

# The Way of Truth

Vol. 77 "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." No. 9

## **CHRIST'S DESIRE FOR HIS CHURCH**

*"Striving Together for the Faith of the Gospel"*

*See page 4*

An aerial photograph of a river winding through a deep canyon. The river flows in a circular path around a large, prominent rock formation in the center. The canyon walls are steep and layered with reddish-brown rock. The sky is a clear, pale blue.

September  
2019

## THE RIGHT SPIRITUAL ENVIRONMENT

**T**HIS MONTH, we begin printing messages presented during our convention in July. The Lord blessed us with an outstanding meeting with anointed preaching, inspired singing, souls saved, believers sanctified, bodies healed, and the entire church edified. The present movement to heal the breaches of the past and restore fellowship with brothers and sisters across the U.S. who are standing for the truth of the Church of God continued to bear fruit. We were honored by the presence of some visiting ministers who manifested the same Spirit of God to which we are accustomed—humble, respectful, unselfish. This enabled God to pour out His love upon us all.

I was impressed a few years ago with the thought that we, as God's people, need to provide an environment in which Christ could work in a greater way. I see that happening. The landscape is changing before our very eyes! The environment is improving. Oh, the world is still in a downward spiral. As John said "the whole world lieth in wickedness." But, among many congregations of the Church of God, there is now a burning desire to measure Jesus' prayer in St. John 17. There is a forbearance spoken of in Ephesians 4 that is necessary to get along. There is support for one another rather than animosity. There are prayers for one another and with one another rather than against each other.

After Jesus Christ was crucified, the church was in somewhat disarray. Peter went back to his nets, and the disciples were distraught at the loss of their Master. As long as those disciples were in unbelief, though Christ had all power in heaven and earth, He was not able to do what He desired to do.

Jesus then revealed Himself to His disciples after He was resurrected. What a change! Once they believed, once they understood, once they lined up with His will, then He was free to work with His people.

"So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God. And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen" (Mark 16:19, 20).

I love the people of God. We have something special. God is with us. He has been blessing us, but if you are like me, you're not satisfied. We serve a great God. We serve an everlasting God, and we cannot be satisfied until He works with us in a greater way. By His grace and power, we in our day and age can see signs following the Word of God. Christ is just the same today. I believe Jesus Christ desires to do more than what He's able to do at present, and I believe that the spiritual environment that we provide has an effect on how much the Lord is able to do among us.

When I speak about environment, I'm not talking about fields, or canyons, or trees. I'm talking about people. I'm talking about a society. I'm talking about a culture that is being developed. I believe with all of my heart that when God is able and freed, He's going to do much more than what we've seen Him do in the past.

A few years ago I was traveling in the Arizona desert. Mile after mile of desert. Mountains in the background, but there was nothing but dry and arid desert. Then all of a sudden, I saw a field—a field of corn, and as we passed, we could see line after line after line of corn. Then I got to thinking, *someone did something to change the environment*. There was irrigation, fertilization, etc., which made the soil fruitful. I believe we as the Church of God can have an affect on the environment we present to Christ.

Here are some things to think about: *Though God is everywhere, we need to make the right understanding of that terminology*. God is everywhere. The heaven of heavens cannot contain Him, and He's able to do whatever He wants to do. Who can say unto Him, "What doest Thou?" He is God, and He can deal with a heart in a barroom, on the dance floor, because He is God. But as far as His presence, His approval, His blessing, and His working, God is not everywhere. He is only where He is welcomed, and He will only work where He is able to work.

*God will have a holy people*. It is an environment where He can work. The Bible tells us that God has a people, a holy people, a peculiar people, a special people unto Himself. Deuteronomy 7:6, "For thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God: the Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth." You see, sin hinders Christ from working. Sin hinders Christ from doing what He would like to do. We have the Bible example of Achan who sinned and kept victory from the children of God. God will not override sin. He wants a holy people. He will have a holy people.

"Holiness becometh thine house, O Lord, for ever." When God saves an individual, He wipes his sins away. Not one is left behind. They're washed in the blood of the Lamb, and then that individual receives the blessings of God upon His life. It is the holiness of God that is with His people, and God will enable any individual who desires holiness to live above sin, to have victory over the world, to be a special people unto Himself. That is the environment He wants—that special people, that holy people, that godly people whose hearts are perfect in His sight. We're human beings. We make mistakes. We are a work in progress, but God would have a holy people. He *will have a holy people*.

*This people is a sanctified people*. He wants a sanctified people. You don't hear so much about sanctification any more, but it is the second work of grace. It is an important work of grace. It is a necessary work of grace. In Ephesians, chapter 5, beginning with verse 25, "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or

### ABOUT THE COVER

On our cover is a picture of Horseshoe Bend. It is part of Glen Canyon National Recreation Area with parking facilities managed by the City of Page. Located just south of Page, Arizona, the dramatic overlook attracts visitors from around the world each day. This is but another example of God's creative prowess!

# THE WAY OF TRUTH

(Registered Trademark)

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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

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place, that is an environment where Christ will work. There were 120 there in that place. There were not 120,000; not 1,200, but 120 men and women in one place in one accord. Oh, Beloved Ones, can we provide God with that kind of environment? Can we provide Him with a spiritual environment where we can see 3,000 saved? If they could do it, we can do it, but we have to get our eyes off this old world and be in one accord. Fire came down from heaven, and they were full of zeal. "They went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following." Doesn't that sound exciting?

*To have an environment where Christ can work, there needs to be a clean body of ministers.* A clean body of ministers, which are men and women who are called of God, and who are living clean, pure lives. The ministry does not commit adultery with women in their congregation. The ministry must be clean. They must be an example. "Be ye clean, that bear the vessels of the Lord." Christ cleanses us, but we must keep ourselves clean.

*To have an environment where Christ can work, brotherly love must continue.* Romans 12:10, "Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another." The love of God must be

(Continued on page 17)

wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish."

Now, for the church to be sanctified, it means that the members of the church are sanctified. God can fill a chapel with His Spirit, and He does! But when we talk about *the sanctified church*, we're talking about human beings who have been saved, who have offered themselves a living sacrifice unto God, have laid themselves on the altar and died to self, and God sanctifies them. He eradicates the carnal nature. He takes up His abode within the body, and they become filled with the Holy Ghost. If there's unsanctified people with carnality, bickering, and struggling, as in Corinth, it is going to hinder the working of the Spirit. But when we're sanctified, we're dead to self, and as we give Christ first place in our lives, He is then more free to work.

*To provide an environment in which Christ can work, there needs to be a unified body of believers.* In Jesus' prayer in St. John, chapter 17, verse 21, He prayed to the Father. He said, "That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." If the true followers of Christ would have stayed together and provided a unified front to the world, this world would be won for Christ. The world would believe, but there is so much splintering, so much division. Division has taken power away from the church. Unified body of believers—an environment in which Christ can work.

After Jesus rose from the dead, He told His disciples to tarry in Jerusalem until they were endued with power from on high. The first verse of Acts 2 says, "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place." If we are in one accord in one

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# 2019 HAGERSTOWN CONVENTION REPORT

July 2-7, 2019

(Taken from notes by E. Arch)

Theme: "Striving Together for the Faith of the Gospel"

Scripture: "Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel."

**U**NCE AGAIN it was a happy privilege to be able to be in another convention. There were many who came from various places, such as: Jamaica, Honduras, Grand Cayman, and even one dear brother from Haiti, Bro. Ernest Saintilvert. Saints from various states in the U.S. as well were in attendance. It was a blessing to enjoy the fellowship of the many different saints whom we see only at this time, but most important of all, the presence of God was in our meetings.

Prior to the convention, 10 evenings of prayer meetings were held. We could not have a victorious convention if the Lord was not sought.

Each morning at 6:00, an exhortation to prayer was given before the saints knelt in prayer asking the Lord to have His way in each service. These were followed by general services.

Below is a brief synopsis of these services:

**10:00 A.M.—Tuesday**—Bro. Greg Tyler, Host Pastor, brought the morning's message. This can be read in its entirety beginning on page 4.

**2:30 P.M.**—Speaker: Bro. David Shaw, Jamaica. Title: "One Spirit, One Mind." Text: Philippians 1:27. Excerpts: "The world is full of disappointment, but Jesus does care. The Church of God is small in number, but thank God for the power that is manifested among us. God is to be served and Him only. We want a church that constantly remains victorious. Let the Lord lead you. We want to remain the children of God.

Paul said, 'Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.'

**7:00 P.M.**—Speaker: Bro. Harley McClung, pastor of the Church of God in Craigsville, West Virginia. Title: "People Need the Lord." Text: Isaiah 55:6, 7. Lord willing, this full-length message will be printed in a future issue.

**10:00 A.M.—Wednesday**—Speaker: Bro. Raymond Martin, pastor of the Church of God in Shawsville, Virginia. Title: "A Desire for the Faith of the Gospel." Texts: Philippians 1:27; Psalm 37:4. This full-length message, Lord willing, will be printed in an upcoming issue.

**2:30 P.M.**—Speaker: Bro. Donovan Darby, Jamaica. Title: "At Evening It Shall Be Light." Text: Zechariah

14:6, 7. Excerpts: "We have a mission, a responsibility to take the gospel to the world. The early morning church was warned by Christ that false prophets would arise. Paul had a deep insight of what would happen in the future. Christ has called His ministers to point others to the Lamb of God. If you depart from truth, you depart from Christ. The Church of God is led by the Spirit of God."

**7:00 P.M.**—Speaker: Bro. Doug Koerner, pastor of the Church of God, Essex, Maryland. Title: "For the Work's Sake." Text: Philippians 1:27. Lord willing, this full-length message will be printed in a future issue.

**10:00 A.M.—Thursday**—Speaker: Bro. David Goble, pastor of the Church of God in Carmichael, California. This was Bro. Goble's first visit to our convention. His spirit was excellent and fit right in. The title of his message was, "What the Lord Has Restored." Text: Joel 1:1-4. This full-length message, Lord willing, will be printed in an upcoming issue.

**2:30 P.M.**—Speaker: Bro. Darrell Sanford, pastor of the Church of God in Hattiesburg, Mississippi. Title: "A Great Work in the Day of Small Things." Text: Zechariah 4. Lord willing, this full-length message will be printed in a future issue.

**7:00 P.M.**—Speaker: Bro. Doug Shenberger, assistant pastor of the local congregation. Title: "Are You Breaking the First and Great Commandment?" Text: Matthew 22:34-38. Lord willing, this full-length message will be printed in an upcoming issue.

**10:00 A.M.—Friday**—Speaker: Bro. David Shaw. This was a Divine Healing Service, but a short message was given entitled, "The Effectiveness of Praying in Faith." Text: James 5:13-16. Many came to the altar to be prayed for their healing. Lord willing, this full-length message will be printed in a future issue.

**7:00 P.M.**—Speaker: Bro. Matt Deville from Deville, Louisiana. Title: "Ponder the Path of Thy Feet." Text: Proverbs 4:26. Excerpts: "We all must choose what path

we will take. *Ponder*, 'consider; study; carefully look at.' We need to be aware of the path we are taking. If we go down the wrong path, it will lead us to somewhere we don't want to be. Sin will lead people down a pathway that they don't want to be; but there is another pathway, a pathway that leads to brighter days. Consider

what path you are on. The prodigal son wasted his life with riotous living. He realized the path that he was on was the wrong one, but he also realized that there was a better one available to him. He said, 'I will arise and go to my father.' His father rejoiced and welcomed him back home. People's lives have been wasted for years. Oh, if they could only get them back! There's evil all around us out there in the world. There was a lot of evil going on in Sodom and Gomorrah. Young People, let God lead you. God has something better for you."

**10:00 A.M.—Saturday**—Speaker: Bro. Mick Akers, pastor of the Church of God in Patton, Pennsylvania. Title: "The Inaugural Anointing." Text: I John 2:21-27. This full-length message, Lord willing, will be printed in an upcoming issue.

For some photos from  
this wonderful convention,  
turn to page 21.

**2:30 P.M.**—This was a time chosen for an Ordinance Service—the Lord’s Supper and Feet Washing. The Lord’s presence was real. Those who took part were blessed by being in this service.

Afterwards, we had a baptismal service. Those baptized were: Sammy Crooks, Cameron Deville, Kyle Richards, Annika, Ryan, and Valerie Shenberger, Daniel and Jessica Swain.

**7:00 P.M.**—Speaker: Bro. Paul Wilson of the local congregation. Title: “There Is Still Hope in God.” Text: John 11:1-16; 18-27. Excerpts: “Jesus came to seek and to save the lost. Bring your cares to Jesus. When there seems to be no way out, when it seems dark and dreary, there is hope in God. Sin is a horrible pit. When the Word of God goes forth in power and people will listen, there will be a shaking. Something will happen. Jesus said, ‘I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.’ He also said, ‘Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.’ He will calm the troubled waters of your soul.”

**9:30 A.M.—Sunday**—A few of our Sunday school children participated in the opening preliminaries. Bro. Doug Shenberger gave us the synopsis of the lesson entitled, “Patient in Tribulation.”

**10:30 A.M.**—Speaker: Bro. Tim Crooks from Jonesville, Louisiana. Title: “The Value of Your Soul.” Text: Mark 8:34- 37. Excerpts: “We want to talk about value. *Value* is ‘the regard that something is held in reserve; the importance, worth, or usefulness of something.’ We read in Luke 12:16-20 about the farmer who had a bountiful crop. He tore down his barns to build greater. His said to his soul, ‘Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry,’ but God said to him, ‘Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?’ God has a plan for you. He sent His Son to hang on the cross to die for you. That’s how much He values your soul. His precious blood can redeem your soul. Only you know what the value of your soul is. I know God sees the value of your soul. Until you put the proper value on your soul, you’re not going to do anything to change it. Jesus is here to save you. If I could choose for you, I would do so, but Christ has paid the price to redeem your soul.”

**6:00 P.M.**—Speaker: Bro. Ray Hydes from Grand Cayman. Title: “Jesus Came to Make the Impossible Possible.” Text: Acts 7:54-60; 8:1-3. Excerpts: “Jesus has changed and touched many lives. It is difficult to overestimate the influence of the apostle Paul. He is known worldwide as one of the greatest missionaries. The Lord changed Saul to Paul. He was converted. God changes the bad record to something good. It is amazing what the Lord will do if you will allow Him. If we stay close to God, He will never leave us. Sanctification is very important. It will keep us grounded. The Lord had a plan for Paul. Paul became a chosen vessel to be used of God. Christ gives you a new heart. Being a Christian is a simple life. Living a Christian life is not a complicated life. If the Lord could change Saul to Paul, He can do the same for you. Are you a glad to be a Christian? I am a child of God, praise the Lord! There are only two destinations—heaven or hell. Unsaved

Friend, Jesus has a plan for you just like He had for Paul. With Jesus in our hearts, we can be changed. Do you want to feel safe and secure? The best feeling to have is that whatever happens, you are ready to go. It is not how we start, it’s how we’ll finish. Paul said at the end of his life, ‘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.’ May the Lord help us to have that same testimony at the end of our lives. Unsaved Ones, let the Lord save you.”

*Thank the Lord for a wonderful convention and the work that was accomplished. We trust those who were helped spiritually have been encouraged to press the battle on. Everyone worked together in harmony, whether it was in the temporal or spiritual affairs of the convention.*

*We are looking forward to another convention next year if the Lord tarries His coming. †*

#### 2019 HAGERSTOWN CONVENTION

CD’s are available of these wonderful services. These may be purchased for \$3.00 each. Any orders of 10 or more, \$2.50 each. The complete set of 16 preaching services, plus 5 musical CD’s, \$50.00.

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- \_\_\_ CD #1046 Christ’s Desire for His Church—G. E. Tyler
- \_\_\_ CD #1047 One Spirit, One Mind—David Shaw
- \_\_\_ CD #1048 People Need the Lord—Harley McClung
- \_\_\_ CD #1049 A Desire for the Faith of the Gospel—Raymond Martin
- \_\_\_ CD #1050 At Evening It Shall Be Light—Donovan Darby
- \_\_\_ CD #1051 For the Work’s Sake—Doug Koerner
- \_\_\_ CD #1052 What the Lord Has Restored—David Goble
- \_\_\_ CD #1053 A Great Work in the Day of Small Things  
—Darrell Sanford
- \_\_\_ CD #1054 Are You Breaking the First and Great Commandment?  
—Doug Shenberger
- \_\_\_ CD #1055 The Effectiveness of Praying in Faith—David Shaw
- \_\_\_ CD #1056 Ponder the Path of Thy Feet—Matt Deville
- \_\_\_ CD #1057 The Inaugural Anointing—Mick Akers
- \_\_\_ CD #1058 Ordinance Service
- \_\_\_ CD #1059 There Is Still Hope in God—Paul Wilson
- \_\_\_ CD #1060 The Value of Your Soul—Tim Crooks
- \_\_\_ CD #1061 Jesus Can Make the Impossible Possible—Ray Hydes
  
- \_\_\_ CD #291 Singing #1
- \_\_\_ CD #292 Singing #2
- \_\_\_ CD #293 Singing #3
- \_\_\_ CD #294 Singing #4
- \_\_\_ CD #295 Singing #5

**Please remember this ministry in your prayers that the Lord will continue to provide the financial wherewithal to publish the truth.**

# CHRIST'S DESIRE FOR HIS CHURCH

2019 HAGERSTOWN CONVENTION MESSAGE BY BRO. GREG TYLER



**T**HERE IS NOTHING like being a saint of God and the fellowship that we have in Christ. My thoughts this morning are entitled, “Christ’s Desire for His Church.” Christ has a desire for His church. He only has one bride—the bride of Christ—the Church of the living God. Every soul who is saved and has his name written in the Lamb’s book of life is part of that organization. She is His. She belongs to Him, as does every individual who is saved. He has a desire for His bride.

I read this verse from Philippians 1:27, and it really made an impression on me: “Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel.” So much is in this verse of scripture; and although the apostle Paul is the one who penned it, Paul was speaking for Christ. It was Christ’s desire and will that Paul was expressing in this verse. Just like when Peter spoke or John spoke, they spoke for the Lord. They were moved upon by the Holy Spirit. So we can assume that the points in this verse of scripture is the desire of Christ for His church.

Paul begins by saying, “Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ.” Christ wants His church to be holy. *Conversation* here means more than just “talk.” It’s your “manner of living.” It’s what you say and do; it’s what you think and how you act. It’s the entirety of your life. It is Christ’s desire for every member of His church to live a certain way, according to the Word of God “as it becometh the gospel of Christ.” To *become* something is to make it beautiful, pleasant, attractive, and to adorn it. Paul used the term *adorn* in Titus when he said “that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.” So, we’re not only to live the gospel, we’re to adorn it. We’re to make it beautiful. I think if we live it out with all of our hearts, and be conscientious, we can adorn the doctrine of Christ.

Paul goes on further to say “... that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs ...” Christ is seeing what we do, no matter where we are; and not just at camp meeting time, but every day of our lives. “... that ye stand fast.” Church, that is Christ’s desire for us. He’s not willing that any should perish. He doesn’t want one of us to backslide. He wants us to stand fast in the faith. Don’t take a step backwards. Don’t give an inch to the enemy. Fight the good fight of faith. Stand your ground. We’re not fighting alone. We have God on our side. He’s the Captain who has never lost a battle. We not only have God on our side, we have the saints on our side. As soldiers of the cross, we’re part of the army of the Lord. We should support one another in this battle. It is a battle, but the Lord wants us to stand.

Paul said in Ephesians 6:13, “Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.” Christ’s desire for His church is to stand strong. Stand fast; not moved. Stick with the truth. Don’t change it for something else. “Buy the truth, and sell it not.” Let us stand fast in one spirit. There are a lot of religious spirits in the world, but Christ wants us to stand together in one spirit, which is the Spirit of God. Every true child of God has the same spirit. “The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.”

Paul said in I Corinthians 12:13, “For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.” Unity of the Spirit is more than just a union. It’s not a union of spirits. Unity of the Spirit is having the Holy Spirit and striving together in that same Spirit. This is Christ’s desire for His church.

## A MIND TO WORK TOGETHER

Having a mind to work. “... with one mind”—the mind of Christ. Having a mind to labor in the kingdom of God. Having a mind to stay true. Romans 12:16, “Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits.” Have one mind; a mind of humility, and esteem others better than yourself. That’s one thing I appreciate about this ministry that we have. These brethren from Jamaica, from the States, or wherever they’re from, they are humble men. There’s no big “I’s” among us. “Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits.” When I see someone who wants to put self on display, I guard against that thing. We want to have the mind of Christ. You know, Christ even had a humble mind, and He was the Son of God.

When Nehemiah found out that the walls of Jerusalem were broken down, the Bible tells us that he wept. As we look upon the situation of the world today, it should cause us to weep. We should have a burden for the world around us. The world is collapsing. There’s no foundation. The church needs to be strengthened. The walls need to be rebuilt. In Nehemiah, you’ll find the scripture that says “the people had a mind to work.” I trust we have a mind to work this week. The work is not just for the ministry. It’s for ourselves. There’s a job for all of us to do.

Sis. Stutzie wrote a chorus years ago—  
*We have a job to do,  
For the world is lost and dying,  
Christ will see us through;  
On His Spirit we’re relying,*

*Christ is the world's great need;  
We'll lift Him up in word and deed.  
From the paths of sin we'll bring them in  
We'll work and win!*

I trust that is our mind this morning.

We must not be striving *against* one another. The scripture says, "... striving together." We have a mountain to move, and we ought to be pushing in the same direction—never running down one another. Saints of God, never run down one another. Build up! Galatians 5:13-15, "For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another." Listen to the Word of God. Never bite and devour one another. Build one another up in the most holy faith. The devil will do his best to tear us down, but we as brethren need to build up one another. Striving together, for what? "... for the faith of the gospel"; not for my gospel; not for your gospel, not for any person's benefit, but for the gospel of Christ.

Jude said, "Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints." The original faith of Jesus Christ is what we need to strive together for.

### **CHRIST'S BURDEN FOR HIS PEOPLE**

The word that caught my attention that is the gist of this message is the word, *together*. Christ's desire for His church is that we strive together; not against one another, but locking arms in fighting the good fight of faith and standing together. Matthew 12:25, "And Jesus knew their thoughts, and said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand." A house that is divided against itself will not stand. If the church fights amongst itself, criticizes one another, bites and devours one another, it is not going to stand. The true church will not do that. We will stand together and fight for the faith of the gospel. Christ's desire for His church is that we strive *together*.

Christ's burden can be seen in John 17:21. We see His burden as He prays: "That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." Can't you feel the burden of Christ? It is Christ's desire for His church that we be one. Standing together, providing a united front that the world may believe that He was sent from God. One reason why the world is in such a bad shape as it is, it is because those professing to be God's people can't seem to get along with one another. I'm not speaking about our congregation here, because we have peace in our congregation, but among the professing Church of God's out there, they're fighting and devouring one another. Shame! shame! shame!

It is Christ's will that His people dwell together in unity. "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!" There's that word

again: *together*. 489 times you will find the word *together* in the Bible. I didn't count them. I have a computer program that told me that, but I believe it. Almost 500 times the word *together* is used.

I remember one time Bro. Terry and Sis. Carol came for a visit. I don't know if it was for a revival or what, but we had an extra day, and Bro. Terry wanted to see Harpers Ferry. We had six of our children close together in the van at that time and also Bro. Terry and Sis. Carol. The place we went to at Harpers Ferry was closed that day, and Melody, our daughter, said, "Well, at least we're together, Dad." Then it started raining and here we were together in that van. There is something special about being together. We're not alone.

### **WE ARE NOT ALONE**

All the saved together are one organization—one building, one city, one church. There's only one. I want you to get a vision this morning and see the desire of Christ for His church. Ephesians 4:4-6, "There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all." That's Bible! There's only one God and only one true faith. There's only one body—the body of Christ. If we're a part of it, we have something to rejoice about. What a blessing to be a part of the body of Christ!

It is easy for people to get the idea that they're the only ones. I think Elijah got to that place one time when he thought he was the only one, and he was told that there were 7,000 who had not bowed the knee to Baal. Some people have a tendency to think that they're the only ones. Let's see what Paul said to the Corinthian church. I Corinthians 1:1, 2: "Paul called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and Sosthenes our brother, Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both their's and our's." Jesus Christ is not only our Lord, but others as well who have been redeemed and are living the truth—others we don't know about. He's one Lord. There's only one Lord; and Paul says "all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both their's and our's." Thank God, He is our Lord! He protects us like He does the sparrows. But we are not the only ones!

Dear Ones, we need each other. We're not in this alone. We need one another. All the congregations of the Church of God across the United States and across the world need to be united together. Every saint of God needs to be laboring together. Can you imagine the power that would be in our midst if people would just submit and stop fighting against God's will? Christ's desire for His church is that we be one.

### **QUICKENED TOGETHER**

We are quickened together. There's so much that happens to us that others also experience. Ephesians, chapter 2, beginning with verse 1: "And you hath he quickened [made alive], who were dead in trespasses and sins; Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the

power of the air [In other words, we were following the devil.], the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. [Everyone in this building once walked in the pathway of sin, but Jesus reached down and lifted us out.] But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ [In others words, wherever you were saved, you became a part of the family of God. You experienced conviction and repented of your sins and became a child of God. Whether it was in Haiti, Jamaica, Africa, Louisiana, Mississippi, or Maryland, it didn't matter. We were made alive together.], (by grace ye are saved;) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." We're sitting together in heavenly places this week. This a heavenly place this morning.

### **FITLY FRAMED TOGETHER**

Christ wants us to assemble ourselves *together*, whether it be two or three or a hundred. Hebrews 10:25, "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." We're not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together. I know we use this scripture locally a lot of times for our local services, but I think it fits at camp meeting, too, when the saints come in from the four corners and we fellowship one another. We should not forsake assembling together. We should take advantage of these times. I appreciate those who took their vacation this week to be with the saints. For all the visitors who've traveled so far to be with us, it means something. God wants us to assemble together regularly. We need that.

Ephesians 2:21, 22: "In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit." Fitly framed together! God does the framing, but we're fitted together. We're all part of the body of Christ. God makes us fit together; and when we fit together, He doesn't just leave us there. He attaches us. Things are attached when you're building something. Things can be attached with nails, or maybe screws, or some kind of adhesive. The gospel has an adhesive. It's the love of God that binds us all together. We fit into the family of God and we're connected with each other. Again, the Church of God is more than just one congregation. It's a universal body; it's a worldwide body. We're made to fit in our place in the body of Christ overall. It's love that holds us together and helps us to make it through.

What is love? Let us look at I Corinthians 13 briefly. "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. [Are you listening?] And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity [or love], it profiteth me nothing.

Charity suffereth long [That's why the adhesive holds us together as the body of Christ, because we suffer long with one another. We're not easily offended. We love one another with a pure heart fervently.], and is kind [without exception, even to your enemy.]; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own [no selfishness in love], is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Charity never faileth: ... And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity." Love is the adhesive that holds us together—the pure, unselfish love of God.

### **JOINED AND TEMPERED TOGETHER**

We're still talking about striving together. I Corinthians 12:24, "For our comely parts have no need: but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that part which lacked." I don't know why, but when I think of tempered, I think of welding two pieces together and pounding it out while hot, then when it cools, it has been said it's stronger than the original because it won't break where it was tempered together. *Tempered* means, "to treat, as to increase strength." We're stronger as a unit than we are by ourselves. We draw strength from one another; we draw hope from one another.

We're joined together. Ephesians 4:16, "From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love." Isn't that a beautiful verse of scripture? "... fitly joined together ... edifying of itself in love." That's the Church of God. We're connected to each other. We're all part of the same body.

Luke 24:14, 15. These verses speak of Jesus after He arose from the dead. We're still talking about striving together. "And they talked together of all these things which had happened. And it came to pass, that, while they communed together and reasoned, Jesus himself drew near, and went with them." Some people forbid their congregation to even talk or commune with other saints. Did you know that? When we talk among ourselves and commune together, it opens up the door for God to reveal some things to us. Communicating together! Christ's desire is that we rejoice together. It's one thing to rejoice by yourself, but it's greater when we rejoice together. When one member of the body suffers, we suffer with it; when one member rejoices, we rejoice with it.

John 14:36 says, "He that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together." Together! We must be together. Paul said in Romans, "That I may be comforted together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me." Comforted together! We can comfort one another. We should comfort one another. As God comforts us, we can comfort one another. In times of sorrow and in times of difficulty, the saint is very precious. He's one who is beside you, laboring with you, and feeling what you're feeling.



First Corinthians 3:9, “For we are labourers together with God: ye are God’s husbandry, ye are God’s building.” We are laborers together with God. There are no lazy Christians. Everyone has a job to do. We’re laborers *together*. We need to labor together for the cause of Christ. Again, not for ourselves, but for the cause of Christ. We are God’s husbandry, His garden. He’s still working on me.

We’re workers *together*. II Corinthians 6:1, “We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain.” We’re workers together with Christ. If I am working together with Christ, and you’re working together with Christ, we’re workers together ourselves, because we’re workers together with Christ.

Praying *together*. When Peter was put into prison, the church went to praying. In the book of Acts, we read, “And when he had considered the thing, he came to the house of Mary the mother of John, whose surname was Mark; where many were gathered together praying.” We all have individual prayers and that’s a necessity to keep our salvation, but there’s something special about praying together, hearing other saints pray and agree with you. God wants us to pray together. One can put a thousand to flight, and two, ten thousand. Jesus said, “If two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done.”

We’re to be followers *together* of Him. Philippians 3:17, “Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample.” Followers together of Christ! There’s something about following together. As we follow Christ, we draw closer to Him, but something else also happens. We get closer to each other. It’s beautiful! Christ has a plan for us to be together.

### OUR HEARTS ARE KNIT TOGETHER

Our hearts are *knit together*. Colossians 2:2, “That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgement of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ.” Praise the Lord! The saints’ hearts were knit together in love. Can we share the same thing? I think so. Some saints I never knew existed a few years ago, I find my heart knit together with them. Sis. Renee and her family and others of the saints. Our hearts are knit together in love; not judgmental of one another, but building up one another. Rejoicing that God saved others in other places as well as here. When a person is saved in Jamaica, he’s saved to the church, and we rejoice. We heard that Bro. Jimmy was saved in Mississippi. I had never met him, but we rejoiced. That was a wonderful answer to prayer. Our hearts are knit together! I hope you’ve begun to see the importance of us being together, Saints. That’s a burden Christ has for His church.

### SAINTS WILL BE CAUGHT UP TOGETHER

Let me tell you something else, and this thought thrilled me: we’re going to be caught up together. The church in Thessalonica was worried because they were expecting Jesus to return to the earth immediately and their loved ones were dying off, so Paul responded to that. I Thessalonians 4, beginning with verse 13: “But

I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep [those who have died] in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first.” This is not talking about two different resurrections. This is not talking about the resurrection of Christians and a separate resurrection of unsaved people. This is talking about those who are dead in Christ. “Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.” When that day comes, we shall be caught up *together* with all the saints of God. We shall be caught up with the Lord in the air. What a time that will be!

### CONCLUSION

We are heirs *together*. I Peter 3:7, “Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.” Heirs together! Romans 8:17, “And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ [If I’m a joint-heir with Christ, and you’re a joint-heir with Christ, we’re joint-heirs together.]; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.” Hallelujah! We’re going to be glorified *together*. I haven’t thought much of being glorified, have you?

Christ’s desire for His church is that we, as His children, be together; not striving against one another, but striving together for the gospel of Christ. Let us strive together, not only this week, but in the years ahead. Let us be drawn closer to God and to each other.

Finally, all the saved will be in heaven together throughout the ceaseless ages of eternity. When we get to heaven, we’ll see the saints there. We’ll be together. There’s no divisiveness in heaven, and there ought not to be any divisions among the saints here on earth. †

#### OUR SERVICES ON CD’S

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- \_\_\_ CD #1044 Commitment—Gary Alwell
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- \_\_\_ CD #1066 Faithful in the Least—Doug Shenberger
- \_\_\_ CD #1067 Our Attitude Towards Sin—Brian Richards
- \_\_\_ CD #1068 Sin, When It Is Finished—G. E. Tyler
- \_\_\_ CD #1069 What Is Your Desire?—Paul Wilson

## THE POETRY PAGE

### GRACE AND PROVIDENCE

Ida Goldsmith Morris

Almighty King! whose wondrous hand  
Supports the weight of sea and land;  
Whose grace is such a boundless store,  
No heart shall break that sighs for more.

Thy providence supplies my food,  
And 'tis thy blessing makes it good;  
My soul is nourished by thy Word,  
Let soul and body praise the Lord.

My streams of outward comfort came  
From him who built this earthly frame;  
Whate'er I want his bounty gives,  
By whom my soul forever lives.

Either his hand preserves from pain,  
Or, if I feel it, heals again;  
From Satan's malice shields my breast,  
Or overrules it for the best.

Forgive the song that falls so low  
Beneath the gratitude I owe;  
It means thy praise, however poor;  
An angel's song can do no more.

### THE JOURNEY OF LIFE

Paulett Barrett

The way is rough and dreary,  
The feet get tired and weary;  
Keep going without fear,  
For the end is near.

The world doesn't seem to care,  
But for a cure, the Word is there;  
Jesus bore the cross alone,  
He paid the cost, my sins atoned.

Why linger along the path  
When the way is already paved,  
Is not the Savior there to guide,  
And the angels to guard on every side?

Lift up your eyes to heaven,  
And see the glory that is given;  
Continue your journey and His way defend,  
He'll see you through right to the end.

### A PRESENT HELP

Lucena C. Byrum

My very soul cried in distress,  
"What can I, can I do?"  
Right in that anguish Jesus said,  
"I've not forgotten you."  
He laid His hand upon my brow,  
His face I could not see,  
But, oh, the presence of His love  
Was richly over me!  
The message He put in my mind  
Has never died away;  
It grows in beauty more and more,  
It's in my heart to stay!

### HE CARES

Will H. Smith

"Oh, carest Thou not that we perish,  
Oh, say is it nothing to Thee?"  
Cried the frightened disciples of Jesus  
One night on the old Galilee.

"Oh, carest Thou not that we perish?"  
With this He awakened from sleep,  
Rebuking the winds and the billows,  
And soon there was clam o'er the deep.

### THE PURE IN HEART

John Keble

Blest are the pure in heart,  
For they shall see our God;  
The secret of the Lord is theirs;  
Their soul is Christ's abode.

Still to the lowly soul  
He doth Himself impart,  
And for His temple and His throne  
Selects the pure in heart.

Lord, we Thy presence seek,  
May ours this blessing be;  
O give the pure and lowly heart,  
A temple meet for Thee. †

#### VIEW OUR WORSHIP SERVICES LIVE!

As many of our readers know, we can be found on the internet at [www.wayoftruth.org](http://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. Tune in and worship with us!

# WINNING A CROWN

By the late C. W. Naylor



## Part XIII

### The Sanctified Life—Some Misapprehensions

**T**HERE ARE many misapprehensions regarding the sanctified life. It will not be possible to mention more than a few of them here, nor will it be necessary to notice these few in detail. Some such misapprehensions are extreme in their nature. A number of years ago a religious teacher who at that time was enjoying a great deal of notoriety was conversing with a lady who professed the experience of entire sanctification. This teacher was an opposer of the doctrine. While talking with her upon the subject, he moistened the corner of his handkerchief and, watching his opportunity, he rubbed it across her neck. As she had just alighted from the cars after a long trip, the handkerchief was, as he had expected it to be, soiled somewhat. In triumph he held it up before her, declaring it to be a conclusive argument that she could not possibly be sanctified. Of course, this was ridiculous, but it showed his idea of sanctification. He published the incident with much glee in his paper. To him it was conclusive disproof of the doctrine.

Although few people make such errors as this, there are those who feel that sanctification unfits us for the ordinary employments of life. They think it raises us up to some sort of superhuman state and quite takes us out of and away from ordinary things. This, however, is not true. Sanctification purifies our hearts and fills us with the Holy Spirit, and we are then more than ever in a position to be natural in our life. It makes us pure and holy, but not superhuman. We are still only men with the faculties and powers of men, with this added, that the Holy Ghost dwells in us and possesses us.

Another error is that, to maintain such a life, we must hold ourselves aloof from others, or that it makes one feel that he will be contaminated by contact with others. Sanctification does not make us Pharisees. It does not take us out of the natural relations of life. It only fits us more perfectly for them. Jesus was our perfect example in this respect, and He took part in all the affairs of life and mingled with all sorts and classes of people, yet He kept Himself unspotted from the world. He was "separate from sinners" even when He mingled with them and was most closely associated with them. He partook of none of their sins; He kept Himself aloof from all that was bad in their lives; but in other things He partook with them. So may we. We may fill our part in the social world and in all the relations of life in a way becoming to Christians and in a way that is pure and holy. To feel that we are better than others and to hold ourselves aloof from them will not attract them to our religion; on the contrary, it will make them despise us. It is only pride that leads to such an isolation. We must not partake of the sins of sinners, and that sometimes will keep us out of their company; but we should not carry the separation farther than is proper. We should be sociable and neighborly at all times.

It is supposed by many and taught by some teachers of holiness that when we are once sanctified we cannot fall from that state. This too is a misapprehension, a doctrine that the Scriptures do not teach. After being sanctified we are still moral agents and have the power of choice; we can still choose the evil as well as the good. We are in a world of temptation, to which we can yield at any time. I John 3:9 is sometimes taken to prove that we cannot sin if we are sanctified. It says, "He cannot sin, because he is born of God." This applies, however, to all that are born of God, and must be considered as a moral, not an actual, impossibility. We can sin if we will to sin, but if we will not to sin, we can refrain from sinning, by the grace of God. We cannot sin while we love God, nor while He has His way in our lives. Hebrews 10:29 is conclusive evidence upon this subject. It says, "Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?" This clearly asserts that sanctified people may not only fall, but may become worthy of sore punishment.

A misapprehension allied to the one just considered is that if we do fall we cannot be restored. This finds no foundation in the Scriptures. They teach no such thing. On the contrary, they teach us that all sin except sin against the Holy Ghost is forgivable; that if a man repents he will be forgiven, and not only forgiven, but restored to his former state through the grace of God.

Another and rather common misapprehension is that if we are sanctified the human imperfections are all gone, and that we shall therefore make no mistakes. Such a thing would be possible only if we were made infinite in knowledge and power. We shall never be so; we shall come short in many things on account of the imperfections of our faculties. But mistakes are not sinful in their nature and do not contaminate the soul. Still another error is the supposition that in sanctification all the human passions are destroyed. We are still human, and we shall so continue. God created the human passions for a wise and good purpose, and they still serve that wise and good purpose in the sanctified.

The doctrine of entire sanctification is reasonable. It appeals to our reason; and if we look at it as it really is, it is convincing, it is beautiful and uplifting. It excites our admiration and makes us long for the experience.

### Justified and Sanctified Life Compared

There is no small difference between the justified life and the sanctified life. The line dividing them is no imaginary line. In the justified life we have "peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." We have grace to live above sin; otherwise we could not keep justified. We have within our hearts the Spirit of adoption whereby we cry, "Abba, Father." This Spirit bears witness with our spirits that we are the children of God. The blessing of God is upon our lives and upon our hearts. We are often enriched by His presence. We are often filled with thankfulness and appreciation, and sometimes our joy overflows. The justified life is a high and holy life. It is a glorious life, far beyond and above the ways of sin. But above and beyond this life is the sanctified life. It not only includes all that is good in the justified life, but

includes all beyond it that it is God's will to give us here. Some of these greater things we shall now notice.

*The sanctified life means a closer union with God.* In the justified life the Spirit of God is with us and in us as the Spirit of adoption. This Spirit leads, guides, and directs our lives. He has a powerful influence over us, and it is through His power that we live justified lives. In the sanctified life the Spirit of God comes into us as the Sanctifier. He comes to us to possess us in a new and higher and greater sense than before. He comes in all His fullness, glory, and power. He is the Comforter, the Preserver, the Sanctifier. When we are wholly sanctified, we know from practical experience what it means to be "filled with the Holy Ghost." From henceforth we are the tabernacles in which He abides. In us He works the good pleasure of God. This important feature often remains almost unnoticed because of the great emphasis placed upon the cleansing feature of sanctification. The cleansing, however, is only a negative thing. It is merely a step in the process of God's possessing us more fully; only a taking out of the way of barriers to his full possession. The coming into our hearts of the Holy Spirit is the really great thing in the sanctified experience.

True, the cleansing is very necessary; there can be no sanctification without it; and the Spirit will not come into us until we are cleansed; but if we magnify too much this particular feature, it will cause us to base our hope of sanctification or our faith in our sanctification on what we consider as the internal evidences of that cleansing. This opens the door to all sorts of spiritual trouble. This is the reason why so many people never become established. They are always looking within at their own feelings, their own emotions, and the things that concern them; whereas the real question is, Is the Holy Ghost abiding in me? Has the Holy Ghost come into my heart? Is it He who is working therein to do the good pleasure of God?

Let us not overlook this fact, that in sanctification there is a presence with us, an abiding presence ever and always with us. I do not mean that it is always being manifested to our emotions and our sensibilities; it is, however, always present in our lives; its power is there, and it is working there whether we can feel it and be conscious of it or not. The Spirit is not always saying to us, "I am here, I am here, I am here." He is often quiet, but when the need comes, He shows His presence and His power. A wire may be highly charged with electricity, and still we cannot discern the fact by looking at the wire, nor by listening to it, nor by any motion that it may have; but when there is opportunity, that power is manifested. So it is with the Spirit in our lives. Sometimes we cannot tell by our feelings that He is present, nor by any emotion nor in any other way except through faith; but if He is there, when the opportunity and the need come, He will manifest Himself and will work and show that He is indeed the Spirit of God. After He comes into us, He is never absent, unless we grieve Him away. We must carefully distinguish between His presence and His manifestations. If we do not, we throw open the door for all sorts of doubts. †

## THE CHILDREN'S CORNER



### A WARNING

A Bible Lesson by Sis. Rebecca Bland

"Isn't this new highway wonderful?" my dad said to my mother as the car swept along the smooth expanse of asphalt toward Tonoloway Ridge.

"It sure beats driving up Route 40," my mother agreed. "It will cut 'way back on our travel time since we can pass slow traffic whenever we want."

We were on our way to Grandma's house in Pennsylvania, using brand new Interstate 70 for the first time. Mom and Dad could not stop talking about the wonders of the highway.

I was more excited about the car we were driving than I was about the highway. The only cars our family had ever owned were undependable "clunkers," and we always prayed they would get us to our destination. For this trip, however, my dad had borrowed his friend's new car, and our family was riding in style. We four older girls sat in the backseat, fascinated by the speed at which the landscape whizzed by our windows. Baby Rosemary sat up front with our parents.

As we rode along, we caught glimpses of the old road we had always taken when we went to visit Grandma Snyder. Along the new highway were large green signs that led to exit ramps, and our parents called out the names of the towns we were bypassing. Again and again they marveled at our speed and how the miles seemed to melt away.

It wasn't long before my mother exclaimed, "There's a sign for Breezewood already!" She checked her watch. "We haven't even been on the road for an hour!" she added.

"The interstate kind of stops in Breezewood," said my father. "It's confusing, they say. But it doesn't matter. We have to get on Route 30, anyway, to go to your mother's house."

"Well, it sure has been an interesting experience," said my mother. "I can hardly believe how fast this trip has gone!"

Just then there was a terrible noise from underneath the car. My father, who had already slowed down to get off the highway at Breezewood, slowed even more. He turned sharply to my mother. "Did you hear that?" he asked.

"Yes, I did," she answered. "What in the world could it have been?"

"I don't think I hit anything," said my father.

"I hope there's nothing wrong with the car," said my mother. "Maybe we shouldn't have borrowed it."

At that moment, the terrible sound came again. My mother frowned. "There must be something bad wrong

with the car,” she said, “to make an awful noise like that!”

My dad looked sick. “We can’t keep driving the car if it’s got something wrong with it,” he said. “We may ruin it.” He sighed. “The only thing I know to do is to stop at a service station and have them look at it.”

My mother pressed her lips tightly together and said nothing. We knew what she was thinking. We could not afford to pay someone to work on the car.

Twice again we heard the grinding sound coming from beneath the car before my father left the interstate at the traffic light. He pulled into the nearest service station and got out. We saw him walk into the dim interior of the garage and approach a mechanic. We watched as my dad explained our car problem, pointing and gesturing to the interstate from which we had just come. To our surprise, the mechanic threw back his head and laughed. Then he said something to my father. In a moment, my dad was laughing too, shaking his head all the while.

After a few minutes, Dad returned to the car. He was still laughing when he slid into the driver’s seat. “What was all that about?” asked my mother. “What was so funny? Is the car broken, or not?”

“No, it’s fine,” said my father. “There’s nothing wrong with it at all.”

“How could he tell without even looking at it?” asked my mother.

“Because lots of people have been stopping here at the service station with the same concern. They think something is wrong with their car when they hear the grinding sound we heard. But, you see,” said my dad, “back there on the highway, there are raised strips of asphalt. They’re called ‘rumble strips,’ and when your tires run over them, they make a noise to warn you that the interstate is about to end.”

“Can’t people look at the signs?” asked my mother. “There were plenty of signs saying the interstate was ending.”

“Some drivers don’t pay attention to the signs,” said my father. “The rumble strips are to warn them to be prepared to stop. Otherwise, they might run right into the intersection at the same speed they were going on the highway.”

“Well of all things!” said my mother. “Scared me to death! Would have been nice to know about the ‘rumble strips’ ahead of time!”

“A warning that there was going to be a warning?” asked my father with a chuckle.

My mother sniffed. “Something like that,” she said.

Those rumble strips are on the road yet today at the place where Interstate 70 intersects with Route 30 in Breezewood, and every time I run over them with my own car tires, I remember the day I heard them for the first time.

There is no way of knowing how many lives have been saved by that simple, yet effective warning system. Day and night, it remains in place, keeping motorists aware of danger ahead.

In just that way, God watches over His children day and night. He protects our physical bodies, and He

warns us of dangers that would take away our spiritual life.

This month’s wise saying comes from Proverbs 3:26, which says, “For the Lord shall be thy confidence, and shall keep thy foot from being taken.” In Bible times, people often set traps to catch wild animals that were destroying their crops. When an animal’s foot stepped into the trap, it was “taken” or caught.

Temptations lie all around us like traps. If we step into them, we will be caught. Our Bible verse tells us that the Lord is able to keep us from being taken by temptation. If we remember to read the Bible, pray to God every day, and listen to our parents and godly teachers, we can learn how to resist temptation. The words of wise teachers are like “rumble strips,” that warn us of spiritual dangers and help us to avoid them.

### Activity

God’s Word contains many warnings to keep us out of trouble. See if you can find one that starts with each of the letters of the word “WARNING.” (Three of them have been done for you.)

**W** \_\_\_\_\_ and pray that ye enter not into temptation.

**A** \_\_\_\_\_

**R** \_\_\_\_\_ the devil and he will flee from you.

**N** \_\_\_\_\_

**I** \_\_\_\_\_

**N** \_\_\_\_\_ give place to the devil.

**G** \_\_\_\_\_

NOTE: Be sure to include the location where each warning is found in the Bible.

### Answers to Last Month’s Activity

1. “If ye walk in my statutes, and keep my commandments, and do them, Then I will give you rain in due season, and the land shall yield her increase, and the trees of the field shall yield their fruit” (Leviticus 26:3, 4).
2. “If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat the good of the land” (Isaiah 1:19).
3. “But he said, Yea rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it” (Luke 11:28). †

#### 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.

# The Leadings of the Holy Spirit

Radio Message by the  
late Bro. Alvin Craig



**I** WOULD LIKE to speak today on the thought, “The Leadings of the Holy Spirit,” using as a pilot text for our thoughts, St. John, chapter 14, verse 26: “But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.”

*Spirit holy in me dwelling,  
Ever work as thou shalt choose;  
All my ransomed pow'rs and talents  
For thy purpose thou shalt use.*

*O how sweet is thy abiding!  
O how tender is the love  
Thou dost shed abroad within me  
From the Father-heart above!*

*Thou hast cleansed me for thy temple,  
Garnished with thy graces rare;  
All my soul thou art enriching  
By thy fullness dwelling there.*

*In me now reveal thy glory,  
Let thy might be ever shown;  
Keep me from the world's defilement,  
Sacred for thyself alone.*

Chorus:  
*Spirit holy, Spirit holy,  
All my being now possess;  
Lead me, rule me, work within me,  
Through my life thy will express.*

—A hymn written by the late C. W. Naylor

As we think about the leadings of the Holy Spirit, I would like to emphasize the fact that there are many things to lead the soul astray. Yes, there are many influences at work in the world today to lead the soul astray. If you are a young person, a child still in school, there are influences and teachings there that would lead your soul astray. If you are a worker in public work, there are influences and people there that would lead your soul astray. Even in the religious world, there are spirits and false doctrines and false teachings that would lead your soul astray. Professing Christians who do not really know the Lord and do not love the truth would influence you wrong and lead you astray. We are told by the apostle John in I John 4:1, “Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of

God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.”

First of all, if you are an unsaved person, the Holy Spirit will lead you to repentance. Yes, the Spirit of God will lead you to repentance if you will follow His leadership. Without the convicting, drawing power of the Spirit of God, no unsaved person can be saved. We read in Genesis 6:3, where the Lord said, “My spirit shall not always strive with man.” When you feel sorrowful for your sins, when you feel guilty for your sins, it's because the Holy Spirit is working and dealing with you. You need to respond to the Spirit and let Him draw you to that fountain filled with blood that's drawn from Immanuel's veins. You need to be led to Christ that you might truly repent of and be saved from your sins.

Having been justified through the blood of Christ, having been justified by God pardoning you, by redeeming you, the Holy Spirit will then lead you to be sanctified. Yes, the Holy Spirit will lead you to the experience that the Bible terms, *sanctification* (the infilling of the Holy Spirit). I'm not talking about some wildfire thing now, nor acting unseemly. I'm talking about that experience wherein the Holy Spirit comes into your heart and life to abide with you, to teach you, to lead you, and to give you power that you might live a victorious life in this sin-cursed world in which we live. Our text declares, “But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.” So, the Holy Spirit will lead the justified person to be sanctified, to be filled with the Spirit.

The Holy Spirit will lead saints of God into fellowship one with another. God does not divide His people. The Spirit of God does not divide saints of God. There has to be another spirit at work to divide true Christians. I'm talking about true Christians now, because the Word of God does tell us, “And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness but rather reprove them” (Ephesians 5:11). But the Spirit of God will lead saints of God into fellowship with one another. The Spirit of God will lead saints of God to work one with another, to labor together in behalf of the spread of the gospel, in behalf of the souls of men, and in the propagation of the truth of the gospel.

The Holy Spirit will lead in daily living. Yes, we need the Holy Spirit's leadership. “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God” (Romans 8:14). We read in the fourth chapter of the book of Matthew of how the Spirit of God led Jesus into the wilderness. He was led there and He fasted for forty days and forty nights. Jesus was tempted by the devil, but the power of God was with Him and in Him, and He overcame the devil.

The Spirit of God leads through His Word and through the leadership that God has placed in the church. There are leaders in God's church and we're to obey those who have the rule over us. In many instances, the Holy Spirit leading a man of God to pastor a flock of God will lead through that man of God. Not just in our own daily lives, but in our working together in a congregation of saints, God, doubtless will many times

lead us through His appointed leader. When the man of God who is leading the flock is being led by God and by the Spirit of God, then he and the congregation are being led by the Holy Spirit.

Now, this does not mean we are infallible, whether it be a pastor, or a member of the congregation. We are not infallible. We are still human though we have been saved from sin and no longer sinners. We are still human and will make mistakes. Yes, saints of God make mistakes, but making a mistake does not mean that we have lost the Spirit of God out of our lives. It should, however, cause us to be more careful and to seek a closer walk with God. When we see that we have made a mistake, it should cause us to be more careful, more prayerful, more considerate that we might draw closer to God and avoid those things. But, Beloved, as long as we live in the flesh, we are subject to making mistakes. Again, I'm not talking about known sin. I'm talking about making mistakes.

The Holy Spirit leads into the truth. We read in John 7:17, "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself." We also read in John 16:13, "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come." So the Holy Spirit leads into truth because He is the Spirit of truth. A man who propagates a doctrine contrary to truth is not led by the Spirit of God. Do not be offended by what I said. A man who propagates a false doctrine is not being led by the Holy Spirit. Isaiah said in chapter 8:20, "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." I'm not saying that a Christian cannot have a misunderstanding of some verse of scripture, but I am saying that when a man propagates a doctrine that is contrary to the truth of the Word of God, he is not being led by the Spirit, for the Spirit of God is not the author of confusion. God is not the author of confusion. The Spirit of God is the Spirit of truth.

The Holy Spirit leads in church work. We read in the 16<sup>th</sup> chapter of the book of Acts where the apostle Paul wanted to do a certain work, but the Spirit of God forbade him to do it at that particular time and place. The Spirit of God did make known to him where he was to go. The Spirit of God led him, and as he followed the leadership of the Spirit of God, he was mightily used of God in establishing congregations of God in different places. We read in the book of Acts where Paul (known as Saul at that time), and Barnabas and others were in the congregation at Antioch and the Spirit of God said, "Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them." Yes, the Church of God congregation in Antioch was a spiritual people and they were doing a mighty work for God there. They were fasting and praying and laboring to see the gospel go. They fasted and prayed some more and laid their hands upon those brethren and sent them out to do a mighty work for God.

We read in the 8<sup>th</sup> chapter of Acts about Philip going to the city of Samaria. He was being led by the Spirit of God. He preached the Word there under the anoint-

ing and power of the Spirit of God. Demons came out of people, sick people were healed, and precious souls were saved. A mighty revival broke out in Samaria, but the Lord led Philip down into a desert place to minister to a man who had been up to Jerusalem and was on his way back to his home country. God saw the honesty and the sincerity of that man's heart. He sent Philip down there to bring him the true message. He had not found that true message among the Jewish people in Jerusalem, but Philip was sent by God to bring him the message of Christ, the living Savior and Lord. Before they parted company, Philip baptized that man and he went on his way rejoicing.

Impressions need to be checked out by the Word. I realize that the Holy Spirit does impress us. That's one way the Holy Spirit leads us, but I say, impressions need to be checked out by the Word of God, because there are other influences that can impress us. Not all impressions come from the Spirit of God. There are other spirits in the world; religious spirits, as I mentioned earlier. These spirits can impress you, too. The devil is second only to God in power. The devil can impress you, so impressions need to be checked out by the Word, because any impression the Holy Spirit gives you will be in harmony with the Word, for the Word and the Spirit agree. The Holy Spirit is not a spirit of fanaticism and a spirit of compromise. The Spirit of God is the Spirit of truth. The Spirit of God leads in harmony with the Word of God.

Now, to be led by the Spirit of God, we must desire to be led and be willing to be led. The Spirit of God will not force us, but the Spirit of God will lead us. We must be willing to be led. We must desire to be led; and if we are, then the Spirit of God will lead us.

Jesus said in His beautiful sermon in Matthew 5:6, "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled." So, if we're hungering and thirsting after the things of God and desire to do the will of God, we're in a place where the Spirit of God can lead us. Paul said in Galatians 5:25, "If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit." Beloved, as we journey through this sin-cursed, sin-sick world, we need the leadership of the Holy Spirit that we'll be able to live to the honor and glory of God. "If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit." †

## OUT OF BOX 88

Dear Saints,

Many thanks to all of you who do the printing and writings of your wonderful magazine. *The Way of Truth* is helping me grow spiritually by reading everything. It gives me hope of a better world to come at the coming of our Lord Christ Jesus, my Savior. Praise God.

Enclosed is an offering for your ministry.

—A. M., Maine

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. The Lord is good to us. God bless all.

—M. G., Pennsylvania



Dear Young People,

Thank the Lord for sparing our lives another month! While He lends us breath, let us all strive to be useful in His work. Remember, while we all have different talents and limitations, there is something for us all to do.

We do not want to be as the unprofitable servant, but we want to be busy making a difference in the world around us. Seek God for His direction on what He would have YOU to do.

This month we have an article written by Sis. Andrea Williams from Craigsville, West Virginia. Her precious family was able to visit our local congregation to deliver this message for our young people. What a sweet blessing that service was!

May the Lord bless and keep you all in His tender care!

Sis. Crystal Gossard

## “VESSELS OF HONOR”

**I** HAVE BEEN thinking of this topic for some time now. How can we be a vessel of honor unto the Lord? Let's start with these verses in Jeremiah:

Jeremiah 18:1-6: “The word which came to Jeremiah from the Lord, saying, Arise, and go down to the potter's house, and there I will cause thee to hear my words. Then I went down to the potter's house, and, behold, he wrought a work on the wheels. And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter: so he made it again another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make it. Then the word of the Lord came to me, saying, O house of Israel, cannot I do with you as this potter? saith the Lord. Behold, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are ye in mine hand, O house of Israel.”



God has something in mind for each of us. No matter how old or how young; big, small—the list could go on. God has a plan for each of our lives.

*Honor* means, “high respect; great esteem; distinction; privilege; glory; tribute; adherence to what is right or to a conventional standard of conduct; integrity; honorableness; honesty; uprightness; something regarded as a rare opportunity and bringing pride and pleasure.” So, when we think about being honorable in the sight of God, it means a lot of things.

When God chooses us, like clay, He has something GREAT in mind for it. He has in mind distinction, privilege, joy, uprightness, favor; but most of all, He is thinking of His pleasure.

Ephesians 2:10, “For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.” God wants to mold us into something He can use. He can't use a person who is the opposite of honor, which is, disgrace, dishonorable, shameful.

II Corinthians 4:7, “But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.”

In this chapter of the Bible, the writer is speaking of character traits that God would like to see us develop. This list is just a short list of what God desires for us:

Integrity: honesty, uprightness, soundness, strong in moral character;

Full of care and love for others;

Generous with our time, effort, and things we have;

Pure from the things of this world.

Have you ever thought about what God is? God is bit of an artist—He's a creator. When I think of an artist, I think of someone who is using his thoughts, his feelings, not just his strength to create something. Think of different kinds of artists: painters, drawers, potters, musicians, and maybe even an architect. All of them take a piece and create it; and then, they display it for all to see. They may even have a show, a performance, or in the case of the potter, or architect, they test it.

You see, in the case of the potter and architect, there is a test. With us, God will test us to see if we serve the function that He has designed for us. If not, He will start over.

Did you know, with pottery, there are certain steps that have to be followed?

1. Sourcing the clay
2. Preparing the clay
3. Centering the clay on the wheel
4. Creating the form (throwing off the lump)
5. Using a string to cut off the lump
6. Place out to dry
7. Store the pot in a cool place to dry
8. Trim and cut
9. Add signature and dry
10. Fire
11. Glaze
12. Glaze firing
13. Sand and grind
14. Finished

Those are a lot of steps, but each of those steps are necessary to reach a desired product; something that is useful.

Many times when I try things, I just say “that won't work,” and give up, but God doesn't give up, and I'm so glad!

Joel 2:13, “And rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the Lord your God: for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil.”

II Chronicles 30:9, “For if ye turn again unto the Lord, your brethren and your children shall find compassion before them that lead them captive, so that they shall come again into this land: for the Lord your God is gracious and merciful, and will not turn away his face from you, if ye return unto him.”

Psalms 116:5, “Gracious is the Lord, and righteous; yea, our God is merciful.”

The process of being made a vessel of honor is not always a pleasant one. Many times we are chastened and subject to repeat hard tests over and over again,



until we finally comprehend what God desires to do in us and through us. He is longing to mold us and to make us after His delight.

Remember, we have this treasure in an earthen vessel. The glory of God rests on us, and as we allow Him to deal with us and to make us, God will be glorified through our lives.

Remember how I said that God has a vision, a plan for your life? He has something special in store.

I want you to think of something that God could use. In fact, close your eyes and really focus on your life. It doesn't matter what your size, age, or personality may be, God has a special thing He would love to do with your life.

Now, open your eyes. God can take something little, even seemingly useless, and make what He desires. You see, it is a divine privilege to be considered and used by God.

When God is able to mold us in the way He pleases, we become useful to Him.

Romans 14:19, "Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another."

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, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

Remember this: being a vessel of honor is a privilege. God creates, molds, and uses us for His good pleasure.

Lots of people say, "I don't want to be used." And, in the eyes of men, we do not look like much. That doesn't really matter, for you see, God wants to mold and use us; and then, this is the best part: He will bless us more than we can even imagine. †

## BIBLE LESSON OF THE MONTH

### JUSTIFICATION

#### BACKSLIDING

**Scriptures:** Matthew 26:69-75; Jeremiah 3:22; Proverbs 14:14.

Matthew 26:69 Now Peter sat without in the palace: and a damsel came unto him, saying, Thou also wast with Jesus of Galilee.

70 But he denied before them all, saying, I know not what thou sayest.

71 And when he was gone out into the porch, another maid saw him, and said unto them that were there, This fellow was also with Jesus of Nazareth.

72 And again he denied with an oath, I do not know the man.

73 And after a while came unto him they that stood by, and said to Peter, Surely thou also art one of them; for thy speech bewrayeth thee.

74 Then began he to curse and to swear, saying, I know not the man. And immediately the cock crew.

75 And Peter remembered the word of Jesus, which said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And he went

out, and wept bitterly.

Jeremiah 3:22 Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings. Behold, we come unto thee; for thou art the Lord our God.

Proverbs 14:14 The backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways: and a good man shall be satisfied from himself.

**Memory Verse:** Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip.—Hebrews 2:1.

**Aim:** To warn people against backsliding.

### INTRODUCTION

**I**T WOULD seem that few people have any conception of the seriousness of backsliding. The devil even has gone so far as to lead men to teach that it is impossible for people to backslide once they have been born again. Therefore, it is of the utmost importance that we set forth with the greatest plainness the truth in regard to the subject of backsliding. If backsliding were impossible, how could God have a tried people? Why does anyone need to take heed lest he fall? Is Judas today in the courts of glory, since he died a suicide? He had accepted Christ and had taken part in the ministry. He certainly had an experience of salvation. Backsliding definitely separates the soul from God. Millions have backslidden; therefore, we must give the most careful heed to the things we have heard, lest we let them slip.

### MEDITATIONS

**A SPLENDID TESTIMONY—Matthew 26:69—Wast with Jesus—**Everyone should so live that as the world looks on they will say, "You have been with Jesus." Only because the people want the favor of the world will they deny they have been with Jesus. Peter was not now as close to Jesus as he had been, which possibly prompted the maid to make the accusation. Had Peter followed Jesus into the court, the maid would have said nothing.

**BACKSLIDING—Matthew 26:70—He denied—**Peter was concerned about his own safety and had not been praying for strength to go through with Jesus. Usually backsliding does not come as a sudden act. The process was completed in this case when Peter lied. He was lost, but did not fully realize his condition.

**DRIFTING—Matthew 26:71—Gone out—**Peter was drifting away from Jesus, not toward Him, which is the case of all men who reject Christ. Satan proposes to lead all men deeper and deeper into sin until they get so deep that there is no escape. When darkness and blindness overtake the soul, which is the outcome of backsliding, it is difficult to find the way back to God and easy to drift farther away. **Verse 72—With an oath—**Sin had taken Peter to the place where he added the sin of swearing to the sin of lying. Committing a second sin in no way releases a transgressor from the first; it further entangles. **Verse 73—Surely thou also art—**The evidence was too strong. It was useless to misrepresent. But now Peter's power to testify for Christ was gone and he could not again do as he should until he had been restored by the redeeming grace of the Master. **Verse 74—Curse and to swear—**Peter was

now vehement in his denial, and his heart was greatly hardened. Peter was no different from other men. The same will happen to us today if we get careless and follow Jesus afar off. Every day and hour we must walk close to God if we want to keep our standing with God.

#### **AWAKENED—Matthew 26:75—Wept bitterly—**

One look at the majestic and deeply wounded Christ flooded the mind of Peter with the things that had so lately happened. Realization brought remorse, and bitter are the tears that follow the loss of the friendship of Jesus (that is, to the man who is awakened). The Scriptures declare, “A broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.”

#### **HOPE FOR THE BACKSLIDER—Jeremiah**

**3:22—Heal your backsliding—**It is the work of Satan to cause the people of God to stumble and fall back into the mire of sin. The gentle and firm hand of God is ever extended to the one who awakens to his backsliding and seeks the way out. God will restore the old landmarks of spiritual blessings; so may the backslider take courage and return. The state of the backslider is worse than the one who has never been saved. It is an awful thing for one who knew God to fail of the grace of God and spend eternity in a devil’s hell. Having known the joy of sins forgiven, and the peace of the indwelling of the Lord, the backslider’s suffering in hell will be greater.

#### **THE BACKSLIDER’S OUTLOOK—Proverbs**

**14:14—His own ways—**The ways of man are not the ways of God, for the ways of God are as much higher than the ways of man as the heavens are higher than the earth. So, the backslider can look forward only to the remorse and sorrow in this world that come from following ways that are the ways of man, born of his fleshly desires. Dying in such a state will produce only sorrow and woe for all eternity.

### **CONCLUSION**

If a backslider is not quickly restored, he very soon is filled with his own ways, which are not the ways of God. Over the poor backslider’s soul the devil has a certain advantage which he did not have before. He plants his own rebellious spirit in the backsliding heart, charging God with injustice and unfairness. Let the backslider know that such statements are always the result of the deceptive and lying nature of Satan himself, who would impose upon all men his own ungodly nature. Peter did not remain long out of Christ, but his experience proves how quickly and rapidly the backsliding soul can slip and how ardent the denial of Christ can become. To guard against backsliding it is necessary that each succeeding day we draw nearer to God and put an ever-increasing enthusiasm in the work of the Lord. There is joy in true service in the kingdom of God that is rich and sweet, far beyond the best the world can give.

### **FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION**

1. Give two proofs that a Christian can backslide.
2. Give two results of backsliding.
3. Why did Peter backslide?

4. What is usually the first sign of backsliding?
5. Why did Peter curse and swear?
6. What hope is there for the backslider?
7. What is meant by the words that a backslider is “filled with his own ways”? †



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



**QUESTION:** Does Christianity give us any help in developing a meaningful philosophy of life? Why or why not?

**ANSWER:** The word *philosophy* has a number of different meanings, but when it comes to true wisdom and knowledge, ethics, a particular system of principles for the conduct of life, etc., Christianity is the only teaching that gives real meaning to life. The problem in the world today is that the teachings of Christ are not being lived. Millions who say they believe **in** Christ, do not really **believe** Him, for they do not take His teachings seriously! “This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent” (John 17:3).

**QUESTION:** Is famine one of the major signs indicating Christ’s intervention in world affairs is very near—Matthew 24:7?

**ANSWER:** No. There have been famines, earthquakes and droughts down through the ages. Again, most, if not all, of Matthew 24 speaks of the destruction of Jerusalem and that period of time. Notice what Jesus said in verse 34: “Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled.” Do not try to make “this generation” mean our generation today! You twist the Scriptures if you do. Jesus meant the generation He was talking to. I know your literal kingdom teachers make it our generation, but they misrepresent the Word of God.

Notice verse 29 that you ask about: “Immediately after the tribulation...” That tribulation was the destruction of Jerusalem and the great number of deaths suffered by the Jewish people at that time. Also, it was immediately after the tribulation that “the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken.” This was symbolical. No literal stars fell to the earth—if one did strike the earth, it, doubtless, would be the end of all life and the earth itself as we know it.

**QUESTION:** Did the apostle Paul establish the Ten Commandments (Romans 3:31; 7:12-14, 22, 25)?

ANSWER: The apostle Paul clearly teaches that the Old Covenant ended with Christ. Do not try to separate “law” and “covenant,” for the Bible uses them interchangeably. We read in Galatians 4:21-31 of two women and their sons; the one, Agar and her son, represent the Old Covenant given on Mount Sinai (verse 25). Remember, the Ten Commandments were given on Sinai. The other woman, Sarah and her son, represent the New Covenant, and Paul says, “So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free (verse 31). “Cast out the bondwoman and her son” (verse 30).

The New Covenant has laws and Christians are under those laws.

No, Paul did not establish the Ten Commandments, **GOD** gave them to Israel.

Jesus is the “mediator of the new covenant (Hebrews 12:24); it is a “better covenant” (Hebrews 8:6).

QUESTION: In Matthew 7:1, it says, “Judge not, that ye be not judged.” In other verses, it says the same. Yet in John 7:24, it says, “Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment.” And in I Corinthians 2:15, we read, “But he that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man.” Please explain.

ANSWER: It is very evident that the Bible is speaking of two different kinds of judging. I think John 7:24 and I Corinthians 2:15 explain what is meant in Matthew 7:1. Judge not according to appearance, not according to vain imagination, not as things may appear; but find out the facts, know whereof you speak, follow the Word of God and you will judge, or render “righteous judgment.”

Today, we hear the expression, “You must not judge” regardless as to how wicked the actions of a person may be, but that is not what the Scriptures teach.

QUESTION: Jeremiah 3:14, “Turn, O backsliding children, saith the Lord; for I am married unto you: and I will take you one of a city, and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion.” What does it mean? Is the Lord married to the backslider? It says in I John 3:5 that the one who commits sin is of the devil.

ANSWER: How many times have I heard it said, “God is married to the backslider”!

God entered into covenant relationship with Israel. He gave them laws, He gave them promises of great blessings if they would be faithful. He also told them what he would do to them if they were not faithful. See Deuteronomy 28.

Now notice what verse eight of Jeremiah 3 says: “And I saw, when for all the causes whereby backsliding Israel committed adultery I had put her away, and given her a bill of divorce; yet her treacherous sister Judah feared not, but went and played the harlot also.” Now notice verse twelve: “Go and proclaim these words toward the north, and say, Return, thou backsliding Israel, saith the Lord; and I will not cause mine anger to fall upon you: for I am merciful, saith the Lord, and I will not keep anger for ever.” The northern kingdom of Israel had been carried away by the Assyrians, and

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these words seem to be directed especially to them. God had “divorced” them, so He was not married to them, but He was inviting them to return.

I do not believe it is proper to say He IS married to the backslider! He was married to Israel and many of them were backsliding, but He was married to those who had NOT backslidden. The others He had given a “divorce.” Remember, Paul said, “For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel” (Romans 9:6). Not all literal Israelites are spiritual Israelites. †

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## EDITORIAL

(Continued from page 1)

seen in our lives. There must be an environment or culture of pure, godly, love flowing from heart to heart.

Let us examine our hearts, because if bitterness is there, the love of God cannot abide. If you have harm or malice in your heart toward an individual, you’re not abiding in the love of God. If you come in and refuse to sit on one side of the church because someone you dislike is sitting there, you don’t have the love of God. That’s not an environment in which Christ can work. Love your fellowman, especially the household of faith. We want the Lord to work with us! We want Him to find a resting place among His people.

Christ must have preeminence. There were those in the early morning church who loved to have the preeminence. III John tells us about Diotrephes who was one of them. We cannot afford to have anyone in our midst desiring to have the preeminence. Only Christ must have the preeminence if we’re going to see Him work. If we’re going to see signs and wonders, if we’re going to see an increase, if we’re going to see souls saved and Christ moving in a special way, He must have the preeminence. We are to take none of the glory to ourselves. None of it! None of the glory, none of the credit; it all belongs to Him. He does it all. He’s almighty; He’s all-wise; He’s all-powerful. We are nothing! How foolish it is for man to take credit to himself. Without Him, we can do nothing at all.

This culture, this environment must be a place that has flourishing faith in operation. Without faith, we’re not going to see Him work. Those disciples did not originally believe that Jesus rose from the dead. Until they did, Christ couldn’t work among them.

Matthew, chapter 13, beginning with verse 54, “And when he was come into his own country, he taught them in their synagogue, insomuch that they were astonished, and said, Whence hath this man this wisdom, and these mighty works? Is not this the carpenter’s son? is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas? And his sisters, are they not all with us? Whence then hath this man all these things? And they were offended in him. But Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honour, save in his own country, and in his own house.” Verse 58, “And he did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief.” You see, we can be a holy people, we can be a sanctified church, we can be filled with the love of

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God, we can have a holy ministry, but if we are filled with unbelief, Christ's hands are tied.

For the church to fulfill her commission, each member of the body must feel his responsibility to live right, pray hard in faith believing, be a vessel of honor sanctified and meet for the Master's use, obey the preaching, go deeper with God, and love others with a pure heart fervently. When the environment is right, I believe the Lord will work in a greater way!

May the Lord help us to provide an environment where He is free to do everything He wants to do.

"So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God. And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen." †

## THE NEW JERUSALEM

By the late H. M. Riggle

From his book, "The Kingdom of

God and the One Thousand

Years' Reign"



*"And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God" (Revelation 21:2, 3).*

*"And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will show thee the bride, the Lamb's wife. ... And showed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God" (verses 9, 10).*

**H**EAVEN is frequently in scripture termed a city. See Revelation 22:14; Hebrews 11:16; 13:14. It is a place where we have a "building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens" (II Corinthians 5:1). It is the place of our future inheritance (I Peter 1:4). This place we shall enter after this earth and the works therein are burned up (II Peter 3:7-13). Therefore be it understood that in this chapter we do not deny that there is a place and state of future rewards in an immortal and glorified body in heaven, which is the place of God's throne and home of the angels.

Our object is to treat directly on that which John saw coming down from God out of heaven. A thing which came "out of heaven" cannot be heaven itself. But was this, as many suppose, a literal city? Let the Word

answer. It came down "prepared as a bride adorned for her husband." Here is a sufficient hint to the wise, that this city is not a literal thing, but represents a spiritual bride; i.e., the bride of Christ. The angel promised to show John "the bride, the Lamb's wife," and accordingly showed him "the holy Jerusalem descending out of heaven from God." It is an undeniable fact that this holy Jerusalem is the bride, the Lamb's wife. Such is the positive testimony of these two texts at the head of this chapter.

The bride, the Lamb's wife, is the Church of God. Propheying of the church in this dispensation (Isaiah 54:1-4), Isaiah says, "Thy Maker is thine husband; the Lord of hosts is his name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel" (Isaiah 54:5). In the early twilight of this Christian era, John the Baptist affirmed of Christ: "He that hath the bride is the bridegroom" (John 3:29). "Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God" (Romans 7:4). That first husband was the law. He emphasized his demands with "Thou shalt." If the Jewish church failed to obey him, he was ready to stone her to death. Surely such was not a happy union. Yet this woman was bound to that husband as long as he lived. But in the course of time that husband died—the law was abrogated, and passed away—and she was married to another. This second husband loves her. He gave His life for her. Instead of emphasizing His demands with "Thou shalt," He tenderly says to her, "If you love me, you will keep my words." This second husband is Christ; Him who is raised from the dead.

The object of this union is "that we should bring forth fruit unto God." The fruit of matrimony is offspring. Not in a future age, but now Zion travails and brings forth children unto God (Isaiah 66:8-13). "Of Zion it shall be said, This and that man was born in her" (Psalm 87:5). The whole church are "workers together with God" in the salvation of lost souls. In A.D. 30 Jesus had a bride and was Himself a bridegroom (John 3:29). And like a true companion His wife joined heart and soul with Him in the great cause which drew Him to earth. Accordingly in A.D. 96 we hear "the Spirit and the bride say, Come" (Revelation 22:17). "But Jerusalem which is above [above the law dispensation and the world] is free, which is the mother of us all" (Galatians 4:26). Every convert of the cross from the dawn of this dispensation to its close is a "new-born babe" in the family of God. This being true, if Christ and the church—the spiritual Jerusalem—are not now married, we who are her offspring are bastards, and not legitimate sons of God. "For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the savior of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it in the washing of water by the Word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies.

He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church" (Ephesians 5:23-32).

This language is very clear and conclusive. The marriage relation is that which now exists between Christ and his church. "The husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church." As the man and his wife are one flesh, "we are members of his body of his flesh, and of his bones." And that we might know that we are indeed married to Christ now, He was unwilling to drop the mysteries of this wonderful relation without reassuring us that the marriage of the Lamb had already come. "This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church." So Christ and the church are living in the beautiful bond of matrimony. The marriage of man and wife in a most striking manner illustrates our union with Christ. The following are some of the points of agreement between the two. First. In taking a husband a woman leaves the house of her father and mother, with all its endearing attractions. She leaves all others on earth to cleave to and love him. So says Christ: "Whosoever forsaketh not father, mother, and all that he hath cannot be my disciple." Second. The bride must even leave her former name, and be called by the name of her husband. So does Christ write His new name upon us, and henceforth, whatsoever we do in word or deed, we do in His name. Third. The marriage relation is sealed under a covenant of fidelity for life; the husband to love, cherish, and protect; the wife to love, honor, and obey. So does the Christian enter into an everlasting covenant with God in Christ to abandon all for His sake, to love, trust, and obey Him in all things. And God places Himself under covenant obligations to love us for Christ's sake, to preserve us from all evil, and supply all our needs. Thus we see that all the prominent features of the marriage state are fulfilled in our present relation to God when saved in Jesus, and he that is not really married to Jesus has not left all for His sake, and is not saved in God. Jesus Christ will soon return, not to consummate His marriage with the church, but to receive His wife (Revelation 19:7, 8; I Thessalonians 4:16, 17). So it is a positive fact that the Church of God is the wife of Christ, and she is the holy Jerusalem. The new Jerusalem is the Church of God.

Such terms as "Zion," "city of God," "holy city," "Jerusalem," "new Jerusalem," "heavenly Jerusalem," etc., are frequently found in the prophecies, and throughout the New Testament. Now do these terms apply to a literal city yet to descend upon earth, or to the people or Church of God in this dispensation? Let the Word answer. Paul writing to the Hebrew brethren in A.D. 64 testifies thus: "Ye **are come** unto mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem." And this he denominates "the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven" (Hebrews 12:22, 23). In the name of Jesus we ask: What can be plainer? The heavenly Jerusalem is the church,

and in this dispensation we have come "unto" it, and are living in it. "Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill" (Matthew 5:14). "The sons also of them that afflicted thee shall come bending unto thee; and all they that despised thee shall bow themselves down at the soles of thy feet; and they shall call thee, The city of the Lord, The Zion of the Holy One of Israel" (Isaiah 60:14). The people of God in this dispensation were to be called "The Zion, the city of the Lord." So they are called (Matthew 5:8; Hebrews 12:22, 23). "For Zion's sake will I not hold my peace, and for Jerusalem's sake I will not rest, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth. And the Gentiles shall see thy righteousness, and thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord shall name. ... Thou shalt no more be termed Forsaken; neither shalt thy land any more be termed Desolate: but thou shalt be called Hephzibah [my delight is in her], and thy land Beulah [married]: for the Lord delighteth in thee, and thy land shall be married. ... And as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee. I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem, which shall never hold their peace day nor night: ye that make mention of the Lord, keep not silent, and give him no rest, till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth" (Isaiah 62:1-7). "And they shall call them, The holy people, The redeemed of the Lord: and thou shalt be called, Sought out, A city not forsaken" (verse 12). There is no possible evasion of the fact that the prophet here speaks of the New Testament church. The "holy people," who are "redeemed" by the blood of Christ are here called "Zion, Jerusalem, A city not forsaken." In verses 4 and 5 it is said that Zion would be married unto the Lord. "And as the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee." This is all present truth. It is also said that the mouth of the Lord should name the church. Turn to John 17:6, 11, 12, 26 and read the fulfillment of this. The watchmen on Zion's walls are God's holy ministry who proclaim the everlasting gospel.

In Isaiah 52:1, 2 the holy city is called Zion and Jerusalem. The same is commanded: "Awake, put on thy strength"; "put on thy beautiful garments"; "shake thyself"; "arise and sit down," etc. How could a literal city do this? What sense could attach to these words if Jerusalem be not God's church? But remembering that the new and holy Jerusalem, which is here prophesied of, is the bride of Christ, this language is natural and sensible. Thus we could multiply scriptures which clearly teach that the heavenly Jerusalem is the church, but we deem it unnecessary. One clear proof text is as good as a thousand. Yet if there are any still unsettled on this point we ask you to closely read the following texts: Psalm 87:5, 6; Isaiah 1:21-27; 4:3-5; 12:5, 6; 26:1; 33:5, 14; Joel 2:1, 32.

Again, as soon as the new Jerusalem came down it was announced: "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them" (Revelation 21:3). Surely this is plain. Does God dwell with His people now? Christ said, "If a man love me, ... my Father will love him and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him" (John 14:23; 16:13-16). "If we love one

another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us. Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit" (I John 4:12, 13). "Ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people" (II Corinthians 6:16). His name was called "Emmanuel" for the very purpose of announcing that fact. The word signifies "God with us." Truly God was in Christ and dwelt among us, and by the Holy Spirit has taken up His permanent abode in the church. Since the day of Pentecost the tabernacle of God is with men. Hence at that time the new Jerusalem came down to earth.

But, says one, in what sense is the church a city which descended from heaven? In Revelation 17:1-5, sect Babylon is seen in the figure of a woman—called a "great whore"—with her harlot daughters. So in Revelation 12:1 the true church is seen in the figure of a pure woman, clothed with the sun. In Revelation 17:18 and 18:1-24 Babylon is called a "great city" which is said to be full of darkness and a "habitation of devils." So in Revelation 21:1-27 the church is called the "holy city," which is said to be full of light and glory. Every fully saved man and woman is a house in this city (II Corinthians 6:16; I Corinthians 3:16, 17). Sect Babylon, or the Antichrist beast religion, is said to "ascend out of the bottomless pit" (Revelation 17:8); while the true church "came down from God out of heaven" (Revelation 21:2-10); namely, the one is Antichrist, the other genuine. The one is of hellish origin, the other of heavenly, divine origin. The one shall finally be cast down to perdition, from whence it emanated (Revelation 17:8; 19:20); the other will in the last day ascend to heaven, from which it emanated (I Thessalonians 4:16, 17).

1. In the new Jerusalem all things are made new (Revelation 21:5).

2. This is true of God's people, or the church (II Corinthians 5:17). We have in this dispensation a new church, new people, "new name," new kingdom, New Testament, "new creation," "new heart," "new spirit," "new and living way"; we "walk in newness of life" and "serve in newness of spirit." Behold, all things are become new.

1. In the new Jerusalem such as thirst can drink of water of life freely (Revelation 21:6).

2. This is true in the Church of God (John 4:10-14; 12:1-3; Revelation 22:17).

1. In the new Jerusalem "he that overcometh shall inherit all things" (verse 7).

2. This is true in the Church of God (Romans 8:32; I Corinthians 3:21-23).

1. The new Jerusalem had the glory of God (Revelation 21:11).

2. So has the church (John 17:22).

1. The new Jerusalem had a wall, "great and high" (Revelation 21:12).

2. So has the church. (Isaiah 26:1; Zechariah 2:5).

1. The new Jerusalem had gates which were continually open (Revelation 21:12, 25).

2. This is true of God's church (Isaiah 60:18; Hebrews 13:15).

1. This city had twelve foundations (verse 14).

2. So has the church (Ephesians 2:19, 20).

1. None but saved people dwell in the new Jerusalem (verses 24, 27).

2. This is true of the Church of God (John 10:9).

Beloved, in the light of God, these are the same. But why is the church called new Jerusalem? The following are some of the points of agreement between old Jerusalem and the Church of God, as type and antitype. First, it was the dwelling place of God on earth. Now the church is the habitation of God through the Spirit (Ephesians 2:22).

In Jerusalem was the temple of God; the church is now His holy temple (II Corinthians 6:16). In Jerusalem God recorded His name; His church is also called by His name. In Jerusalem was the place of continual sacrifice unto God; "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ" (I Peter 2:5). As therefore, the Church of God has taken the place of old Jerusalem as the present dwelling place and temple of God, and place of all offerings, she is called the new Jerusalem. †

—Reprinted from September 1982, issue

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