

The Way of Truth

Vol. 75

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

No. 11

*“Earnestly Contending for
Common Salvation”*

See page 3.

November
2017

THANKSGIVING

Note: *In a few verses, I have used our current use of words rather than the 1611 English.*

THERE ARE many verses in the Bible with the words, *thanks, thankful, and thanksgiving*. In this editorial, I want to write about some things we need to be thankful for.

According to **Cruden's Concordance**, *thanksgiving* means, "an acknowledging and confessing, with gladness, the benefits and mercies, which God bestows either upon ourselves or others."

THANKS FOR GOD, OUR HEAVENLY FATHER

"Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God" (Philippians 4:6).

"For in the days of David and Asaph of old there were chief of the singers, and songs of praise and thanksgiving unto God" (Nehemiah 12:46).

"I will praise the name of God with a song, and will magnify him with thanksgiving" (Psalm 69:30).

"Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto him with psalms" (Psalm 95:2).

"Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name" (Psalm 100:4).

"All the angels stood round about the throne, and about the elders and the four created beings, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worshipped God, saying, Amen: Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honor, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen (Revelation 7:11, 12).

There are many more verses that exhort us to give thanks to our heavenly Father for His goodness to us.

THANKS FOR OUR SAVIOR, JESUS CHRIST

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

Jesus Christ: "Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a separate people, zealous of good works" (Titus 2:14).

Jesus Christ: "Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed" (Isaiah 53:4, 5).

"Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is no other name under heaven given among men, whereby we can be saved" (Acts 4:12).

"For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus" (I Timothy 2:5).

Then released he Barabbas unto them: and when he had scourged Jesus, he delivered him to be crucified" (Matthew 27:26).

"I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore" (Revelation 1:18).

Thanksgiving for a living, risen Lord and Savior!

THANKS FOR THE HOLY SPIRIT

"I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it sees him not, neither knows him: but you know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you" (John 14:16, 17).

"Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth" (John 16:13a).

"You shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and you shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

THANKS FOR THE CHURCH OF GOD— THE BRIDE OF CHRIST

"Come here, I will show you the bride, the Lamb's wife" (Revelation 21:9).

"There appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars" (Revelation 12:1).

"Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost has made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he has purchased with his own blood" (Acts 20:28).

"Praising God, and having favor with all the people, And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved" (Acts 2:47).

"But now has God set the members every one of them in the body, as it has pleased him" (I Corinthians 12:18).

Christ "is the head of the body, the church" (Colossians 1:18).

THANKS FOR THE SAINTS

"Now you are the body of Christ, and members in particular (I Corinthians 12:27).

"Seeing you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that you love one another with a pure heart fervently" (I Peter 1:22).

"There should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honored,



ABOUT THE COVER

On our cover this month is an autumn shot of the Grand Teton Mountains. Notice that though there are a diversity of elements and colors, they all work together to produce one beautiful picture glorifying God. So, we as children of God, though diverse must strive together in the unity of the Spirit to glorify God.

THE WAY OF TRUTH

(Registered Trademark)

Vol. 75 November 2017 No. 11

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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—Alvin A. Craig, Editor

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all the members rejoice with it" (I Corinthians 12:25, 26).

"I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy, for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now" (Philippians 1:3-5).

THANKS FOR LIFE AND

ALL THE BLESSINGS OF LIFE

"The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 6:23b).

"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning" (James 1:17).

"For in him we live, and move, and have our being" (Acts 17:28a).

I feel sure there are many other things we can think of to be thankful for, so let us not fail to give God thanks for all our blessings. †

SUNDAY SCHOOL LITERATURE

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 Primary and Nursery-Beginner children.

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"Let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful."—Colossians 3:15.

THANKFUL
Donna Eddy

Summer's past, and winter's near,
And Thanksgiving Day is here.
Though the flowers and leaves are gone,
Warm days vanished by cold dawn,
Still our heartfelt thanks begin
For the good days that have been,
For the loved ones we now see,
And the good things yet to be.

THANK YOU, LORD
Elsie Natalie Brady

I cannot thank you Lord enough
For all you've given me,
For food and shelter, and for love
Of friends and family.
In time of sorrow you stood by
And held my trembling hand,
You wiped the teardrops from my eyes
And helped me to understand.
Although I cannot ever know
What the future has in store,
Your love will always see me through,
'Til we meet on Paradise shore.

GRATITUDE
Margaret E. Sangster

I thank You for these gifts, dear God,
Upon Thanksgiving Day—
For love and laughter and the faith
That makes me kneel to pray.

For life that lends me happiness,
And sleep that gives me rest,
These are the gifts that keep my heart
Serene within my breast.
Love, laughter, faith and life and sleep,
We own them, every one—
They carry us along the road
That leads from sun to sun.

WE THANK THEE
Grenville Kleiser

Father, we thank Thee:
For peace within our favored land,
For plenty from Thy bounteous hand,
For means to give to those in need,
For grace to help in thought and deed,
For faith to walk, our hands in Thine,
For truth to know Thy law divine,
For strength to work with voice and pen,
For love to serve our fellow men,
For light the goal ahead to see,
For life to use alone for Thee,
Father, we thank Thee.

THANKSGIVING DAY
Marie Barton

I thank Thee for so many things—
Through autumn, winter, all the springs
And summers, every day holds cause
For thankfulness. Then grant me pause
At each new silvering dawn to say:
This, Lord, is my Thanksgiving Day.

HAPPY THANKSGIVING
Vivian M. Chatman

When Thanksgiving comes around this year
May wondrous blessings flow;
May candles set the centerpiece,
Set faces all aglow.
And may a prayer of thanks go up
For bounty and for good;
May every member understand
And be happy as he should.
Take out the horn of plenty
And make merry everywhere;
And spread your gratitude around
And all your bounty share. †

*"But thanks be to God, which giveth us the
victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."
—1 Corinthians 15:57.*

Earnestly Contending for Common Salvation

2017 Hagerstown Convention Message by Bro. Darrell Sanford

(condensed for publication)



PRAISE THE Lord, Saints! I have been on the verge of tears this morning for the wonderful spirit here. We appreciate the opportunity to be here with you. I appreciate your confidence in me, and especially the ministers for allowing me to share this pulpit. I don't take it lightly at all. I never do, whether I'm at home or wherever I may be, and I certainly don't here.

I do appreciate the saints of God. I've received nothing but good, and a good spirit and blessings to my soul since I've been in this meeting. All of us have, I believe. We're all saints of God. It's no reason to think that it would be any other way than that. That is how it ought to be. If we have the same Spirit, it's not the Spirit getting in the way. Sometimes there are things in our head that gets in the way, but not the Spirit of God. I appreciate you, Saints.

I appreciate Bro. Greg Tyler. I contacted him back in December, and we started communicating. We met previously a time or two, but when God started laying things on my heart, and having a desire for a greater unity among God's people, and stepping out of the group mentality and into what the church really is, all saved people, God led Bro. Greg on my heart. I feel certain that it was God who brought us together. I sent him an e-mail expressing my thoughts and burdens. You really don't know what reply you're going to get when you do something like that, but what I received was just a mirror reflection of what I said. We've had a wonderful relationship develop through e-mails and through a few phone calls, and so on; so Bro. Greg has been a huge blessing to me. He has meant so much to me through the last several months.

I certainly do appreciate Bro. Alvin Craig. I thank him for the confidence that he has put in us in allowing us to be here and to share this message. Thank God for all of you and for the beautiful church of God!

We're going to look into the book of Jude this morning. Please keep us in your prayers. May God help us here this morning. Reading from the Epistle of Jude, verses 1-4: "Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called: Mercy unto you, and peace, and love, be multiplied. 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. For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ."

I know that Jude was talking to these people. He was writing to them, but it is applicable to us today.

He's writing to people who are sanctified and holy and set apart by God the Father for His service. Thank God, we've been called to something, Saints of God. Called unto what? One thing we're called to is the fellowship of His Son. We've been called unto holiness and unto the fellowship of Jesus Christ. We need more peace. We need more love, and we certainly do need the mercy of God upon us.

AN EXPERIENCE OF SALVATION

Thank God, I'm glad I'm among the beloved. I really do believe that I'm among the beloved people and ministry of God. I thank God, 37 years ago (February 10, 1980), I bowed down at an altar of prayer in a single-wide mobile home as I came to a Church of God congregation. I had long hair. I was into drugs and alcohol. My wife (my girlfriend at the time) and I went to a service, and I bowed down at that old altar and was able to get my soul delivered. I was able to get an experience of salvation. Jesus changed my entire life and washed my sins away. He gave me new desires. I didn't want to smoke or drink and do all the ungodly things any more. Do you know what it did? It made me what the Bible said it would make me. It made me a new creature in Christ. Old things passed away, all things became new. I got an experience. How many of you have gotten that same experience? You came to an altar and got that same experience. You didn't know me. In one sense, we weren't allowed to fellowship one another.

I appreciate these brothers here. I received nothing but love and tenderness and kindness from these brethren. I believe that anyone could come before Bro. Tyler and Bro. Alvin who were blood-washed, saved saints of God, exhibiting the Spirit of Christ, and they would be accepted. I know we need to know one another, but I have the confidence that you have a true and a pure ministry here that is willing to accept all of God's people. I got delivered from my sins in that fellowship I was in. You got delivered from your sins in the fellowship that you were having association with, but it was the same deliverance. There was no difference. You were delivered from your sins; I was delivered from my sins. We started living holy and walking with Christ. There was no difference, and there's still no difference. Anyone who is getting that experience, there's no difference. We're all one in Christ.

ALL CHILDREN OF GOD RECEIVE THE SAME SALVATION

Listen, things were warring against the church in Jude's day. We might as well face it. Things will always war against the church. They've always warred against

the church. We have to be diligent. We have to do as Jude says. He wrote, "Beloved, when I gave all diligence; I made it my business to put forth the effort to write unto you [Of the what?], the common salvation." Saints of God, it's a common salvation; not that it's not worth anything or not ordinary; it's common, because we all share the same salvation. There are no two or three salvations. There is one common salvation. People try to pervert it. They always have perverted it. People try to expand it. They try to diminish it, but it is the same one salvation. That's why Jude was writing. He said, "I gave all diligence. I made it my business to write to 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." Once! What did Jude mean by *once delivered*? Well, one time; it was once for all time that it was delivered to the saints. There is no difference in the salvation that was preached and offered in that day; in 50 A.D., or whenever this was written. It's the same salvation today.

If a man bowed at an altar in 45 A.D., he got the same experience I got in 1980 A.D. There is only one salvation. It's common, and all of God's people share it. It is regardless of your knowledge. It is regardless of what you know. It's what you receive in your soul. Knowledge is important, and we need to come to the knowledge of things, but I'm talking about that moment of conversion, that moment of repentance, and what it produces. It is one common salvation. At that moment, I'm your brother in Christ. You are my sister in Christ. We are one in the gospel. There is no difference. We have to earnestly contend for that, Saints of God. There was a reason why Jude said "common salvation." Why? "For there are certain men who have crept in unawares." They have crept in all along the way. For 2,000 years, they have been creeping in and trying to pervert things. John dealt with these men. He addressed them in First John, and Paul addressed them in Galatians and in other places. Why? Because they have always been there trying to pervert and to change things. Saints of God, is this thing worth earnestly contending for, to keep it pure, to keep it holy, to keep unity with one another? Common salvation—shared by all! Jude said "earnestly contend." The word *contend* means, "to struggle." Struggle for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints of God. It was needful.

CONTENDING FOR COMMON SALVATION

Let us go to the book of Matthew. We will probably be back to Jude at some point. There is a lot to read in Matthew, chapter 15, but we know the situation. We'll just try to describe it. The Pharisees got on Jesus' disciples because they were not washing their hands before they ate bread. They said, "You're transgressing the tradition of the elders." Well, my mama told me to wash my hands before I ate, too. So I don't think Jesus said, *Don't wash your hands before you eat*. It was a religious thing. It was not a cleanliness thing. It was a religious ritual thing of washing their hands whenever they went to the market, because they were afraid they would touch something that was unclean. So it was a ritual washing; but yet, the whole time they were hold-

ing that on the disciples so tight, look at what else they were doing. They were perverting the very law of God. Verse 6, "And honour not his father or his mother"; in other words, give them a pass on that. "If they'll make an offering to the temple [meaning, an offering to the Pharisees], we'll give you a pass. You won't have to take care of your parents any more. This will set you free from that, because you gave it to God." I believe, if I'm correct, that is the content that's going on here. Jesus said, "Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition."

Matthew 15:8, 9, "This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." In one sense, the problem is not having some custom or tradition, but the thing is, holding it up on the same level as the law of God. That's where we get into trouble. We all have our customs and traditions. We do things differently in our services than you do here, but for me to come here and say, "You have to do this to be saved," that won't be right. Why? Because it's our custom and our tradition. It's not a law of God, Saints of God. This is the interesting point: Verse 13, "But he answered and said, Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up." If God didn't plant it, if God has not set it for us, we don't need it. It will do nothing but hinder. Men come along and want to plant plants, but root those things up, Saints of God. We can't go wrong in obeying the Word of God. We must earnestly contend. We must struggle diligently for the faith once delivered for the common salvation. It's going to take effort; it's going to take endeavoring. It takes love and humility, but we can do it. I believe these brethren and sisters are doing it. I believe you're doing it. I believe I'm doing it, and I believe God will help us to do it. It will take God to do it.

THERE IS JUST ONE TRUE FAITH

Let us look at a few thoughts here. I want to put this into perspective. We know that we have a common salvation. Let us look at Titus 1:4—"To Titus, mine own son after the common faith." The common faith! This is nothing new to us, is it? I'm not preaching anything new to you this morning. I've been hearing this ever since I was a young convert.

There is one church, one faith, one body, one baptism, one Lord. We tell people in denominationalism that there is just one faith, because that is just a common thing in denominationalism. "What faith are you?" they ask. There is only one faith. We know what they mean when they ask that question. They mean, "What denomination are you?" which means, "What do you believe about Christ and the gospel?" That is asked because different denominations teach different things about Christ and the gospel. People in those denominations may not agree that we're right, or what we're saying is right. They may not even agree that denominationalism can be done away with. It's in place. But you know what? All of that is totally irrelevant. It doesn't matter if you think what we are saying is right, or if you think denominationalism can be done away with, and all of God's people can be one. Totally irrelevant!

The pertinent point is what the Bible teaches. What we think can be done with it has nothing to do with it. That's irrelevant. The Bible teaches that denominationalism is wrong. So let's at least agree that denominationalism is wrong. Don't try to solve it. How are we going to solve it? Don't worry about that. Just agree that it is wrong, and that will distant you from it. "Wait a minute, that's wrong." That is sort of like when you get saved. You find out that lying is wrong. Don't worry about what you're going to do when you face a situation. If you know it's wrong, you'll stay away from it. We have to recognize that some things are wrong. So, Titus says, "... the common faith."

Let us consider Hebrews 13:8. What does it say? "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever." He hasn't changed. There is no gospel 2.0. There is not even a gospel 1.1. What Christ has established is the same. How we get saved is the same, how we stay saved is the same, how we get sanctified (filled with the Holy Spirit) is the same as it was when He established it. Do you know what? The church of God and what it is, is the same. It has not changed. It has been obscured, it has been almost hidden at times, but it has never been changed. It is still the same as it ever was.

The foundation of God stands sure. It is not going anywhere. Paul was writing that about a couple of fellows who tried to come up with something about the resurrection being already past. He said, "They are causing some people to lose their faith, but even when it looks like the church is going down, the foundation of God is secure." It hasn't gone anywhere. If we will plant our feet on the Foundation, we won't go anywhere, Saints of God. We'll stand with what is right.

A COMMON PROBLEM

We have a common salvation because there was a common problem. We have a common problem which brought forth a need for a common solution or common cure. That common solution produced some common results that gave us a common conversation. Let us follow that line of thought through a little bit. The common problem we know was sin, and the common problem continues to be sin. That's why we had to have that common salvation in the first place. In Romans, chapter 3, there are a number of things here. One thing Paul is trying to get across here is that the Jews and Gentiles have to come the same way. The Jews in this sense are no better than the Gentiles. "The law is not going to get you out of the sin problem that you're in. Let us break in at Romans 2:28, 29: "For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter [meaning, not according to the law of Moses]; whose praise is not of men, but of God."

Paul now goes into Romans, chapter 3. He is basically putting the Jew and the Gentile on the same level. He says, "What advantage then hath the Jew?" So if they both have the same problem, and one is no better than the other, "What advantage then hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision?" Then Paul says, "Much every way: chiefly, because that unto them were

committed the oracles of God." What advantage do they have if this doesn't do them any good? They were given the laws of God, and there's a great advantage in having the laws of God. They were given something to show them what they should do. They were given something to bring forward. They were really given the duty and the task of bringing forth Christ to the world. Through that lineage and that seed, they brought forth Christ to the world. There was great advantage in being a Jew. They were not in the darkness of the Gentiles. They had the very law of God. Yes, it pales in comparison to what they had paled in comparison to what we have, but it was still the most glorious thing on the earth at the time. It was a stepping stone to what we have.

Do you know we have a great advantage in the church of God? I know the difficulties we have in addressing division and other things, but thank God, there is no division here this morning. Thank God, there is unity, love, and peace here. But we know there are those calling themselves "church of God," and for all I know, are church of God. There are walls dividing us that ought not to be. So, in that sense, we have this same problem. We tell these denominations, "You have a problem; you're divided," when we are divided. What advantage then have we? We have much because we have the truth of God's Word that we have lived. We have the truth of holiness. We have the truth and teach people how to get delivered from their sins, and how to be filled with the Holy Spirit appropriately and in the proper way.

We know the truth on the church of God. We know what the church truly is. We know God's church is not this organism divided into all of these denominations out in the world. That's not what it is. It is that same church which Jesus built and it continues to exist. We are a part of it. Brethren, when we make the bold statement, "We are it," we've created a sect. We are not "it"! I mean our fellowship, our group. My fellowship that I have been affiliated with is not "it"! Nobody is "it"! No little bounded fellowship is "it"! We are part of God's church. We don't number God's people. We don't draw boundaries around God's church, other than the walls of salvation.

Romans 3:21, "But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested [through the gospel, right?], being witnessed by the law and the prophets." Even the law spoke of the coming of the gospel, the coming of Christ; and the prophets spoke of the coming of Christ. They witnessed it. Verses 22, 23: "Even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: For all have sinned [Jew and Gentile; that's the context Paul is speaking there.], and come short of the glory of God." It does not say that we all sin every day and come short of the glory of God, but people take it out of context to let it say that. Our point is: sin is the problem. It's a common problem.

Isaiah 59:1, 2, says, "Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: But your iniquities [sins] have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear." We'll go to Colossians 1:21. Here again, making this point

we have a common problem for which we needed a common salvation. "And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, ..." Wicked works have separated you, and it will still separate you from God. It doesn't matter if you have "Jesus saves" on your cap, or "I love Christ" on your T-shirt. None of that matters. It doesn't matter if it comes out of your mouth. You can sing, "Amazing Grace," a beautiful song ever heard, but none of that matters. Your wicked works separate you from God. "... yet now hath he reconciled." We were alienated. We were estranged. The word *alienate* means, "to be shut out from one's fellowship and intimacy." We have a common problem, but we also have a common cure.

Let us look at Romans 6:15—"What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law [Mosaic law], but under grace? God forbid." A lot of the world thinks so, because they continue to sin. That's exactly what they're doing. They say, "Well, we have grace now, so it covers everything." *Grace* is God's divine favor in keeping us from sin. We have grace not to sin at this point. Verse 16, "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?" Sin always brings death. If you obey it, it is "sin unto death." You sin, you die! It is amazing how the enemy has been able to perpetuate that lie all the way from the Garden of Eden. "Thou shall not surely die." He's telling people the very same thing today, and they're still believing it. But, thank God, we're not believing it! We know better. As you obey, you're living a righteous life.

Romans 6:17, "But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you." That's the gospel Jesus was talking about: believe the gospel! What happened when you obeyed from the heart? What happened when you confessed your sins with the mouth and believed in your heart on Christ? You were made free from sin. Salvation still does that, does it not? That common salvation does it. That's what true repentance produces.

Romans 6:18, "Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness." That's part of our common salvation, Brethren. That is the common faith. We cannot neglect to teach and believe that and be the common faith. We cannot do it. We have to promote it, believe it, and live it. Just believing and teaching it is not enough. We have to live it. We have to live being made free from sin. We have to live walking in righteousness and obeying God. There are people in some places that teach "you ought to do what is right," but that's not enough. That's good that they teach you that ought to do what is right, but they generally give you a pass for doing what is wrong. It is not enough to teach people to do what is right. You have to do what is right. You have to go ahead and do it. Yes, yield your members to do the right thing. These feet don't carry me to the barrooms any longer. They carry me to the church house now. These hands don't lift up cigarettes to my mouth any longer. They lift up holy hands to God and give Him praise. These lips don't tell lies any more. They praise God and pray. That's my members. We're

yielding them differently now. There is a common cure, is there not?

We have to earnestly contend. We have to struggle to keep this common salvation where it is supposed to be. People down through the ages have let down. Thank God, some have stood for all they knew. There again, they might have not known all there was to know, but all that they knew, they stood for. Saints of God, the church has been through some dark times. You read about Tyndale and others. A lot of those folks were pretty devout folks. You're looking at people who gave their lives for this common salvation. They would not recant. They would rather stand there and burn than to recant what they knew. People have stood to keep this thing going forth, to keep it as pure as they knew how to keep it. Now it's our turn. We are standing on their shoulders. Uphold the truth that we know, and Saints of God, we know a lot.

TWO WORKS OF GRACE

Let us look at John 14:15, 16—"If ye love me, keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever." If you love Christ, you have to get saved (justified and washed from your sins) to keep His commandments. If you will keep His commandments and bring forth that fruit, He said, "I have something else for you." You didn't receive the Spirit as an abiding Comforter at conversion, because the world cannot receive Him. Verse 17: "Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive [We are introduced to Christ when we get justified. We get introduced to the Spirit of God, and we know Him; but we couldn't do it when we were in that unregenerated state.], because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and [there's a difference, He] shall be in you." Two different works. Two different levels right there. They don't come at the same time.

Now, John 15:1, 2—"I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me [When we get saved, we are a branch in Him. We're in Christ! The Lord adds to the church, which is His body. So this branch is in Christ.] that beareth not fruit [or the fruit a saved person should bear] he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit [the fruit of the Spirit, because he's under the fruit of the Spirit], he purgeth it [Christ is purging this branch. The word *purge* means, 'to cleanse.' Why?], that it may bring forth more fruit." Jesus said, "Bringeth forth more abundantly."

We have a well in us in salvation. It is referred to as a river. This Christ spoke of the Holy Ghost. What is it? It's water, but it's more abundant water. A well is nice, but a river is better. A river is never-ending. So what is that? It is a part of the common cure. How important, Saints of God, that we teach that as part of the common salvation! We can't let that go. Christ instituted that. That's not ours to mess with. "Well, we'll probably get more converts if we'll just have them to come down and shake the preacher's hand. Repentance embarrasses people. We don't want to put too much stress on people, so just ask, 'Who would like to be a part of the church today? Come down and shake our hands and we'll give you a card.'" It allows people to keep their dignity. That's what the religious world

does. Well, we might get more people, but we wouldn't be doing it the Bible way. They would miss a vital point, and you would never have the church that will do as the church without that vital point. You have to have justified, sanctified people for the church to work. If you skip that part, you'll never get to the part of being the church of God. That's the foundation. It's necessary. It's not ours to mess with.

COMMON CONVERSATION

This common salvation produces a common conversation. Ephesians 4:17-24, "This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind [We don't walk those ways any more.], Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart [That's not how saved people live.]: Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness. [That's what I once did.] But ye have not so learned Christ; If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus [The truth is in Jesus.]: That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts [those lusts that drew us away, those deceitful lusts that drew us into them. That's what corrupted us.]; And be renewed in the spirit of your mind [We have to have that renewal. That's part of the common salvation.]; And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." How important that is for us to uphold! It's vital. We can't substitute anything for it.

I Peter 1:13-17 tells us that we must be holy as He is holy. That is common to all of God's people. Everything we have said here is common to all of God's people. It doesn't matter where you are. This is what we must do. These are basic requirements to be saved and to live a life acceptable before God. This is what is common to Christianity.

Let's look at Titus 2:11-15—"For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men [It's common. This grace of God doesn't tell you folks one thing and you folks something different.], Teaching us [all] that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world [That's the common salvation; the common conversation. Why do we do that? Because we have an expectation for something.]; Looking for that blessed hope [eternal life], and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ [He's coming back. That's why we are living soberly and righteously in this world. We are going to be called into judgment to give an account for the deeds done in this body.]; Who gave himself for us [May He help us to give ourselves for Him.], that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people [set apart], zealous of good works. [God help us that we will have a zeal to do what's right, to perform God's will, and to do His work in this world.] These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee." This is part of the common salvation. This will go to the judgment with us.

God has provided a common cure for sin, which is justification, sanctification (the infilling of the Holy Spirit), and that produces a common life, a common conversation.

A COMMON LIFESTYLE

One more thing I want us to look at concerning the common conversation. Philippians 1:27, a part of our common lifestyle. "Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you [I know Paul wrote this, but there are a couple places in here where I think about Jesus saying this. I know it was inspired through the Spirit of God, so it is not a far stretch.], or else be absent [I want to be accepted of Him.], I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel." That is what God's entire church should be doing. That is the common faith. Nothing less will do, Saints of God. Listen: No more than we can change justification, no more than we can change the proper receiving of the Holy Spirit (the cleansing of the carnal nature and the infilling of the Holy Spirit), no more than we can change those and things be right, and we be what we ought to be, can we change God's Word. We have to be one. We have to strive together and work together; not for my interest, not for your interest, not for your kingdom, not for your little patch, but for the gospel of Christ. We're here for the good of souls. I'm not here to build a kingdom down in Hattiesburg. I'm here to work for souls. We have to have one mind. Colossians 3:2 says, "Set your affection [your mind] on things above, not on things on the earth." May God help us to have our mind in the right place.

A COMMON CHURCH

Our last thought is: All of these things produce a common church. Matthew 16:18, "And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock [this truth that He is the Christ] I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Christ built His church. He is the builder. That's the only common church there is. Acts 2:46, 47, "And they, continuing daily [We see the church. This is the birthplace of the church.] with one accord [one mind] in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness [We ought to be a glad people. We have much to be glad about.] and singleness [simplicity, our mind set on one goal] of heart, Praising God [He's worthy of our praise. The world praises their god. We need to praise our God.], and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." I can't take people into the church. I can work with them and do what I know to do, but I can't add no one to God's church. That's a divine work. It is not for me to say, other than looking at their fruit to see if they are or not.

I told this story many times—

When I stood up by the altar after being saved, I still had that long hair and other things on me. With tears in my eyes, I was delivered from my sins, and as I turned around to the congregation, they called me brother. I didn't look like they did. I went a few days before I got rid of the long hair, but I was still Bro. Darrell, because my heart had changed. I was saved,

but if people had seen me on the street, they would have said, "Boy, that guy is messed up." But I wasn't messed up. If you had been around me for awhile, and heard the things coming out of my mouth, you would have known differently.

I was saved on a Sunday night, but I had to go the guys in my band the next morning for practice. I had to go tell those guys that I'm not playing in the band any more. So I walked into the studio and called to the one who was most friendly to me. I spoke to him on the porch. I said, "Dan, I can't do this any more. I got saved last night, and I can't play in the bars any more. The guys all knew that God was dealing with me because I'd been acting weird for months. God was dealing with me. I was talking about breaking up the band but not right then.

Then the other guy started filtering out, "Hey, Man, what's going on? We have to start our practice. What are you doing out there?" So then I had to tell all of them. One got pretty mad. He cursed and stomped off, because they were expecting to make money on that gig. I guess he probably didn't like what I did.

But you know what? I still looked the same. I had all the long hair at that time, but I had a new spirit. God did that! I was in the church of God. You could look at me and say, "You're not in the church of God looking like that." But I was already in there. You couldn't do anything about it. You couldn't put me out, either.

Now, I had to walk in the light. I had to do some changes and measure up. God accepted me, and who God accepts, we accept. I thank God that there is still a Holy Spirit that deals with people. He dealt with me.

CHRIST IS THE HEAD OF HIS CHURCH

There are a few more scriptures I'd like to bring to you. Ephesians 1:22, 23, "And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all." He is the Head. The church is His body. It is the fullness of Him. He's the One that fills all in all. Christ is the One who puts the members in place, and the One who gives the measures of grace to each one. He fills all in all the parts of His church.

Ephesians 2:15—"Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace." This being the case, all races and all cultures are one. There's no room for a Hispanic church, a Filipino church, a Caucasian church, a black church, for we are all one. Christ didn't even make two churches—one for the Jews—one for the Gentiles, who were totally different from one another. He said, "You all are going to be in the same body. You're going to work together. You are going to accomplish the work together. They did, and yes, they had issues they had to work through. Even with the issues, God would not put them separate from one another. He doesn't want us separate from one another today.

Ephesians 2:18-22—"For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father. Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are

built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together [He is the framer.] groweth unto an holy temple [If we'll let Him put the pieces in place, and let Him be the Head, we will grow up together unto an holy temple. We have to humble ourselves and accept what God does.] in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit." Saints, I am saved as any of you. You're as saved as I am. There are other people out there who are saved as you are. They may be a little different in this or that. We have different customs. God help us to look and see the spirit of one another. Let Christ be the Head.

CONCLUSION

John 17:14-18—"I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them [If we really hold the Word to the world, they won't like it.] because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep [guard] them from the evil. They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth. As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world." We are to go into the world as one body, one people. Verses 19 and 20: "And for their sakes I sanctify myself [He set Himself apart.], that they also might be sanctified through the truth. Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word." This prayer is for us. We're responsible. All we can do is to obey and live this. I see a people who are willing to obey and live this. In that sense, I can't help what everyone does. The outcome is left to God. We have to do our part.

Saints of God, once we see the truth, we know. We're responsible. We can still only do what we can do, and pray for God to move. I believe God desires to move. I know He does, because I know the will of God.

John 17:21-23—"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." The consequences of not doing this are immeasurable. He said that we need to do this that the world may believe. The world scoffs and mocks us. I'm not only talking about church of God. I'm talking about Christianity. They mock us because of division and people not living it. People aren't living it because they don't have the goods, but we have the goods. My call is to all. God help us! We have to be one. It's not an option. It's part of the common salvation. "And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one. I in them [that's the issue; Jesus said that for our benefit.], and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one [Christ needs to be seen in us.]; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me." If we don't get Him in us, as the entire body, as the entire church of God which is beyond what we know, we will never be complete, and therefore never will complete the work God has for us to do.

Galatians 3:28 says, "Ye are all one in Christ Jesus." If we're going to be one, if we're going to be common, if we're going to be the faith once delivered, then we must

have Him in us, which will make us one in Him. We are one in Christ. We may be different in a lot of things. We may be different in politics, in culture, in historical perspectives, etc., and some of it may be OK, but here's the thing: we're one in Christ. When we focus on Christ, we'll be one. If we focus on politics, and you have something there a little different than I do, we're not going to be one. If you focus on some culture, and I have mine and you have yours, that's fine. That's something we have and can't do anything about, but if we focus on that, we won't be one. When we focus on Christ, we are one in Christ. We have to make Christ first and foremost. All this other stuff is secondary, or irrelevant, or worthless. The only thing that really matters is Christ. Christ in us and living through us that we might truly be the church of God and do the work He has for us to do.

I love you. I thank you for the opportunity to minister to you this morning. †

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BIBLE LESSON OF THE MONTH

SIN, MAN'S GREATEST ENEMY

THE POWER OF SIN

Scriptures: II Kings 5:20-27.

II Kings 5:20 But Gehazi, the servant of Elisha the man of God, said, Behold, my master hath spared Naaman this Syrian, in not receiving at his hands that which he brought: but, as the Lord liveth, I will run after him, and take somewhat of him.

21 So Gehazi followed after Naaman. And when Naaman saw him running after him, he lighted down from his chariot to meet him, and said, Is all well?

22 And he said, All is well. My master hath sent me, saying, Behold, even now there be come to me from mount Ephraim two young men of the sons of the prophets: give them, I pray thee, a talent of silver, and two changes of garments.

23 And Naaman said, Be content, take two talents. And he urged him, and bound two talents of silver in two bags, with two changes of garments, and laid them upon two of his servants; and they bare them before him.

24 And when he came to the tower, he took them from their hand, and bestowed them in the house: and he let the men go, and they departed.

25 But he went in, and stood before his master. And Elisha said unto him, Whence comest thou, Gehazi? And he said, Thy servant went no whither.

26 And he said unto him, Went not mine heart with thee, when the man turned again from his chariot to meet thee? Is it a time to receive money, and to receive garments, and oliveyards, and vineyards, and sheep, and oxen, and menservants, and maidservants?

27 The leprosy therefore of Naaman shall cleave unto thee, and unto thy seed forever. And he went out from his presence a leper as white as snow.

Memory Verse: Be sure your sin will find you out.

—Numbers 32:23b.

Aim: To show what sin does to us.

INTRODUCTION

SAD IS the story of millions of earthly pilgrims who have felt the awful power of sin as it has blighted bright prospects of happiness in life, melted away buoyant health, brought nations to ruin and spread the horror of death from one end of the world to the other. No man has the power to break the bands of sin! Often men and women have wailed, "I am a hopeless slave to the cigarette habit, the drink habit, the gambling habit," etc. Sin originates with the devil, who seeks to impose it upon every soul who lands on the shores of time. Let us remember that the power of Satan exceeds, tremendously, the power of any man, and we are helpless before him, taken captive at his will. It is only as we call upon the Almighty power, the true and living God, that Satan and the power of sin is broken. It is a wonderful thought that God cares for you and me and never does He turn away the honest cry of the penitent sinner. The same power that saves from sin, also, if we trust in God, keeps us from again entering into the bondage of sin. Life can find full and complete expression only when sin has been mastered.

"THAT THEY ALL MAY BE ONE."

—JESUS

MEDITATIONS

POWER OF COVETOUSNESS—II Kings 5:20—

Take somewhat—Gehazi's heart became lustful as he beheld the wealth of gifts that Naaman had brought to bestow upon Elisha, the same which he had rejected. He was covetous, and covetousness is idolatry (Colossians 3:5). Satan tempted him through his eyes. Had he turned from this, thinking of honest things, etc., he would not have yielded. In our great age today there is much to entice the soul through the eye. As Paul said, we must keep our bodies in subjection to the Spirit (I Corinthians 9:27).

YIELDING TO TEMPTATION—II Kings 5:21

—Running after him—The mind of Gehazi was fully occupied with the thought of receiving this ill-gotten gain, and no room was allowed for meditation upon the result of sin or its power over the flesh. Naaman, though interested in the sudden appearance of Elisha's servant, knew nothing of his infamy.

ONE SIN CALLS FOR ANOTHER—II Kings

5:22—My Master hath sent me—To satisfy the covetousness that possessed him fully, he had to resort to the sin of lying. Sin is powerful and merciless, driving its victim relentlessly. Sin is not consistent with life; therefore, sooner or later, it will come to light. "Be sure your sin will find you out." A talent is about \$1,000. Having seen such a display of wealth, the temptation became great. The love of money is the root of all evil (I Timothy 6:10).

TAKING PAY PERSONALLY FOR THE WORK GOD DID—II Kings 5:23—He urged him—

Naaman was grateful and happy for the blessings of renewed health received directly from the hand of God. So glad was he that in his appreciation he urged Gehazi to take not just one talent of silver, which he had asked, but two. The servant had nothing in the healing at all, but his covetous spirit was his powerful master. No one could derive true joy from the use of such ill-gotten gain.

COVERING SIN—II Kings 5:24—Bestowed them—Sin must be kept covered; so after Gehazi had returned home with his loot, it had to be hidden away. He could hide it from men, but there was one eye from which he could not hide it. He was not conscious of this eye because he was so thoroughly blinded by sin.

A SLAVE TO SIN—II Kings 5:25—Went no whither—He dared not let it be known what he had so recently done. He was now spiritually sick, and his sickness was now eating deeper and deeper into his soul. So it is with every soul who is under the power of sin. For Gehazi there was no way out; he must go deeper in sin or else confess his sins. To confess, he had neither the courage nor will to do.

SIN UNCOVERED—II Kings 5:26—Is it a time

—How finite is the mind of man! If man would only trust God fully with all things! There will always be a proper time to receive money. God did not aim to receive any money from Naaman. Gehazi could not, or would not, resist temptation; thus he disrupted God's plan, which was serious indeed. Not always, by any means, does God uncover sin as He did here, but even though He does not uncover it, He still is just as conscious of it, and it merits the same penalty.

SIN'S PENALTY—II Kings 5:27—Shall cleave unto thee—How helpless is the man who meets the displeasure and wrath of God! We do not know what happened to the goods the servant had gotten, but we do know that he was smitten with leprosy with the judgment that it would never depart from his house. We hope that he repented and his soul was saved in the end, but of this we know nothing. Let this be a warning to all concerning the power that lies in sin. Many seem to escape the immediate penalty of sin, but no sinner will escape when the great Judge sits upon His throne in the last day.

CONCLUSION

It is the devil's business to minimize the power and penalty of sin and to blanket its consequences. In doing this, he has been very successful, as is evidenced by the great majority of mankind who are held in its power. The only way that the human race can be awakened to the awful situation is by the strong preaching of the truth concerning sin. No one can truthfully deny that there is pleasure in sin, but it's not a pleasure that satisfies. It must be followed by more of the same character. But the pleasure to be found in God's kingdom has no evil effects and completely satisfies.

There is only one thing that will counteract the power of sin, and that is the blood of Jesus. The blood will both break the power of sin and keep one from its power.

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

1. Wherein does the power of sin lie?
2. How can the power of sin be broken?
3. What is the nature of the pleasures of sin?
4. What are the steps the devil uses in bringing men under the power of sin?
5. Why do people cover their sin, as Gehazi did?
6. What is the present and future penalty for sin?
7. Why is it that sin is sure to be uncovered? †

BIBLE PROOFS OF A SECOND CLEANSING

By the late R. R. Byrum

THE SCRIPTURES clearly recognize sin in two forms, committed sin and inherited sin. Formal proof of these is scarcely necessary here. It is assumed that every believer in the Scriptures recognizes the actuality of committed sin. Inherited sin, or native depravity is also quite generally recognized as Scriptural. Definite proofs of native depravity have already been given. Though it does not necessarily follow that these two forms of sin must be overcome in us at two different times, yet their existence



does positively prove the *possibility* of two works of grace.

Remaining depravity in believers, which has already been sufficiently shown, is, to the minds of those who believe in the completeness of Christ's salvation, proof of a second cleansing.

More Direct Scripture Proofs of a Second Cleansing

Sanctification for Disciples—In Jesus' notable prayer for his disciples offered at the close of the last supper, on the eve of his betrayal and crucifixion, he prayed, "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth" (John 17:17). ... This was a cleansing of the heart and not of the life, it is certain, from the fact that it was to be done by the Father and not by themselves. As we have shown in a previous chapter, men are always said to cleanse their own lives; but God's sanctification of men described in the New Testament is always a cleansing of the heart, and not of the life. Also it should be noted that this sanctification was in order that they might be 'kept from the evil' (verse 15). It was a cause, and the holy living was the effect.

These disciples for whose cleansing Jesus prayed were already justified, as is evident from several expressions in the same chapter as well as from other texts. They belonged to God and were obedient to his word (John 17:6), were not of the world (verses 9, 14, 16), were kept from sin (verses 11, 12, 15), had been sent to preach (Matthew 10:7), and their names were written in heaven (Luke 10:20). It has been objected that they were justified, but had not been regenerated and that this was the sanctification for which Jesus prayed. But that they were regenerated, or converted, can also be shown. Some of the very points to which we have called attention are fruits, not of justification, but of the new birth.

Regeneration makes one a member of the church. The kingdom and the church are practically identical, so regeneration is essential to entrance into the kingdom of God (John 3:3). ... Jesus' prayer for the sanctification of his disciples is undeniable proof of a cleansing of the regenerated.

Sanctification for the Church—"Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it [the church] with the washing of water by the word" (Ephesians 5:25, 26). Here is described a sanctification, not of sinners, but of the church or those already saved. That this sanctification is a cleansing is evident from the argument already given in this chapter, that in the New Testament the sanctification done for man by God is always a cleansing of the heart. It is not consecration.

An Entire Sanctification—"The very God of peace sanctify you wholly [entirely]; and I [pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (I Thessalonians 5:23). This text teaches a sanctification to be done by God, therefore a sanctification of the heart, and not of the life. The keeping them blameless in the latter part of the verse is the keeping from evil in John 17. It is an *entire* sanctification, which may reasonably be

taken to imply that there is a sanctification that is not entire. Also it is to be done for those who were a church "in God the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ" (I Thessalonians 1:1), those who were "brethren" (verse 4), a very spiritual church, who a short time before this letter was written were converted through Paul's labors.

Sanctification Contemporary With Holy Ghost Baptism

We now come to a fourth main class of proofs of a second cleansing. Our purpose is to show that a second cleansing is accomplished at the time of Holy Ghost baptism and then to show that this baptism is subsequent to conversion. It is said of Cornelius before Peter came to him that he was devout, feared God, gave much alms, prayed always (Acts 10:2), that his prayers were heard (verse 4), and that he was a just man (verse 22). There can be little doubt about his being a truly saved man. Some would object that he was justified, but not regenerated. To this it may be answered that the work of justification and regeneration normally are contemporary, and the baptism of the Spirit is subsequent. ...

After Cornelius had received the Holy Spirit baptism through Peter's ministry and Peter had returned to Jerusalem, the apostle was called in question for going to these Gentiles. In his defense he said, "God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us; and put no difference between us and them, *purifying their hearts by faith*" (Acts 15:8, 9).

It is evident that sin in the life is not overcome by some indefinite process or by a gradual evolution in human character; for according to the teaching of Jesus it is accomplished only by a sudden revolution in the moral nature, a revolution produced by the Spirit of God in the new birth. And if sin in the life can be overcome only by a definite act of God's grace, it is not to be expected that that sin which is basic in depraved human nature will gradually fade away and disappear. If it is to be overcome at all it will have to be done by the power of God, and there will also have to be a *definite time when it is done*. In this case also the remedy will have to be equal to the disease, and nothing short of a definite, sin-killing act of God's grace can dispose of this inward malady.

The Scripture text already cited, Acts 15:8, 9, identifies heart-cleansing with the baptism of the Spirit, hence the Spirit baptism provides a definite remedy for a very definite need. To this agrees also the words of Paul in Titus 3:5, 6, where the apostle affirms that Christ "*saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he shed on us abundantly.*" Salvation is therefore twofold, because there is a twofold need, occasioned by the two forms of sin. It is not complete until the baptism of the Spirit is received. In Matthew 3:11, 12, Jesus also associates a purging, destructive work with the baptism of the Holy Ghost. †

—Sixth chapter (condensed) of *Holy Ghost Baptism and The Second Cleansing* by H. M. Riggle, copyright, 1912.

IT SHALL BE WELL WITH THE RIGHTEOUS

Radio Message by
Bro. Harley McClung



I WOULD like to take my thoughts from Isaiah, chapter 3, verse 10, and also Psalm 128, verses 1 and 2: Isaiah said, "Say ye to the righteous, that it shall be well with him: for they shall eat the fruit of their doings"; and the Psalm says, "Blessed is every one that feareth the Lord; that walketh in his ways. For thou shalt eat the labour of thine hands: happy shalt thou be, and it shall be well with thee." So, I would like to entitle my thoughts, "It Shall Be Well with the Righteous."

Righteous means, "morally upright in character; virtuous in manner of living." Proverbs 14:34, "Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people." What a wonderful promise God has made to us! and He is faithful and able to keep and to fulfill every promise, but let us understand that this and every promise is conditional.

Isaiah said, "It is well with the righteous"; that is, those regenerated through the new birth, those who have been washed in the blood of the Lamb, those who have been cleansed from all unrighteousness, and those who have taken part in the righteousness of Christ. Isaiah is not speaking of self-righteousness. Self-righteousness in God's sight is as filthy rags. Isaiah is not speaking about becoming religious. He is talking about being translated out of the kingdom of darkness and into the kingdom of God's dear Son.

It shall be well with the righteous in all seasons of life. In the springtime; that is, childhood and youth. Jeremiah 3:4, tells us: "Wilt thou not from this time cry unto me, My father, thou art the guide of my youth?" It is one's youth that influences are set in motion that may never die. In youth, habits and character are formed that govern one's future. Proverbs 22:6 says, "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it." The first commandment with promise is found in Ephesians 6:1-3: "Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honour thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise; That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth."

In life's summer, mankind's busy season, evil days have come, and this brings the stormy period perhaps, of one's life. Life is crowded with toil, care, problems of responsibility, adversity, and disappointment many times. It's here that we need or have needed all to be well with us. It's here that the Lord's safety net and guidance through a righteous life and from the dangerous periods are so greatly needed.

Then, we come to life's autumn; that is, the declining years. This is the fruit-gathering season. "Thou shalt eat the fruit of thy doings, and shalt eat the labour of thine hands." Galatians 6:7, 8, "Be not deceived; God

is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting."

It shall be well for the righteous in every part of one's life: in relation to ourselves and individually; in relation to the home and family, domesti-

cally; in relation to society, socially; in relation to the community, state, and nation as citizens. In relation to our business, practically, we live well. In relation to the church, religiously, and in relation to our Lord and eternal God, spiritually, we will live well. It shall be well in every condition of our lives. In prosperity, even in adversity, in wealth or poverty. It will be well with our souls, or with the soul of righteousness in health or sickness. Amidst favorable and pleasant surroundings, or unfavorable and unpleasant, it shall be well.

It shall be well when we're applauded or persecuted. In Jesus' example, Paul's example, we can clearly see that it was indeed well with Paul's soul, and all that he showed to us as an example. In joy or in sorrow, in the calm or in the storm, in easy sailing or severe temptations, or fiery trials, it shall be well with the righteous.

There will be difficulties of plenty. Yes, everyone suffers or deals with difficult situations. Faith, though, enables the righteous to triumph over them all. Fruit of the flesh, or fruit of those who are unrighteous, also deal with situations and problems. In Galatians, chapter 5, verses 19-21, we read: "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like [Those things that are akin to all of the things mentioned above.]: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." In other words, those who do such things, it will not be well with their souls.

The righteous shall eat the good of the land. They shall pluck the fruits of a well-spent life. Galatians 5:22-25, "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit." This is the glory of manhood's reward.

We come now to life's winter; that is, old age. Now, the chilly blast of winter is blowing: a hoary head, a tottering step, a leaning on a staff, a bending towards the grave; but for the righteous, it shall be well. It's here that righteousness is a crown of glory to the aged. Here, victory has been experienced, and final victory is in sight. Paul was able to say, "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." Here, the fruit of well-

being is anchoring the soul of the righteous; here, the fruit of the righteous pleasures one ever so greatly. It's here that one realizes the truth stated, "Happy shalt thou be." Paul said, "All things work together for good to them that love God." Even afflictions work for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. That's why Paul said in Romans 8:18, "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us."

It shall be well for us in the solemn hour of death. There surely will be a golden sunset of a well-spent life for the righteous. It is written, "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints." Simeon said, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace." "I am now ready, [a desire to depart], which is far better," Paul said. "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit," Stephen said as he was about to lay down his life. These are successful endings to the lives of righteous men in bygone days.

It shall be well with the righteous through all of eternity: after death, in the resurrection, at the judgment, and through the ceaseless ages of eternity. It pays to live right and righteous in the sight of almighty God.

Paul said, "Awake to righteousness, and sin not." Jesus said, "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled." So we can indeed live a righteous life in this sin-sick, sin-cursed world that we live in. God has made it possible through His Son to redeem us from that life of sin we sold ourselves to, and to give us the power that we need to live righteously in all parts of our lives. In the spring-time, in the last days, God has given us the means by which we can live righteous and holy and a justified life all the days in His sight.

I trust what we have said has been meaningful to you, and it has brought you to the place where you can see, it will be well with the righteous.

God bless you. †

THE REFORMATION AND US

By Bro. Herbert Kowalski, Germany

"And Josiah took away all the abominations out of all the countries that pertained to the children of Israel, and made all that were present in Israel to serve, even to serve the Lord their God. And all his days they departed not from following the Lord, the God of their fathers."

—II Chronicles 34:33.

WE ALL know about Martin Luther and the reformation in Germany.

Years later, around 1880, another reformation started. Light was received on unity and other important teachings. But in the Old Testament, there were reformations under Hezekiah and Josiah, as well.

What does the word *reformation* mean? "restoration (of a previous state); reform; transform; renew."

Latin origin: reformare—the 're' signifies: again; back.

We have the very beautiful song, "Back to the Blessed Old Bible." A portion of a verse says: "Back to the blessed old Bible, Back at the Master's call, Back to the words of our Savior, Loving, obeying them all." That is a lovely reformation song.

When is a Reformation required? When one has deviated from the commandments of God, or if one has turned to false teachings. A reformation is required when human doctrines are set up in place of the Word of God.

Let us take a look at the Old Testament reformation during the time of Josiah. Josiah's grandfather was Manasseh, his father, Amon. Both, the grandfather and father were godless men (II Kings 21:19, 20). The first eight years of Josiah's life were spent during this godless condition. At the age of eight, the people made Josiah their king. At 16, Josiah sought God, and at the age of 20, he began the reformation (II Chronicles 34:3, 4).

Josiah was at least 26 years old when the book of the law was found, and the passage in II Kings 22:11 was read. This was the Old Testament, but for him it was a "new book"; He had not known God's Word and had heard it for the first time. Josiah, wanting to know more, requested that someone should ask the Lord. Thereupon, Hilkiah the priest, went to the prophetess Hulda. God spoke through Hulda.

What was the effect of the Word? The Word struck Josiah like a hammer. The Word was like a sword, which divides right from wrong. Until then, he had seen the godless nature of his fathers, but now he saw the holiness of God. Josiah's heart was softened. He humbled himself, rent his clothes and wept (II Kings 22:11). If only this humbling and weeping would take place in many hearts today! Dear Reader, are you a sinner? If so, be as sorrowful for your sins as this young king was.

Josiah purged the cities of their idolatry. Not only did he bring down the high places, but also the "groves" and desert places (II Chronicles 34:6—German translation). Before God, it is also necessary to clear up the hidden things that happen in secret.

In conversion, the hidden things must also be removed. If your covenant with God is broken, then renew it today.

Centuries later Christ was born: He came to build His church. Paul prophesied an apostasy: "Forbidding to marry ..." A papacy came into existence; a pope who refers to himself as the Vicar of God on this earth.

Now, we take a leap of many centuries.

Hus, Luther, Melancthon and others recognized the deplorable conditions of the Church: Five hundred years ago, on October 31, 1517, 95 theses were posted on the portal of the Castle Church (*Schloßkirche*) in Wittenberg, Germany. Why? Many people were not satisfied with the conditions of the church, primarily with its teaching on purgatory. Luther believed that one is saved through grace and not through works. Let me ask: What has become of Luther's Reformation? In our day, Luther would be called an extremist. Very few pastors, if any, would preach Luther in their churches.

I asked a pastor in Hamm (Germany) if she would preach repentance or conversion. She answered, “No, it’s not what the congregation wants to hear, and so they would not come to church.”

The divine will for marriage—exclusively a union of a man and a woman—was set aside. And apart from that, God rejects all other forms of marriage as sinful. Hence we can assert: Most of so-called Christianity is in need of a reformation.

I read an article, dated May 26, 2017, by Klaus Kelle, a German journalist. After listening to a speech in Reichelsheim, Germany, on Ascension Day, he wrote—

“The Bible as the Foundation of the Identity of Europe’ was a lecture to which I was drawn, if for no other reason, because of its title. The guest speaker was Vishal Mangalwadi, a philosopher and professor of Theology. A US magazine called him, ‘India’s leading Christian Intellectual.’ This I had to see. The man from distant India did not disappoint my expectations. If Europe does not reflect on its *Christian-occidental* roots and values, it will destroy itself. He said, ‘**We need a new Reformation** to fight the darkness that threatens to devour the West.’ Would such a sentence be conceivable on a German church day? Evangelical or Catholic? It does not matter. The Bible is the book that has brought tolerance to Europe.”

I will say that most of the Christians in this world need a reformation. Europe, as well as America, and others, too.

Other reformation movements came up after Luther. Specifically, John Wesley and the Methodists come to mind. Other well-known evangelists preached to the extent that they had received light.

The other Reformation had its beginnings around 1880: Brothers of the Reformation were D. S. Warner, Byers, Byrum, Ebel, and so on.

Which biblical teachings were important to the brethren? We know the song, “Back to the blessed old Bible, Back to the city of God ...” They rejected all creeds and catechisms. Back to the Bible applies to all people all over the world which have deviated from it. Christ said, “Search the scriptures!”

Many years ago, a brother in Russia was sick of dead Christianity. Life from God was missing in his congregation. He fasted and prayed, “Give me the truth or I die.” He found the church of God, the body of Christ (Zechariah 8:1-3). But nowadays, the tendency is to go back to the conditions the fathers came out of.

The songwriter says: “Back to the blessed old Bible, Leaving confusion and strife; Fleeing from Babel to Zion, Back to the joy of our life.” Babel is everywhere, where the biblical truth is not proclaimed. Zion, Jerusalem, or the city of God are symbols for the church of God. More than 100 years ago, many were enlightened with great clarity (Off. 18:1). And we read in verse four how all children of God are admonished to *come out of her*. This is not spoken to sinners. It says, “my people”!

Some quotes from F. G. Smith’s sermon notes: “Any movement that does not stand committed to ALL TRUTH and UNIVERSALITY does not and cannot represent the true church. Not all who were in Babylon

were Babylonians.” He wrote under the point, *Our Attitude*: “Mixing [sectarianism and the truth] is like walking into a fog bank. Never build up Babylon, but always build the kingdom of God. God open our eyes! that we may not lose the sight of our own message and work! Love individuals who are in error? Yes, but true LOVE will tell them the truth.”

Unfortunately, a vision of Zion, the Church of God, is disappearing more and more. If we stop teaching the truth and the true church, we have lost our right to exist. Then we will simply have become a church among churches.

Back to the question: **Which biblical teachings were important to the brethren?** A holy life and sanctification (I Peter 1:15, 16). A holy life means to live a life without sin. In the German song that begins with the words, “Glorious things are preached within the city of God, church of the Lord,” Bro. Ebel expresses the following: “... quite unlike the churches of man in this world, where good men and evil conjoin, God’s church, the bride of Christ, will stand holy and pure, until Jesus your Savior returns.”

The new generation has changed the truth about biblical sanctification as a second work of grace. I read a German article recently. The writer said: “Throughout its history [the Church of God], has corrected its understanding of the doctrine of sanctification.” They call it “correction”; I label it “error.”

The unity in Christ in the one body was very important for the brethren (Ephesians 4:3-5). Whoever is converted to God belongs to the church of God. A church membership book is unbiblical. We do not read that the thousands of redeemed were registered as members in a church book in Jerusalem. Do church alliances reflect true biblical unity? Some conservative religious movements in our country are warning that you cannot work together with the Christian Alliance. It would be good if all church of God groups would see it in the same way. Whoever gets involved with the alliance will lose himself in it.

Furthermore, the reformation movement preached healing for soul and body. Many were healed. Thank God, He is the same today! We can bring all our pain and sickness to Him.

And at last, they did what Jesus said: “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.” They were very diligent in winning souls for the Lord. Let us do the same.

In conclusion, I would like to ask: To what extent are the roots of the reformation important for us? Whoever has deviated from the foundation of the reformation must go back and return to the Bible.

I will end by quoting F. G. Smith one more time: “Keep the spirit of the reformation and we will keep the reformation itself.” †

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THE CHILDREN'S CORNER



FIRE!

A Bible Lesson by Sis. Rebecca Bland

"This is so much fun!" my younger sister, Twila, said. She looked up from the edge of the bonfire where she sat, carefully toasting a marshmallow on the end of a long stick.

"I know!" I agreed. "I can't believe Mom and Dad let us stay out here and roast marshmallows without them!"

It was dusk on a crisp autumn evening. Already dark shadows had gathered in the woods just below the field where our bonfire had been built. There wasn't much left of the fire—just a pile of brightly glowing embers. Still there was plenty of heat left to roast the marshmallows to perfection.

Our parents had already gone indoors with the parents of our friends, whose home we were visiting. They had given us strict orders upon their departure. "Keep your eyes on the little ones. Don't let them get too close to the fire!"

I looked around at the children gathered by the fire. Two of them were my younger sisters, Twila and Wilma. The other four were children of the family we were visiting. The youngest (we'll call her Cindy) was only eight years old. Her younger brother (we'll call him Jacob) was six. Her two older brothers (we'll call them Calvin and James) were teenagers, just a little older than I.

It was surprising to me that my parents had agreed that my two sisters and I could stay outside with our friends and enjoy what was left of the bonfire. *They must think we are old enough to be trusted out of their sight*, I thought to myself. I smiled in the darkness, trying to get used to this new "grownup" feeling.

"My marshmallow isn't getting done," Cindy complained. "I'm tired of holding it over the fire, and my face is getting hot."

"Do you want me to roast it for you?" her older brother, James, asked.

"No," said Cindy. "I want to do it myself."

"Well, then," James answered her, "stop complaining about how hot your face is."

"I'm going to hold my marshmallow closer to the fire," Cindy said.

"If you do, it will probably catch on fire," Calvin warned.

"No, it won't," said Cindy. "The fire is too little." She dipped her marshmallow closer to the glowing embers. A little smoke began to rise from the marshmallow. Suddenly, a flame shot out of it. The marshmallow was on fire, and so was the stick.

"See, I told you that would happen!" Calvin said to his little sister.

Cindy jerked her flaming stick out of the bonfire. "My marshmallow is ruined!" she cried, pulling the stick toward her. Somehow the stick became tangled with Cindy's skirt, setting it afire, too. When Cindy saw the flames, she began to run toward the house, screaming for her mother as she ran.

"Stop!" Cindy's brother James shouted. He jumped up and began to run after her as fast as his legs could carry him. "Stop running! You're making it worse!"

Sure enough, Cindy's running was fanning the flames on her skirt, making them burn larger and brighter. The flames began to leap upward toward Cindy's hair as she continued to run.

"Stop!" James yelled again. In two giant leaps, he caught up with Cindy and threw her to the ground.

"What is he doing?" Twila asked as she and I ran toward them. "Why did he throw her down on the ground?"

"Go get Daddy!" I said to her. "Tell him to come quick!"

Twila changed direction and ran toward the house.

As I neared them, I saw James rolling Cindy's body over and over on the hard earth. The flames, smothered by his action, flickered and went out. Cindy sat on the ground and looked at her blackened skirt. She began to cry.

"You hurt me!" she said to James.

"Well, you're still alive!" James told her. "If you had kept on running, you would have burned up!"

"He hurt me!" Cindy complained again to her mother when she reached us. Cindy's mother picked her up and hugged her hard. Then she set her down and looked at her skirt. It hung in blackened, ragged shreds around her legs.

"Don't you know you should never run with a fire?" she scolded. "James did exactly what he should have done."

James' father gripped his shoulder. "I'm proud of you, son!" he said. "That was some quick thinking!"

"That's right," said my father. "You have to smother a fire. Running just feeds the flame."

I knew my father was right. In school I had learned that fire needs three things in order to burn: a heat source, fuel, and oxygen. When Cindy tried to run from the flame, it burned all the higher because of the oxygen that was in the air around her. However, when James rolled his sister on the ground, he "smothered" the fire by blocking the oxygen.

Another thing fire needs in order to burn is fuel. In Proverbs 26:20 we read, "Where no wood is, there the fire goeth out: so where there is no talebearer, the strife ceaseth." There is an important lesson for us in this verse. When people gossip or tell tales on each other, it adds "fuel" to the fire of arguments and strife. They grow hotter and more dangerous, "burning" relationships and injuring the feelings of others. However, when people refuse to say evil things about others, the fire of strife goes out.

If you want to live a peaceful life that pleases God, guard your tongue. Use it to say only kind words about

others, and then you will not need to be rescued from the fire of a bitter argument or an ugly quarrel.

Activity

There is a scripture in the New Testament that compares the tongue to a fire. Can you find it? **Hint:** If you unscramble the word below, you will know in which book of the Bible to look.

MAJSE

Answer to Last Month's Activity

1. "Children, obey your *parents* in the Lord: for this is *right*" (Ephesians 6:1).
2. "A soft answer turneth away *wrath*: but grievous words stir up *anger*" (Proverbs 15:1).
3. "By humility and the fear of the Lord are *riches*, and *honor*, and *life*" (Proverbs 22:4).
4. "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are *true*, whatsoever things are *honest*, whatsoever things are *just*, whatsoever things are *pure*, whatsoever things are *lovely*, whatsoever things are of *good report*; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things" (Philippians 4:8).
5. "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy *youth*, while the evil *days* come not, nor the *years* draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no *pleasure* in them" (Ecclesiastes 12:1). †



Dear Young People,

My plans are to turn the responsibility of the oversight of this page to someone younger. I have been intending to do this for a long time. The new editor of the Young People's Page will be introduced to our readers next month, Lord willing.

Of course, I will continue laboring in *The Way of Truth* ministry and you will doubtless continue to see my writings in its pages. But, after authoring the Young People's Page in this magazine for many years, my time is long overdue to step aside. I hope my efforts have been an encouragement to young people around the world. Always remember that living for Christ is the very best way to live!

Following are testimonies from Sis. Gail Cook from North Carolina. I hope it will be a blessing.

Keep on pressing and be faithful to the end!

In Christian love,
Bro. Greg Tyler

MY TESTIMONIES UNTO THE LORD

By Sis. Gail Cook, North Carolina

I would like to share my testimonies of God's goodness to me over the years and for the prayers He has answered. Although I do give God thanks and praise

for the many things He has done for me, I realize that my thanksgiving has mostly been in my prayer life and with close family. Of course, these testimonies do not reflect all of the answers to prayer that I have experienced. My desire is to give God the glory and praise!

In the early part of 1997, when I was unsaved, God started dealing with my heart. He was showing me my need of Him. One day, I believe it was in the month of May, I surrendered my heart and life to God. I didn't know much truth at all, but I did remember what my mother taught me when I was very young. She clearly taught me how to get saved and sanctified. I was home with my three-year-old daughter that afternoon. I knew so little, so I repented several times that afternoon, not knowing for sure what to expect.

The next morning, I took my daughter to the babysitter, and I went to Greenville to stay with an elderly woman so my mom, her caregiver, could leave for a while. On my way to Greenville, and for most of the entire day, I felt the glory of God's presence with me. What a wonderful witness that I had received salvation! I was enjoying God's presence so much that I didn't realize until several hours into the day that I didn't even think about smoking a cigarette. My cigarette addiction was completely gone. It was as if I had never smoked. I had smoked for about 11 years and the addiction was bad. I thank the Lord for saving me and freeing me from that horrible addiction.

A few months after I got saved, I moved to Le Roy, West Virginia, with some of my family. One day while I was working at the Big R Supermarket in the deli and bakery department, I started getting sick. I left work early, around 1:00 or 1:30 p.m. By the time I arrived home, I was really sick. I had a high fever, aches and chills with stomach pain and nausea. I didn't have any medicine to take. I lay on the couch and prayed. I knew I had to pick up my daughter from after-school, but I didn't know how I was going to do it. I felt that bad. I managed to pick up my daughter and went back home and just lay on the couch. I prayed again. Then around 7:00 p.m., I became so nauseated that I had to go to the bathroom. When the contents in my stomach were gone, I went and lay down in my bed and realized that my fever was gone, and I was feeling so much better. After a few minutes, I felt completely well. I'm pretty sure I had a stomach flu or virus.

Another time, I had to have a tooth pulled. After I arrived at home from the dentist, I rested until I was sure the bleeding had stopped. I wasn't in any pain because my mouth was still numb from the anesthesia. A few hours later when the numbness wore off, I was amazed because I didn't have any pain or even one bit of soreness where the tooth had been pulled. It was fine. I know the Lord answered prayer.

One time while I was working at Bank of America, it was my turn to work on a Saturday. I had been sick with a cold that week, but I still went to work because it wasn't real bad. I got up early Saturday morning and prepared myself, then took my daughter to the babysitter, but all the while I was feeling sicker. When I arrived at the bank, I was feeling even worse. I was a few minutes early, so I just sat in the parking lot for a bit. My left eye was so watery that I couldn't see out of it.

I had aches and chills and felt like I had a fever. I felt terrible by this time. I was wondering how in the world I was going to be able to do my job. I knew Saturday's were fast-paced and I would be working the drive-thru. This was usually nonstop until the bank closed at 1:00 p.m. I knew I had to be able to see well to get the account numbers and all the information correct. I knew I was in no shape to do my job. I said a short prayer, and I guess you could say I stepped out in faith. I got out of my car and walked to the front door. Someone inside had to open the door for me because I didn't have a key to this branch. Just as soon as I stepped inside the bank, I felt a sensation go through my body from my head to my feet. My eye immediately stopped watering. The aches and chills were gone. I felt such a soothing, peaceful and well-feeling the entire time at work. The Lord instantly healed me. I had a good day and was able to do my job well.

In 2004, I was living in Greenville, but I went to Ayden one Sunday to meet my sister, brother, and mother at an elderly man's house. We were meeting there to read our Sunday school lesson together. My mom was taking care of this elderly man, so that is why we went there. When we were about to leave, my daughter wanted to ride with my brother back to my place. I told her she could. On our way home, I was driving on a four-lane highway at 60 mph, when all of a sudden a car slowly pulled out in front of me from a side road on the right-hand side. The car was about four car lengths in front of me when I saw it, and I hit the brakes. I didn't have time to slow up much at all. My first thought was, *I'm going to hit this car and there is nothing I can do about it. It's going to be bad.* I held the steering wheel tight and braced my whole body for the impact. I hit the driver's door of the other car and pushed the car sideways a few feet. My car was totaled. There were three girls in the other car. The driver was 16, and the other two girls were 16 or younger. I thank the Lord none of them were hurt any worse than they were. I believe it was the driver who had at least one broken bone. I walked away with only bruises. The air bag did hit me in the face and bruise it. Both my knees and arms were bruised as well.

After my car came to a stop, I realized that through it all I had no fear, for it was then that I felt that God's hand of protection had been on me. I called my brother and told him what had happened. He turned around and came back to the scene. He told my daughter to stay in the truck because he didn't know how bad the accident was. I told my brother and the paramedics that I was OK, but I was taken to the hospital anyway. I thank the Lord that my daughter was not with me at the time, and for His hand of protection on me.

I also thank the Lord for the healing that He has given my daughter through the years. There is one particular time that stands out in my mind. When my daughter was about 10, she had a severe allergic reaction to something, and she broke out in itchy hives all over her body. She was miserable. I took her to the doctor and got some medicine for her, but she simply refused to take it. I felt like I didn't have enough faith for God to heal her, but after a few days with no relief, my mom anointed her. My mom, my sister, and I then

prayed for her. As I was praying, the Lord gave me the faith that I needed, and I knew she would be fine. She started getting better, and by the end of the following day, she was well.

There is another situation that I would like to testify about. About three years ago, my cat, BB, needed to be neutered so I took him to Spay Today for the procedure. They said there that BB was running a fever and the procedure could not be done. I knew he had been lying around some, but when I brought him home, I noticed he was just lying around all the time. I thought he would get over it, but that didn't happen. I took him to the vet twice and both times they gave him antibiotics. That did not help him any. The third time the vet suggested that we do blood work and a lot of tests on him. I didn't have the money to do those tests. This went on for about four months, and I didn't know what to do.

I was talking to my brother one day, and he told me that we can take anything to God. He told me that I should request prayer for BB at the next Wednesday night's service. We listen to the LIVE services online from the church in Hagerstown, Maryland. I sent in an unspoken request. I had the saints to pray, and my brother and I prayed about it. The next night, around 10:00 p.m., I noticed that BB was playing for about 10 minutes. I was gladly surprised. The following morning, he was much more active. I knew then for sure God had touched him.

These are not the only instances that God has answered prayer for me. He has provided my every need. When I didn't see a way in some financial situations, He made a way. He has worked out different problems in such a marvelous way, when to me the situations looked almost impossible. The Lord has been so good to me. My desire is to give Him all the praise and thanksgiving. †

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TEN REASONS TO DRAW NEAR TO GOD

By Bro. G. E. Tyler



Text: "But it is good for me to draw near to God: I have put my trust in the Lord God, that I may declare all thy works."—Psalm 73:28.

WE, AS the church of God believe in two definite works of experience—justification and sanctification. Justification in simple terms is being forgiven of committed sins and being regenerated or born again. Sanctification is that justified soul consecrating himself as a living sacrifice and receiving the Holy Spirit as an abiding Comforter. When a person is saved and sanctified, he is a vessel meet for the Master's use. Some may assume that once this experience is gained there are no more battles, no more struggles, no more to be gained. Such is not the case! It is true that the saved and sanctified Christian is equipped for victory, yet the ebbs and flows of the human existence produces the need of often drawing closer to God to maintain the victory. There are spirits and influences prevalent in our world that would negatively affect our spiritual prowess. The Psalmist said, "But it is good for me to draw near to God."

Reason #1—It will increase our soul burden.

Does it trouble us that people with whom we have daily contact have not been won to Christ? It ought to! Our central purpose as Christians is to spread the gospel and win others to Christ. If we are ineffective in this, will we be successful in our overall life? So much of what goes on in the world opposes this effort. That is why from time to time we need to draw nearer to Him that our soul burden will increase. Isaiah 66:8 says, "Who hath heard such a thing? who hath seen such things? Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? or shall a nation be born at once? for as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children." We need to get to the place where we "weep o'er the erring one." A burden is a heavy weight on our hearts. As we draw near to God, our soul burden will increase. This will in turn enable us to more effectively pray through that conviction will grip hearts and more souls will be saved.

Reason #2—It will enable us to fill our place in the church more effectively.

The apostle Paul says in his letter to the Ephesians, chapter 4, verses 15 and 16, "But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: 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." Every member of the body of Christ has a place to fill—we are "fitly framed together." That place God has for us is important, and

if we are out of place it is a drag on the body. When we are floundering and drifting we can't see where we belong. But if we draw near to God, we not only see our place more clearly, we are in a position to be more effective in our responsibility. Here is an illustration entitled, "No Vacancy Here!"

When the slow-moving clerk in a small store was not around one morning, a customer asked the owner's young son, "Where's Eddie? Is he sick?"

"Nope, he ain't workin' here no more," was the reply.

"Do you have anyone in mind for the vacancy?" inquired the customer.

"Nope! Eddie didn't leave no vacancy!"

We smile, but the statement which characterized Eddie applies equally to many in the church today. In serving Christ, they are so weak and colorless that if they left the community, their absence would scarcely be noticed. "But it is good for me to draw near to God."

Reason #3—It will enable us to hear the voice of God more clearly.

A little fellow in the ghetto was teased by one who said, "If God loves you, why doesn't He take care of you? Why doesn't God tell someone to bring you shoes and a warm coat and better food?" The little lad thought for a moment, then with tears starting in his eyes, said, "I guess He does tell somebody, but somebody forgets." God's plan is to care through His followers and that caring is the fruit of goodness.

Is God trying to get a message through to you? We have to sift through the static to clearly hear His voice. "But it is good for me to draw near to God." Drawing near to God is like fine tuning a short-wave radio to find a particular station, ignoring the static and focusing in on His voice. Often God's voice won't thunder to gain your attention. You must listen closely, and this is much easier when you are snuggling up to your Creator. The account in I Kings 19:11, 12 reveals this: "And he said, Go forth, and stand upon the mount before the Lord. And, behold, the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the Lord; but the Lord was not in the wind: and after the wind an earthquake; but the Lord was not in the earthquake: And after the earthquake a fire; but the Lord was not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice." It is that still, small voice that we need to hear.

Reason #4—It will empower us to see how to walk straight.

Not only do we need to hear God's voice through His Word, we need to have clear spiritual sight. "Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he" (Proverbs 29:18). Again, if we be drifting away from God, we will not see where we are going spiritually. We need a crisp spiritual vision. "But it is good for me to draw near to God."

Have you ever wondered why a pigeon walks so funny? According to an interesting article in the *Detroit Free Press*, a pigeon walks the way it does so it can see where it's going. Because it can't adjust its focus as it moves, the pigeon actually has to bring its head to a

complete stop between steps in order to refocus. This is the way it walks: head forward, stop; head back, stop. Don't laugh—that's how it goes!

In our spiritual walk with the Lord, we have the same problem as the pigeon. We have a hard time seeing while we're moving. We also need to stop between steps—to refocus on where we are in relation to the world and the will of God. That's not to say we have to stop and pray and meditate about every little decision in life. But certainly our walk with the Lord needs to have built into it a pattern of "stops," which enables us to see more clearly before moving on.

Reason #5—It will cause us to more effectively "cut loose" any weights.

Satan tries to saddle the saints with all kinds of weights. A weight here would be anything that hinders one on the Christian pathway. If we are not diligent, those weights will pile up. "But it is good for me to draw near to God." Drawing near to Him causes us to cut loose of all the things that would weigh us down. "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us" (Hebrews 12:1).

In the Alleghenies a large eagle was shot by a hunter. When he examined the bird, he was amazed to find that one of its claws was held firmly in a strong steel trap from which dangled a 5-foot chain. Although not heavy enough to prevent the creature from flying, the additional weight had wearied the eagle and brought it down within reach of his rifle. So, too, the Christian can be entrapped and brought low spiritually by encumbrances which make him incapable of rising to the heights he might otherwise attain. There is a place of quiet rest—near to the heart of God.

Reason #6—It will enable us to be more deeply rooted and grounded.

The nearer we draw to God, the deeper our roots go. God wants us to be grounded and settled. When you are drifting, you are not rooted and grounded. "But it is good for me to draw near to God." There you will find yourself anchored to the Rock. So, when the storms of life blow hard against us, we will be able to stand!

Would you rather be a tumbleweed or an oak in your influence on others? That's the question posed by Galen Anderson, who wrote, "A man's life is like either the tumbleweed or the oak tree. Some people just grow like the weed. They are of no value in their youth, and as the years of life come they break loose and become a blotch on society. They have no useful purpose in life—just drifters. Their loved ones will mourn their loss, but society will not miss them. Then there are those whose lives are like the oak. They have turned from the frivolity of this life and have invested in things that have genuine worth. Their influence for good will live on in the lives of others after they are gone. Their death is noticed because their lives were spent bettering the nation and the community. They will be missed." Drawing near to God will cause you to be like that giant oak tree that stands tall through the furious storms of life.

Reason #7—It will flame the fires of our prayer life.

Prayer is the key to drawing near to God. By definition if you draw near to God, your prayer life is going to be deeper and richer than ever. It is impossible to draw near to God with an abbreviated prayer life. "But it is good for me to draw near to God." There are depths in God that few are able to experience simply because most neglect the opportunity to draw near to God.

A. L. McGinnis once said: "The people I admire always turn out to be people who practice rigorously the habit of a daily appointment with God. I once asked a successful minister, 'What is your secret?' Without blinking he said, 'McGinnis, you can't give out without taking in.'" And he went on to explain that he arrived at his study by 7:00 each morning and took no calls until 11:00. Those hours were devoted to prayer and study. People who, in Emerson's noble phrase, "live from a great depth of being," have always required time to contemplate, time to listen for guidance, to bask awhile in the awareness that we are cloaked in the love of God.

Reason #8—It will draw us closer to one another.

It has to be so! God wants His children to be one—close to each other, loving one another—never tearing down each other or devouring one another. When bickering is going on among saints, someone (and maybe everyone) needs a closer walk with God. We are one as Jesus prayed in John 17 (the real Lord's prayer). And the closer we draw to God, the closer we draw to one another. Let me make an illustration: Suppose there was a table with a candlestick in the center of a large room. Twelve people were distributed around the walls of the room. The command was given for each to take one step towards the table. Then take another. With each step, everyone is that much closer to the center table. But something remarkable also comes to pass. Each individual is closer to each of the other eleven! Let us suppose the center table represents almighty God. As each one draws closer to God, he automatically draws closer to all others who are drawing near to God! "But it is good for me to draw near to God."

Reason #9—It will cause us to be more meek and compassionate toward others.

As we draw near to God, we become more spiritual and thereby more compassionate. Drawing close to God never causes one to become "holier than thou," rather by necessity, it influences the individual to become more humble and sensitive to the needs of others. Galatians 6:1 says, "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted." A person who is drifting has a tendency to be puffed up. The natural result of drawing near to God is that we become more conformed to the image of His Son. And Christ is full of compassion and plenteous in mercy. "But it is good for me to draw near to God."

Reason # 10—It will cause us to be more unselfish.

Selfishness is a destructive force in the world. When one lets up in his spiritual quest, he has a tendency to

feel sorry for himself, to feel he has been wronged or mistreated. Such an one is in jeopardy. "But it is good for me to draw near to God." In drawing near to God, one loses all semblance of self. The model prayer outlined in Matthew 6 was never meant for repetition but to show us the utter selflessness of the spirit of prayer.

You cannot fulfill the Lord's model prayer, and even once say, "I."

You cannot fulfill the Lord's model prayer, and even once say, "My."

Nor can you fulfill the Lord's model prayer and not pray for another.

For when you ask for daily bread, you must include your brother!

For others are included in each and every plea.

From the beginning to the end of it, it does not once say, "me."

HOW CAN WE DRAW NEAR TO GOD?

We find the answer in James 4:7, 8, "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded." (1) Submit yourself to God—become abandoned to His will. Remember, He is the Potter, you are the clay. We cannot rebel against God and draw near to Him at the same time. (2) Resist opposition—from the devil, from the world, from others around you. Be determined with a made-up mind. Resistance will come every step of the way, but here we are told that if we resist steadfastly, the devil will have to flee. (3) Draw nigh to God—set a course—have a supreme desire! We have this promise that if we put forth the effort to draw nigh to Him, He will definitely draw nigh to us! Now, our steps are small, but His are giant steps! So put forth the effort to draw near to Him and you will attain to that goal and the results will astound you! "It is good for me to draw near to God." †

Profit and Loss

Author Unknown

I counted all my dollars while God counted crosses;

I counted gains while He counted losses;

I counted my worth by the things gained in store,

But He sized me up by the scars that I bore.

I coveted honors and sought for degrees;

He wept as He counted the hours on my knees.

I never knew till one day by a grave

How vain are the things that we spend life to save.

I did not know till a friend went above

That richest is he who is rich in God's love.

THE QUESTION BOX

Answered by the Editor



QUESTION: Am I wrong to say that Christians are to observe the Sabbath as it says in Isaiah 58:3?—R. C., Virginia

ANSWER: It is our understanding that the Seventh Day Sabbath was given to the nation of Israel as a day of rest, in memory of their slavery in Egypt. H. M. Riggle, in his book, *The Sabbath and the Lord's Day*, says: "The law was given only to the children of Israel." In Deuteronomy 4:8, we read, "What nation is there so great, that hath statutes and judgments so righteous as all the law, which I set before you this day?" This law included the Sabbath, which is shown in verse 13: "He declared unto you his covenant, which he commanded you to perform, even ten commandments; and he wrote them upon two tables of stone."

So the Sabbath was part of the Old Covenant which ended when Jesus died on the cross. We worship on the first day of the week in memory of the resurrection of Christ from the grave. Of course, we worship on other days as well. The Sabbath of the Old Covenant was a type of the soul rest we have in Christ when we are saved. "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28).

QUESTION: Could you give me some insight to Romans 8:2?—R. C., Virginia

ANSWER: The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, (the gospel is the law of the New Covenant.) Jesus Christ is the only one who can give you life. "He that has the Son has life; he that has not the Son has not life." (So the law of the gospel, when obeyed, brings life.) The breaking of the law of God is what brings death to the soul. So every sinner is under the law of sin and death.

QUESTION: I would like your insight about people trying to live by Jewish ways.—R. C., Virginia

ANSWER: As far as people living under the Old Covenant, they simply do not understand the truth in regard to the two covenants. Please understand it was the law of the Old Covenant that expired when Jesus died. There is much in what we call the Old Testament that is to be obeyed, just as the New Testament.

QUESTION: Was the encounter with an actual person or an earnest prayer made by Jacob?

—I. K., Nigeria

ANSWER: It was an earnest prayer on Jacob's part. He was facing his brother who was coming with 400 men. Jacob possibly thought Esau was coming to kill him as he had said he would. It was an angel that Jacob struggled with.

QUESTION: Why was Jacob's thigh dislocated and made to suffer the pain a lifetime. Was this lifetime pain a necessary one, and does this have any significance in the Christian life today?—I. K., Nigeria

ANSWER: I suppose the angel was showing Jacob that he had more power than Jacob did. There is no reason that I know of to think Jacob had to suffer the rest of his life. We do read in Genesis 32:30-32, "And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: for I have seen God face to face [it wasn't God but an angel], and my life is preserved. And as he passed over Peniel the sun rose upon him, and he halted upon his thigh. Therefore the children of Israel eat not of the sinew which shrank, which is upon the hollow of the thigh, unto this day: because he touched the hollow of Jacob's thigh in the sinew that shrank." It is possible the Lord healed him. The words "unto this day" refers to the children of Israel not eating that part of an animal, not Jacob's condition.

There is no reason that I know of to think it has any spiritual meaning for Christians today.

QUESTION: Jacob wrestled with a man, according to Genesis 32:24-29. Was it physical or spiritual?

—P. P., Nigeria

ANSWER: If we take the scripture literally for what it says, then it was an angel who took on physical form for that mission.

If it would have been a spirit-being, I don't think Jacob could have seen it.

This is not the only time an angel appeared to human beings in physical form. We read, "There was a certain man of Zorah, of the family of the Danites, whose name was Manoah; and his wife was barren, and bare not. And the angel of the Lord appeared unto the woman, and said unto her, Behold now, thou art barren, and bearest not: but thou shalt conceive, and bear a son" (Judges 13:2, 3). In relating this to her husband, she called the angel "a man of God." Later, when Manoah made an offering using fire, the Bible says "the angel of the Lord ascended in the flame of the altar." †

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A divine Christ	John 1:1, 14
An infallibly inspired Bible	II Timothy 3:16
Salvation from sin	Matthew 1:21
The new birth	John 3:1-7
Entire Sanctification	Ephesians 5:25, 26
A holy life	Titus 2:11, 12
	Hebrews 12:10-14
Unity of God's people	John 17:21
	I Corinthians 12:13
Divine Healing	James 5:14, 15
The ordinances	Matthew 28:19, 20
Eternal life	Matthew 25:46
	John 3:15; 6:54; 10:28
Eternal punishment	Mark 9:43-46
	Revelation 20:15

**YOU SHOULD KNOW MORE
 ABOUT THE CHURCH OF GOD,
 THE CHURCH OF THE NEW TESTAMENT**

Jesus bought it with His own blood	Acts 20:28
It has a good foundation	Ephesians 2:20
	I Corinthians 3:11
Christ is the Head	Ephesians 1:22; 5:23
	Isaiah 9:6
Christ is the Door	John 10:9
	John 10:1
	Acts 2:47
Only the saved are members	John 15:2-6
	I John 3:8, 9
Membership is offered to all	II Peter 3:9
	Revelation 22:17
Membership is rewarded	John 14:2, 3

COMING MEETINGS

2017 CAYMAN CONVENTION

83A Walkers Rd.

George Town, Grand Cayman

November 21-26, 2017, Lord willing

Bro. James Arch, Host Pastor



2017 PHILIPPINE CONVENTION

Lacayanga Subdivision

Paniqui, Tarlac, Philippines

December 26-30, 2017, Lord willing

Bro. Rey Fabian, Host Pastor



2018 JAMAICA CONVENTION

Lapland, Catadupa, St. James

February 13-18, 2018, Lord willing

Bro. Hezekiah Lamey, Host Pastor

ADD A NAME TO OUR MAILING LIST

If you know of someone you feel would appreciate this magazine, feel free to send us the name. Please make sure he/she wants it and it won't be refused.

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