

The Way of Truth

Vol. 78

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

No. 8

“In Times Like These”

Message begins on page 5.

August 2020

IS DOCTRINE IMPORTANT?

I HAVE run into people through the years who boasted that they believed in preaching Christ—not doctrine, as if doctrine was something that someone can choose to ignore. What is doctrine? *Doctrine* is defined as, “teaching or set of teachings of an individual or organization.” So doctrine is simply teachings. How can someone preach Christ without preaching His teachings? Christ has a doctrine and it must be preached! Notice what the Word of God says in II John, verses 9-11, “Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds.”

Every organization has its doctrine, but there is only one true doctrine of Jesus Christ. On the other hand, there are many false teachings associated with nominal Christianity. There are false spirits connected with false doctrine. I John 4:1 declares, “Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.” False doctrine causes division among God’s people. Romans 16:17 warns, “Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.”

The Lord sends mankind pastors and teachers, “That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive” (Ephesians 4:14).

Though having the same Spirit of God is the basis for fellowship, we cannot say that doctrine or teaching is not important. We are commissioned by Christ to teach His doctrine to a gainsaying world.

In this editorial, I would like to emphasize ten points concerning the doctrine of Christ.

1. *People were astonished at His doctrine.* “And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine” (Matthew 7:28). What Jesus taught was so much higher and more beautiful than anything the masses had ever heard before. His *sermon on the mount* was filled with astonishing, life-altering principles.

2. *Jesus taught doctrine with authority.* “And when he had gone a little farther thence, he saw James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, who also were in the ship mending their nets. And straightway he called them: and they left their father Zebedee in the ship with the hired servants, and went after him. And they went into Capernaum; and straightway on the sabbath day he entered into the synagogue, and taught. And they were astonished at his doctrine: for he taught them as one that had authority, and not as the scribes” (Mark 1:19-22).

“And they were astonished at his doctrine: for his word was with power” (Luke 4:32).

Never a man spake like this man! And His doctrine it is full of power even today. His teachings still have the power to transform lives today!

3. *The doctrine of Christ is according to godliness.* The doctrine of Christ does not advance the idea that man has to sin every day in word, deed, and thought. His doctrine produces a godly life in the believer. “If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness” (I Timothy 6:3).

4. *The doctrine of Christ is founded on the Scriptures.* The Bible rightly divided and properly applied by the Holy Spirit is the doctrine of Christ. “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness” (II Timothy 3:16). Notice that all scripture is profitable for doctrine—the doctrine of Christ.

Therefore, doctrine needs to be preached. “Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears” (II Timothy 4:2, 3). That leads me to our next thought.

5. *The doctrine of Christ is sound doctrine.* Paul said, “But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine” (Titus 2:1). You can’t preach Christ without preaching His sound doctrine. “Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers” (Titus 1:9).

6. *Jesus taught doctrine by displaying His power.* “And they were all amazed, insomuch that they questioned among themselves, saying, What thing is this? what new doctrine is this? for with authority commandeth he even the unclean spirits, and they do obey him” (Mark 1:27).

7. *Jesus taught doctrine through parables.* “And he taught them many things by parables, and said unto them in his doctrine” (Mark 4:2). Jesus taught so many principles through His power of storytelling. God’s forgiveness comes to life through the parable of the prodigal son. Warning comes through the story of the ten virgins. A picture of eternal loss is vividly brought to life through Lazarus and the rich man. Our responsibility to use what we have for God is seen in the parable of the talents. The requirement of forgiveness is emphasized in the parable of the unforgiving servant. Our responsibility to our neighbor is powerfully displayed in the story of the good Samaritan. All these, and more, brought the doctrine of Christ down where we live.

8. *Jesus taught doctrine by exposing hypocrisy.* “And he said unto them in his doctrine, Beware of the scribes, which love to go in long clothing, and love salutations in the market-places” (Mark 12:38).

ABOUT THE COVER

None of us have ever seen times quite like these when it seems dangers lurk around every corner. The photo on our front captures the storm that seems to be continually brewing. But the saints need not fear for the Lord still reigns!

THE WAY OF TRUTH

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

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not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you" (John 14:17).

4. *Separation from this evil world*—"They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world" (John 17:16).

5. *One must endure to the end*—"And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved" (Matthew 10:22).

6. *Love thy neighbor*—"A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another" (John 13:34).

7. *The singular nature of His church*—"I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matthew 16:18b).

8. *Unity of the body of believers*—"That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me" (John 17:21).

9. *The kingdom of God is a present reality*—"Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you" (Luke 17:21).

10. *There's a heaven to gain and a hell to shun*—We are not predestined; we have the ability to choose. "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (II Peter 3:9).

Yes, Christ's doctrine is important! †

Exposing hypocrisy was in part what caused men to hate Jesus and want Him dead. But it was part of His doctrine.

9. *The doctrine of Christ was the Father's doctrine.* "Jesus answered them, and said, My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me. If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself" (John 7:16, 17). Christ came to do the Father's will and proclaim the Father's doctrine. We should do the same.

10. *The doctrine of Christ became the apostles' doctrine.* "And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers" (Acts 2:42). The apostles did not create their own teachings but rather preached Christ's doctrine throughout the world.

And it continues down to us today. "Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment" (Hebrews 6:1, 2). The doctrine of Christ has many principles.

I will close by briefly referring to ten principles of the doctrine of Christ. There are many more.

1. *Salvation from sin in being born again*—as He taught us through His discourse with Nicodemus.

2. *Living a holy life*—as He declared to the woman caught in the act of adultery, "Go, and sin no more."

3. *The infilling of the Holy Spirit*—Christ definitely taught two works of grace—"Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him

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A Christian First

By Bro. Darrell Sanford

"Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men. Avoid it, pass not by it, turn from it, and pass away. For they sleep not, except they have done mischief; and their sleep is taken away, unless they cause some to fall. For they eat the bread of wickedness, and drink the wine of violence. But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day. The way of the wicked is as darkness: they know not at what they stumble."—Proverbs 4:14-19.

"Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners. Awake to righteousness, and sin not; for some have not the knowledge of God: I speak this to your shame."—I Corinthians 15:33, 34.

"Make no friendship with an angry man; and with a furious man thou shalt not go: Lest thou learn his ways, and get a snare to thy soul."—Proverbs 22:24, 25.

IT IS such a perilous, violent and malicious time in our country and the world, as the land is filled with hate, anger, and violence. We would truly have to be blind and foolish to not realize that Satan will seize every opportunity he can to exploit these events to the detriment of our souls. Let us take the instruction of these aforementioned verses to heart, and tread carefully when enticed to the causes of worldly and ungodly men. Not that their causes, issues, or objectives are necessarily ungodly themselves, for then we would not even give them consideration, but rather it is those legitimate things, holding a common concern to us all, that will hide the snare designed for the righteous.

"Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?"—II Corinthians 6:14.

Remember, the unsaved "have not the knowledge of God," and they will easily pursue a course in the interest of their objective, which we cannot. Keep thyself pure from other men's sins.

May God's people hold to the path of light and walk in the Spirit of Christ—it is the only safe place. We are not of this world, our citizenship is in heaven, from whence we look for the Savior, Jesus Christ, our Lord. My greatest purpose, my mission, is to call souls to Him and the salvation He offers—nothing is so important as that. In eternity my bank account won't matter, my political opinions won't matter, my social status will not matter, but what I did for Christ and how I represented Him will matter a great deal. Whether I used my influence to guide souls to salvation, or alienate them from the Christ I claimed to follow, will matter a great deal. When I stand before the Savior who died for ALL men and give an account of the deeds done in my body, I want those deeds to have been for God's glory and with His approval.

Whatever else I am, I am a Christian first and foremost. Before I am an American, I am a Christian. Before I am a son of the South, I am a Christian. Before I am a member of a race, I am a Christian. Before I am in some socio-economic class, I am a Christian. Before I am anything else by which I may be designated, I am a child of God and a follower of Jesus Christ. There is nothing else that comes close. The apostle Paul wrote in Philippians 3, "But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, ... If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. ... Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

This world is ablaze, it is set on fire by the zealous passions of carnal hearts. The Bible says in the book of James, "Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth! And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell."

Truly, the tongue is busy in our day spreading hate, vulgarity, maliciousness, strife, and anger. In these modern times, the tongue does much of its damage through the fingers on a keyboard—it is so easy. Either way, it all comes from the heart—from the heart of man proceeds wickedness, evil thoughts, pride, and foolishness. We, as Christians, must guard our souls from being drawn in to the fleshly, carnal wars of the world. Let it not be that our tongues will defile the whole body (of Christ) by starting a fire which brings reproach upon the blessed name of Jesus and destroys the "trees" we are called to save. "Blessed are the peacemakers, for THEY shall be called the children of God." My goal, my calling, my mission is the salvation of souls. To bring the broken, the vile, the hateful to Christ and let Him fix them. "For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another. But after that the kindness and love of God our Savior toward man appeared, Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior; That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life" (Titus 3:3-7).

Yes, we may, and must, minister to the outward man, as John wrote in I John 3, "But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?" There are many exhortations in the Scriptures that we should minister the love of God to both our brethren and to the lost in their temporal and social needs. We should do what we are able to in those areas, but, a person can go to heaven

hungry, homeless, naked, poor, or in prison, but they cannot go to heaven not knowing Christ. Some things are more important than others, and nothing more important or valuable than a soul. Let us do what we can to make this world a better place for all mankind. There is no better way to do that than by living the life of Christ before them and teaching the Word of Christ to them.

I must let nothing come between me and my calling from Christ. You, Saint of God, Child of God, Christian, must let nothing come between you and your purpose and calling from Jesus Christ. He has called YOU to do HIS work. My devotion, my consecration, my love must be total and not divided with anything in the world. I am His servant, or as Paul introduced himself in his letter to Titus, "Paul, a servant [slave] of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle." I am a slave to Jesus Christ; I have no say in the matter. I must do His will, not my own. He is my benevolent Master, but my Master all the same. We are all, at once, both lowly servants and honored kings and priests.

"But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light: Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy. Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul; Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation."—I Peter 2:9-12.

Pray for me, Friends, pray for me, Children of God, that I will not be distracted by the cares of this world; that I will not be weighed down by the burdens of this life; that the gospel will remain my purpose, and a crown of righteousness my goal. I knew these things early in my salvation when the excitement of deliverance from my sins was fresh, when the beauty of the Lord was vivid before my eyes, when the pristine love of God burned in my heart, when the value of salvation and the cost of dying lost was stamped upon my mind; when there was an urgency in me, an urgency to draw near to dwell with Christ, and go far to win the lost. And I STILL know these things! But time and circumstances, and life, and battles, and want, and prosperity, and lethargy, and new things, and old things, and the spiritual sleepiness all around us war hard against our souls!

"And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed." So pray for me that I will not faint, and pray for yourselves and for one another! Failure comes at too high a price! Let us keep our hearts pure and our eyes upon the goal. "*Keep yourselves* in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life."

"What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's."—I Corinthians 6:19, 20. †

WINNING A CROWN

By the late C. W. Naylor



Part XXIV

The Transformation of Divine Energy

CHRIST told His disciples to tarry in Jerusalem until they should be endued with power from on high. Paul speaks of the power of Christ resting upon him. It is God's will that all His people be endued with this heavenly power. God's power never works in the soul of man independently of the presence of the Holy Spirit. Whatever power people possess that does not come through the Holy Spirit is not the power of God; but when God is present with us, His power is always present, and this power will manifest itself. This power does not work according to the human will, but works according to the will of God; therefore, we must be submitted to His will in order for it to work through us. God will never take orders from us. If we attempt to use His power for a wrong or selfish purpose, it will react to our own hurt.

Sometimes people mistake for manifestations of the power of God things which are not such at all. Some think that noise and demonstration are the result of power, or indicate the presence of power; and the more noisy and demonstrative a person is, the more power he is thought to possess. Noise is not power nor an indication of power. It often indicates only human enthusiasm or hysteria. Some bodies of religionists are very noisy, and yet they have very little of the power of God in their lives. As a rule, those who make the most noise accomplish the least for God. It is generally a mark of superficiality, especially where there is a disposition to carry it to the extreme. Some modern religious movements are noted for the demonstrations of their adherents. They leap and shout and "fall under the power" and do many unseemly things. They do many things that make the people ashamed who look upon them. Sometimes they "carry on" until they are utterly exhausted. Sometimes they go through strange contortions and jerkings, and sometimes froth at the mouth. They think all this to be the manifestation of the power of God. One thing I have noticed about these people who go to such extremes is that very often those who are the most demonstrative are living lives which are anything but commendable and in some cases even immoral. There is a power in such people, but it is not the power of God; for the power of God does not manifest itself in an unseemly manner. There is something beautiful and attractive about His power, something that draws the soul, something that melts it and inspires it and awes it as if in the presence of the Almighty.

Noise is not power. One day I walked with a friend down a street in a large city. A motorcycle passed us, making a great racket. There was much noise, but little power. We walked on a little farther and went into the engine-house of a great factory. I stood beside the great Corliss engine there and watched it running so smoothly that there was hardly a sound. I could not

realize what power was there. It seemed as though I could put out my hand and stop it. But there was power there, great power. It turned the wheels throughout that large factory and kept the machinery busily running. Likewise, those who are most powerful for God are often persons who are quiet and attract little notice. The power in them works softly and silently, but mightily. It accomplishes God's purposes.

It is true that persons of some temperaments do sometimes make considerable noise when they are full of the power of God, but this is the result of temperament, not the result of the power, for the same amount of power in another may work quietly and silently, though none the less effectually. I do not object to some noise in religion if there is divine power back of that noise, the power to be what a Christian should be, the power to live as a Christian should live, the power to glorify God, but the noise without the real power for accomplishment is a vain thing. God does not judge people by the amount of noise they make; He does not value them for their noise, but for the power that they possess. There are some who once were powers in the hands of God, but who now are like shorn Samson. The power is gone. They have the form, but they lack the power. Some sing, "There is power, power, wonderworking power"; but when you look for it in their lives, you do not find it. Power is the thing that counts, and God wants us to be filled with it. Natural ability counts for something, but no matter how great our natural capacity, if the power is lacking the capacity counts for nothing. We are like empty vessels. God has plenty of power, and He will give us power if we will tarry before Him. Power is something that comes down, not something that is worked up. The "howling dervishes" work themselves up into wild hysteria and fall in fits and have all sorts of manifestations, but there is no power of God in it. So we may do. I repeat, enthusiasm is not power, hysteria is not power. Only the presence of God can give us power.

Power Transformed

Electric power passes silently through the wires; but as it passes through the incandescent bulb, it is turned into bright light; as it passes through the resistance-coil, it is transformed into heat; as it passes through the motor, it is transformed into activity; and as it passes through the magnet, it is turned into magnetism. So God would have His power transformed in us, and so it will be transformed if we give Him His way. It will be transformed into light so that we may shine for God and so that those around us may behold His beauty in us. God would have us be lights to the world, and so He lets His power rest upon us that it may be transformed into light and shine out into this dark world. He wants men to see our light and thereby know His power to save and to keep.

He wants His power turned into heat so that our lives are no more cold and barren, but our affections and emotions are warmed and enriched and bring forth fruit unto His glory. He wants all our faculties and powers to be filled with fervency, all our lives warm and radiant with His glory. He wants His power transformed into activity so that we may work righteousness,

that 'men may see our good works and glorify our Father which is in heaven.' People who are full of the power of God are not content in idleness. They feel that they must work the work of God while it is yet day. You do not have to coax such people to work. They are ready for a job any time. The power of God will manifest itself in zeal. Where zeal is absent, power is absent. Power is always seeking an outlet. If the power of God is resting upon us, we cannot be easy while multitudes around us are going to destruction. There is much Christian activity that comes to naught because there is no power in it or too little power in it. There may be zeal without power, but zeal will be ineffectual without power. The power of God does not need elaborate ecclesiastical machinery in order to work. It will work in the heart; it will work out in the life. All that God asks is that the heart be submitted to His will and all the powers of life dedicated to His service; then He will fill us with power and work through us the accomplishment of His purpose. Our lives then will be fruitful to glorify His name.

God wants His power in us turned into magnetism, that we may draw men to ourselves and through ourselves to Christ. If our lives are unlovely and unattractive, God cannot draw men through us. It matters not what may be our situation in life nor how few may be our natural talents. Our lives may be hampered and our development may be hindered, but if the power of God rests upon us, we shall attract men to Christ. The humblest life may be glorified and made attractive by the presence and power of God. But magnetism not only attracts; it also repels. So we, if we are full of this divine magnetism, shall repel all that is evil. Our very presence, even though a word is not spoken, will be a reproof to evil. Our looks will be louder than the words of those who are without the power of God. Those who are wicked and corrupt will feel ashamed and reproved in our presence. They will try to hide their wickedness. They will be careful of their language. They will find no pleasure in their wickedness in our presence.

Oh! let us be filled with the power of God and let us manifest it in our lives, so that the world may believe. Let us submit ourselves to the divine will. Let us seek daily a real enduement from on high, and then when it comes let us realize that the excellency of the power is of God and not of us, and let us give to Him the glory. Let us manifest to our fellow men this power, not to show that we have the power, but that we may win them to Christ—that we may make them to know the riches of His love, the power of His grace, and the wonders of His holiness. "Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you." †

OUT OF BOX 88

Dear Christians,

Greetings in Jesus' name. Just a few words to thank you for your paper. How I look forward to receiving it! What an encouragement and a blessing it is to me! God bless you dear folks.

—M. G., Pennsylvania

In Times Like These

Message by Sis. Rebecca Bland, delivered 06/14/20



I WOULD LIKE to read a little bit from the book of Ecclesiastes, chapter 7, verses 1-10: “A good name is better than precious ointment; and the day of death than the day of one’s birth. It is better to go to the house of mourning, than to go to the house of feasting: for that is the end of all men; and the living will lay it to his heart. Sorrow is better than laughter: for by the sadness of the countenance the heart is made better. The heart of the wise is in the house of mourning; but the heart of fools is in the house of mirth. It is better to hear the rebuke of the wise, than for a man to hear the song of fools. For as the crackling of thorns under a pot, so is the laughter of the fool: this also is vanity. Surely oppression maketh a wise man mad; and a gift destroyeth the heart. Better is the end of a thing than the beginning thereof: and the patient in spirit is better than the proud in spirit. Be not hasty in thy spirit to be angry: for anger resteth in the bosom of fools. Say not thou, What is the cause that the former days were better than these? for thou dost not inquire wisely concerning this.” I’d like to focus on the tenth verse: “Say not thou, What is the cause that the former days were better than these? for thou dost not inquire wisely concerning this.”

I’d like to entitle my thoughts, “In Times Like These.” These days I hear people say, “We can’t wait till we get back to normal.” The pandemic and the national unrest that we’re going through right now—“these days”—we want to get past them.

The song that the male trio sang this evening, “In Times Like These,” was written in 1943. It was written by a woman who was a housewife. She was listening to the clock chiming on her mantle, and the tune of that little chime kept running through her mind. If you listen to the chime—the Westminster tune—and just rearrange the notes a little bit, there you have the tune of that song. She was thinking about “these times”—not *our* “these times,” but *her* “these times.”

Do you know what was happening in 1943? They were in the midst of the Second World War. This woman had five children. She had been looking at the newspaper, and every day there was the casualty list. So many young men gone, she noticed as she kept looking at the casualty list.

She had to go downtown and get war books. Do you know what war books were? They were little books that you had to go down and get, and they had stamps in them. They were for food rationing and for rationing of other things, because the military needed a lot of supplying, and so the civilians needed to cut back as much as they could. So there was an office created. It was called *The Office of Price Administration* (OPA). They rationed certain things. If you heard something was about to be rationed, you went out and bought a whole lot. It wasn’t toilet paper. Sugar was the first one, then coffee, meat; after that, a kind of shortening (lard), and

canned fish. One after the other, you heard, “Oh, they’re going to be rationing that now.” Cheese, canned milk. You had to have stamps. Each product was worth a certain number of points, so if you wanted to buy a certain thing, you had to give them that number of stamps before you could buy it. If you were out of stamps, maybe you had a kind neighbor or someone in your family who would help. Those were hard times—“times like these.” So she listened to the clock chiming on the mantle and she was thinking, *in times like these, we need a Savior; we need the Bible.*

I remember the first time I ever heard that song. I was a little girl, and there was a gentleman by the name of Bro. Shermer. I don’t know what congregation he was from, but he sang that song. That song was only 16 years old when I first heard it. It hadn’t been around so long. It’s not a real, real old song. Now, when I heard that song the first time, it was in “times like these.” We were having a time. That year we had a lot of “amens” going on in the congregation when Bro. Shermer sang that song. “In times like these, we need a Savior, ... in times like these, we need the Bible.”

Do you know what was going on right then, the first time I heard that song? There was a man who had been elected to the position of prime minister in the USSR. The USSR (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) doesn’t even exist any more. The prime minister’s name was Nikita Khrushchev. He was a very, very scary man to us children. We heard about him a lot. This afternoon I said to Barry, “When you hear the name Nikita Khrushchev, what do you think of?” He said, “The Cuban missile crisis ... and the shoe.” I can’t think of his name without thinking of a shoe, because he, supposedly, was angry at something that was being said at the United Nations by someone in the Philippine delegation, and he took his shoe and either pounded it on the table, or threatened to pound it on the table. As a child, I had a picture in my mind of this fearsome Communist leader, Mr. Khrushchev, who pounded his shoe on the table when he was mad, so who knew what else he might do.

I had nightmares, because we watched films about what to do if an atomic bomb were dropped. There was a bomb shelter in the basement of the school, and after watching those films, I would dream at night that a bomb would drop while I was at school. I thought we would be down there in the bomb shelter for years before it would be safe to come out. Of course, no one knew I thought that, and so I was never set straight. I thought I wouldn’t see my mom and dad for years if they ever dropped a bomb. I used to dream about it at night. I was frightened. So the first time I heard the song, “In Times Like These,” and everyone was saying “amen,” that’s what we were dealing with. By now we’ve been hearing this song for 77 years. When you heard that

song tonight, you probably had thoughts going through your mind; not about Khrushchev, not about rationing sugar and coffee, but about the condition of our world and nation today.

In “times like these,” it’s tempting to say, “Oh, several months ago, last year, things were so much better! Why did all of this have to happen?” Because you see, right now, what would we normally be doing? Getting ready for camp meeting. We would be saying, “Just a few more weeks and it’ll be camp meeting.” But now camp meeting’s been canceled. So we’re tempted to say, “Those times were so much better.” Let’s look at our text again: “Say not thou, What is the cause that the former days were better than these? for thou dost not inquire wisely concerning this.”

So often these days, I hear commercials that start out like this: “In these uncertain times, we want you to know that we ...” and I think to myself, *what “certain times” are there? Are there any times that are not uncertain?* No, not really. We felt they were a little more certain, but is there such a thing for a human being as a “certain” time? But haven’t you heard that a lot? “In these uncertain times ...” *All times are uncertain, except to God; but for us, they are all uncertain.* We’re used to a routine, and we feel like life is going to go on and on in that way. We know there are going to be changes, and we dread them. We dread the ones we know about: old age, losing a loved one. We know that’s going to happen, but we dread them ... but even more, we dread unexpected changes. We’re not ready for them.

Do you remember when everything got shut down? I remember talking to a colleague of mine. She said, “You know, I said to my husband, ‘when all is said and done, they’re going to be closing the schools.’” He said, “No, they’re not.” I said to her, “Do you think so?” She said, “Oh, I think so.” Well, two minutes later, I walked down to the office to get something, and there stood the three administrators looking at the news and saying to each other, “Did you hear what the governor just said? He just closed the schools. Tomorrow is going to be our last day.” I walked back up to that teacher’s classroom and said, “Do you know what they were just saying down in the office? You were right.” She said, “I said they were going to close the schools.” The next day, I told my students “good-bye” for the rest of the school year. Just like that! Uncertain times. Well, every day is uncertain, and we need to remember that. Schools were closed, restaurants were closed, and now the commentators seem really anxious to warn us that there’s going to be “a new normal.” Do you hear that, too—“a new normal”?

Do you what *normal* is? Normal is change. That’s pretty much all we can be sure of. There will be change. We’d like to kinda have an idea what’s going to happen, but we can’t know. We’re not God. But God has tried to warn us. If you’ll look at James, the fourth chapter (and I know you’re very familiar with this scripture), you could probably say it without looking at it, but it bears repeating. James 4:14, “Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.” Think about that first part: “Ye know not what shall be on the morrow.” So even back last

year when we thought we were living in “normal” times, they were so uncertain, weren’t they? Life is uncertain.

In Matthew, Jesus warns us—in the sixth chapter, part of the sermon on the mount—“Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.” In other words, “Don’t start worrying about it. Worry won’t keep it from happening. Just trust Me to get you through it.” Since God has warned us of uncertain times, how shall we live? Shall we live by saying—as this verse tells us not to do—“What is the cause that the former days were better than these?” What did He say about that? Is that a wise way to live? “Oh, if we could just go back to where we were this time last year! Everything was just wonderful.” Is that how we’re to live? Jesus said, “No.”

What did we sing tonight? “We Have a Hope.” *Hope within our hearts assures us it is better farther on, It is brighter all the way.* Now, those two phrases—*better farther on ... brighter all the way*—are not quite the same. I was thinking about that this week. We went to a farm to pick strawberries. Sis. Sue, Sis. Esther, and I picked strawberries, and it was not very good picking. I’ve picked strawberries many, many years of my life, but that was not good picking. I know what good picking is. The strawberries were little, and they were few and far between. If you’re going to bend over for that long a period of time, you would like to have some nice strawberries to show for it. It was not good. Usually, you’ll go and there’s a flag, and they tell you to “start at that flag. Stay on your own row, and go until you are finished, and put the flag where you stop so the next person knows where to start.”

When we got to the farm, we asked, “Where shall we go to pick strawberries?” The lady said, “Go wherever you want. It doesn’t matter.” That was the first clue that it was not going to be good picking. “Go wherever you want”—that’s the same farm I got fussed at one time because I forgot, and I saw a nice strawberry over in the other row and I went and picked it. There was one beside it and I picked that one, too, and the man said, “Stay in your own row.” But this time, we could wander wherever we wanted to go, so we picked and picked. Finally, we said, “Why don’t we go ‘way down there? It may be better farther on.” We thought, *we’ll go ‘way down there. There are people down there. Maybe they’re finding better berries.* So we went. We didn’t keep picking as we went. We pulled up stakes and away we went, ‘way down toward the end. That’s not what the song, “We Have a Hope” is saying—“It is better farther on.” It doesn’t mean you have to wait a long time, ‘way in the future before it gets better. Is that what it says? “It is better farther on, It is brighter all the way.” Skipping which days? Not skipping any days. *It is brighter all the way*—every day! Every day with Jesus is sweeter than the day before. So then, why should we say to ourselves, *Oh, I wish we could just go back to last year? Why were the former times so much better than these?* Is Jesus here with us now in these days—in “times like these”? Is He sweeter than the day before? Now, thank you for coming along with me while I preach to myself, because I’ve been guilty of thinking,

well, this time last year ... I've been guilty of that, so thank you for your patience while I talk to myself here.

II Peter 1:19, one of the most beautiful verses I think that I've ever read, says: "We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts." The Day Star has risen in our hearts, and what can dim the light of Christ? Nothing. So no matter what happens, it is better farther on; but not only that, it is brighter all the way. So we should live in hope and in joy. Bro. John and Sis. Jackie told us about joy this past Wednesday night. We can't even be true Christians without that joy. In peace. In times like these, we can live in peace.

(She takes out a long list). I have a physical list with me. It is an illustration to represent a mental list that I have carried around with me for years. It's my "calamity list," my "trouble list." You see, it goes from the bottom to the top, because the things on the top are what I'm most concerned about. They are the "now" things. The top is blank, for things haven't happened yet, but I know they're going to happen, just like all these other things have happened. I've been carrying this around for the longest time, and I think, *OK, there are usually three or four urgent things at the top. Now, if this one, this one, and this one would be taken care of, then I could focus on doing what I should do, or my mind would be clear and I could do the things that I should do.* In time, these latest troubles are crossed off. They've been taken care of, but then other troubles are coming in and some old ones are carried forward—like the one that says "no money." That keeps getting carried forward, and I think, *if I could just get these three things taken care of, then my life would be so much better, and I could focus and do what I need to do.*

You can see I'm going to run out of paper real soon. For as long as I live, troubles and calamities are going to happen. Oh my, this list started way, way back when I was a teenager and I had a pimple on my face one Sunday afternoon, and I was afraid that it wouldn't disappear before Sunday evening and people would see it. Now, that sounds simple, but it was a big deal to me. All Sunday afternoon, it was all I could think about. My life would be fine if it wasn't for that pimple.

"Mom, what can I do?"

"I don't know."

"Mom, what can I do? Everybody is going to see that pimple."

"Well, I heard if you put Epsom salt on it, it will help."

"Mom, do we have any Epsom salt?"

"I don't know. Go look under the sink and see."

I found some Epsom salt and put it on the pimple. I kept going back to the bathroom mirror and looking at my face. It came time for church, and the pimple was still there. It was there for a couple days, but then it got scratched off the "calamity" list and something else took its place.

If we wait until all of our troubles and calamities are done before we can focus and do the work of God that He wants us to do, I'm telling you, it's not going

to happen. We can let those things consume us, because all of us have "times like these." Every day we have "times like these," don't we?

I remember something that happened 25 years ago, and I know it was almost exactly 25 years ago, because Tommy was a baby, brand new, and he just turned 25 last week. So it was back down here (*showing list*) during one of "these times." About here (*looking at the list*), Barry and I were living in a little trailer. The door on it wasn't working right, and the landlord wouldn't come to fix it. We were afraid to bug him about it, because then he might put our rent up, and we were trying to save so we could buy a house. We didn't want to buy the stuff to fix it, ourselves. We just didn't seem to be able to get ahead because we were trying to save to get a house. We went to see Tommy, brand new Tommy. It was so exciting, but I was 'way back here on this list, and I was in a very, very negative frame of mind. In the middle of all the hugging, all the cheer, all the congratulations, I started thinking about the beautiful little house that my much younger sister (Tommy's mother) had, and I thought, *What is wrong with me that I can't get things together?* My calamity list was so long. *She probably doesn't even have a list,* I thought.

I took all the laughing, all the hugging, all the congratulations I could take, and then I kinda slipped out of the room and went into the living room and wandered around. I went over to Rosemary's desk and thought, *Maybe she has a book. I'm going to sit here and read a book while I wait for everybody to get done in there.* So I found a book. This is it (*shows book*). It's more than 100 years old. It wasn't quite 100 years old then, but it is now. It was published in 1911. When I opened the front cover of this fascinating-looking book, I saw my grandmother's name there. It was something she had received for her graduation, May 1912. I didn't remember ever seeing this book before. I thought I had seen everything that Grandma ever touched, but I hadn't seen this. It was a devotional. I wasn't going to read the whole book, so I just looked through it a little bit. I saw some more of Grandma's handwriting in the very back, and it said, "Page 358 is extra good." Now, would you put the book down at that point? No. I'm looking for page 358. There it is, and there's her handwriting along the side, "This is all extra good." And there are underlinings. Would you put the book down at that point? No, you're going to read it. I began to read. "Of nothing may we be more sure than this, that if we cannot sanctify our present lot in life, we could sanctify no other ... Our heaven and our Almighty Father are there, or nowhere." I closed the book. I had just been "told."

If you can't be happy, if you can't be productive for God where you are right now, in whatever circumstances, where could you do better? You can't wait around and wait around and wait around for all of this (*shows list*) to get better. God is with you right where you are now, or else He's nowhere in your life. And that is true. How many times I have reminded myself of that! It wasn't a quote from the Bible, but it was biblical. May the Lord use us where we are. Whatever our times are, may we give ourselves to Him so that, no matter what we're going through, we'll realize that this can be our most productive day for God—if we will let it be more

productive than yesterday. "God, help me today. Help me to put this list back in my pocket." We can't just get rid of it. Troubles happen to us all. You have those lists, too. I know you do. But we can't wait around on these things (*shows list*) thinking, *I can't do anything for God until the things on the top of this list are crossed off.*

May the Lord help us to remember, *Hope within our hearts assures us it is better farther on, It is brighter all the way.* †



This month, we are sharing some thoughts by Sis. Jolie Williams of the Craigsville, West Virginia, congregation. These thoughts were presented during a recent Youth Sunday service in Hagerstown. We trust that they will be a blessing to you.

MY THOUGHTS

Jolie Williams

CURRENTLY, in our world, there is so much unrest and discontent everywhere we turn. In these times, we can get distracted and it may get difficult to lean completely on God and give all of our cares to Him. In my case, I feel like I should just do something myself instead of giving it to God. I have to step back during those times and reprioritize my literal and spiritual life. After all, He is the Author and Finisher of my faith, so why should I not give it all to Him? Not only that, He wants us to give our worries to Him; He is happy to help us bear our burdens. While He is faithful to shelter us, He wants us to ask for strength and help to face whatever life challenges.



Colossians 1:11a, "Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power." This verse perfectly sums up what vision we must have in order to have a successful walk with Christ. Without a doubt, the strait and narrow way is a difficult way to be on when we face opposition from all sides, but Christians all know that it is so worth it. Nothing can compare to the relationship we have with God and our fellow Christians. God knew it would be hard, so He made a way for us to get direct help from Him. Not only that, God gives us ALL might, not just a little bit here and there, but ALL might. This verse in Colossians says that we are strengthened with ALL might, according to His glorious power. As a Christian, we know that glorious power that Paul is speaking of. We can let go of the try-hard life of sin and be in glory right here in this present time.

Psalms 91:1-7: "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God, in him will I trust. Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence. He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth

shall be thy shield and buckler. Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flieth by day; Nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness; nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday. A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh to thee." This verse is such a beautiful depiction of how our life is when we lean completely on God. His power is beyond our belief. There is no battle that He cannot win. Paul said in his letter to the Colossians that God would strengthen us, but that just skims the surface. He delivers His children from the devil's snares and helps us to give up the doubts and fears of this world. If we will only let go of the world, He will be our Protector while we live in this sinful, contrite world. Why should we be afraid or have doubts when such an amazing Savior loves us and protects us like the Psalmist exclaims?

I Corinthians 10:13, "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." God created man with a free will; we are free to choose righteousness or sin. For those who know God's goodness, it's a no-brainer which way is more beneficial. When we were once in sin, we were at the weakest point in our life. We made decisions that might have affected our life forever. It was easy to choose wrong because we had no convictions, and our carnality was at its most prevalent. When we give our life over to God, and allow Him to reign in our mind and heart, we build up a strength against sin, and we are able to slowly say no to sin and become more pure. God knows just how much we can bear. He may allow things to happen to us that we as humans may think impossible, but through Him, it is possible. He made us a promise in this verse that there would never be anything to come our way that would be impossible for us to bear. He'll give us strength to get through each test that we have to face.

Ephesians 6:10, "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might." As a child of Christ, our promises from the Lord are countless, but this one is so special to me. During our struggles, the Lord has promised to be faithful; we are urged to lean on Him and be strong in Him. When we are faithful to obey Him and understand His Word, He is a shelter for us to lean on and put our trust in. If we dedicate our lives to Christ, He makes our life before righteousness look so bleak and hopeless, and gives us a more beautiful and happy life than we could ever imagine! He will strengthen us, protect us, and He will love us with an unconditional love that can't compare to anything else. When we ask Him for strength, He doesn't give it sparingly. He gives it with ALL His might! So whether we feel defeated and weak, or glorious and victorious, know that God is a powerful Master, and He will never leave or forsake us in times of need.

Let me leave you with one last verse. Isaiah 41:10, "Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness." †



THE QUESTION BOX

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



QUESTION: Where did the ark of the covenant of the Lord go?

ANSWER: We have no Bible record as to what happened to the ark. As far as is known, it was in the temple in Jerusalem until the temple was destroyed by the army of Babylon, in or around the year 587 B.C. Many vessels were taken from the temple in Jerusalem to Babylon. There they were placed in the temple's of idols. It was some of these vessels that Belshazzar and his lords drank from when the portion of a hand wrote on the wall. You will find that in Daniel 5.

Around 537 B.C., King Cyrus allowed the Jews to return home, he also allowed them to take the vessels back with them, but nothing is said about the Ark of the Covenant.

QUESTION: Some contend that a sinner can be saved and sanctified at one and the same time. Is this scripturally true? Please illustrate with the tabernacle, two room type of the Old Testament.

ANSWER: What we call justification and sanctification, what some Church of God ministers call "two works of grace," cannot be obtained at the same time. However, if the person knows the truth, he can be saved and sanctified in a matter of a few moments. They are still two separate works.

As for the tabernacle, it had two rooms, and you could NOT enter both at one time: the first, the justified state, and the second, the sanctified state.

QUESTION: Should we pray for any of the gifts of the Holy Spirit, or wait until God Himself imparts them?

ANSWER: I believe God gives us the privilege of asking for certain gifts when He said, "Covet earnestly the best gifts." And yet I believe in the light of I Corinthians 13, taken along with chapter 12, the safest way is to get ourselves in the spiritual condition where God can give us the one, or ones, He wants us to have. Paul says God divides severally as He will (see I Corinthians 12:11).

QUESTION: Even though we have not seen the last day when Christ will come the second time for the resurrection of the dead, I understand some dead people are already in heaven with God. How did this happen, and has it a scriptural backing?

ANSWER: There is much confusion in regard to this matter. I will state as simply as possible what I understand this scripture to teach.

Man is a twofold being, flesh and spirit. When a person "dies," as we call it, Jesus called it "sleep," his body returns to the dust of the earth. The body is what will be resurrected and changed. The spirit "returns to God who gave it" and it thus is permitted to enter into rest with Him or is cast into torment, depending on how the person lived. It is the spirit (soul) that is with God now. Some ask, "Why then the need of a judgment?" Because a person's influence goes on and he cannot be judged at the time of his death. His reward for good or for evil continues to pile up, even after he has left this world. Paul's reward is still building because of the influence he has on us yet today. When time is no more all these influences will be stopped. Every man's record will be tallied and he will be rewarded.

These thoughts are backed up by such scriptures as Job 32:8; Ecclesiastes 12:7; I Corinthians 3:8; I Corinthians 15; Philippians 1:23; Revelation 6, 20, 21, along with many others that could be given.

QUESTION: After the second coming of Christ, shall the just live in the flesh again like at the present?

ANSWER: No, John declared that it does not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when we see Christ, we shall be like Him. Jesus said that in heaven there will be neither male nor female.

QUESTION: Would you please explain Psalm 19:7, which says, "The law of the Lord is perfect converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple"?

ANSWER: The Seventh Day Adventist, and others, do not seem to realize that not every verse of scripture that has the word "law" in it has reference to the law given on Mount Sinai. God has always had a law. His divine law is His Word, and we are told in John 1:1-14 that Christ is the Word. Christ had no beginning, so God's law had no beginning. The law, the divine law, is perfect, converting the soul, just as is stated; or, in other words, obedience to the law of God—repentance, confession, faith, obedience—converts the soul. As for the Old Covenant law, Paul said, "By the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified" (Romans 3:20). The Old Covenant law was nailed to the cross.

QUESTION: Some preach that a person should be baptized before he is saved, saying the Scriptures teach, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." Baptism, they say, comes when you believe before you are saved. What do you think about this?

ANSWER: Such teachings are doctrines of the devil! The Bible clearly teaches that when a person truly believes on Christ, then he is saved (Romans 10:9). It is impossible to BELIEVE ON CHRIST, in the true meaning of believing, and be baptized BEFORE you are saved. From the very moment you believe, you are saved. Then, of course, a person must go and be baptized, which is an answer of a good conscience toward God and not the putting away of the filth of the flesh. See I Peter 3:21. No one can have a "good conscience toward God" without salvation.

Philip refused to baptize the eunuch until he first gave a testimony of salvation (Acts 8:27-37). †



MEN WHO WIN FOR GOD

F. W. Davis

The men who get things done for God,
Are those who forge ahead;
And storm the blockades laid by hell,
With a determined tread.

They spend much time in secret prayer,
And oft on calloused knees;
They disregard all doubts and fears,
And sail through stormy seas.

Their hearts and lives are pledged to God,
To do His will or die.
They're wholly bent to reach the lost,
And fight on to the sky.

God, give us more determined souls
Who will not break or bend;
But stand upright for holiness
And blast sin to the end.

STRENGTH IN WEAKNESS

Frances Ridley Havergal

I could not do without Thee,
I cannot stand alone,
I have no strength or goodness,
No wisdom of my own;
But Thou, beloved Savior,
Art all in all to me!
And perfect strength in weakness
Is theirs who lean on Thee!

WHAT PRIVILEGE!

Hilda Rovik Lindal

To know Thee is to love Thee,
Jesus, Thou Son of God!
Eternal, pure, and holy
Incarnate Word of God!

To know Thee is to trust Thee,
Almighty One, and true!
Whose gentleness hath made me great,
Whose joy doth strength endue!

To know Thee is to serve Thee,
O Lord, my righteousness!
Inspiring, quick'ning Spirit
Of truth and holiness!

To love, to trust, to serve Thee,
What privilege is mine!
Make me a vessel meet, Lord—
And all praise shall be Thine!

STILL, STILL WITH THEE

Israel M. Smalling

Still, still with Thee, my God so dear,
Though dark my pathway be;
Though dangers hover o'er my way,
Thy presence cheereth me.

What though the way I cannot see,
I know that Thou art near;
From hidden snares Thou'lt safely guide,
My heart shall never fear.

E'en though in valleys dark I go,
My heart shall fear no foe;
Still, still with Thee, my God so good,
Thou givest daily food.

In pastures green Thou leadest me,
By waters still also;
Thy goodness still shall follow me,
And then to heaven I'll go.

FOLLOWING JESUS

Flora Hinzman

I will follow Thee, my Savior,
I will follow Thee, my Lord;
I will follow Thee, my Savior,
I'll obey Thy precious Word.

Come, dear friends, and love my Savior,
He's so precious to my heart;
If you but will turn and follow,
Then from sin you must depart.

You'll be happy when you serve Him,
You'll be glad your sins are gone;
Then you'll tell the lost of Jesus
And His power against all wrong.

Oh, I love to follow Jesus,
And be with Him every day;
When I cross the chilly waters,
He'll be with me all the way. †

Sanctification and the Infilling of the Holy Spirit

By Bro. Richard Lehman

(Conclusion)

“And when his disciples James and John saw this, they said, Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did? But he turned, and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. For the Son of man is not come to destroy men’s lives, but to save them. And they went to another village.”—Luke 9:54-56.

The apostles needed more than just the Word of God and forgiveness for their sins. They needed the will of their personal spirit to die! Then the Holy Spirit could be seated on the throne of their hearts so that God would be directing, and not them. But what did it take to bring them to a place where their hearts were prepared to receive the Holy Spirit? Their notions and plans of what the kingdom of God would be had to be dashed. Their earthly thinking had to be destroyed so that they could receive a spiritual kingdom and allow God to work His spiritual purpose through them. They hoped then an earthly kingdom would be restored to the people of Israel. In addition, they thought that Jesus would become their earthly King in this new kingdom.

But when Jesus was crucified their earthly thinking and hopes were dashed completely. They were now the outcasts of Israel, and fearful of the future. But when Jesus revealed that He was the risen Lord, and told them to wait for the promise of the Holy Ghost so that they would be witnesses to all the world, they now were looking in a spiritual direction, not an earthly one. This happened when they received the experience of sanctification and the infilling of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. “And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven. Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language. And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galilaeans? And how we hear every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born? Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judaea, and Cappadocia, and Pontus, and Asia, Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes, Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God. And they were all amazed,

and were in doubt, saying one to another, What meaneth this? Others mocking said, These men are full of wine. But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judaea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words: For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day. But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy.”—Acts 2:1-18.

They were filled with the Holy Spirit, and were given the gift of languages so that they could fulfill the call to preach the gospel to the world. They were now engaged with the spiritual kingdom, and no longer an earthly kingdom.

Note: the true Holy Spirit does not give a false gift where people do crazy things like babbling in an “unknown” tongue, or falling on the floor, etc. It is important that we understand the difference between devil-possession and true Holy Spirit inspiration!

So the apostle’s burden and purpose was not only for other people to be saved, but also for these people to be sanctified (set apart by the Holy Spirit) to fulfill God’s worldwide gospel purpose. “Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made the same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent and be baptized everyone of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call. And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.”—Acts 2:36-40.

Receiving the Holy Spirit happens after sins have been forgiven and washed away. In the case of the apostles, they received the Holy Ghost a long time after they were saved.

In Samaria it was similar. Those who believed were first saved when Philip introduced the gospel of salvation to them. Then later Peter and John came to Samaria and instructed them in receiving the Holy Spirit, and then the people gladly did. “Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them. And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did. For unclean spirits, crying with loud voices, came out of many that were possessed with them ... And there was great joy in that city.”—Acts 8:5-8.

Then later, Peter and John came and prayed for those who believed and were baptized to receive the Holy Spirit. “Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might

receive the Holy Ghost: (For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.) Then laid they their hands upon them, and they received the Holy Ghost.”—Acts 8:14-17.

Not everyone can receive the Holy Ghost. Like the apostles told the people on the day of Pentecost: we first must have repented of our sins completely so that our sins are washed away by the blood of Jesus. “Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.”—John 14:17.

Before being filled with the Holy Spirit, like the apostles, we must be already familiar with the Holy Spirit. We first become familiar with Him when He speaks to our hearts that we need to repent and forsake sin. When we obey the Spirit in receiving salvation, then we are moving closer to God. He is with us, but not yet in us. Then to be filled with the Spirit, a complete unconditional surrender of self to God must be made without any reservations, followed by an earnest desire and fervent prayer for the infilling of the Holy Spirit. “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.”—Romans 12:1, 2.

But to receive the Holy Spirit, let us understand more about the desire and purpose of the Holy Spirit so we can understand what we are really asking for. It was Jesus Himself that plainly told us the desire and purpose of the Holy Spirit: “Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you.”—John 16:13, 14.

So if we want the Holy Spirit, it must be for the reason that we want to be like Him! We don’t want to speak of ourselves. We want to speak and do only what God shows us, and we want to glorify Jesus Christ.

Ultimately, the Holy Spirit wants to sanctify us, meaning: He wants to preserve us and have us “set aside” or used only for God’s purpose. As spoken of in Romans 12, this is our “reasonable service” that our offering to God might be accepted. “That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost.”—Romans 15:16.

And there is something very important that must be understood about our sacrificial offering to God. Something that is too often neglected today when people teach about sanctification. Being sanctified to the Lord’s purpose does not end with one offering from us! Our first offering and infilling of the Holy Ghost is just the beginning of many more offerings to come!

There is another pattern from the Old Testament worship that God has given us that also teaches us about the full meaning of a sanctified life. And that is the daily morning and evening sacrifice of the Old

Testament. This daily sacrifice was a critical part of the spiritual success of the children of Israel!

“And thou shalt say unto them, This is the offering made by fire which ye shall offer unto the Lord; two lambs of the first year without spot day by day, for a continual burnt offering. The one lamb shalt thou offer in the morning, and the other lamb shalt thou offer at even; And a tenth part of an ephah of flour for a meat offering, mingled with the fourth part of an hin of beaten oil. It is a continual burnt offering, which was ordained in mount Sinai for a sweet savour, a sacrifice made by fire unto the Lord.”—Numbers 28:3-6.

This sacrifice was not a sacrifice for sin. This was a sacrifice that the people were to personally identify with themselves. And this sacrifice was to be pure: “without spot.” It was also called the “whole burnt offering” because nothing of the lamb was to be withheld from being completely consumed by the fire. When the sacrifice was completed, there was nothing of the lamb left, except for ashes.

And everyone of the congregation of Israel with the burden to pray would gather together to agree in prayer at this particular time. But to reach the throne of God with their prayers, their hearts needed to identify with the sacrifice by the attitude “your will be done, Oh, Lord!” Then the priest could take the coals and incense (which represents prayer) inside the tabernacle where the incense would be offered on the golden altar. Incense on the golden altar represented prayer that is not mixed with any selfish fleshly purpose. It represented consecrated prayer to: “the will of God!”

Note: today the fire of this spiritual daily sacrifice, starts when the Holy Ghost fills us. But the spiritual sacrifice must be maintained every day for us to continue to be successful in our walk with the Lord. We must keep our will consecrated to the will of God daily so that our prayers can be offered before God without any selfish fleshly mixture.

One of the spiritually darkest times in the history of the Israelites is described as a time when the daily sacrifice was taken away. “Yea, he magnified himself even to the prince of the host, and by him the daily sacrifice was taken away, and the place of his sanctuary was cast down. And an host was given him against the daily sacrifice by reason of transgression, and it cast down the truth to the ground; and it practised, and prospered.”—Daniel 8:11, 12.

The removal of this important morning and evening sacrifice created a wide open door to Satan to have the upper hand against God’s people! And if it is spiritually removed from our lives today, Satan will again get the upper hand. In the Old Testament, God consumed the first daily sacrifice made on the altar with heaven sent fire. Then after that, it was the responsibility of the people to keep offering a daily sacrifice and to always keep the fire burning (see Leviticus 9:23, 24).

Now along with the daily sacrifice, the High Priest would take coals of fire from off the altar of sacrifice, and he would use those same coals to offer incense on the golden altar which was before the veil in the holy place of the tabernacle (while at the same time all the people agreed in prayer in the court near the altar of sacrifice). The golden altar was not used for offering

the daily sacrifice. Only the coals and the incense could be offered on the golden altar. "And Aaron shall burn thereon sweet incense every morning: when he dresseth the lamps, he shall burn incense upon it. And when Aaron lighteth the lamps at even, he shall burn incense upon it, a perpetual incense before the Lord throughout your generations. Ye shall offer no strange incense thereon, nor burnt sacrifice, nor meat offering; neither shall ye pour drink offering thereon."—Exodus 30:7-9.

No flesh could be included with the coals the High Priest would take inside the tabernacle, nor could any other fire be used to offer this intercessory prayer incense, or the priests would die (see Leviticus 10:1, 2). The day of Pentecost particularly matches the pattern of the morning sacrifice, being it was the spiritual whole burnt offering of God's people, at the beginning gospel day. And on the day of Pentecost, God sent the Holy Ghost fire to consume the sacrifice (of their will and lives) and to fill His people with the anointed power they needed to spread the gospel.

Today, in the evening time of the gospel day, we again also need to offer a complete sacrifice—the evening sacrifice. We again need the Lord to consume completely the sacrifice so that we can be filled with the Holy Ghost, so that we might fulfill the calling of our day to again spread the gospel. But once we are sanctified by the Holy Ghost, we must continue to bring our sacrifice to the Lord daily. Jesus and the apostles taught us this. "And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it."—Luke 9:23, 24.

"I protest by your rejoicing which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily."—I Corinthians 15:31. This daily sacrifice spiritually represents our daily sacrifice. And even though we may have our daily devotions mostly alone, while we are in prayer in the morning and in the evening, our hearts still must be in unity with the rest of God's people, just like it was supposed to be in the Old Testament when they would gather together to pray at the time of the morning and evening sacrifice.

Jesus emphasized strongly the need for this unity at the altar of sacrifice! "Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift."—Matthew 5:23, 24.

Finally, the positive work of the Holy Spirit is to provide the power, gifts, and provide for the needs of the church so that she may fulfill the mission of the gospel.

To provide the needed power: "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."—Acts 1:8.

To provide the necessary guidance in truth: "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but

whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come."—John 16:13.

To provide the necessary comfort: "And 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 seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye knoweth him; for he dwell with you, and shall be in you."—John 14:16, 17.

To provide us clear teaching: "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you."—John 14:26.

To help us increase in spiritual fruit: "Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit."—John 15:2. "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law."—Galatians 5:22, 23.

To unify God's people in one purpose: "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me."—John 17:20-23.

"And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness. And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common."—Acts 4:31, 32.

To qualify and fit one for service: "And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high."—Luke 24:49. "If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work."—II Timothy 2:21.

The evidence of the Holy Spirit is found in Himself. It does not depend on any certain phase or emotional reaction. The evidence of the Holy Spirit in a life is as clear as the evidence of the existence of the sun. †

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The Boldness to Stand

Message by Bro. Tom Harris, delivered 05/17/20



I WOULD LIKE to entitle my thoughts this evening, “The Boldness to Stand.” My text I have is Hebrews 4:16: “Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.”

Whenever we think about this verse, we realize that the Lord is exhorting us to be bold. When I thought about that, I thought, *Why would the Lord need to tell us to be bold when we come before Him?* I’ve been reading some in the Old Testament, and I’ve noticed that there are quite a few places where people reminded God of His promises.

Moses, on one or more occasions, reminded God. He went before God and said, “Lord, this was your promise to Abraham, to Isaac, to their generations, to the children, and consequently to the children of Israel.” In II Chronicles, we read of Solomon reminding the Lord of His promise to his father, David.

In Isaiah, chapter 43, we’ll read something about reminding God. I’m sure that many are familiar with a couple of verses here. Let us start with verse 1 and read through verse 3: “But now thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. For I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour: I gave Egypt for thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee.”

We read later on in that chapter how Israel had not been honoring God in spite of His promises. We read where the Lord said, “Thou hast been weary of me, O Israel.” He goes on to say in that chapter, “Thou hast wearied me with thine iniquities.” But then we read in verse 26, where God again is speaking, “Put me in remembrance: let us plead together: declare thou, that thou mayest be justified.” So it would seem as though God was saying, “If you want a result, if you want to be justified, then I need you to remind me of these promises that I’ve made unto you. If you want the benefit of my promises, you need to remind me.” But does God ever really forget His promises? He doesn’t ever forget His promises. We know that God is all-knowing. He’s not a liar. He’s not going to make a promise and then fail to keep it. Least of all, He’s not going to forget one of His promises.

Why then would God tell us to remind Him? I think oftentimes God wants to be reminded of His promise to us, because it shows us standing on our faith. Sometimes I think God will wait to make Himself manifest and known in a situation until we say, “Lord, I know your promise, and I’m reminding you of that promise.” Because, as I said, it shows faith on our part to let God

know that we know. That’s reminding God of His promise to us.

If you didn’t know any better, it would seem like a terrifying thing to go before the great God of heaven and boldly try to do anything. Who are we? According to Isaiah, our righteousness is as filthy rags before God. So who are we, what right do we have to boldly go before God, before His throne, and remind Him of anything? How is it possible? Why would God exhort us to do that? What right do we have? He certainly exhorts us to, if we think about our text and parallel it with that verse that we read of Israel, “Put me in remembrance: let us plead together: declare thou, that thou mayest be justified.” Thinking about that, along with our text, “Let us come boldly ... that we may obtain,” God would seem to be saying, “Again, if you want my promises, I need you to boldly come before me and remind me of those promises.” But again, how is it that we today, as unworthy people, are able to approach God that made the heavens? We can think about the majesty and the awesomeness of this God. When we think of ourselves, how is it that we are able to approach Him? We are able to approach God because of what we’ve been remembering over the past month. It is because of the love of Jesus and the sacrifice that He made.

We read in the Old Testament where God was separated by a curtain in the tabernacle, and His presence dwelt in a place called the Holy of Holies. We read that whenever Jesus died, the veil that separated the presence of God was ripped, and the path was made for us to have access to the presence of God.

We read in Hebrews 10:19, “Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus.” That’s how we’re able to boldly approach God. That’s a right we have—to boldly approach God.

In Ephesians 3:12, we read, “In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him.” This is because of that sacrifice the Lord made and because of the love of Jesus.

I thought of the story of Esther as I was considering the thought, “The Boldness to Stand.” You know the story of Esther. She had it in her heart, after she was made queen, to go before the king. In a way, she was terrified. She was very afraid to go before the king because the king had a rule. I think when he held his scepter out, you were accepted, but if he didn’t move his scepter, then the visitor who came to see the king would be put to death. But Esther purposed in her heart to go and see the king and make a request before him. She went in, having fasted and prayed; not only she did, but many others were fasting and praying that the king would accept her and not put her to death. You know, that’s not the kind of relationship we have with Christ.

Esther wasn't able to boldly go before the king and ask a request, but we through the blood of Jesus are able to boldly approach, not a physical king, but the God of heaven. We're able to go before Him with boldness. We don't have to worry if we're going to catch Him in a bad time. Esther was probably afraid that the king might have been in a bad mood and just on a whim would have decided not to accept her. We don't have to worry about that with the Lord. We can approach Him with boldness and confidence.

Whenever we think about boldly addressing God, we don't address Him with pride. We address Him with humility. We come, not fearful, but we come with great respect; not asking God to do something because we feel like we're owed something, or that we deserve it. We don't come proudly, but we come boldly. I was thinking of a child as I was thinking of this. If the relationship between parents and a child is the way it should be, then a child is never afraid to go to his parents and ask, or to remind them of something. I believe I can recall times when I was a child of reminding Mom and Dad of things. Typically, whenever children reminded their parents of something, it was with the expectation that they would give them the results of their promise. "You said if I do this and this, you would give me this, so I'm reminding you of what you said."

As a child, I wasn't fearful when I went to my parents to ask them something, or to remind them of something. I wasn't afraid that they would punish me for speaking up. I wasn't afraid that they would punish me for catching their attention. That's the way it is with God. There is nothing but love that exists there. We are His children.

We read in Romans 8:16, 17, "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together." It's something to really let that sink in. There's a progression here: "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the *children of God*: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and *joint-heirs with Christ*."

Luke 11:10-13 says, "For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If ye then, being evil [carnal], know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?" We're able to boldly approach the throne of grace because God considers us His child. He considers us His children. Joint-heirs with His Son. All of these are reasons that we are able to approach the throne of grace with boldness. We have the right to do so as children. Again, it's not a prideful thing. It's not, "Lord, give me this because I'm something great, or because I have the right." But as children, we have the right. Our rights have been paid to boldly approach the throne of grace.

I'd like to spend a little bit more time this evening thinking about particular instances in which boldness

is especially needed to stand on the promises of God. It seems like there's certain circumstances you find yourself in where boldness is really needed more so than other times. As I thought about that, I thought that great boldness is certainly needed whenever Satan has you down and is kicking you. Do you know what I'm talking about? Has Satan ever had you down and was kicking you while you were down? Times of great discouragement is a real one. That's a big one.

We read in I Samuel, chapter 30, of David whenever he was greatly distressed. David had a city set up. I believe it was the city of Ziklag. David and his men were fighting the Amalekites. They went out in the morning to fight the Amalekites, but the Amalekites doubled back and they captured the city. They took the women and the children captives. David and the army got back, and he was utterly distraught. He said that the people were thinking of stoning him. The Bible says, "David was greatly distressed." The Bible also says, "But David encouraged himself in the Lord his God." I would like to think that David reminded God of His promises to him. I think he claimed the promises of God to encourage himself in the Lord. That is what we must do.

We're going to go over some of God's promises. Whenever Satan has you down and he's kicking you, you can tell the Lord, "Lord, you've promised that you will never leave me. You've promised that you won't allow me to be tempted above what I'm able to bear, but promised that you'll make a way of escape." What God expects of us is to kneel down and tell Him, "Lord, I'm reminding you." We need to let Him know that we know. "You've promised peace that passeth all understanding. You've promised the spirit of power, love, and of a sound mind. You've promised in my weakness, your strength is made strong. You've promised that your grace is sufficient for me." These are the promises that we are able to boldly claim, that we're able to approach the throne of grace and remind the Lord.

We can't let ourselves think, *Well, you know, I've been sad lately. The Lord must not care about me. I've been afraid lately. The Lord must not be thinking about me.* No! We need to do as the Lord exhorted Israel. We need to remind Him. Put Him in remembrance. "Put me in remembrance: let us plead together: declare thou, that thou mayest [receive the help that you need in time of trouble]."

One thing that I remember struggling with a whole lot whenever I was down, and Satan was kicking me, was when he had me distressed. I'm not saying I don't have struggles now, for we all do. When Satan would have me particularly distressed, it would seem as though there was some great spiritual revelation that I needed to receive before I could pick myself up. It seemed so complicated. Satan would make claiming the promises of God seem so complicated. He would make it seem as though there was something huge that needed to happen before you can get out of the place that you're in. It's just like Satan to make things confusing and more complicated than they need to be.

Another promise that we have from God is that He's not the Author of confusion. I remember Dad telling me one time, "You seem to tell the Lord, and you need

to mean it.” I think that just astounded me to think that it could really be that simple. Again, I thought that it had to be some great spiritual revelation before I could pick myself up; but you know, it’s not that complicated. Tell the Lord, “Lord, I know your promises,” and just mean it. I thank the Lord that He helps me so many times. I still have to tell the Lord, “Lord, I know your promises. I’m not feeling too encouraged right now, but I know you’ve promised to be with me, and I’m claiming that promise, and I mean it.” There’s nothing complicated about it.

Boldly approaching God’s throne—little you and little me. Whenever Satan has us down, we need to boldly stand on the promises of God and fight through it. It’s our privilege and our right to boldly remind the Lord of His promises to us. “Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.”

When is boldness needed? In times of uncertainty in life, boldness is especially needed. We may think we are living in uncertain times now. It has been said that we’re living in unprecedented times of uncertainty. Uncertainty is nothing new to any of us. It might be because we’re experiencing it more on a global scale. We all face uncertainty. Young people face uncertainty. “Should I do this, or should I do that? Should I be this, or should I be that? Should I wait, or shall I get a now?” Young people and older people face health issues that may leave the future uncertain. It is especially during times of uncertainty that Satan just loves to play with our emotions. He loves to make us doubt, to make us fearful, and overtime just subtly wear away our confidence and our determination.

Are you uncertain about anything? Well, we need to remind the Lord of what He said in His Word. In Romans 8:38, 39, we read, “For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Are you uncertain about anything this evening? There is a lot of uncertainty. Are you worried about the state of our country and where we’ll be in a couple years? I know people worry and fret about that, but don’t let it make you afraid, because we read that powers and principalities will never be able to separate us from the love of God.

Are you concerned with the state of the world as it is today, and what the future might hold? “Nor things present, nor things to come”—that’s all encompassing. It doesn’t really matter what’s happening right now. Things present, whatever they might be—things to come, whatever they might be—shall never be able to separate us from the love of God.

We talked earlier about having access to God’s promises and a right to stand on God’s promises. Ultimately, it is because of His love. So in a way, you can think of those verses in Romans 8 as a stepping stone to access all the rest of the promises. No matter what might happen, we know that God’s love will never be separated from us; and we know that through His love, we have access to the Bible that’s full of promises, and nothing will ever take that love away.

Boldness is needed during times of fear. When we’re afraid of “what is,” or “what is to come,” we read in the third chapter of Proverbs, verses 25 and 26: “Be not afraid of sudden fear, neither of the desolation of the wicked, when it cometh. For the Lord shall be thy confidence, and shall keep thy foot from being taken.” Whenever I think of *sudden fear*, I imagine it means, “panic.” Does anyone know what it means to panic? Has anyone ever been panicked about something? I think it’s safe to say that we have all panicked about something at one time or another. *Panic* means, “to get fearful about something all at once.” It happens when you start to think, *Well, what of this, and what of that, what if this happens?* Panic tends to feed itself. That’s how it works.

We read that we don’t have to be afraid of panic. The Lord says, “Don’t panic, for I will be thy confidence.” That is something to remind the Lord of. Whenever you feel like you’re panicking, say, “Lord, you said that I don’t have to panic, because you promised to be my confidence. You promised that I shall not fail if I trust in you.”

Things people say will certainly cause us to panic. If you take everything to heart that everybody says, you’ll no doubt panic. But the Bible tells us in I Corinthians 2:5, “That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.” The Lord will be our confidence, and He will keep us.

Another promise: “Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.” We know that fear doesn’t come from God. I spoke about that a little earlier. “For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.” I remember a long time ago hearing Bro. Brian say, “Have you ever had any fear at all? It’s not from God, so that’s one way to write it off as being from Satan.” If we resist the devil, we can remind God that we’re resisting, because He promised that Satan will flee.

We are able to boldly approach God’s throne and remind Him, not only of all His promises, but really, we can remind Him that we can boldly approach His throne about anything. More than likely, you will find promises to go along with whatever you want to approach God’s throne about.

We can approach God about healing. If you’re approaching God’s throne and reminding Him of His healing grace, you will probably remind the Lord that by His stripes we are healed.

If you feel that you need wisdom and you go to the Lord, you can boldly remind Him that He said in James 1:5, “If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.”

If you want to draw nearer to God, you can boldly approach His throne, saying, “You promised that if I will draw nigh to you, you will draw nigh to me.”

The last thing that I want us to think about is: God honors boldness. I know that we read in our text that if we boldly approach the throne of grace, we’re to do so that we can obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need, but I want to look at an example of this. In the book of Acts, we read of the Holy Spirit coming down in the upper room upon the saints gathered there,

but before that happened the group prayed. In that prayer, they reminded God of something. We read about this in Acts, chapter 4. We'll start at verse 23: "And being let go [speaking of Peter and John who had been arrested], they went to their own company, and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said unto them. And when they heard that, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, Lord, thou art God, which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is: Who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things?" They quoted a Psalm, particularly Psalm 2.

I would like to read Psalm 2: In this Psalm, God speaks of the power that His Son, Jesus, would have. This first verse is what they referenced to: "Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing?" Verse 2: "The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the Lord, and against his anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us. He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision. Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure. Yet have I set my king upon my holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee. Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel." So we see the power that the Son of God would have as we read those verses.

Now, we don't read in the book of Acts that they specifically read that entire Psalm, but I believe that their intent (and we'll see later on) was to remind God of the power that He said the Son of God would have. We read on in Acts 4, starting with verse 25: "Who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things? The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ. For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done. And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word, By stretching forth thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus."

Again, I think they quoted Psalm 2 to remind God of the power that He said Jesus would have; and they're saying, "God, by thy power, we want to have power." They're reminding God, "By stretching forth thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus." I believe they reminded God, and He honored that, as we read in verse 31 of Acts 4: "And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness." They boldly approached the throne of grace and the Lord honored that. They were filled with the Holy Ghost.

Boldly claiming God's promises gives us boldness to face the world. Boldly claiming God's promises gives us boldness and strength and grace to stand before the world. We also read in Hebrews 13:5, 6, "For he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me."

In closing, I'd like us to think one more time: Does God ever need to be reminded of His promises? God doesn't need to be reminded of His promises. He doesn't forget. Of course, not! But again, I believe that there are certain times that God waits for us to remind Him, to let Him know that we know before He comes in and makes Himself known in a special way. Saints, let us not be afraid to boldly approach the throne of grace.

The Bible also says that we are to approach Him with thanksgiving. So before we boldly approach, I think it's important that we also thank the Lord for the privilege of having the right to boldly approach Him.

I'm so thankful for the many promises of God. I'm thankful that we're able to freely, boldly, without fear, approach God and to remind Him of His promises. I would encourage all of us to boldly approach the throne of grace and to remind God of His promises.

Please pray for me as I pray for you. †

BIBLE LESSON OF THE MONTH

SANCTIFICATION

THE DAY OF PENTECOST

Scriptures: Acts 2:1-8, 12-20.

Acts 2:1 And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.

2 And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.

3 And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them.

4 And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

5 And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven.

6 Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language.

7 And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galilaeans?

8 And how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born?

12 And they were all amazed, and were in doubt, saying one to another, What meaneth this?

13 Others mocking said, These men are full of new wine.

14 But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judaea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words:

15 For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day.

16 But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel;

17 And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour

out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams:

18 And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy:

19 And I will show wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke:

20 The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come.

Memory Verse: And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.—Acts 2:4.

Aim: To give a Bible example of sanctification.

INTRODUCTION

THE DISCIPLES were definitely instructed by the Master to tarry in Jerusalem until they received what He promised the Father would send. Many contend that the disciples were converted on the day of Pentecost, but a careful study of John 17 will show that they were already converted. Referring to Acts 15:8, 9 and also Acts 10:34, 35, it is made clear that when they received the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost, they were purified, or sanctified. See also Ephesians 5:25-27, which says He “gave himself” for the church, meaning those who were converted, that He might sanctify and cleanse, or “purify” it. Acts 15:8, 9 says their hearts were “purified” when they received the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost; also the Gentiles in Acts 10 were “purified” when they received the Holy Ghost. Therefore, we can say the experience received on the day of Pentecost was sanctification.

MEDITATIONS

PENTECOST—Acts 2:1—day of Pentecost was fully come—Leviticus 23:15, 16 gives a law for a feast of Pentecost. Some think this was in commemoration of the giving of the law on Sinai. However, the Bible does not say it was, or wasn't. Pentecost was to be counted fifty days from the Feast of First-fruits, two days after Passover. **One accord**—We suppose this includes the 120 who were present at the choosing of Matthias. With one accord they were awaiting the “promise of the Father.” They had no ill-will toward each other, no quarrels to be settled, no dissensions; the way was clear, and God's perfect will was being sought.

SUPERNATURAL HAPPENINGS—Acts 2:2—Sound from heaven—When God gave the law to Moses on Mt. Sinai, there were thunderings and lightnings, and the mount burned with fire, and it is possible the people thought of this as the Spirit was given on this day. **Verse 3—Cloven tongues like as of fire**—God was now fulfilling what Jesus had promised the disciples. They were to wait in Jerusalem until the Father gave them the Holy Spirit before they started out on their mission to carry the gospel to the ends of the world.

THE HOLY GHOST HIMSELF—Acts 2:4—All filled with the Holy Ghost—All in the upper room were filled with the Spirit, but the Scriptures do not say all spoke in other tongues, and it is error to teach

that a person must speak in some other tongue as an evidence of Holy Ghost baptism. Only those the Spirit gave “utterance” to spoke in other tongues. How many was that? The Bible does not say. But every true disciple is to be filled with the Spirit (Ephesians 5:18).

THE UNLEARNED GALILEANS SPEAK LANGUAGES—Acts 2:5—Every nation under heaven—Men had come to this Pentecost feast from many different countries. They were devout. God saw that in their hearts they were open for truth, and He purposed to let them all hear the gospel while assembled here. It was for this purpose the Spirit gave the disciples utterance to speak with other tongues, not, as some suppose, for an evidence that they had received the Holy Ghost. If God meant anything that happened that day as an evidence outside the Holy Ghost Himself, it would have been the mighty, rushing wind or the fire which had so forcibly designated the presence of God at Sinai. **Verses 6-8—In his own language**—There was no confusion, no disorder, no babbling of tongues, but “every man heard them speak in his own language.” The secret of it all is found in verse 11: they heard them speak in their own tongues “the wonderful works of God.”

TONGUES NOT AN EVIDENCE—Acts 2:12—What meaneth this?—If “tongues” had been meant for an evidence of the baptism of the Holy Ghost, it would have been contained in prophecy, and these “devout men” would have recognized it at once and would not have been filled with wonder, saying, “What meaneth this?”

PETER'S EXPLANATION—Acts 2:14-16—This is that—God gave Peter wisdom to answer the questions in the minds of the people on this notable day.

JOEL'S PROPHECY—Acts 2:17-20—Sons and your daughters ... servants ... and ... handmaidens—This proves that God calls women as well as men to preach. It also shows that the Holy Ghost enables the one to preach whom God calls. You miss the mark when you go to school merely to learn to preach and you rely entirely on your education to get your sermons. God only can enable one to preach the gospel, and He does so by the Spirit.

CONCLUSION

“People have preached and written much about the evidence of the baptism of the Holy Ghost. But to ask for our evidence that we have the Holy Ghost is like asking for an evidence of the existence of the sun overhead. The sun does not need a witness to testify for it: *it stands for itself*; and the work which it performs—illuminating the earth, and kissing the face of nature with its genial rays of light and warmth, causing vegetation to spring forth, bringing life and joy, happiness and health, to the sons of men—these works proclaim unmistakably, without further witness, the sun and his glory. Likewise the Holy Ghost *stands for Himself as the witness*. ‘The Spirit *itself* beareth witness with our spirit’ (Romans 8:16; Hebrews 10:14, 15); while the works which He performs—purifying the heart, teaching, comforting, guiding, unifying—show forth His power and glory.”—F. G. Smith, *What the Bible Teaches*.

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

1. For what were the disciples waiting in the upper room?
2. What is the difference between speaking with other tongues as the Spirit gives utterance and working oneself up or getting under the devil's power?
3. How do we know the disciples were sanctified on the day of Pentecost?
4. How can we know we are sanctified? †

THE CHILDREN'S CORNER



OOOOPS!

A Bible Lesson by Sis. Rebecca Bland

I smiled as I reached into the post office box and pulled out a pile of mail. There on the top of the stack was a letter addressed to me in my mother's handwriting. I had expected the letter, because my mother wrote to me at least once a week. But the sight of that envelope from home still brought a smile to my face. I was a young lady now, twenty-one years old and working in another country, but my mother's letters kept me connected to my family so far away.

As soon as I reached my apartment, I sat down and ripped open the envelope. As always, I could not wait to read what had happened at home since my mother's last letter.

Nothing much has been going on here, my mother wrote. I laughed to myself. My mother almost always said that. What she meant was that nothing big was going on. But I knew that lots of little things happened every day, and my mother always remembered to tell me about them so I would feel like I was still a part of my family's daily life.

We have been picking peaches and canning them, my mother wrote. *Yesterday, we canned 24 quarts.* I stopped reading and looked into my memory. I could picture my mother and sisters back at home, busily peeling peaches and putting them into jars to preserve for the winter. I could almost smell the sweet, fruity odor of peaches cooking and feel the stickiness of their juices on my fingers. Where I was living now, there were no peach trees. The climate was not right for them. I sighed and returned to the letter.

A funny thing happened Wednesday night after church, my mother's next paragraph began. I leaned back in my chair and made myself comfortable as I prepared to read my mother's story.

The girls talked Daddy into going for ice cream cones. When we pulled up at the dairy, Daddy pointed to the car in front of us. "Look! It's Mr. Clevenger, the milk tester!"*

I remembered Mr. Clevenger. He was a short, round man with bushy eyebrows and a cheerful smile. His movements were slow and deliberate. He visited all the farms in our neighborhood with his little testing bottles. He enjoyed talking with my father, and sometimes he even stayed and had dinner with us after the evening milking. He loved my mother's chili.

I continued to read my mother's story. *"I'm going to have some fun with Mr. Clevenger," Daddy told us. He got out of the car real quiet, and he sneaked up to the back of Mr. Clevenger's car. He put both of his hands on the trunk and pushed down hard a couple of times to make the car bounce. He wanted to startle Mr. Clevenger and make him laugh when he found out who was behind him.*

"That sounds like Daddy," I said to myself. "He's always doing things to make people chuckle." I went back to Mom's letter to see what happened when Daddy bounced Mr. Clevenger's car.

Well, guess what! my mother wrote. *It wasn't Mr. Clevenger in that car! It was a perfect stranger in a car that looked like Mr. Clevenger's! He rolled down the window and yelled, "What are you doing?"*

Daddy had to go up to the man's window and try to explain to him that he had made a big mistake. They finally got it straightened out, and we laughed about it the whole way home.

By the time I had finished reading my mother's story, I was laughing, too. I could picture my father bouncing the car of a complete stranger, and then trying to explain why he had done such a thing.

Today when I remember that story, I think about how easy it is to mistake one person for another, especially in the dark. We may feel certain we know who someone is, only to find out we are wrong. In my mother's story, the mistake was a funny one, and it did not have serious consequences. I'm sure that the next time Mr. Clevenger came to test our milk, Dad told him what happened at the dairy that night, and they both had a good laugh over it.

But some mistakes have very serious results. Mistakes are often the result of wrong decisions. All of us have decisions to make. When you are young, the decisions are not usually very far-reaching. You sometimes need to decide whether to share something with your siblings, or keep it all for yourself. You often need to decide whether to come when your parents call you, or pretend you did not hear them. You know which is the right decision, but you aren't certain it is the one you want to make.

As you get older, the decisions will get bigger, and the consequences of your decisions will become more serious. It is important for you to be certain what is right, and then make that choice, whether or not it appears to be the more pleasant one at the time.

Our wise saying this month comes from Proverbs 22:21, which says, "That I might make thee know the certainty of the words of truth ..." The writer of this proverb was explaining why he was about to give good advice. He was letting his readers know that truth is certain, whether or not we feel like hearing it.

Children, ask God to help you understand the truth of His Word. It is certain, and it is sure. If you make it

your Guide in life, you will not regret the consequences of your decisions.

*not his real name

Activity

Circle all the words that are synonyms for (mean the same as) the word **certain**.

sure doubtful unlikely
unreliable definite undeniable

Answer to Last Month's Activity

1. "**Consider** it in thine heart, that the Lord he is God in heaven above, and upon the earth beneath ..." (Deuteronomy 4:39).

2. "Only fear the Lord, and serve him in truth with all your heart: for **consider** how great things he hath done for you" (I Samuel 12:24).

3. "Go to the ant, thou sluggard; **consider** her ways, and be wise" (Proverbs 6:6).

4. "**Consider** the ravens: for they neither sow nor reap; which neither have storehouse nor barn; and God feedeth them: how much more are ye better than the fowls?" (Luke 12:24).

5. "And let us **consider** one another to provoke unto love and to good works" (Hebrews 10:24). †

THE ALTAR

By the late Bro. Hoyt Matthews

THE ALTAR constructed by human hand was a very important and necessary part of the Old Testament religious rites.

Just when the Old Testament altar began its earthly existence, we know not; possibly at the time of the promise of the Messiah (Genesis 3:15). There would have been no need for the altar before the fall in the Garden of Eden; however, after the fall, we find the descendants of Adam and Eve offering sacrifices which would have necessitated the altar. Cain's sacrifice was not accepted, but Abel's was. How did Cain know that his sacrifice was not accepted by God?

Let us jump ahead many years to the time of Elijah and his Mount Carmel experience with the prophets of Baal. The children of Israel were being influenced by these prophets of Baal, so Elijah arranged for a contest between himself and these false prophets. This involved the use of two altars: the altar of Baal and the altar of Elijah's God, the God of heaven. Each was to present their sacrifice on their own altar, and the god that answered by fire would be the God of Israel, but they were to put no fire under the altar.

The prophets of Baal put forth their fruitless effort until time for the evening sacrifice, at which time Elijah repaired the neglected altar of the Lord, dug a trench around it, and filled it with twelve barrels of water. Having done this, he prayed a short prayer to the God of heaven, which brought down fire from heaven that

consumed, not only the sacrifice, but also the altar, and licked up the water in the trench. When the people of Israel beheld this, they cried out, "The Lord, he is God; the Lord, he is God."

Would it be reasonable, then, to conclude that Abel's sacrifice was consumed by fire which came down from heaven and Cain's was not? We might consider, too, the fact that when Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, the high priest, offered strange fire (that is, humanly produced fire), they were consumed by fire from the Lord for their disobedience.

Probably the most significant Old Testament altars were the two altars that were a part of the wilderness tabernacle furniture. The tabernacle itself typified the New Testament church, while the Old Testament altar typified Jesus Christ. We are no longer required to make remembrance of sin year after year, for the blood of bulls and goats never took away sin. *What can wash away my sin? Nothing but the blood of Jesus.* As Jesus was giving up the ghost there on Calvary, He whispered, "It is finished." The debt of sin was paid once and for all; the Old Testament altar, which was constructed by human hand was blotted out. Our altar now is eternal in the heavens, there to appear in the presence of God for us, for there is one Mediator between God and man, and that is Christ Jesus.

In most modern day sanctuaries, there is a wooden rail built across the sanctuary just in front of the pulpit, which we refer to as the altar. To this rail, the seeker for spiritual help is invited to come. This wooden rail is only a convenient place for the seeker to come to receive needed help from our altar, Jesus Christ, from which all divine assistance comes. This altar can be reached from anywhere on this planet. It is at this altar also where the "new creature in Christ Jesus" presents his body a living sacrifice; that is, he consecrates his all to the divine will of God. A story has been told of a Native American who was endeavoring to consecrate, in his limited understanding, to the "Great Spirit." He first placed his pony on the altar, but did not attain satisfaction. Next, he placed his moccasins on the altar but without avail. Finally, he placed himself and his all on the altar in full surrender, and the living sacrifice was perfected and acceptable unto God.

This consecration must exist till life on Earth shall end. If at any time during the Christian experience the Christian begins to withdraw consecrated entities from the altar of sacrifice, the consecration weakens, and the godly relationship falls into peril. For an example of this, let us look to the Church of God Reformation Movement that had great power with God during the late 1800's and the early 1900's. For them, as a movement, the day of signs and wonders have flown away, but let us not be discouraged, for the Divine Author of signs and wonders is still very much alive and reaching out to those whose full surrender is still on the altar.

How refreshing it is when the saints of God gather together around the old wooden rail at the close of a service, crying out for higher ground, for the signs and wonders, for a greater spirit of evangelism. "And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy

word, By stretching for thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus. And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness" (Acts 4:29-31).

Such experiences have a price tag. Consider the cost to the merchantman as he sought the pearl of great price. Along with this will come persecution and the opposition of Satanic spirits. In paraphrasing the thoughts of the Church of God pioneer ministry, when we trust the Lord for the healing of our bodies, Satan will contest every inch of ground we gain, but let us be encouraged, for "If God be for us, who can be against us?"

It is imperative that we keep all on the altar at such times, for in seeking relief from the heat of the battle, there may be temptations to accept alternatives to God's plan, thus allowing Satan to thwart God's will.

Few people realize the vital importance of the altar. It has always had much to do with the eternal destiny of mankind, from Adam until time and eternity shall be wedded and become one.

As the flood waters receded and the ark rested on the mountains of Ararat, God told Noah, "Go forth of the ark, thou, and thy wife, and thy sons, and thy sons' wives with thee" (Genesis 8:16). According to the Scriptures, the first thing Noah did after leaving the ark was: "And Noah builded an altar unto the Lord" (Genesis 8:20).

God commanded Abram (Abraham) to leave his father's house and country and go into a country He would show him. This was accompanied with the promise that Abraham would become a great nation. Thus, he became the father of the nation of Israel, which were a nomadic people. As Abraham passed through the land of Canaan, the Lord appeared unto him and said, "Unto thy seed will I give this land: and there builded he an altar unto the Lord, who appeared unto him" (Genesis 12:7).

Isaac, the son of Abraham, in his transitory nature, journeyed to Beersheba, "And he builded an altar there, and called upon the name of the Lord" (Genesis 26:25).

In his journeys to the land of Canaan, Jacob, the son of Isaac and the father of the twelve patriarchs, settled in Shalom, "And he erected there an altar, and called it EleloheIsrael" (Genesis 33:20).

After striking the rock that water might come forth to satisfy the thirst of the murmuring Israelites, Amalek came and fought against Israel. "And Moses said unto Joshua, Choose us out men, and go out, fight with Amalek: to morrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the rod of God in mine hand" (Exodus 17:9). When he held up his hand, Israel prevailed; when he grew weary and lowered his hand, Amalek prevailed. In the times of weariness, Aaron and Hur held up Moses' hands and the battle was won. This was followed by Moses building an altar, "and called the name of it Jehovah-nissi" (Exodus 17:15).

Long past are the days of types and shadows. This dispensation is blessed by the altar that is eternal in the heavens.

August 2020

The chorus of a song written by Elisha A. Hoffman says—

Is your all on the altar of sacrifice laid?

Your heart, does the Spirit control?

You can only be blest and have peace and sweet rest,

As you yield Him your body and soul.

Saints, as we assemble together in prayer, let us pray as did the saints of old, that the Lord would stretch forth His hand to heal and that signs and wonders may follow the preaching of the Word. This is a desperate need of the church in our day. May the altar of effectual fervent prayer be ever before us.

In conclusion, let us build in our hearts the altar of love, devotion, and worship to the Lord of lords, and the King of kings. †

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THE CHURCH OF GOD STANDS FOR

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

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