantly,
Thou glorious Will! ride on;
Faith's pilgrim sons behind thee take
The road that thou hast gone.

He always wins who sides with God,
To him no chance is lost;
God's will is sweeter to him when
It triumphs at his cost.

Ill that he blesses is our good,
And unblessed good is ill;
And all is right that seems most wrong,
If it be his sweet will!

I KNOW THEY'RE GONE

Walt Huntley

One day my heart was heavy,
My spirit was oppressed;
I heard the Master whisper,
"Come unto Me and rest."

The life I led was empty,
No peace within my soul,
Until the day Christ saved me
And won complete control.

My friend, it is no secret,
Just trust Him and receive;
You too can be forgiven
If you will now believe.

He'll fill your soul with music
When you to Him belong;
For once you know the Savior
This theme shall be your song.

They're gone, I know they're gone,
I sing because they're gone.
He took the burdens from my heart;
Praise God, my sins are gone.

I PRAY IN THE MORNING

Estelle D. Broadrick

I seek my God in the morning
When the day is new and still;
Inspiration comes with the sunrise,
And I pray to do His will.

I seek my God in the evening,
Wearied of labor and strife—
And hope that I have been a blessing,
To someone else's life. †

2018 BOUND VOLUMES

EVERY YEAR WE BIND THE TWELVE ISSUES OF THE WAY OF TRUTH TOGETHER. THE 2018 VOLUME IS READY. ALSO AVAILABLE 2004-2017. PRICE: \$4.00 POSTPAID.

REACHING FORTH FOR WHAT GOD HAS FOR US



Radio Message by Bro. James Arch

mandments: for this is the whole duty of man.” *Fear* means, “extreme reverence or awe as towards a deity.” Of course, *reverence* means, “a feeling of profound awe and respect, and often love; veneration.” *Awe* means, “a mixed emotion of reverence, respect, dread, and wonder inspired as by authority, great beauty, or might.” So we understand what it means to reverence God and to stand in awe of this great God.

Solomon had found through experience that nothing materially that he acquired had satisfied his soul. If you’ll look into the second chapter of Ecclesiastes, you will see there that he mentioned a number of things he had acquired, and then he looked at all of that and said, “All is vanity. Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man.”

Of course, Solomon highly recommended beginning with God as early as possible. He said, “Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them.” So, Young People, you have a whole life ahead of you if the Lord spares you, and it’s a good time to begin a life with the Lord. You can build on a foundation on which to stand and tell others what He has done for you. As I’ve mentioned in the beginning of this program, it’s a wonderful thing to be a Christian, to let the world know, and to stand tall and say, “I am a child of the King.” God offers all that is good for us, but we have to go after it.

Success is in the way you walk the path of life each day,

It’s in the little things you do and in the things you say.

Success is not in getting rich or rising high to fame,

It’s not alone in winning goals, which all men hope to claim.

Success is being big at heart and clean and broad in mind,

It’s being faithful to your friends and to the stranger, kind.

It’s in the children whom you love and all they learn from you,

Success depends on character and everything you do.—From the book, “Pepper Box.”

We are told in an old familiar proverb, “God gives every bird a worm, but He doesn’t put it in the nest for them.” The birds have to go after the worm.

The first thing is forgiveness. God forgives. Thank God, He forgives. Where would we be today without the Lord’s forgiveness? John said, “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (I John 1:9). This scripture basically refers to the first and second works of grace: *justification* and *sanctification* that the Bible teaches so very clearly. We could never get too much of God. We could never get too close to God, especially in the world that we’re living in today. I’m not negative, but we must be real. As Christians, especially, we need all that we can get from the Lord to stand. Paul said, “... and having done all, to stand.” So the first thing to reach out for is forgiveness. What a won-

IT IS A privilege to come into your homes again today or wherever you may be listening to this program. It’s a wonderful thing to be a Christian and to be able to share the gospel with others. I thank the Lord every day for the day that He found me and took me out of a lost condition and gave me something to live for. I thank Him every day for a brand new day, which is a gift.

For the devotional part of our program, I will be speaking on the subject of, “Reaching Forth for What God Has for Us.” The scriptures are found in Psalm 37 and Ecclesiastes, chapter 12. Psalm 37:1-4, “Fret not thyself because of evildoers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity. For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb. Trust in the Lord, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed. Delight thyself also in the Lord: and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.” Ecclesiastes 12:13, “Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man.” This is a big subject, and it would take a long time to elaborate on it, but I’ll try my best in the few minutes that we have to do so.

Someone has said and I quote—

Three things will make life worth living: a self fit to live with, a faith fit to live by, and a purpose fit to live for.

A man by the name of O. W. Holmes wrote and I quote—

The greatest thing in this world is not so much where we are, but in what direction we are moving.

Solomon the wise man said that we must think over our path and take the right one. He said in Proverbs 4:26, “Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established.” Now, what does it mean to fear God? The same wise man said, “Fear God, and keep his com-

derful privilege it is to know that God so loves us that He will forgive us of our sins and cast them into the sea of forgetfulness, never to remember them against us any more!

Paul found what God had for him. Do you know what this man said? "For to me to live is Christ." That's a man speaking who had worked against God's people, worked against the church, and wanted nothing to do with Christianity. But one day God got ahold of this man's life and He turned him around, because Paul went after this. It was not only that, but Paul kept on reaching forth. That's the thing about it. Paul didn't stay in one place. Do you know what he went on to say? "Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." Paul was at that time a Christian. He was already a Christian, but he wanted all there was of God. Let me tell you, Friends, that man kept on going. Nothing stopped him, nothing retarded his onward move, nothing discouraged him. He kept on going, and when he got to the end of his life's career, he said, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith." What a wonderful testimony that was!

God has peace of mind and heart for us. Have you ever seen such unrest in the world that we are seeing today? Do you know what Jesus said before He left? "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." Those are strong words, but they are the words of Jesus Christ the Son of God. That's what Jesus brought down. He brought peace. He gives people peace of mind and heart.

Do you know what Paul said to the Romans in chapter 5, verses 1 and 2? "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God." This scripture is also used for the first and second works of grace that the Bible teaches so clearly. Justification (being forgiven), and of course, sanctification (being baptized with the Holy Ghost and being filled with the Spirit) is another work. Thank God for this wonderful privilege.

God gives power to live for Him. God doesn't call a people to do what He couldn't equip them to do. The Bible says, "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth." If there ever was a time in the history of the world and in the history of the church that God's people need this power, it is today. Friends, the enemy is real. The devil is real. He's not dead. He's very much alive and walking around. The Bible says that the devil is walking around as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. The Bible also says that he would deceive the very elect, if it were possible. So God gives power.

Delighting in the Lord brings pleasure. The Psalmist said so in our text that I read: "Delight thyself also in the Lord: and he shall give thee the desires of thine

heart." God wants us to enjoy life and also to enjoy the Christian life. The Christian life is not a drudgery. I believe that God has intended for every human being to live happy lives. Oh, what the enemy has done to this world! So many people have not found anything to live for.

The Bible tells us in Psalm 100, "Serve the Lord with gladness: come before his presence with singing. Know ye that the Lord he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture. Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name. For the Lord is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations." So serving the Lord is joy. Although times may be hard and sometimes you may go through some strong storms, there is still a deep-settled peace and joy that the world cannot give and that the world cannot destroy.

God offers prosperity? Do you know what the Bible says? "He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper" (Psalm 1:3). Thank God today for these precious promises.

God offers promotion. John said in Revelation 21:4, "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away." That will be the final resting place. When we get to heaven, what a day of rejoicing that will be!

Friends, if you will live for the Lord, if you will hold on and stay true to Him, He will never fail you. He has never failed yet, and He cannot fail, for He is God. †

OUT OF BOX 88

Dear Friends,

I just want to say "thank you" for *The Way of Truth* magazine and the Sunday school literature. Wonderful messages. I pray God will bless each of you there. Thank God for the truth! ... Use the enclosed money as the Lord leads.

—C. J., West Virginia

Thank you for *The Way of Truth*. May the Lord bless and keep you.

—M. O., Ohio

Dear Friends,

Greetings to all of you in Jesus' name! Just a few lines to send an offering for your wonderful paper each month. It means so much to me. ... I look forward each month to receive it. God bless all.

—M. G., Pennsylvania †

WINNING A CROWN

By the late C. W. Naylor



Part XII

A Purification of the Nature

THIS perfection or purification is the purification of our natures, so that from our hearts we desire and love and seek only what is good. It is the purification of our wills, so that we choose God's will ever as our guide and the limitation of our lives, and gladly conform our conduct to His will. The holy heart sincerely seeks to know and do God's will. It is moved only by motives that are holy and just. Our attainment of this state does not prevent our having all those natural functional desires that belong to our being. It only requires us to subject these desires to the will of God. God does not raise up for us an impossible standard, one to which we cannot attain. All His ways are just and right and wise. He requires of us only what He ought to require and only what we can duly render unto Him. He has made full provisions for our attaining the state of grace that He marks out as being in His mind perfect. There is nothing unreasonable about His standard. There is nothing idealistic; it is intensely practical all the way through. It is only when we misapprehend the subject that difficulties appear which are insurmountable. The way to this state lies through the grace of God; it is not a human attainment independent of grace.

This perfecting work of God's grace purifies our affections so that we may love God supremely. All other things must take a secondary place. The nearest and dearest of earth, and even our own selves, our lives, our ways, and our possessions, must be loved less than God. He becomes the soul's beloved one, so that we may say, "My beloved is mine, and I am his." Paul speaks of us as being espoused to Christ as a chaste virgin. In this experience the strength of our souls is poured out in tender affection to Him, and in return we receive the riches of His love. John expresses it as being the perfecting of our love, or of God's love in us, which amounts to the same thing. He says, "But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected" (I John 2:5).

Again, John says, "Herein is our love made perfect ... because as he is, so are we in this world" (chapter 4:17). From this we see that this perfecting of love is, according to John's idea, being like Christ in this world. The professor of Christian perfection who does not bear the image of Christ upon his heart and manifest the life of Christ in his daily deportment does not come up to the standard of these scriptures. The man to whom God is not nearer than everything else has not yet attained unto this grace. There is no such thing as a worldly-minded sanctified man. Those who are worldly-minded are of the world, but those who are God's are minded after the things of the Spirit. Their desire runs out after God and the things that will please Him, and when they enter this perfect state, their desire runs stronger and fuller after God than ever before. He fills

their whole horizon, as it were. Into all the avenues of their being comes His Spirit, His power, and His light. We may expect to see in the life of a truly sanctified man or woman the characteristics of Christ that we see pictured in the Bible. "As he is, so are we in this world," said the apostle. This is the true standard of the sanctified life. Christlikeness is the keynote of that life.

Speaking of Christ, John says, "But we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is." Our mortality will be changed, and we shall put on immortality, but that is not all: we shall be like Him spiritually—not made like Him when He comes, but like Him when He does come; ready and waiting for Him in His likeness. A pure heart and a pure life are inseparable from the experience of entire sanctification or the perfected moral state.

Perfection of Conduct

The word "perfection" sometimes relates to our conduct. If the fountain is pure, the stream which flows out of it will be pure. Likewise, if the heart is pure, the life that flows out of it must of necessity be pure. In Matthew 5:48 Jesus says, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." He had been speaking specifically of conduct. Illustrating God's perfection, He says in verse 45, "For he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust." Our being perfect in this regard means that we shall act from the same principles and considerations as God acts, and that those acts will be of the same character as His acts. It does not mean that our acts must needs be as wise as His, nor correspond to them in some other regards; but there is one thing in which they must correspond to His, and that is, they must flow forth from love. That love must be the underlying and all-powerful spring of our action. This is the secret of a sanctified life. God's love, being perfected in us, flows out in love to all our fellow men, in kindness, gentleness, mercy, forbearance—in fact, in all those virtues which are God-like in their nature.

Back of conduct lies character. This character gives quality to conduct. The moral quality of conduct lies in the intent, and not in the outcome of the action. The things that we do are judged, not by the wisdom of the acts, by their timeliness or success, but by the purpose back of them. Pure purposes always arise from a pure heart. Through lack of knowledge these pure purposes may not always be perfectly translated into pure and holy and wise and good actions, at least so far as the judgment of our fellow men is concerned. We may make mistakes; we may come short of our expectations; things may not turn out as we supposed they would; but out of a pure heart flows only deeds prompted by love, and deeds so prompted are always pure in God's sight.

I once heard the testimony of a man who had formerly been a saloon-keeper and an exceedingly wicked man. He said, "When I was a sinner, I was wholly sanctified to the devil." I was forcibly struck by this saying, but I knew, when I considered a little, that it was true. In his sinful life he had acted from wholly selfish considerations. His heart had contained nothing whatever of righteousness. Just as Paul says, "When ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness" (Romans 6:20). There is nothing whatever in the

sinner's heart that God can count as righteousness, and he who gives himself over to do the will of the flesh and of sin may truly be said to be wholly sanctified to the devil. To be wholly sanctified to God means the exact opposite of this. It means that our hearts and our lives are conformed to the image of God. Perfect conduct is that conduct which, springing from pure desire and pure intent, conforms to God's standard for us here in our present situation and state. It is not conforming to man's standard or judgment, but to God's.

However much we may come short of an absolute standard, God judges us by quite another standard. He judges righteously. He requires all that He should require of us, but no more; He is always reasonable. He knows our situation; He knows what we can do and what we cannot do. Whatever conduct flows from pure love, that conduct is pleasing and acceptable to God. But He who is love and He who knoweth the secrets of man's heart can be pleased neither with the heart nor with the life of one who does not act solely on the principles of love. This is the supreme test of heart and conduct. If His love is truly perfected in us, then will our lives be acceptable and well-pleasing in His sight.

Perfection of Development

There is a third sense in which the word "perfection" is used. This is entirely distinct from those previously noted. In this sense it relates to a state of maturity. Beginners in the Christian life are represented as being babes, while mature Christians are called men. In Ephesians 4:11-15, Paul uses the term "perfection" in relation to development. Speaking of the perfecting of the saints, he says: "Till we all come ... unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: that we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; but speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ." This perfect manhood to which we ought to attain is the measure of the stature or age of the fullness of Christ, and it is attained, as he says in verse 15, by "*growing up into him.*"

We begin our Christian life as newborn babes. It is indeed a new existence to us. Old things have passed away and all things have become new. We begin to reach out and explore the kingdom of God. We find on every hand glorious realities in the divine life which now works in us and works out in our lives. God does not expect us to remain always in this immaturity of childhood. He has made provisions for our growing in grace and in the knowledge of Christ so that we may develop our spiritual faculties and our spiritual powers and our spiritual understanding. As it has been said, "The path of the just is as the shining light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." The light of the morning may be only a faint gleam, but it increases and develops until the glorious sun rises in all his majesty and the day is made perfect. So the Christian life from a small beginning goes forward and upward, increasing in the love and power and grace of God, in Christlikeness, until at last in the fully developed strength and glory of Christian manhood, we can indeed "shine as lights in the world."

This subject is illustrated in the fifth chapter of Hebrews, verses 12-14. The writer there shows that in attainment those addressed were only as babes, just like beginners, and that they needed to be taught again the first principles of the doctrine of Christ. These first principles he interprets in the sixth chapter as repentance, faith, baptism, laying on of hands, resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. Those believers were not such as could eat strong meat; that is, they were not able to understand those deeper and greater truths which only more mature Christians had the capacity to receive and understand. "But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age"; that is, those who are full-grown, and he explained such to be "those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil."

Coming to Christian perfection, that is, the perfection of Christian development, is not a thing of a day nor a year. It is a "growing up," a "growing in grace and knowledge." This is a perfection entirely distinct from the perfection of our moral state and of our conduct. The sanctification of our hearts does not give us this Christian maturity. It comes only through the exercise of our senses to discern good and evil, and the putting into practice of those things which we do discern to be good. It is the result of conforming to the laws of spiritual growth and increase. James speaks of it thus: "But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing" (James 1:4). By this he means that in developing patience we develop into a state of maturity. This does not mean a state beyond which we cannot go, but it means the same as maturity does in the physical man. The same principle applies to all our other powers and faculties. They may be developed to such a state of maturity that we can truly be said to be men in God and for God. Spiritual maturity, however, never passes beyond the comparative state. It never becomes absolute; for we may continue to increase so long as we follow after God in this world, and the future world no doubt will see a still further increase.

Some persons seem to remain as babes all through their Christian lives. They must be nourished and cared for. They are unable to stand alone, it seems. They must be guarded and watched and cared for like a child. But this is not God's standard for the Christian. He ought to go farther; he ought to become more mature; he should not be content to be a child all his days. God wants him to be a man of strength and power for himself and to accomplish things worthy of a man.

Old Testament Perfection

The word "perfection" is common to the Old Testament as well as to the New, and had a very definite meaning. Some of the worthies of the Old Testament are said to have been perfect men. In Genesis 6:9 we read, "Noah was a just man and perfect in his generation, and Noah walked with God." God has always had a practical standard of perfection, to which men could attain if they would. There have always been men who attained this standard and whom God counted faithful and perfect. "The Lord appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect" (Genesis 17:1). To the whole nation of

Israel, God said, "Thou shalt be perfect with the Lord thy God" (Deuteronomy 18:13). This was no unattainable standard, but a practical and readily attainable one. Of Job it is said, "And that man was perfect and upright, and one that feared God, and eschewed evil" (Job 1:1). In verse 8 God Himself calls him a perfect and an upright man. When Hezekiah was sick nigh unto death, he had enough confidence in his standing before God and in the life he had lived, to pray thus: "I beseech thee, O Lord, remember now how I have walked before thee in truth and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight" (II Kings 20:3). David was a man after God's own heart. Speaking to Jeroboam, God said, "Thou hast not been as my servant David, who kept my commandments, and who followed me with all his heart, to do that which was right in mine eyes" (I Kings 14:8). Again, we read, "David did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord, and turned not aside from anything that he commanded him all the days of his life, save only in the matter of Uriah the Hittite" (I Kings 15:5).

Of King Asa it was said, "The heart of Asa was perfect all his days" (II Chronicles 15:17). The nature of this perfection is defined in chap. 14:2—"And Asa did that which was good and right in the eyes of the Lord his God." This testimony is repeated in I Kings 15:14—"Asa's heart was perfect with the Lord all his days." This perfection is defined in verse 11—"And Asa did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord, as did David his father." Old Testament perfection, then, consisted of doing that which was right and just and pleasing in the sight of the Lord. It was quite possible, as we have seen, for men so to live; and not only was it possible, but some of them did live such lives. How many did we are not told, but there were many who pleased the Lord and enjoyed His blessing and approval. Such men as Abraham, Moses, Caleb, Joshua, Samuel, Isaiah, Jeremiah, all the prophets, and many thousands of others were worthy examples, and God accepted and blessed them in their lives and poured out His love upon them. It is quite true that these ancient men could not attain that moral perfection which is made possible for us through the shedding of the blood of Jesus Christ. There had been no provision made for the cleansing of their natures, other than that of the influence of the Spirit of God upon them, and His fear that was in their hearts. This led them to live a life that was commendable in the sight of God.

In every age God has required perfection, and He has given a standard of perfection to which men could attain, not one which was impossible and altogether out of their reach, but one which was reasonable and adapted to their circumstances and age. Our privileges at this time are greater than the privileges given to men in any other age. The gospel age is preeminently the age of the Spirit of God, and when He comes into and takes possession of the soul of man, He can work in it and through it after His own good pleasure in a way never possible before the gospel age. In those ancient days, however, men oftentimes lived lives that would put to shame many professing Christians nowadays and not a few professors of entire sanctification. Inasmuch as God gives to us much now, He requires of

us much more than He did of people in former dispensations. But this much more which He requires of us is no harder of attainment by us than what He required of them was by them in their situation. We can, therefore, be "perfect and entire, wanting nothing."

The Bible also speaks of a perfection that is not attainable in this life. Paul says, "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect" (Philippians 3:12). Sometimes this text is used to oppose the doctrine of Christian perfection. It is held to mean that no one can be perfect in this life, and of course it is true that in the sense here meant no one can be perfect in this life. The thing of which Paul was speaking, however, was not moral perfection. In the preceding verse he said, "If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead." He was speaking of that perfection which shall be ours in the future life, and not of anything relating to this life. In another place he says, "For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then I shall know even as also I am known" (I Corinthians 13:9, 10, 12). This glorious perfection lies beyond the vale, and into it we may not enter until this mortal shall have put on immortality. When our bodies are changed to the likeness of "His glorious body" and we are in the glorified state, then shall we have attained this final state of perfection. To it we look forward with bright hopes and joyful anticipations. †

BIBLE LESSON OF THE MONTH

JUSTIFICATION

OUR TESTIMONY

Scriptures: I Kings 17:1-6; Matthew 10:32; Revelation 12:11; II Timothy 1:8; John 4:39; John 3:11; I John 1:2, 3.

1 I Kings 17:1 And Elijah the Tishbite, who was of the inhabitants of Gilead, said unto Ahab, As the Lord God of Israel liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word.

2 And the word of the Lord came unto him, saying,

3 Get thee hence, and turn thee eastward, and hide thyself by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan.

4 And it shall be, that thou shalt drink of the brook; and I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there.

5 So he went and did according unto the word of the Lord: for he went and dwelt by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan.

6 And the ravens brought him bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening; and he drank of the brook.

Matthew 10:32 Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven.

Revelation 12:11 And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.

II Timothy 1:8 Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions

of the gospel according to the power of God.

John 4:39 And many of the Samaritans of that city believed on him for the saying of the woman, which testified, He told me all that ever I did.

John 3:11 Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness.

1 John 1:2 (For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and show unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;)

3 That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.

Memory Verse: For whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own glory, and in his Father's, and of the holy angels.—Luke 9:26.

Aim: To show that the justified has a testimony to the world.

INTRODUCTION

IT IS A wonderful thing that God has taken into His plan the assistance of men in the great work of carrying the gospel to the ends of the earth. Had He so designed, He could have caused the gospel to have been preached and propagated by angels, but not so. He has designed that every one of us have a part in carrying the divine message to the ends of the earth.

MEDITATIONS

SPEAKING FOR GOD—I Kings 17:1—There shall not be—Such an assertion was possible only at the direction of God, for the weather is in His hands. This seemed like a very evil thing for the prophet to say to the king, but the prophet could speak only the things that God gave him and remain a servant of God.

OBEYING GOD—I Kings 17:2—The word of the Lord—God spoke to him by one means or another, perhaps in his innermost conscience, letting him know His will. God still speaks to men today, mostly through His written Word. However, occasionally He does still speak to men directly.

GOD CARES FOR HIS OWN—I Kings 17:3—Hide thyself—God knew the anger of the king and also knew that drought would soon fill the land; therefore, He made provision for His prophet. He always cares for His own, those who put their full trust in Him.

AN UNUSUAL THING—I Kings 17:4—Commanded the ravens—How easy it is for God to command the ravens, the wind, the rain, or any other thing! Who can stay the hand of God when it is stretched forth? None. It is good to live in the realm of faith with God, with whom in answer to prayer all things are possible. From a natural standpoint, the ravens would fear man and would be far more likely to eat the food themselves than to take it to the prophet, but the Lord had commanded, and so it was.

GOD KEEPS HIS WORD—I Kings 17:6—And the ravens—Just as the Lord had said, the ravens

visited Elijah regularly with the needed food, and the stream of water provided his drink. Where did the ravens get the food? That is a secret with God. The thing that interests us is that Elijah was miraculously taken care of. But first Elijah had to obey God and hide himself as directed.

FRUIT OF TESTIMONY—Matthew 10:32—Confess me before men—To confess Christ is to acknowledge Him as Sovereign of the universe, sole Possessor of all material and spiritual things, as personal Redeemer of the souls of men by the sacrifice of His own life, purchasing healing for all by His stripes. Because Christ is not a visible power on the earth, He relies upon His people to convey the knowledge of Him by their testimony. He who does this in sincerity has the promise that Christ will acknowledge him before the Father.

CONQUERING IN CHRIST'S NAME—Revelation 12:11—Word of their testimony—Christians of the morning church are spoken of here, and they had power in their testimony, because they had acknowledged Christ and had been cleansed from all sin by the power of His blood. The force that they overcame was the pagan religion that filled the earth in that day. Thousands of Christians were killed by the evil forces of paganism because their powerful testimonies wooed men from their rank. Again, we are facing strong pagan forces, and Christ is counting on us to give a true testimony of Him, even as did the morning church. Their love of Christ far exceeded their love of life; therefore, it was impossible for them to be defeated.

CHRIST'S TESTIMONY—II Timothy 1:8—Be not ... ashamed—Christ testified by the life He lived and by the words He spoke of the doctrine of holiness (holiness being a life without sin of any kind). Such a testimony is a rebuke to a pleasure-loving world. The world does not love a rebuke; therefore, it will be found either turning from sin to Christ or viciously opposing everyone who stands for or lives a life of holiness. Christians are far fewer in number than sinners; therefore, the heavy weight of their numerous testimonies of sinfulness causes some Christians to be ashamed of the pure testimony of Christ, and they turn back to the world.

THE SAMARITAN'S TESTIMONY—John 4:39—Which testified—Jesus, knowing all things, was able to tell the Samaritan woman the secrets of her life. The woman was astonished by the revelation of divine power. Such a miracle is not beyond the testimony of the Christian today, for He tells us in St. John 14:26 that the Holy Spirit will teach us all things. Such revelation of divine power and knowledge will always convince men of Christ.

KNOWING WHAT WE SPEAK—John 3:11—That we have seen—The early disciples spoke from experience and not what they had learned from men. Our testimony has little weight if it does not flow from an actual experience. To know from experience the joy that comes into the heart when God forgives us of our sins gives the Christian a marvelous working testimony. Likewise, to feel the touch of God's hand in divine healing is a basis for a convincing testimony, but we must

be faithful in testifying, regardless of the consequences.

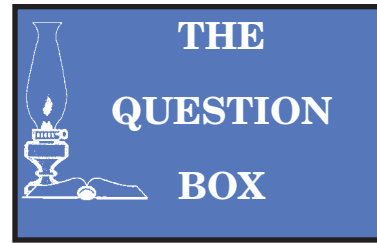
THE GREAT TESTIMONY—I John 1:2—And seen it—The early disciples spoke with power and conviction because they had seen with their eyes the Lord and had heard Him with their ears. We, too, by faith have seen and heard Him; therefore, our testimony should be powerful. Eternal life is manifest in every true saint today. **Verse 3—Declare we unto you**—Having had contact with Christ in salvation, we are at once privileged, or duty-bound to bear a testimony of experience to the world.

CONCLUSION

It just follows naturally that the closer contact a man has with Christ, and the more he learns about Him, the greater and more profuse will be his testimony. Since Christ never did any evil thing, the more we learn about Him, the more good things we will have to tell. One fine thing about a Christian's testimony is that the Holy Ghost will always bear witness to its truth.

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

1. What part does the Christian play in the conversion of the world?
2. Which contributes more power to a testimony, human training or divine love?
3. How did God make Elijah's testimony effective?
4. Consider the miraculous happenings in the ravens feeding Elijah.
5. Why should an experience in divine healing increase the weight of our testimony?
6. What was Christ's testimony?
7. What was the Samaritan woman's testimony? †



Editor's Note: These questions and answers in this issue are taken from *The Way of Truth Question and Answer Book*, 1946-2001.



QUESTION: What does the writer of I John 4:16 mean when he said, "God is love"? God is a Spirit, etc., but how can God be love?

ANSWER: The word *love* is used very freely, and at times wrongly. But John simply meant what he said, "God is love." John does not mean by his statement that God is not a Person, or Spirit, but that He is a perfect example of one manifesting love. Love is one of His characteristics.

In chapter three, John says, "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God." The same apostle quotes Jesus as saying, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

Paul said, "For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:7, 8). Truly, "God is love."

QUESTION: I would like for you to explain Jeremiah 12:9: "Mine heritage is unto me as a speckled [spotted] bird, the birds round about are against her; come ye, assemble all the beasts of the field, come to devour."

ANSWER: Many people speak of the "great speckled bird" as being a type of the Church of God. There is a song out that says it is. Such is far from the truth! Nowhere can you find anything that is speckled or spotted used as a type of the Church of God. If you will read the verses before and after this verse, you will see God was speaking of a backslidden people who had forsaken Him.

QUESTION: What is the spiritual knowledge behind the transfiguration in Luke 9:28-36?

ANSWER: Christ chose three of the disciples as witnesses, as two or three were required to substantiate a fact. This gave the three the opportunity to get a glimpse of the fullness of the Godhead; it also showed to them the truth of the future life, as they saw Moses and Elijah. Elijah had been translated not seeing death; Moses had died and the Lord buried him. So whether dead or living, when Christ comes, it really doesn't matter; all the redeemed shall be changed and given glorified bodies.

Peter suggested they build "three tabernacles," but the voice out of the cloud said, "This is my beloved Son,

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in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.” Moses representing the law, Elijah the prophets, were, as it were, giving way for the Son of God and the New Covenant. “The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it” (Luke 16:16).

One other point, according to Adam Clark, it was a tradition among the Jews that both Moses and Elijah should appear in the times of the Messiah. If so, this would confirm in their minds that Jesus was indeed the Messiah.

QUESTION: Some teach that all of literal Israel are going to be saved. In Romans 11:26, Paul spoke about all Israel being saved. If the verse is talking about literal Israel, what about predestination?

ANSWER: The Bible *does not* teach predestination! Nowhere, when the Scriptures are rightly divided, can you find any support in the Bible for the doctrine of predestination. The Bible clearly teaches it is a choice each one must make. Of course, the Lord must draw the sinner, otherwise he could not come to Christ for salvation; but when the Spirit convicts, the sinner makes the choice to respond or not to respond.

In this eleventh chapter of Romans, Paul speaks of Israel being an olive tree, and he speaks of some branches, not all, being broken off. “Because of unbelief they were broken off” (verse 20). Why were they broken off? He goes on to say, “And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be grafted in: for God is able to graft them in again” (verse 23). “The scripture hath concluded all under sin” (Galatians 3:22). The only way anyone can be saved is through Jesus Christ. So there is no predestination here.

We should not understand the word *save* or *saved* to always mean saved from sin. God saved all Israel out of Egypt! How many of them were actually servants of God? Paul tells us in Romans 9:6, “For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel.” Who is God’s Israel today? Again, Paul tells us, “For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God” (Romans 2:28, 29). Further, Paul tells us in Galatians 3:28, 29, “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. And if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.” God’s Israel today is His redeemed people, and ALL of them are saved.

QUESTION: Isaiah 59:2, “But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.” Can you tell me the difference between sin and iniquity?

ANSWER: There may be a shade of difference in parts of the meaning of the two words, but in the main they mean the same thing. Sin is “lawlessness”; iniquity is “lawlessness.” Sin is “unrighteousness”; iniquity is “unrighteousness.” Sin separates you from God; iniquity separates you from God. †

WE GREET you this morning in the name of the Lord. We are thankful for the presence of each one who is with us here or listening over the Internet. We trust that the foregoing part of the service has been a blessing to you.

Our subject this morning is, “Who Has the Authority to Modify the Scriptures?” I’ll read two passages of scripture. II Timothy 3:16, 17: “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect [or mature], thoroughly furnished unto all good works.” Then in Revelation 22:18 and 19, we read: “For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.” Of course, we’re talking about the Bible, and these scriptures help us to understand the need of our believing them; not only believing them, but obeying them. “Man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord” (Deuteronomy 8:3).

In regard to the Bible, it is estimated that from the time the first book was written, until the writing of the last one, there elapsed a period of about 1500 years. The number of men used of God, in writing the books of the now composed Bible, is not definitely known, but scholars have estimated that between 35 and 40 men have had a part in writing the wonderful book we call *The Bible*. All the books of the Old Testament were written in Hebrew, except about six or eight verses in Daniel and in other books. All the rest were written in Hebrew. Those few verses were written in Aramaic. The New Testament was written in Greek. In the days of Christ and the apostles, the Old Testament was written in Greek, and they used the Greek translation in their teachings.

The reason why I have entitled my thoughts this morning, “Who Has the Authority to Modify the Scriptures,” is because of an article that appeared in the *Newsweek* magazine some years ago written by their religious editor, Kenneth L. Woodward. He entitled his article, “Morality and Protestant Ministers.” He said, “Although he wasn’t married himself, Jesus had some rather clear teachings on the subject. ‘Adultery was sin,’ he declared, and that included even lustful looks at another woman. He was tough on divorce, too, saying that anyone who divorces and marries another [except it be for fornication] also commits adultery. But the authority of Scripture isn’t what it used to be—even for those who preach it from the pulpit. In recent years the divorce rate for Protestant clergy has risen to match

THE AUTHORITY TO MODIFY THE SCRIPTURES?

Delivered 5/24/15 by the late Bro. Alvin A. Craig



the general population's. Now the question is, Are the Scriptures condemning adultery and fornication to be modified as well?" (End of quote.)

Where do we find that God has given anyone—prophets, popes, bishops, rabbi's, or anyone else you want to mention—permission to modify the Scriptures? We find that God has instructed His ministers to preach the Word, but not to change it. "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15). "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, ... teaching them to observe [to do] all things whatsoever I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:19, 20). Our text says, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect [or mature], thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

The apostle Paul instructed Timothy, "I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; Preach the word" (II Timothy 4:1, 2). That wasn't just for Timothy, but it goes for all of God's ministers. We do not have the right, the authority, or the responsibility of changing God's Word, but we do have the responsibility of teaching it and of living it, and helping others to come to know it and to live it. "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations." The gospel of Christ, the book that we call *The Bible*, is not just for the Middle East, not just for America, but it is for the entire world. One reason why we have so much trouble and evil and ungodliness in the world today is because people are not being taught what the Word of God teaches; and many of those who are being taught are not living it.

One of the evils of sectarian religion is their creed. Do you know the Bible is not a creed? Men have drawn up their own rules and regulations that govern their particular religion. When men draw up those rules that we call a *creed*, they can change them. But the Bible is not a creed. The Bible is God's message to man. I just read, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect [or mature], thoroughly furnished unto all good works." So, the Word of God is not a creed, but it is God's message to man. Whenever God calls a man or a woman to preach, He calls them to preach, not a creed, not sectarian doctrine, but He calls them to preach the Word of God.

The Word of God is forever settled in heaven. The Psalmist said, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." We are to walk in that light, for "if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." The Word of

God is for everyone. You are not excused; no one is. "Man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord."

Jesus said, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." Everybody, it would seem, think that they're going to go to heaven—but not so! "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." James 1:21, 22, "Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls. But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only."

Quoting again from the article I referred to earlier: "The authority of Scripture isn't what it used to be—even for those who preach it from the pulpit." Who said it isn't the authority that it used to be? I believe the Word of God is forever settled in heaven. I don't believe it's changed, and I don't believe it's going to be changed. Just because men who are called preachers don't preach it, doesn't change it. Did you hear what I said? Just because those who call themselves ministers don't preach the Word doesn't change the Word. Paul said in Galatians 1:6, "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel [error]." So who said that the Word of God isn't as effective as it used to be? Who said that the Scriptures aren't as firm and steadfast as they used to be? Psalm 119:89, "For ever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven." Isaiah 55:11, "So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it."

The problem is not with the Scriptures, but with the preachers who are not preaching it. If the full gospel was preached, and nothing else, we would have one church. Of course, all those who are members of that church would be Christians. So the problem is not with the Scriptures. The problem is with the fact that so many preachers don't preach the Scriptures as they are. Do you know, Beloved, the Word of God is only the Word of God as long as it is rightly interpreted? Whenever a preacher, or anyone else, puts the wrong meaning on a verse of scripture, he is putting his own interpretation on it, but in reality, it is not changing the Word. Whenever a preacher puts his interpretation on the Scriptures and it is not what the Scriptures teach, you have false doctrine. You'll have what Paul said: "doctrines of devils and commandments of men." So the Word of God is only the Word of God as long as it is correctly interpreted. The second passage of scripture

that I read from Revelation 22, tells us, "If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book."

Do you know what the Book of Life is? The Book of Life is God's church book. Yes, God has a church book. He keeps it in heaven. He hasn't given Bro. Greg or Bro. Alvin the responsibility of keeping a church book. The Lord adds to the church daily those who are being saved. If we take away from the words of this Book, our names will be taken out of the Lamb's Book of Life and out of the holy city. In other words, we'll be backslidden. We'll not be part of God's church nor His family. So we are to preach it as it is. It's only the Word of God when it is preached as it is. Men may disregard it, they may doubt it, fail to preach it, and in their minds they may change it, but they cannot change it.

Romans 3:3, 4, "For what if some did not believe? shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect? God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar." Pretty plain words, aren't they? Suppose some do not believe? That doesn't change the Word of God. It is still the Word of God. Suppose some put a wrong meaning on it? Then it is their doctrine and their teaching and not the Word of God.

It is amazing how little regard some people who call themselves Christians have for the Word of God. I believe that the message in this Book is to be revered, respected, and honored. As a rule, even in my home, it would be rare that you'll find anything laying on my Bible. If there are two or three books there, I want the Book to be the top one. This message in this Book is to be respected and revered. It is to be regarded highly and obeyed. I don't want to overemphasize it, but I do want to emphasize it.

How can a group of men, mere mortals, modify what Jesus Christ taught? He taught that adultery is sin, and it still is. Regardless of how many Protestant preachers have had relationships with other women doesn't change the fact that adultery is still sin. They are sinners if they're doing that kind of thing. The article by Kenneth L. Woodward also says, "Various surveys suggest that as many as 30 percent of male Protestant ministers have had sexual relationships with women other than their wives." 30 percent! There was an article in another magazine some years ago about how many preachers stood in the pulpit and were anxious and concerned that the congregation may find out that they've been having an affair. We hear about that from time to time. Beloved, God's ministers are Christian ministers. They're holy ministers. They're God-called ministers.

Various denominations are accepting same-sex marriage. That doesn't change the fact that God said it is an abomination in His sight. Of course, there are a lot of other things that the denominational world is accepting that the Word of God condemns.

Protestant ministers are not the only ones trying to change the Word of God. Some years ago, another article by the same writer, Mr. Woodward, in a different

issue of *Newsweek*, said: "A growing movement in the Roman Catholic Church wants the pope to proclaim a new, controversial dogma: that Mary is a Co-Redeemer with Christ." Again, remember, this was written some years ago. We're not talking about the present-day pope. Mr. Woodward goes on to say, "In the last four years, the pope has received 4,340,429 signatures from 157 countries supporting the proposed dogma and nearly 500 bishops and 42 cardinals are included." Mother Teresa was one of those who signed it.

Now, I'm not speaking disrespectfully of Mary, but the Bible teaches, "There is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus"; and the apostle Peter, whom they would claim was the first pope, said, as recorded in the book of Acts, "There is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." Peter was talking about Jesus Christ. There is one Savior, one God, one Lord, and one Jesus Christ; there is one body and one faith.

When it comes to a Co-Redeemer, there is no such person. Only one! They searched through heaven to find one who was willing or able to open the seals of the Book. That One was found to be Jesus Christ the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world. There is not one verse of scripture in all the Bible to support such teaching that Mary is Co-Redeemer. Furthermore, there is not one verse of scripture in the Bible that teaches that we should pray to Mary, or to any other saint, for that matter. Jesus taught us, "Whatever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son."

When it comes to traditions, there are a lot of traditions of men. There are a lot of them in the Catholic Church, along with Protestant churches. In the Catholic Church, they can have a belief and a teaching for years without it being made a dogma, but once it has been declared by the pope to be a dogma, the members must believe and accept it as a fact. Purgatory was taught many years before it became a dogma. The teaching that the priests are to be celibate was declared about 1000 A.D. That is directly contrary to what the Bible teaches.

Paul, in leaving Titus in the isle of Crete to set in order things pertaining to the Church of God, and to ordain elders, gave the qualifications. One of the qualifications was that elders must be the husband of one wife, but tradition says that they are to be celibate, and it became a dogma that they must believe. One time there was a lady who had a Catholic priest to come and talk to me. He came. We talked awhile. I mentioned this particular point. I asked him, "If your church did not teach that, would you have a wife?" He said, "I probably would." But, because of a tradition, the dogma says that they must not. There are a lot of other things that I could mention. The pope was declared to be infallible back in the 1800's. Before that, he was declared to be the ruler of the world. He had the authority to remove kings, queens, and prime ministers from office and put in whoever he saw fit.

According to the Lord Jesus, the traditions that were in His day were setting aside the Word of God. Jesus and His disciples were walking one day through

a field and they were hungry. It was the sabbath day. Some of His disciples took some of the grain and rubbed it in their hands and ate it. Some of the Pharisees saw them. They went to Jesus and asked, "Why do your disciples transgress the traditions of the fathers by eating without first washing their hands?" Jesus asked them, "Why do you set aside the Word of God with your traditions?"

There are a lot of traditions that would cause you to disregard the Bible. Now, there are some traditions that are good. I'm not saying they're not, but let's make sure that they are good and they do not cause us to disobey the Word of God.

I mentioned about denominations and sectarian religions with their traditions, but what about the Church of God? I can tell you one thing, God's ministers have no more right to modify the Word of God than anyone else has. We are duty bound to preach, to teach, to live the Word of God. We have no more right than anyone else to change the Scriptures. As I said earlier, no one has been given the authority or the right to modify the Scriptures.

Let me read these last couple of verses again: Revelation 22:18, 19, "For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book." So, if you want to have eternal life, if you want to make heaven your home, take the Book as it is; believe it, and live it. When you come to the Lord in judgment, you'll be able to hear Him say, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." †

THE HIGH COST OF POSTAGE RATES

We seldom say anything about the cost of publishing this magazine. But postage rates continue to climb. Especially expensive are international rates. We have a vision to increase our readership, not cut back. It is important to hear from international readers once each year to remain on our mailing list.

Though there is no subscription price to our magazine, we would like our readers to know that your offerings to help defray expenses are gratefully received!

SUNDAY SCHOOL LITERATURE

For many years, The Way of Truth publishing work has provided Church of God Sunday school literature for many congregations. If you would like a sample of Bible-based literature and a price list, please request it. We have a six-year series of lessons. Each quarter we print quarterlies for Adults and Young People, Intermediates and Juniors. We also print leaflets for younger children. Write or call and order your sample today.



Greetings, Dear Young People!

I want to encourage you all to hold on to the unfailing promises of our Lord. He will not forsake you. You may go through times when you don't understand why certain things happen. The Lord doesn't promise us that things will always go smoothly or that life

will be painless. But He will never leave you! He will help you! Don't lose hope. Don't give up. Remember: there is nothing to turn back to!

This month we are starting a small series of encouragement and advice written by several saints who have passed the young people's phase of life. I look forward to sharing what these precious ones have written. The first is an article written by a dear sister in our local congregation, Rosemary Harris.

May the Lord keep you in His love,
Sis. Crystal Gossard

JESUS CALLS US

IN THE Bible we read of different ones that Jesus called. He called Zacchaeus down from the sycamore tree. Zacchaeus could have made excuses, but instead he answered Jesus' call, came down out of the tree and talked with Jesus. From then on his whole life was changed.

Jesus called a rich young ruler to sell his possessions and follow Him. Sadly, he didn't answer that call. He made excuses, and he never knew that true riches and happiness would only be found in following Jesus.



Jesus called 12 men from various occupations to follow Him. They answered His call to a life separate from the world and of service to others.

Jesus calls us today. He has called us from a life of sin just as He called Zacchaeus, and from a life of worldliness as He called the rich young ruler, and to a life of service as He called His 12 disciples.

Jesus calls us from a life of cares and distractions; things that take our time, attention, and affections away from Him and eternal things. In our world of technology, there is SO MUCH that tries to catch our eye, our ear, our hand, our heart. Things that may be legitimate but threaten to fill our mind and consume our life with ... what?

My mom used to remind me to be careful not to fill all my quiet time with things. She said, "You don't always need to turn the radio on as soon as you walk in a room or as soon as you get into your car. Give Jesus a chance to talk to you. If He wants to tell you something or call you, you may not even hear Him if your mind is filled with too many things."

The enemy of our souls will use anything and everything he can to steal our time away from reading and studying the Bible, from just thinking on spiritual things, and from spending quiet time in prayer with the Lord.

Being close to the Lord will allow us to hear His call. It is one thing to hear and another thing to answer.

Answering is much more important. I remember as a little girl being called to do something—probably to sweep the floor or put clean laundry away. But you see, right then I was REALLY busy playing with my dolls. So I didn't answer Mom's call. I hoped that she would assume I wasn't anywhere around and didn't hear her calling. Then she'd eventually call Esther, Anna, or Darese. Surely, they could do whatever she needed done just as well as I could! Besides, they couldn't be as busy as I was. Maybe Mom would realize that in time she didn't need me after all. I decided to just wait and see.

But then I heard my name called again WITH my middle and last name—"Rosemary Olive Castang!" OK, maybe she does need me, I thought as I ran to her. "Yes, Mom. Were you calling for me?" "I MOST CERTAINLY WAS!" she said. It was obvious that she knew what I'd done and now I was in trouble for not answering immediately as I had been taught to do.

God has a reason for calling whom He does. He doesn't mistakenly call for the wrong person. We would not want to grieve Him by ignoring or avoiding His call, nor would we want to miss a blessing He has for us in doing something for Him. A gentle nudge or a strong impression often is His way of calling us. But if He needs to, He does have ways of getting our attention, which can be a lot stronger than just using our middle and last name!

Isaiah was a good example when he answered God's call. He wasn't like the little girl who ignored the call, hoping someone else would be called. No, he enthusiastically answered right back, "Here am I, Lord; send me!"

Have you ever heard this reasoning? *Let Sis. — make that contact instead of you. You wouldn't know what to say. Or, just wait a little while longer and Bro. — will lead next in prayer. You don't need to pray every service. Someone else can greet the visitor. You'll just get all flustered and be an embarrassment.* I've heard that voice of reasoning plenty of times and it isn't the voice of Jesus calling.

What else may Jesus be calling me or you to do? To worship and praise Him? yes; to a closer walk with Him? yes; to a greater soul burden for others? yes; to a time of prayer? yes. The important thing is that whatever or whenever He calls us that we answer Him. We answer because we want to please and honor Him, and because we love Him and want to follow Him.

Jesus Calls Us **Cecil F. Alexander**

1. *Jesus calls us; o'er the tumult
Of our life's wild, restless sea,
Day by day his sweet voice soundeth
Saying, "Christian, follow me."*

2. *Jesus calls us from the worship
Of the vain world's golden store,
From each idol that would keep us,
Saying, "Christian, love me more."*

3. *In our joys and in our sorrows,
Days of toil and hours of ease,
Still he calls, in cares and pleasures,
"Christian, love me more than these."*

4. *Jesus calls us: by thy mercies,
Savior, may we hear thy call,
Give our hearts to thy obedience,
Serve and love thee best of all. †*

THE CHILDREN'S CORNER



TURN ABOUT

A Bible Lesson by Sis. Rebecca Bland

If one of my sisters doesn't come along soon, I'm going to climb down from here, I said to myself. *I'm getting bored sitting in this tree.* I rearranged my position and leaned down far enough to look through the leaves toward the back porch of our house. There was no one in sight.

I sighed. It had seemed like a good idea earlier to climb up into the old plum tree that grew beside the outhouse. It was early summer and the plums were only beginning to form. They were small, hard, and green, and they made a wonderful clatter going down the outhouse ventilation pipe. I imagined it would liven up the quiet summer afternoon to scare one of my sisters during her visit to the outhouse.

The minutes dragged on. I was just about to climb down the tree and find some other form of amusement when I heard the screen door slam. I peered down through the leaves and saw my younger sister, Twila, coming down the path that led from the back porch to the outhouse. I hugged myself and laughed soundlessly. *This will be fun!* I thought.

Twila stepped inside the outhouse and closed the door. Stealthily, I reached up and pulled three green plums from the branch above me. I leaned down and flung the plums into the ventilation pipe. There was a loud scream, and the outhouse door flew open. Twila went running down the path toward the house, stopping only once to look back over her shoulder to see if something was pursuing her.

I chuckled to myself again and climbed down from the tree, taking care to stay out of view of the house. Ducking behind the tall privet hedge, I made my way around the yard and then walked innocently up the front porch steps and into the kitchen. Twila was in the next room, telling our mother about the fright she had experienced in the outhouse.

"What did it sound like again?" asked my mother as she threaded the bobbin on her sewing machine.

“It went ‘bumpity-bumpity-bump’ right down that little pipe thing that goes up through the roof of the outhouse!” Twila told her.

“Oh, it’s hard to tell,” said my mother. “Maybe it was a squirrel or something.”

“Could a squirrel come down the pipe?” asked Twila in surprise.

“No,” said my mother. “Maybe he knocked something down into the pipe.”

“It scared me to death,” Twila declared.

Mom snorted. “You look pretty much alive to me,” she said.

I smiled to myself and went back outside.

A few days later, I played the same trick on my sister, Wilma, but with a very different result. Wilma came storming out of the outhouse, determined to find the squirrel who had startled her. She looked up into the plum tree and straight into my face.

“Did you do that?” she demanded. “Did you throw something down the pipe to scare me?”

“Come up here, and I’ll explain how I did it,” I said. I showed my younger sister how I had picked green plums and thrown them down the ventilation pipe. “Don’t tell anyone,” I cautioned her. “It will be our secret. We’ll climb up here together some time and scare Twila like I did before.”

But as it turned out, I got a dose of my own medicine. One day, a week or so later, I headed for the outhouse, deep in thought. I didn’t see two pairs of bare feet hanging from a branch of the old plum tree above my head. I didn’t hear two little whispered chuckles. But I did hear the sudden, sharp rattle in the ventilation pipe behind me just as I was making myself comfortable. Instinctively, I jumped up and ran screaming from the outhouse. As I beat a retreat down the path to the house, I heard shouts of laughter from the plum tree as Twila and Wilma exulted in their revenge.

You may have heard the saying, “Turnabout is fair play.” It refers to the belief that, if you do something to harm someone, it is only fair if you are paid back in kind.

It is common for children to play harmless tricks on each other. However, there are times in life when people may commit actions that bring real harm or grief to others. While God instructs us not to take revenge upon those who have hurt us, He has warned us that unrighteous behavior brings negative consequences.

This month’s wise saying comes from Proverbs 11:31, which says, “Behold, the righteous shall be recompensed in the earth: much more the wicked and the sinner.” God has promised to bless the righteous. That does not mean that the righteous will never be hurt or have bad things happen to them, but it does mean that God will watch over them and help them out of their difficulties.

The word *recompensed* means “paid back.” God repays our service to Him by allowing us to feel His favor. When we take the time to read the Bible and pray to God, He blesses us by guiding our pathway and by giving us the strength to make good decisions throughout the day, even when we are tempted to do

otherwise. There is no greater blessing than to know God is pleased with us.

On the other hand, God has also promised to recompense the wicked and the sinner. They, too, will receive consequences for their words and actions. How unpleasant those consequences will be!

Let us determine to stay away from anything that would cause God’s disfavor, but instead live righteous lives that He may smile upon.

Activity

Can you fill in the missing words in these scriptures that promise God’s blessing on those who serve Him? The location of each is given so you may check yourself when you are finished.

1. “If ye walk in my _____, and keep my _____, and do them; Then I will give you _____ in due season, and the land shall yield her increase, and the _____ of the field shall yield their _____” (Leviticus 26:3, 4).

2. “If ye be _____ and _____, ye shall eat the good of the land” (Isaiah 1:19).

3. “But he said, Yea rather, blessed are they that _____ the word of God, and _____ it” (Luke 11:28).

Answer to Last Month’s Activity

The lesson we can learn from Jesus’ story, “The Parable of the Two Sons,” is that our actions are more telling than our words. Our promises mean nothing if we do not keep them. †

JESUS IS COMING SOON— TIME TO REPENT

By Sis. Enid Jones

THE songwriter reminds us that *Troublesome times are here, Fling men’s hearts with fear, Freedom we all hold dear, now is at stake.* Therefore, we’re called to humble our hearts to God and seek to live daily in His presence, obeying His laws so that we will be suitable candidates for heaven when He shall appear in all His glory to carry the chosen ones home.

Some warnings have been given and are being slighted, but I want to use these few minutes to remind us that the words given are for our admonition and should be taken seriously. God does not go back on His words, so once we hear them we become responsible to act on them, put them into practice, because they are for our benefit.

Warning: time to repent. The meaning of *repent* is “to be sorry for actions, saying you are sorry, asking for forgiveness.” When we hurt our loved ones, our neighbors, our friends, our coworkers, or our associates, we let them know we are sorry and ask them to forgive us so the broken relationship can be restored. Food for thought: if we can ask those persons for forgiveness,

how much more important it is to ask God, the Life-giver, Maker of the universe, for forgiveness? It is time to repent, time to fall down on your knees before the great I Am, time to get down in sackcloth and ashes and cry out, "Father, forgive me! Wash me in the precious blood that flowed from Calvary, heal my wounded, broken spirit." David cried out in Psalm 51:7, "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow."

Why do we need to repent? Jesus came into the world for one purpose only: so we can be saved. Matthew 4:17 says, "Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Since it's at hand, it is at a place where we all can touch and reach it. It's not out of your reach. The kingdom was made available for one and all, so no one has any excuse for not getting into the kingdom. Jesus bids you to come. "O taste and see that the Lord is good." I tell you, He is a good God. Sin separates between God and man, but "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever [includes you and me] believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Thank God, all are included. No one is excluded.

Whosoever believes: Do you believe? What more do you want Jesus to do to prove that He loves you? How much more proof do you need to believe? Every breath we take, every step we make, every thought is allowed through His grace and mercy to us. Acts 3:19, "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord."

In Matthew 3:8, we read, "Bring forth therefore fruits meet [worthy] for repentance." The fruits of righteousness: joy, peace, forgiveness, love, kindness, and all the fruits that will be acceptable in the sight of God. Won't you be a fruit-bearing child of God? God is saying to you, "Give me thine heart, and I will give you my Father's kingdom." Jesus left this world with the promise, "I will come again." Jesus is coming soon!

You may ask me how I know? II Timothy 3:1-7, "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away. For of this sort are they which creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, led away with divers lusts, ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth." Never before has it been like it is today.

Men love themselves to the point of forgetting the existence of all others. Covetousness is causing men to engage in unlawful activities. They are boasting, even when there is nothing to boast about. The scripture says, "Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall." "Heady, highminded, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, false accusers, despisers of those that are good, having a form of godliness, but denying the power

thereof," are a few that the Bible says "from such turn away."

Where will you spend eternity? Jesus, when He was leaving this world, left with this wonderful promise: "I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." An old time favorite chorus says—

*He is coming back again,
He is coming back again,
He went away, not to stay,
Sing glory, hallelujah!
He is coming back again.*

He is coming with His hands full of rewards to give us, according as our works shall be. Eternity is everlasting. There are different phases of life. We were born, we live, we die. Death comes to all at one point or another, but after death comes the judgment. There is a place prepared for both saved and unsaved.

Luke 16:19-31 records the results of a life lived for God and one lived for self. Lazarus was a poor beggar, full of sores, and daily sitting at the gate of a rich man who had enough and to spare. He was not even offered the crumbs that fell from the rich man's table. But since death is no respecter of persons, both died. While the rich man was buried, Lazarus was carried by angels to Abraham's bosom. In hell the rich man looked up and saw Lazarus in the safety of a new home, and he begged him to go and dip the tip of his finger in water to put on his tongue to quench his thirst. The rich man asked that Lazarus be sent to warn his brethren not to come to this place of torment where he found himself. Sadly, the response was, "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead." Are you waiting for one to return from the grave to tell you that hell is real?

Where will you spend eternity? It will certainly have to be spent somewhere! Where do you want to spend eternity? The choice is before you, unsaved loved ones. It is time to repent. Jesus is coming soon. "If God be God, [serve] Him; but if Baal, then [serve] him." The choice is yours. While the blood is running in your veins, you better get salvation deep down in your soul.

This story has been told—

A drowning man was rescued by a man nearby. One day he was brought before a judge for a crime. When he saw that the judge was the person who had saved his life from drowning years ago, he was elated. When the sentence was passed, he confidently told the judge that he was the man he had saved from drowning.

Sadly, the judge said to him, "I was your savior that day, but today I am your judge. You are guilty as charged."

Christ is your Savior today; tomorrow He may be your judge. Where will you spend eternity? The choice is yours. Choose wisely! †

PLEASE PRAY FOR THIS

MINISTRY!

THE NEED OF COMPASSION

Message delivered 12/4/16 by Bro. Paul Wilson



IT IS A wonderful thing to be a child of God. It is good that we can be in God's house to worship Him. The writer said, "Let us with a gladsome mind, praise the Lord, for He is kind." We have a lot to thank God for. Thank Him for life. You know, life is a wonderful thing and we shouldn't take it for granted. We should be grateful to God for His love to us.

When I think about where we came from and where we are tonight, truly, God is good. The writer said, "O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever. Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy" (Psalm 107:1, 2). We know that the unsaved will say, "God is good," but I think and believe only the saved can really, really talk about the greatness and the goodness of God.

I want to speak to us on the thought of, "The Need of Compassion." If you have your Bibles, I invite you to turn with me to the book of St. Luke, chapter 10, reading from verse 25 through 37: "Behold, a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? He said unto him, What is written in the law? how readest thou? And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself. And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live. But he, willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbour? And Jesus answering said, A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. And by chance there came down a certain priest that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side. But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him, and went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee. Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves? And he said, He that shewed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise."

Reading again the 33rd verse of the text: "But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him." Compassion—we need a lot more of it in this world. It seems like, everywhere you go, there are people without

compassion. People have no feelings toward each other. What would the world be like if everyone on the face of the earth had no compassion? It would be a miserable world, wouldn't it? What would the world be like if Jesus did not have compassion on us? Again, it would be a miserable world.

The word *compassion* means, in part, "pity; inclining one to help; to be merciful; to have sympathy; to show mercy." Compassion is a beautiful word, but how many people really practice compassion? There are people who have met with mishaps in their lives, and the first thing that comes out of people's mouths is, "Well, they deserved it." Yes, there are some people who might deserve some things, but we as the people of God are to show a different spirit, a different attitude towards people. There are many people in the world who do not know Christ, and we as the people of God are to carry a burden for them and have a care for them. When we see what sin is doing to some people's lives, we need to have pity on them. I believe if we do have pity on some people, we will be praying for them and carrying a burden for them. Our world is in need of God. People everywhere are crying. They are miserable and are looking for help in some way.

Our text says that this man came and asked Jesus a question. The Bible says that he came tempting Jesus. Jesus asked him, "How readest thou?" Yes, he read well. He said to Jesus, "I keep the commandments, and the Bible says that I should love my neighbor as myself." Jesus said, "Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live." But, he was willing to justify himself, so he asked Jesus another question, "Who is my neighbor?" Jesus gave him a parable. "A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him." The man had been robbed. There are people in our world who have been robbed of their pride and their character. The devil has been destroying people's lives. He's robbed them of everything they had. There are people who have had dreams in life, but the devil has destroyed them.

The parable continues to say, "There came down a certain priest that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side." You would think that a priest, a man who called himself a man of God, would have had compassion on this man, but what did he do? He went by on the other side. Maybe in his heart he said, "Well, he got what he deserved. He shouldn't have been walking on this street alone." The priest had no compassion, no pity, no sympathy.

We as the people of God are to show a different attitude and a different spirit. We are to show compas-

sion towards people. It's our responsibility. Again, let me say, people are crying. They are dying. The world is in need of God. If you listen to the news at what is happening in other countries, you will realize that there are people who have no compassion for others. You hear of young people being shot, old people being attacked and robbed, and finding little babies abandoned on the streets. No compassion! no feeling! But I'm glad that the God whom we serve is a God who is full of compassion.

The man in the parable was stripped of his dignity and all that he had planned. Again, instead of the priest ministering unto him, he passed by the other way. Church of God, we cannot pass people by on the other side. It doesn't matter how far in sin they have gone, we cannot pass them by. It's our responsibility to bring a soul to God; it's our responsibility to cry out to God for lost souls. They need to be pitied. We need to have compassion on them.

One of the ways you can minister to people is to let your life minister to them. No, you might not be able to speak like Bro. Greg or Bro. Alvin, but your life will show pity on someone and he will see the need to turn himself over to the Lord.

The next one who passed by this man was a Levite. Our text says, "Likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side." What good did that do? Some people might have said, "Well, at least he looked on him," but what good did that do? It didn't do any good. The Levite needed to help him because he saw the need. He saw the need! He saw the wounded man. He was in need of help, but the Levite passed by the other side. Just looking by, or standing by the sidelines does not help. We need to do something. God help us that we'll be able to be more compassionate. I need more compassion. I don't know about you, but I need more compassion. I need to carry a deeper burden for the souls of men, those who are perishing and dying.

Have a look around us. "Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest" (John 4:35). Someone has said, "Lord, prepare some souls that we'll be able to go and harvest." God needs workers. I want to be a worker. I need to have a greater burden for the souls of men.

Now, we have the Samaritan. "But a certain Samaritan [a man who had no dealings with this Jewish man. We have been told that the Samaritans were looked on as dogs. The Jews had no respect for the Samaritans.], as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion [sympathy] on him." In his mind, he said, "Well, I have to help this man. He's in need. He's a fellow human." He did not look at the color of his skin. He did not look at his status in life. Even though he knew that the Samaritan was considered a lower class person, he went over and helped this man. What a beautiful picture! "And [he] went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him."

I am glad that I am in a congregation where I see a lot of compassion that is shown to others. We don't shut up our bowels of compassion for people. You know,

there are some pastors of some congregations who only care about feeding themselves. Did you hear what I said? They use their congregations as merchandise while the souls of the saints are perishing. Those who come among them as unsaved, their souls continue to perish. But, thank God for the Church of God! She is different.

The parable continues and concludes talking about the Samaritan: "And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee. Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves? And he said, He that shewed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise." Compassion! People around us are crying.

In Matthew, chapter 9, verse 35, Jesus went around "healing every sickness and every disease among the people," but in verse 36, it says, "But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd." The multitudes needed help. Jesus was moved with compassion.

We, too, as the people of God need to be moved. There are things that need to be moved. We need to be moved with compassion because souls are dying and perishing. People need God; not just for temporal things, but people need spiritual things from God. We are the only ones who are able to minister to their souls. Jesus saw the people and was moved with compassion. Again, let me say, *God help us that we will have more compassion for the lost and dying.*

We read of a story of a king who called his servants together. He was taken into account those who owed him. There was a certain servant who owed the king a lot. This servant cried and said, "I don't have it to give; forgive me," and the Bible says, "Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt."

Look at ourselves, Saints of God. Look at where we were in sin, and Jesus left the splendor of heaven and forgave us of all our debt. There was a debt we could not pay, but Jesus the Son of God was moved with compassion. He left the beauty of heaven and said, "I will go for them." Compassion!

Do you know what the Bible said of this same servant who was forgiven by the king of his debt? "But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellow-servants, which owed him an hundred pence: and he laid hands on him, and took him by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest. And his fellow-servant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. And he would not: but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt."

This servant was ungrateful. Look at the debt the king forgave him of and yet, he showed no compassion to his fellow servant. He had no compassion, but the king heard about it. He said to this servant, "Imagine, I forgave you of your great debt. I thought you would go out and forgive your fellow servant of the little debt that he owed you." The Bible says that the king was

wroth and had this servant delivered to the tormentors.

The Bible says, "They that sow to the wind shall reap the whirlwind." Let me say, if you show mercy, someone will show you mercy. I'm glad God is a merciful God. He's a God of mercy and compassion.

We read in Mark 1:40, 41, "There came a leper to him, beseeching him, and kneeling down to him, and saying unto him, If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. And Jesus, moved with compassion, put forth his hand, and touched him, and saith unto him, I will; be thou clean." Jesus had compassion on him. Here was a man who was cast off from society. He was a man that the crowd had nothing to do with.

I read in the Bible that when people saw a leper, they would throw stones at him to keep him at bay. I got something from that. We don't want to throw stones at people. Sometimes we can say words around people that could turn them off. We don't want to do that as the people of God. Jesus knew the leper was unclean. The Bible said, "He touched him." He had compassion on him. Jesus touched that leper and he was able to reunite with society. He was able to reunite with his family and friends. Why? Because Jesus had compassion on him.

Do you know that there are some Christians who would not find themselves talking to people who are drug addicts, or drunkards, or whatever lifestyle they may be in? Think about it. We could have been in that same condition in life if it had not been for the mercy of God. If it had not been for the transforming power of salvation, we could have been in those lifestyles; but thanks be to God who has delivered us from the power of darkness and translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son. Jesus had compassion on us. Thank God, no one threw stones at me, because sin makes us lepers, spiritually. Those of us who went out in sin, sin made us lepers, spiritually.

I read of a woman with the issue of blood. "Behold, a woman, which was diseased with an issue of blood twelve years, came behind him, and touched the hem of his garment: For she said within herself, If I may but touch his garment, I shall be whole" (Matthew 9:20, 21). She was considered to be unclean. That's why she said, "If I may touch His garment, He wouldn't know who touched Him." But Jesus knew. Jesus turned and said, "Who touched me?" The disciples said, "Master, the multitude throng thee and press thee, and sayest thou, Who touched me?" Jesus said, "Somebody hath touched me: for I perceive that virtue is gone out of me." The Bible says, "She came trembling, and Jesus said unto her, Daughter, be of good comfort: thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace." Jesus had compassion!

In Matthew 20:30-34, we read, "Behold, two blind men sitting by the way side, when they heard that Jesus passed by, cried out, saying, Have mercy on us, O Lord, thou son of David. And the multitude rebuked them, because they should hold their peace: but they cried the more, saying, Have mercy on us, O Lord, thou son of David. And Jesus stood still, and called them, and said, What will ye that I shall do unto you? They say unto him, Lord, that our eyes may be opened. So Jesus

had compassion on them, and touched their eyes: and immediately their eyes received sight, and they followed him."

We are serving God tonight because He had compassion on us. It's hard to keep our mouths shut when Jesus does something great for us. The blind men spread it abroad of what Jesus did for them, although Jesus told them not to tell anyone. He showed them mercy and compassion.

Jesus had compassion on the leper, on the woman with the issue of blood, on the blind men, and thank God, He had compassion on us.

Psalm 78:38 says, "But he, being full of compassion, forgave their iniquity." This is speaking of how much the people of Israel sinned against God and murmured and complained. In all that God did for them, they still murmured and complained. Do you know we have some people in the world who just murmur and complain? No matter how hard life may get, there is someone in a worse situation than we are. Verses 58, 59: "For they provoked him to anger with their high places, and moved him to jealousy with their graven images. When God heard this, he was wroth, and greatly abhorred Israel." God could have destroyed them, "But he, being full of compassion, forgave their iniquity, and destroyed them not." God is even full of compassion when we fail Him or come short in our Christianity. He doesn't destroy us or turn us away. What a God of compassion! We have much to thank Him for.

When we look at our country that we're living in and see the evil that is going on among us, God still shows mercy and compassion. He's still showing mercy to America, don't you think? Yes, He's showing mercy to us. Look at the things that have been happening: gay rights, abortion, and other wickedness. How long will God continue to show mercy and compassion? "But he, being full of compassion, forgave their iniquity, and destroyed them not." Many a time He would have destroyed Israel, but He turned away His anger.

Do you know why God is turning away His anger today? Because there are saints who are called "the salt of the earth." Many a time, God has turned away His anger. Let us be true, Saints of God. Let us continue praying. The Bible says, "If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land." Our country needs healing, don't you think? The country needs healing. I'm a citizen of this country. I'm still asking myself, how long will God continue to show His mercy and compassion? I don't know how long, but I trust He will continue to extend His mercy. "Lord, help us to be true to you."

First Peter, chapter 3:8, "Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another [Let's not bite and devour one another; let's not beat each other down; let's not criticize and tear each other apart; let's not sow discord among each other, but let us love another.]; love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous."

Let me read this: "Five Qualities of Helping Believers to Serve God Effectively"—

(1) have harmony: be all of one mind, pursuing the same goals through sympathy;

NOT FORSAKING THE ASSEMBLING OF OURSELVES TOGETHER

By the late H. R. Matthews

- (2) be responsive to another's need: when a sister or a brother is down, pray for them, encourage them;
- (3) be tender-hearted; otherwise, pitiful;
- (4) be affectionately sensitive;
- (5) be of a humble mind; courteous; be willing to encourage one another, and rejoice in each other's success.

I want to serve God effectively.

Our final scripture for tonight: I John 3:17, "But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?" If we have this world's good, and we see a need, and shut up our bowels of compassion, how could the love of God dwell in us? We cannot shut up our bowels of compassion, Saints. We need to reach out with a helping hand. Someone has said: "Reach out and touch somebody's hand; Make this world a better place if you can."

There's a song that Bro. Ralph sings sometimes: "If I Can Help Somebody." It says—

*If I can help somebody, as I pass along,
If I can cheer somebody, with a word or song,
If I can show somebody, that he's traveling wrong,
Then my living shall not be in vain.*

Chorus:

*My living shall not be in vain,
Then my living shall not be in vain;
If I can help somebody, as I pass along,
Then my living shall not be in vain.*

Christians must show their love, and one way to do this is to provide money or material possessions to help meet another's needs. How clearly do you actually say that you really love others? Are you as generous as you should be with all your possessions and time?

Again, let me say, souls are dying. We should win the lost at any cost. If it means getting up at nights and pouring out our hearts for our loved ones, let us do so; if it means fasting for our country for God to continue to have compassion, let us do so. Souls are truly, truly dying without God.

Again, Luke 10:33, "But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him."

May God help us as the people of God to consider being more compassionate.

God bless you. †

THERE ARE times and places where social gatherings fulfill the human desire for togetherness and entertainment; however, divine worship services must not be that time nor place. This is not to say that our greeting and fellowshiping among saints of God does not have a social aspect, but the spiritual aspect is far more essential to spiritual growth. This is the very reason that the Hebrew writer saw the necessity of exhorting the church with the following admonition: "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching" (Hebrews 10:25).

We understand by the Scriptures that the approaching day is that appointed day of our death. Not only so, but we are also informed by the Scriptures that time will flee away at the last day when Christ shall come to judge the world in righteousness. While the saints of God are exhorted to assemble together in divine worship services on the Lord's day, and at other appointed times, they are also admonished to avoid assembling with certain others: "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? ... Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you" (II Corinthians 6:14, 17). What was the heavenly angel's message to saints of God who were under Babylonian deception? "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues" (Revelation 18:4).

Within the heart of every true child of God is created that desire to worship with those wherein dwells the Spirit of unity. Within the heart of King David dwelt this desire when he declared, "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord" (Psalm 122:1). It was King David that became envious when he saw the prosperity of the wicked, until he went into the sanctuary of God; it was then that he understood their end (Psalm 73:17). From the heart of David came this exhortation: "O come, let us sing unto the Lord: let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation. Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto him with psalms. For the Lord is a great God, and a great King above all gods. In his hand are the deep places of the earth: the strength of the hills is his also. The sea is his, and he made it: and his hands formed the dry land. O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the Lord our maker" (Psalm 95:1-6).

As worshipers assemble together, it must be "with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies

THE CHURCH OF GOD STANDS FOR

An eternal God	Psalm 90:2
A divine Christ	John 1:1, 14
An infallibly inspired Bible	II Timothy 3:16
Salvation from sin	Matthew 1:21
The new birth	John 3:1-7
Entire Sanctification	Ephesians 5:25, 26
A holy life	Titus 2:11, 12
	Hebrews 12:10-14
Unity of God's people	John 17:21
	I Corinthians 12:13

washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;) And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works” (Hebrews 10:22-24).

There are a number of benefits to the true saints assembling themselves together:

1. “For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them” (Matthew 18:20). This does not mean, of course, that the Lord is not with the isolated saint who has not a house of worship to attend, for He promised that He would never leave us, nor forsake us. He is with us even in our hours of repose. In this verse, Jesus is simply emphasizing how essential it is for saints to not forsake the assembling of themselves together.

2. “If two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven” (Matthew 18:19). In this verse, we are made to understand that the prayers of the assembled true saints of God more effectively reach the Giver of all good things.

3. “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” (I Corinthians 12:25, 26). The apostle Peter exhorted the saints to “love one another with a pure heart fervently” (I Peter 1:22). As the saints assemble together, they share and rejoice over victories won. They share their burdens and trials, the suffering of both soul and body. This is where the fervent love goes into action.

4. “... exhorting one another: as ye see the day approaching” (Hebrews 10:25). This is where the young learn of the crown that is laid up for those who live godly in Christ Jesus. This where the elders plant the seeds of righteousness that others may win the crown laid up for them. This is where the elderly seek for the grace needed to win the soon coming of their crowning day. But the crowning day is not limited to the elderly. Engraved on the tombstones of the cemetery are the ages of the young as well as the elderly. May all for whom Christ died leave the victorious testimony that the apostle Paul left behind when he died an untimely death: “For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing” (II Timothy 4:6-8).

5. “And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus” (Ephesians 2:6). That verse must be understood both spiritually and literally. For a flock to be a flock, there must be two or more in number. Sheep are fed as a flock. A congregation of saints are fed as a flock. How can this be if they are not assembled where food for the soul is being served by the elders? The apostle Paul firmly

counseled the elders of the Ephesus flock: “Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers [pastors], to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood” (Acts 20:28). This verse could well be addressed to the elders of the Church of God in its entirety, but at that time, the counsel was addressed specifically to the elders of the church of Ephesus. Again, the flock is fed as it is assembled together. Cannot members of the flock be fed individually? Of course! but the main course is served when the flock is assembled together. Please, please, be aware that the main course is being fed only to the assembled flock of God. Sadly, there are many flocks that are being fed with spiritual food that is contaminated with seducing spirits and doctrines of devils.

Beware of the “feel good” religions that endeavor to lift people above the fact that we must fight the good fight of faith; to lift people above the fact that there is a devil in the world from whom flows trials and temptations. Did not the apostle Peter declare, “Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you”? (I Peter 4:12). Peter also declared, “Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ” (I Peter 1:6, 7). Such messages never come from the pulpits of the “feel good religionists.”

The “little flock” is encouraged by the scripture, “And let us not be weary in well doing” (Galatians 6:9). Found among the things of *well-doing* is that frequent dining at Father’s table. Absence at Father’s table brings leanness to the soul, which in turn brings a waning of our first love for which the church at Ephesus was told to repent. The crown of righteousness that is laid up for us beyond the starry heavens will be brought into question where an absence at Father’s table exists.

High on our list of priorities should be our first day of the week activities. At the top of the list of activities should be the assembling together of God’s little flock in heavenly places where Christ is in the midst. Of course, circumstances may arise where we may not be able to join God’s little flock in assembly, but let it not be an engagement with worldly pleasure. Let it not be because of secular affairs that could have been taken care of during the other six days of the week. Immediate corrective measures must be taken if one is avoiding the assembling together with the little flock because of an undesirable relationship.

The Holy Spirit has a perfect understanding of the benefits associated with the assembling of the true saints of God. This is the reason that He inspired the scripture, “Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching” (Hebrews 10:25). †

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The Way of Truth
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Hagerstown, MD 21741-0088 U.S.A.

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Bro. James Arch, Host Pastor



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Paniqui, Tarlac, Philippines
December 26-30, 2019, Lord willing
Bro. Rey Fabian, Host Pastor



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