

The Way of Truth

Vol. 78

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

No. 6

Are You Standing on the Rock?

"Therefore Stand"

See Page 2.

JUNE 2020

ARE YOU HURTING?

DURING this present time of the attack of COVID-19 on our world, people are hurting more than ever. Even before our present dilemma, sin had wrought hurt on the family of man from the time of Adam's fall. But this pandemic has multiplied the plight of many and threatens us all with hopelessness and fear. How we need God's help! We always have. But during the present loss of economic necessity and the threat of bodily harm the virus poses, one would think mankind with one accord would look to God for help. Though there are isolated appearances of this, overall we see humanity continuing in its sinful pursuits desiring a return to life as it was. This ought to be a turning point where we, as a society, return to the precepts of the holy Bible, for it offers not only instruction in righteousness, but also great and precious promises to those who are hurting. For instance, Hebrews 4:14-16, "Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."

Let us take a look at life excluding the effects of the pandemic. What do we see? A world that is hurting.

A person's past affects his present. People today are scarred by sin. They hurt! Because of physical and verbal abuse by a spouse or parent, many are haunted by low self-esteem. Broken relationships plague society and cause hurt. Divorce wreaks havoc on the stability of children. Misunderstandings undermine family ties. Millions are disillusioned with life as they know it. People are disenfranchised and forsaken by society. This causes pain. Every homeless person has a story to tell. Many times drugs or alcohol is to blame. People hurt!

The good news is our Savior is touched by the feelings of our infirmities. There is Someone who truly cares. The Bible tells us, "Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you" (1 Peter 5:7).

Let me give you an example—Mark 10:46, 47—"And they came to Jericho: and as he went out of Jericho with his disciples and a great number of people, blind Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus, sat by the highway side begging. And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out, and say, Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy on me." This man was hurting! I truly can't imagine what it was like to be blind. To never behold a sunset or the beauty of nature or color of a cardinal or blue jay—how tragic! To not see where you are going and always be in need to be led around—how deeply scarred Bartimaeus must have been! So when he heard that Jesus was passing his way, he cried out with all his might—wouldn't you?

Reading on in verses 48-52, "And many charged him that he should hold his peace: but he cried the more a

great deal, Thou son of David, have mercy on me. And Jesus stood still, and commanded him to be called. And they call the blind man, saying unto him, Be of good comfort, rise; he calleth thee. And he, casting away his garment, rose, and came to Jesus. And Jesus answered and said unto him, What wilt thou that I should do unto thee? The blind man said unto him, Lord, that I might receive my sight. And Jesus said unto him, Go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole. And immediately he received his sight, and followed Jesus in the way." Bartimaeus got the attention of One who was touched by the hurt he was experiencing.

Then there was the man in Mark 5:1-5, "And they came over unto the other side of the sea, into the country of the Gadarenes. And when he was come out of the ship, immediately there met him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit, Who had his dwelling among the tombs; and no man could bind him, no, not with chains: Because that he had been often bound with fetters and chains, and the chains had been plucked asunder by him, and the fetters broken in pieces: neither could any man tame him. And always, night and day, he was in the mountains, and in the tombs, crying, and cutting himself with stones." This man hurt inside. We don't really know how he ended up in this condition. He was tormented. He hurt night and day. I think of the many who are hurting always, night and day, driven by addiction. Such a condition drives one to harm himself. But there is hope in God! Jesus is Someone who really cares.

Verses 6, "But when he saw Jesus afar off, he ran and worshipped him." There was something within this man that longed for deliverance. All the demons on hell couldn't keep him from seeking help from Christ! And he was changed. The people from the city were afraid when they found him clothed and in his right mind. People today need help. They hurt. We don't know what people are feeling. But Jesus Christ does!

Hebrews 13:8 says simply, "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever." He understands every man's plight and condition and He cares. The scripture tells us that He is touched with the feeling of our infirmities and that He was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.

Are you hurting? Why not seek Him for help in your time of need? He stands ready and willing to help and heal your hurt.

He not only knows your needs, He alone can satisfy those needs. Philippians 4:19 tells us so! "But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus."

We as the church are Christ's representatives, therefore, we should do as instructed in Jude 22, "And of some have compassion, making a difference."

Life is not all clear sailing. It gets complicated. Things happen along life's

ABOUT THE COVER

Our picture on the front is from Bryce Canyon National Park in Utah featuring a formation call "Thor's Hammer." We are made to wonder with awe at the creative hand of God and the inspiring imagination that the earth displays. What a mighty God we serve, reigning far above, on His throne of love!

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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way that cause disappointment, heartache, sadness. Most of the time rejecting God's plan brings about these things. Remember, not everything that happens in life is because God wills it to happen. He knew people would be hurt and be broken-hearted and He came to heal them.

If you are hurting, how can you receive help? First, don't blame God. The scourge that plagues our society is not God's fault. Reach out and touch Him—Acts 17:27, "That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us." He is near you right now.

Jesus has feelings. He can smile or weep in disappointment. We see Him weeping at Lazarus' tomb. Open your heart and receive His comfort, for He is "the God of all comfort."

God does not leave us comfortless, but we have to be in dire need of comfort to know the truth of his promise. It is in time of calamity, in days and nights of sorrow and trouble that the presence, the sufficiency, and the sympathy of God grow very sure and very wonderful. Then we find out that the grace of God is sufficient for all our needs, for every problem, and for every difficulty, for every broken heart, and for every human sorrow.

—Peter Marshall.

Jesus said in Matthew 11:28-30, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

The teachings of Christ alone can solve our personal difficulties and the world's problems. Every man is a

miniature world. Christ enters that world to heal its wounds. We know that all the various schemes of world reconstruction from the beginning of history to our time have failed. Christ's method of making a better world by making better men alone succeeds.—Selected.

So if you are hurting in any way, especially in these uncertain times, do as the scripture admonishes, "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need." †

OUR SERVICES ON CD'S

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- ___ CD #1138 Believing in the Resurrection of Jesus—Doug Shenberger

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THEREFORE STAND

2019 Cayman Convention Message by Bro. Tim Crooks



IT IS GOOD to be in the house of worship today. I believe you thought it worthwhile to be here or you wouldn't be here. This is the most important place you can be today. What you'll hear is the most important thing that you can experience in your life, because it tells all of us how to make heaven our home.

I thought about a part of the song we sang this morning: "And when I think, that God, His Son not sparing; Sent Him to die, ..." You know, He's the only One that could die. The Bible tells us, "God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man," but Jesus took on the flesh of man and was "in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." That's why He could die for our sins, because He knew what we would go through. He realizes the battles that you have fought and the battles you are fighting.

The Bible tells us, "But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed." Think about that! The Bible says that Jesus was tempted, so that means He had strong desires. I believe one of them was in the Garden of Gethsemane. He had a strong desire to live, otherwise Satan could not have tempted Him with those three temptations that are recorded. There would have been no desire there for Him, but we see that He overcame.

We can overcome. That's the beautiful thing about it. We can overcome! Christians are overcomers. If you're a Christian, you're an overcomer. We are on the battlefield for the Lord. Things get rough sometimes, but that's why we know and understand that He is with us.

We're going to read the scripture chosen for our theme—Ephesians 6:13—"Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand"; and the first part of verse 14: "Stand therefore."

A lot of times we talk to people to try to encourage them and it seems they've been through so much. They feel like they're just not making any progress. When you counsel with some people, they say, "I'm just not going forward. I feel like I'm stuck and always fighting a battle." I tell them that the Bible says "and having done all, to stand, stand therefore." I tell them, "You're not going forward, but you're not going backwards. You're standing, you're staying firm, you're planted."

I think a lot of times about being on a battlefield. When soldiers have a strong front that they want to win, and they don't think that there's any possible way that they can move forward, do you know what they do? They dig in. They dig trenches because they don't want to go backwards. Christians, you do not want to go backwards. There's nothing on the backside of us in the armor to protect us. Nothing! but as long as we stand, and we feel like we're not going forward, we're not going backwards.

Sometimes when you're fighting your battle, you think you're not gaining any ground, but when you emerge from the battle, you realize that you've gained some things. You got a little closer to the Lord because you got a better prayer life. Then you learn to be a little more patient and long suffering with others who are going through their battle. That's fruit from growing. Sure, the battle is hard, but we have to have battles if we're going to grow. One thing we need to know: the Lord will never leave us nor forsake us. If you don't believe the Lord will never leave us nor forsake us, read the Old and New Testaments and you'll see how saints came through some battles; but not only that, come to services and listen to the testimonies. When there's going to be a testimony service, some people say, "Well, it's not important, I'm going to stay home, I'm really tired"; but you need to be in a testimony service. I tell you, when you hear testimonies from saints in what God has done for them, you'll say, "He'll do it for me, too."

How do you think Paul was able to stand? Do you think he looked at his own strength? He looked at those promises of old, and said, "God, if you can do that for them, then you can do it for me." That's what we have to understand. That's why it is important that we stand. Look at the old saints. The Lord helped them. He was with them all the way. He never forsook them. They felt like they were forsaken. Sometimes they may have wondered if they were forsaken, but they weren't forsaken.

We'll turn to Isaiah, chapter 40. We'll start at verse 28: "Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, that the everlasting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? [Did you hear that? God doesn't get tired. It doesn't matter how long you're weathering your storm, He's not going to get tired of holding you up. I've been through some long trials and I didn't know if I would see the end, but God held me up the entire time.] there is no searching of his understanding." In other words, the time we think that God would let go of us, He keeps on holding us up. He's still there to help. He will never give up on us.

Verse 29 of Isaiah 40: "He giveth power to the faint [Paul said, 'When I am weak, then am I strong.' God gives us power to stand. He doesn't give us power to run, but power to stand.]; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength." Have you ever come through a battle and you've looked back and said, "I don't know how I made it through"? It was the Lord. Sometimes people go through a strong battle and they thank the Lord for seeing them through, but when they get on the mountaintop, they become careless. They've climbed up so hard on the side of that mountain, but when they get up on the mountaintop where everything looks so

pretty, they step right off the side of the mountain. They forgot that God had blessed them and brought them up the mountain. While they are in a relaxing time, a time of refreshing, they don't realize there's another battle coming. Just because you've come out of a battle doesn't mean you're not going into another one.

Verses 30, 31 of Isaiah 40: "Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint." That's standing; that's digging in. When Moses went up to receive the Ten Commandments, the children of Israel made a calf. It grieved the Lord. He told Moses that He was going to send an angel with them. The people did not understand. Moses understood. He didn't like the thought of God not going with them, but he sought God. He told God, "I know you. I talk to you face to face. I know you're going to lead me aright, but I don't know about this angel." Moses came to the point and said, "If you don't go with us, then we're not going to leave from this fight. We're going to stay and die here." Let me tell you, when you're in a battle, you don't leave without the Lord. You dig in and stay there until the Lord shows you it's time to move forward. When you try to move forward in your own strength, you're going to fail. When you get ahead of the Lord, that's when you have causalities.

Isaiah 41:10 says, "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." Do you believe that this morning? Do you believe that God Almighty loves you enough to hold your hand? Sure He does! Every word in the Bible applies to you and me. Every word is for us. It's for our help and for us to grow. It's for us to have confidence, not in ourselves, but in God. He's the strong hand. It's in His strength that we stand. Within ourselves, we would all fall. If we try to stand in our own strength, we would all fall.

Let's look at Psalm 27:1—"The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?" Verse 2: "When the wicked, even mine enemies and my foes, came upon me to eat up my flesh, they stumbled and fell." I thought about Daniel as I read that verse. Daniel's adversaries were not pleased that he was worshiping the Lord God. They had a decree made secretly to have him thrown into the lions' den to be destroyed. You know the story. The Lord delivered Daniel. I tell you, you have people around you today that don't like the Christian way. They're looking for ways to devour you. Sometimes your family can say words that cut harder than an enemy. People don't realize how they let the devil use them. When Daniel was thrown into the den of lions, do you think he had to get down and start praying? No, he already knew that his God was going to be with him. There was no doubt. He knew on whom he stood. He knew in whom his help was coming from. He didn't have to prove who God was. He had already proven Him.

Christians, whenever you go into a battle, there is no time to pick up your Bible and start reading. It's

time to rely on what you already know. That's the time to rely on what you have already proven. That's what Daniel did. He knew that he was doing the Lord's will. He knew his God would deliver him. God is no respecter of persons. When you are going through those trials, God is there to deliver you. You have to put your trust in God. Don't look at that lion. Look at our God. Look at the strength and might of our God. He is the One that delivers.

Verse 3 of Psalm 27: "Though an host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear: though war should rise against me, in this will I be confident." There are many times when we're encamped about. One that comes to my mind is the three Hebrew boys. They were among a host. Sometimes it seems like when we're in a crowd of people that's doing wrong, it's easier to do wrong. Why sure it is! Peer pressure. That's why it's so important to come to church services. Peer pressure helps us to be better or helps us to be worse. It's all in where we go. Think about that! People want to be godly, they want to draw close to God and be strong, but they hang with the world. What does the world tell them? It tells them you can get rid of your cares in a bottle or in a joint or in a needle. Just hide your cares. Drugs are the answer. So if you hang with the world and start to have problems, do you think they're going to tell you to seek God? No!

Again, the Hebrew boys were among a crowd. There were a lot of people there. The whole kingdom was there. By the sound of the instruments, they were to bow down to that golden image. Probably as far as anyone could see, the people bowed down, except for those three Hebrew boys who stood standing. Can you imagine people being around you? Have you been in a crowd where people have decided to do what's wrong and you've decided to do what's right, and they say, "Look, just go along with it. It's not that bad?" The Hebrew boys didn't let what people said to bother them. There was a host around them. Do you think those people were keeping quiet? They said to the Hebrew boys, "Bow down; come on, bow down! Your friends aren't here. Bow down." Peer pressure.

There are millions of ways to bow down to the gods of this world, but the Hebrews boys didn't let anything move them. The king said, "Well, I'm going to give you three another chance." That's the devil right there, but their minds were already made up. The king had the furnace heated up more than usual. He was so angry. He commanded the soldiers to throw them into the fire. They threw them in. The king got up. He became astonished. He said, "What is going on?" He was confused. He asked, "Didn't we throw three men in the fire?" "Yes, we sure did." "Well, I see four standing and walking around, and the fourth man looks like the Son of God." Saints, stand in the midst of your trials. It doesn't matter how hot or how fiery it is, God is with you. Christ is with you. That's why I started out by saying that Christ has experienced everything you're experiencing. If He made it through, you can make it through.

Let me tell you something about that fiery trial the Hebrews boys went through. Do you know what it did? It burned off the only thing that was hindering them: the rope. When we're going through a trial, it is God's

way of purging us. The Scriptures tell us that. It's for our growth. It's for us to draw closer to God. He sees some bands that's holding us back. He sees some things that have us bound down. He allows us to go through a trial. No, He doesn't push us into a trial, but He allows us to go into it. Sometimes it's because of our own foolishness; but when we weather that trial, when we stand firm on the Word of God, we will come out with all those hindrances gone. Gone! And God knows that. He's on your side this morning.

Verse 4 of Psalm 27: "One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life [How are you going to dwell in His house all your days? If you hold on to the Lord and stand in His strength.], to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in his temple."

Verse 5 of Psalm 27: "For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion: in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me; he shall set me up upon a rock." That Rock is Jesus, Friends. He will set you upon that Rock. The Bible says, "When my heart is overwhelmed: lead me to the rock that is higher than I." That means we have to get up out of ourselves; get out of self-pity. People get consumed with self-pity. They start to go through a trial and it seems to them that they're the only ones that's gone through a trial. Do you know why they think so? It's because they have been listening to the devil. "Sis. Jodie doesn't go through a trial like this. Bro. James doesn't have a trial like this." That's the devil telling them that. If they'd stop and think, they would say, "I remember when they testified of what God had delivered them from." They rested on that Rock. They didn't rest in themselves. They rested in Jesus Christ, knowing that it was not in themselves they stood, but it was in His strength. Jesus told us in John 15 that we could do nothing in ourselves. He said, "I am the vine, ye are the branches." As long as we stay connected, we will have life. We will have that strength. We will have that growth among us as long as we stay connected. Do you know what happens to those who become disconnected? They die. They wither up and then gathered for stubble.

David said in Psalm 73:2, "But as for me, my feet were almost gone; my steps had well nigh slipped." It was because he looked at the way the world was going around him. David saw the prosperity of the wicked. He started to get envious. His foot almost slipped off that Rock. Almost! Then he said, "I went to the clubhouse and got with my friends." No, that is not what he said! He said, "I went into the house of the Lord and then I saw their end." We have to get in the right place to have things in the right perspective. It is important to be in the house of the Lord. It is important to know where your help and strength come from.

I tell you, there have been many times that my feet have almost slipped. Honestly, every one of us has been in that place. The devil designed slippery slopes. Christ is the Rock. David also said, "He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings." If you get too close to the edge of that rock, you're going to fall off. The rock is the most stable place to be, but if you get too close to the edge, it's slippery, and you're going

to fall. That's why it is important to guard our steps; that's why it is important not to back up; that's why it's important to stand firm on the Word of God; that's why it is important that whenever you've done all to stand, that you stand. Stand planted on the Rock, Jesus Christ, because that is where your strength and your help come from. If you slip and fall, the shame is not in falling, the shame is in not staying firm. David said, "This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles" (Psalm 34:6). All you have to do is to acknowledge your need.

Saints, if you feel yourself slipping, acknowledge your need. Sinner Friend, if you realize you've fallen off that Rock, all you have to do is to acknowledge your need. Ask the Lord to help you. Ask Him to forgive you. The Bible says that He is able to graft those branches in again. That's contrary to nature. What does that mean? The branch that was cut off was dead. You can't graft a dead branch in by nature. It has to be a LIVE branch; but Jesus said that He could do it contrary to nature. He's willing to take those branches and reconnect them to the Vine, that Source of life, to that Source of strength. He's able to reconnect you to the Source of power you need to make heaven your home. We should never take it for granted all that the Lord has provided for us.

If you're in a trial or in a battle this morning, the Lord is here. You might say, "Well, I don't know whether He'd understand what I'm going through." Do you know what He says? "Come now, and let us reason together." That's the God we serve. He's willing to understand your situation. Even though you think He can't understand, He's willing to understand it. The Lord is willing to give you what you need. Do you know where it starts? It starts with all of us acknowledging our need, acknowledging that we need help, and acknowledging that we are not strong enough in ourselves to face our battles. We need to realize that we're not strong enough in ourselves to make heaven our home. We can't do it by ourselves. It takes the Lord.

I'll leave you with what I started out with this morning: "Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore." †

MY DADDY

Author Unknown

The importance of parental presence as a support for children's achievements should not be underestimated. I remember visiting my middle son's nursery school class, at the request of his teacher, so that I could observe a "problem child" in the class.

It so happened that I was sitting and observing a group of boys, including my son, who sat in a circle nearby.

Their conversation went like this: Child A: "My daddy is a doctor and he makes a lot of money and we have a swimming pool." Child B: "My daddy is a lawyer and he flies to Washington and talks to the president." Child C: "My daddy owns a company and we have our own airplane."

Then my son (with aplomb, of course): "My daddy is here!" with a proud look in my direction. Children regard the public presence of their parents as a visible symbol of caring and connectedness that is far more significant than any material support could ever be.

DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE

By Bro. Darrell Sanford

DIVORCE and remarriage is a subject which has been debated for time immemorial among Christianity in general, and within the Church of God movement since 1880. I am offering this in hopes that it may bring clarity to some concerning this matter and, at least, present a position on the subject which I believe is both scriptural and reasonable. In certain places I have refrained from writing all the verses out completely for the sake of brevity, but encourage you to read the verses we reference in your Bible.

What Constitutes Marriage? They Two Shall be One Flesh

Genesis 2:7, 8 shows us the creation of Adam.

Genesis 2:18-25 shows the creation of Eve and the institution of marriage being established.

Genesis 2:23, 24, “And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh. A man shall leave his father and mother and cleave [adhere, cling, join to] to his wife, and they two shall be one flesh.” First, we establish that God created marriage between a man and a woman—one man, and one woman. Now, note that “they shall be one flesh.”—This principle is fundamentally and inherently characteristic to the marriage relationship. They two shall be one—not three shall be one, or any other number. How are they one? They are one in the sense of being a part of each other in this covenant of marriage. They are still individuals in personality, human characteristics, internal constitution, but they act as one, in consort with one another, each with the interests of the other in view in every aspect of the relationship. Love reciprocates to the needs of the other. The Golden Rule applies in marriage as in all other societal relationships. Love is the foundation upon which a godly marriage is built, just as we see in the mystical union between Christ and His church. It is the love of Christ for His people and the people’s love to Him which binds them together and creates that relationship of mutual respect and care. Another manner in which we consider they are one is that concerning the marriage bed. It is sacred and shared only by the two. They are one in the intimate relationship. The intimacy shared in the marriage bed brings a oneness to the two which is unparalleled by any other means. It is ordained by God to be shared only in the bond of matrimony, as it is written in Hebrews 13:4, “Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.” Also, it is the intimacy of the bed which produces the one flesh in the form of their offspring, as God said in Genesis 1:28, “Be fruitful, and multiply.” Therefore, out of the act of those two coming together, and becoming one flesh, another flesh—a child—is produced. This

principle of “they shall be one flesh” as was ordained in the beginning, binds them together in a covenant. This constitutes lawful, holy, God-ordained marriage. Within this compact the husband alone has right to the wife and the wife alone has right to the husband. They are one, and their interests in all things are intertwined, and no more so than in that most sacred and intimate of all acts—the marriage bed. In fact, the sacred exclusivity of a man and woman becoming one through this experience of intimacy is so vital and so essential to the essence of the marriage covenant, that when a third party is introduced into this relationship, through the unfaithfulness of one of the parties, the two cease to be one and the covenant is broken. How can it be broken, we may ask; what is the rationale? The rationale is in understanding what formed the covenant to begin with, and what constituted the sacred bond. “They two shall be one flesh.” Once this third party is introduced into the relationship, the two are no more one flesh. That act of adultery has violated the sacred covenant of oneness which sealed the marriage relationship. In a very real sense, that pact no longer exists, because the condition of “one flesh” no longer exists. Now, adultery does not abolish the marriage, but it violates and renders void the state of oneness between the husband and wife. The two cannot be one flesh if a third party has entered the sacred union. Divorce then dissolves the actual marriage contract and conjugal relationship. I will reiterate this point in a subsequent part of this study.

Marriage in the Beginning

The first marriage was accomplished within the confines of the garden of God, a place untainted by sin, and between two people who were untainted by sin. These two holy hearts, both submitting to and in fellowship with God, were intended to remain in the relationship their entire lives. There was no need of divorce under such conditions, just as there is now no need for divorce when two people possess holy hearts, dwell in a holy home and are in fellowship with, and submitting to, the holy heavenly Father. It is inconceivable that a man and woman, both filled with the Holy Spirit and living according to the law of love, could ever develop such a rift that would force them apart; and, such people would certainly never introduce a third party into the relationship by way of adultery. There was no provision made for divorce in the beginning, for there was no need. I Timothy 1:9 says, “Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners ...” Upon this principle could we not say, divorce was not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient? Again, a couple sharing the bond of matrimony within the confines and glory of the kingdom of God will live according to the law of love. For this practical reason there is no provision for divorce and remarriage among saved people. This is the condition under which the marriage covenant was established in the beginning, and this is what is expected when two people are saved in the church of God today.

Marriage in the New Testament

I Corinthians 7:10, 11, “And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife

depart from her husband: But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband: and let not the husband put away his wife." These scriptures are but one part of a broad ranging address Paul makes in I Corinthians 7 concerning various scenarios pertaining to 1) the unmarried, 2) a marriage in which both are saved, 3) a marriage in which one is saved, and 4) a marriage in which one abandons the saved party. Verses 10 and 11 is speaking of two saved people and the instruction is clear, as he asserts that this is the same as spoken by Jesus. The law of marriage in the kingdom is that two saved people have no cause or right to divorce and remarry others. I stand by my earlier position that a married couple filled with the Holy Spirit, living under the law of Christian love should have no reason to separate or divorce. Nevertheless, Paul does allow here that, in some case (which is not defined), the wife may "depart," but the rule is explicit—they must remain unmarried or reconcile to her husband. Why does he insert this provision? I don't know, maybe she had enough of him leaving his shoes in the living room floor. We know that as saved people, we still have our personalities and "ways" about us, which will sometimes bring about issues, but we also know that we can resolve these through humility, love and the grace of God. Again, this portion pertains to TWO SAVED people, untainted by sin. When sin enters the relationship, we are dealing with a different animal.

Does Sexual Relations Alone Constitute Marriage?

This may seem a strange place to interject this, but intimacy (becoming one flesh) contributes such a strong bond in the state of marriage, that I wanted to establish this point early on. Some would say that, if the act of intimacy—the consummating of the marriage—seals the covenant and makes two one flesh in that unique sense, then the first person with whom you have intimacy is the one to whom you are married. However, that is not so, because in marriage there is also the factor of leaving father and mother—which indicates the establishment of a new household and family unit—and cleaving to one's wife. This commitment is formalized in the wedding ceremony through the marriage vows in the sight of God, and confirmed legally in the eyes of the state. So, there is also, not merely the act of intimacy, but the intention and commitment to form a permanent relationship and live as a family devoted to one another. Intimacy alone, without these other aspects present, constitutes mere fornication, not marriage.

What Did Jesus Say Concerning Divorce?

Matthew 19:3-12. First, verses 3-6, "The Pharisees also came unto him, tempting him, and saying unto him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause? And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man

put asunder." (I Corinthians 6:15-18 makes it clear that that the term, "one flesh," indicates sexual relations.) Notice first of all, that their purpose for posing the question was to trip Him up in some way. However, the premise they are using in putting this before Jesus, according to various commentators, is that there were two opinions on this matter among the Jews; one from the school of Hillel, which stated that a man might divorce his wife for practically any reason, and the other from the school of Shammai, which held that only adultery was a lawful cause for divorce. Therefore, the question asked was whether a man could put away his wife "for every cause." Jesus then, in verses 4 and 5, relates the account from Genesis which we presented earlier, concluding with the principle, "they twain shall be one flesh." In verse 6, He gives His judgment on the matter, basically, they are no more two, but one flesh. "What God hath joined together, let not man put asunder." Now, that is the law of the kingdom. Luke 16:16 states, "The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached." Therefore, this is the law for all the followers of Christ just as it was, and was intended to be, in the beginning. **Verse 7**—"They say unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away?" Their next question then brings Moses and the Old Covenant into the picture. Jesus' answer is revealing, not only to them, but to us as well. **Verse 8**—"He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so." Because of their hard-heartedness. Remember the scripture we quoted earlier—I Timothy 1:9—"the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless." The phrase *hardness of your hearts* is defined in **Strong's** as, "destitution of (spiritual) perception, hard-hearted." Well, what was the difference between the beginning, when they were expected to live together as one till death do them part, and the time when Moses gave them the liberty to divorce? Just this, in the garden they were holy and pure in heart, but after the fall, man was "shapen in iniquity" (Psalm 51:5) and "the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth" (Genesis 8:21). Man's sinful and hard heart was devoid of the grace needed to abide as when he was in that holy garden experience, and it was not until Jesus brought us back to that pure hearted state that we could fulfill such a commitment again. That being the case, can we expect hard-hearted man today to do any better? God did not expect it of him then, will he now? We may contend that it is different now, in that Jesus has reestablished that which was from the beginning. Yes, He has through salvation, and it is available to all to partake of, but all have not partaken. Are sinful, disobedient, hard-hearted men expected to live under the divine laws of grace, which they have not received in their hearts, or perhaps are not even aware of in their minds? How can they? **Verse 9**—"And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery." Jesus is stating here a law of the kingdom of God, of the New Covenant. Yes, He is speaking to the Jews of the Old Covenant, but He clearly distinguishes the source of the statement—

“I say unto you,” not Moses, and not even that which is written in the Genesis account, but that which is established in the kingdom of God, the church of the living God. “Whosoever divorces his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery.” *Fornication* is defined as “illicit sexual intercourse, adultery, homosexuality, harlotry” (**Strong and Thayer**). Now, some will hearken back to the law and contend that He is speaking of fornication before the marriage rather than adultery after the marriage, for the reason that the penalty for adultery under the law was stoning. But that is not supported here for the reason already stated—Jesus is stating a law of the New Testament, not the Old. He rejected stoning the woman taken in adultery in John 8:7, and initiated the law of love and mercy.

Why Adultery Is So Grievous that this Exception Is Allowed

Though we have already addressed the sanctity of the marriage bed, it is of such importance that it deserves continued emphasis. While it is clear that a husband and wife bound in matrimony are “one flesh” in a somewhat spiritual, metaphorical sense, by being members one of another, it is also very evident that they are one flesh in a physical sense through sexual relations, and that this is a very special and privileged liberty intended to be enjoyed only in the confines of marriage. That sexual intimacy is intended by the term “one flesh” is confirmed by the following scripture: I Corinthians 6:15-18, “Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid. What? know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? for two, saith he, shall be one flesh. But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit. Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body.” Paul expresses that “he which is joined to [has sexual relations with] a harlot is one body.” Then he quotes the scripture “for two, saith he, shall be one flesh.” This makes it abundantly clear that the term “one flesh” is not intended to be merely metaphorical, but emphatically physical.

Reemphasizing Matthew 19:5 and The Principle of Two Being One Flesh

Again, in Matthew 19:5, we see Jesus use Genesis 2:24 as the premise for His commandment concerning marriage; as He states it, “For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh.” This bonding of the two into one through the act of sexual relations is such a sacred and exclusive relationship that it is considered a foundational aspect of marriage, emphasizing not only the sacredness of the contract, but also the very nature of it. This is what marriage is—the joining of a male and female into one single unit in the pursuit and duties of life, and in the physical intimacy of the marriage bed. When another person is brought into this sacred spiritual and physical union, then the relationship is defiled—it is no longer two as one. Hence, the reason that fornication is THE exception for one partner to divorce their spouse and be married to another

is because no other act so violates and disrupts the very nature of marriage. No argument, no disagreement, no opposing interests, no economic difficulty, no sickness—nothing comes close to violating the marriage bond as does adultery.

The Purpose of Lawful Divorce

Therefore, a reasonable reading of the scripture shows, according to Jesus, that if a man divorces his wife for the cause of fornication and marries another he does not commit adultery. Again, this is not the law of Moses, and the law of Moses has no bearing here, nor is it merely that which was written in Genesis. This is Jesus stating the law of the New Testament for the people of the New Testament. The purpose of a lawful divorce, one that is indeed justified, is to allow for a lawful remarriage. We must consider the force and the context of the phrase, “And I say unto you,” in Matthew 19:9. The same iteration is found also as Jesus addresses various subjects in Matthew 5, wherein He first quotes the law, then expresses His own judgment. Such examples may be found in Matthew 5:21, 22, concerning murder: “Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment ...”, and again in Matthew 5:27, 28, “Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.” It is rendered even clearer by these instances that Jesus instituted a grander law than that of Moses. Such a law would not have been possible had He not also established a better covenant, with greater powers and grace to live out His commandments. The lost world is not empowered and expected to live the Christian life—they cannot! “Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God” (John 3:3). We cannot put new wine into old wineskins—they will burst and spill the wine! “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel” (Mark 1:15). Man must repent, he must turn from his sins, he must believe the gospel and become a new creature, then he will see the kingdom of God and obey its laws. Continuing with Matthew 19:10-12, “His disciples say unto him, If the case of the man be so with his wife, it is not good to marry. But he said unto them, All men cannot receive this saying, save they to whom it is given. For there are some eunuchs, which were so born from their mother’s womb: and there are some eunuchs, which were made eunuchs of men: and there be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven’s sake. He that is able to receive it, let him receive it.” The disciples, being troubled by Jesus’ pronouncement, reply, if we can’t divorce for these other reasons, then it is better not to marry. Jesus addresses their contention, that being, that it would be better to not marry and therefore remain celibate by saying this, “All men cannot receive this saying, save they to whom it is given.” It is obvious that this is the intention of His response, because He immediately refers to the state of eunuchs. *Eunuch* (according to **Strong**) means, “a castrated or impotent

man; (according to **Thayer**) “one naturally incapacitated for marriage, or one who voluntarily abstains from marriage.” Jesus states the various causes for men being eunuchs: 1) naturally at birth; 2) made that way by other men for their own purposes; 3) Men who have voluntarily abstained from conjugal relationship, denying themselves a wife and family, so they may devote themselves fully to the work of the gospel. “All men cannot receive this saying,” says Jesus. All men are not capable of voluntarily abstaining from marriage and, of course, lawful sexual relations, except, “they to whom it is given.” In other words, it requires a special devotion and calling, as well as the grace of God in order to live after such a manner. The phrase, “save they to whom it is given,” indicates that this ability is a gift from God, for He is the only One who could give a man such a gift, and therefore it also reasons that it is given for a purpose. That purpose is that he may attend to the work of the kingdom of God without the distraction and concerns which would exist due to caring for a wife and family. Jesus finalized the discourse by saying, “He that is able to receive it, let him receive it.” Again, all men cannot receive it, or abide under such conditions. It takes a special gift from God—a gift given for a specific purpose, the work of the kingdom. We would point to the apostle Paul as an example of one such eunuch and will look into where he addresses the matter shortly.

Is Celibacy Imposed by Man Endorsed by God?

This brings us to the issue of forcing celibacy upon someone who does not have grace to bear it. For the purpose of this I want to share the position of some who hold a very stringent view of divorce and remarriage. That being basically this: no remarriage is allowed while the first spouse is living for any reason. If a person gets saved while in a second marriage, and the first spouse is still living, they must divorce and either remain single or remarry their first spouse. There may be variations of this among different ones, but my response to this position should suffice for the others as well. **Celibacy Is not the Natural State of Man.** “And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him. ... And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; And the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh. And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed” (Genesis 2:18, 21-25). God said, “It is not good for man to be alone”; and furthermore, the natural state of man is to be at one with a woman. We have already read that Jesus said all could not bear the state of not having a wife. We have seen the trouble that man-imposed celibacy has caused among the Catholic priesthood. It is not natural. Paul writes on the subject in the following scripture: I Corinthians 7:7-9, “For I would that all men were even as I myself. But every man hath his proper gift of God, one after

this manner, and another after that. I say therefore to the unmarried and widows, It is good for them if they abide even as I. But if they cannot contain, let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn.” Paul was content to remain celibate because he had a gift from God (as Jesus described in Matthew 19:11), but recognizes that, absent that gift, marriage is necessary to avoid the burning passion of unnaturally abstaining from the proper and natural sexual desires and fulfillment. For man, in his misplaced religious zeal, to force this upon someone, when God does not, would be a most cruel and difficult affliction. Notice the previous verses from I Corinthians 7:1-5, “Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me: It is good for a man not to touch a woman. Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband. Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband. The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife. Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency [lack of self control].” The sexual drive is a powerful force, and it is a force which God put in us. Paul writes, “to avoid fornication let every man have his own wife.” While certainly not being its only purpose, marriage and sexual union is a defense, a very strong defense, against sexual immorality. He continues in verses 3-5 to express that the wife and husband are to render unto the other “due benevolence,” meaning that they are obligated to fulfill each other’s sexual needs, and not defraud, or rob, one another of that to which they have a right. The point is that the marriage bed is not merely for procreation, it is for the pleasure of the couple, and a benefit of lawful marriage. It also fulfills a very vital and basic need pertaining to the emotional and physical welfare of men and women. Therefore, if we, through religious precepts, force people into celibacy, we had better be certain that we fully understand the scriptures upon which we rely to prove it is necessary, for to not do so is to place a stumbling block of gigantic proportions in a brother or sister’s path.

Second Marriages Formed Before Conversion

Could this be—if a person who is in a second marriage, with the first spouse living, gets saved, must they divorce, and either remain celibate or remarry their first spouse? This leads me to ask, may all manner of sin be forgiven a man except divorce and remarriage? Is a person to be relegated to a lifetime sentence for the sin of divorce and forced to bear an unnatural punishment? **Is Divorce the Unpardonable Sin?** In looking at divorce and remarriage, the debate often gets very technical—parsing words and their meaning, dissecting scriptures, etc., but let’s consider first the simplicity of it—the basic scriptural principles which apply universally to all situations concerning sin. That being, that when we seek salvation, we are forgiven of all sin—murder, theft, fornication, drunkenness, adultery, etc. There may be consequences in man’s legal system for some of these, but all is forgiven in the kingdom.

Again, does God forgive murder? Does He forgive fornication? So is the adulterer forgiven or not? Is he or she who is divorced and remarried, or divorced and not remarried, forgiven or not? Divorce and remarriage is not mentioned among the works of the flesh, though Jesus teaches concerning it in the gospels. What is mentioned as a work of the flesh is fornication and adultery, both of which are forgiven when a man or woman seeks salvation. The thief is not forbidden from going shopping because he was once a shoplifter—nothing is held against him—he is free from punishment and consequences of his past life. So why are the adulterers still subject to punishment for their past sins? Remember why divorce was granted to the Jews to begin with? For the hardness of their hearts. Moses, with God's approval, made an allowance because of their lack of grace. The lost, sinful people of the world today have the same hard hearts and lack of grace those old covenant Jews had, yet when they get saved with these things in their past, will we put a yoke upon their necks which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?

Other Scriptures Concerning the Divorce

Mark 10:12, "And if a woman put away her husband and marry another, she commits adultery." Luke 16:18, "Whosoever putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery: and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from her husband committeth adultery." Neither of these include the phrase "except it be for fornication," however, in that Jesus clearly included it in Matthew, it applies to all—it cannot be ignored. I realize that some may draw a distinction between the intended readership of the various versions, whether they were written for mainly Jewish or Gentile audiences, and their adjoining customs, laws and traditions, but the fact remains that Jesus, in Matthew 19, is establishing the law of the kingdom of God, and that pertains to all of us who are saved—either Jew or Gentile. Matthew 5:31, 32, "It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement: But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery." This scripture assumes that one who is divorced will remarry, because he "causeth her to commit adultery." Remarriage is obviously not guaranteed or mandatory, but it is the natural course for most. Now, Matthew 5 addresses an unlawful divorce (one in which there is no fornication) and the unlawful consequences of remarriage in that scenario. But the point is made that the purpose of divorce is generally to marry again. (That was why Moses granted the right to divorce, so that lawful remarriage may follow.) The purpose of divorce remains the same when the action is justified due to unfaithfulness; it frees the individual from the contract in order that he/she may lawfully remarry. Jesus gave only fornication as a cause for divorce in the kingdom of God. Now, it is not mandatory and if the couple can reconcile and repair the marriage, I believe this is preferable, especially when children are in the home. The rule of marriage between two saints of God in the kingdom is no divorce, for there is no need or cause among a holy people. But should one commit adultery, then the pact of one flesh

is violated and the right to divorce is valid. Adultery does not abolish the marriage, but it violates and renders void the state of oneness between the two parties. The two cannot be one flesh if a third party has entered the sacred union. Divorce then dissolves the actual marriage contract and conjugal relationship. I realize there are other scenarios, and this writing is not meant to be exhaustive or cover every point or situation concerning marriage, divorce and remarriage, and there are other things concerning this subject I would like to expand upon, but for now I hope this will be received for your sincere consideration.

God bless. †

BIBLE LESSON OF THE MONTH

SANCTIFICATION THE COST OF SANCTIFICATION

Scriptures: Luke 14:28-30; I Corinthians 6:19; Exodus 21:5, 6; Luke 22:42.

Luke 14:28 For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it?

29 Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him,

30 Saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish.

I Corinthians 6:19 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?

Exodus 21:5 And if the servant shall plainly say, I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free:

6 Then his master shall bring him unto the judges; he shall also bring him to the door, or unto the door post; and his master shall bore his ear through with an awl; and he shall serve him for ever.

Luke 22:42 Saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done.

Memory Verse: But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ.—Philippians 3:7.

Aim: To show that full surrender of ourselves to God is the price we pay for the experience of sanctification.

INTRODUCTION

IT IS necessary to count the cost of sanctification, or should we better say of full salvation, before entering upon the experience, for it is a disgrace and an affront to God for one to start in the race and fail after starting. To be sanctified wholly in Christ Jesus demands that we separate ourselves from personal ambitions. Of course, anyone who would value personal ambitions and worldly gain above complete devotion to Christ would be very unwise indeed, for God has promised to give His kingdom to the little flock who has been true to the gospel. This embraces life eternal in a state of indescribable bliss. It may cause some or much suffering as the cost is paid, but it is the best investment that can be made. At any rate the suf-

fering can in no wise be compared to the suffering of eternal separation from God. Paul declared the sufferings of the present time could in no wise be compared to the glory which shall be revealed in us.

MEDITATIONS

ALL THINGS COST—Luke 14:28—Which of you—We are all faced with the same necessity of paying the cost of both spiritual and material things. He who wisely counts the cost and pays accordingly is the man who prospers the best. Let us all count the cost in the light of eternal verities. **Verse 29—Laid the foundation—**The foundation was true to plan, but that alone was not enough to afford a place of habitation. So a start in the Christian race will afford no satisfaction in eternity at all; rather, it will serve as a source of reproach to the soul. Let us start the race with a determination to finish it, regardless of the cost. There is no man who cannot pay the cost of eternal salvation if he so desires. **Verse 30—Not able to finish—**This is what was said, but the truth of the matter was that he was not willing to pay the cost.

IN CONTROL OF THE SPIRIT—I Corinthians 6:19—Ye are not your own—By the right of creation all souls belong to God, but the Christian belongs to God also by the redeeming blood of Jesus. The soul who submits fully to Christ receives of His Spirit, who takes complete control of his soul and body, the Spirit of God having taken up His abode there. God does not rule the human heart as a tyrant, as does the devil. He rules alone by the force of love, and everything He does is for the purpose of helping and blessing the hearts in which He abides. Therefore, how true is the scripture which states that His yoke is easy and His burden light! I trust the solemn declaration by God, “Ye are not your own,” will command reverence and due benevolence to the great God who has created you.

BONDAGE MORE DESIRED THAN FREEDOM—Exodus 21:5—Not go out—It was the law among the Israelites that after a Hebrew servant had completed six years of service to his master, he was to be offered his freedom. If his master had given him a wife, he had to leave her behind if he decided to leave. His freedom meant not only the loss of his family but also the protection of his master’s house. He had to count the cost and abide by his decision. **Verse 6—Serve him forever—**This man’s decision was to affect the rest of his life. It meant something. The love of home, wife, children, and a fair master compelled him to choose servitude rather than freedom. Likewise, a man must choose to accept the bondage of Christ and yield to His yoke, which is easy, if he is to have His protection and blessing.

THE FLESH RECOILS FROM SUFFERING—Luke 22:42—If thou be willing—As Christ counted the cost of the redemption of mankind, His flesh shrank from the suffering but personal discipline and divine obedience kept Him willingly in line with the decree of the Father. We, as Christians, must conform to the same consecration if we are to be found worthy of dwelling eternally with God.

CONCLUSION

F. G. Smith wrote:

“This blessed state of perfect holiness cannot be entered by sinners. The Holy Ghost is given, not to the world, but to those who are chosen out of the world—to those who are God’s believing and obedient children. Therefore the first essential is that the candidate for sanctification possess a clear, definite experience of Bible justification. But this is not all. Justification brings us into a holy relation with God; therefore in our converted experience the outward life must be brought into harmony with the truth, so that we are living sinless lives; otherwise we do not remain in a justified state at all, hence are not candidates for sanctification, the second work of grace.

“The seeker must make a complete surrender to the whole will of God, a perfect consecration of time, talents, and all to His service, and himself be sacredly the Lord’s for time and for eternity. ... When this perfect consecration is made, God will be pleased to send His Holy Spirit in sanctifying power purging the heart from the very nature of sin, and will Himself take up His abode in the pure and devoted soul. Hallelujah!”—*What the Bible Teaches*.

It is a very solemn thought that there is a possibility that our souls might miss the great prize of eternal life. It is also a solemn thought that we have the blessed privilege of entertaining the Holy Spirit of God as a Guest in our hearts. The cost of this latter fact is negligible when we consider the reward; so it is foolish to halt between two opinions. It is futile to try to serve two masters, and it is disastrous to turn from the true and living God. Count the cost, pay the price, lay hold on eternal life. Encourage others to do the same, for they who turn many to righteousness shall shine as the stars forever and ever, world without end!

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

1. Why is it better not to start than to start and fail?
2. Consider the difference between the cost of being eternally saved and being eternally lost.
3. Is the cost actually too great for anyone to pay?
4. Why did Christ desire the cup to pass from Him?
5. What was the cost the servant had to pay in order to retain the privilege of staying with his master?
6. Why is it wise to submit to the control of the Spirit?
7. Why cannot a Christian say he is his own?
8. What attitude should we take toward the Holy Spirit in our lives? †

**HAPPY
FATHER’S
DAY!**

THE CHILDREN'S CORNER



GOING HOME

A Bible Lesson by Sis. Rebecca Bland

Going home! Going home! Going home! The words repeated themselves over and over in my head as my father's car flew down the highway, taking me ever closer to the home I had missed for so long.

I'm going home! I said to myself—*finally!* I looked down and smiled to see that my feet were pushed against the floorboard of the car, as though I could make it go faster.

It had been a year since I had visited my family. It had been a year since I had seen my home. I had been away, teaching in another land, but now I was coming home.

I closed my eyes, picturing the car driving up to the little gate that opened on the lawn of the big white farmhouse where my parents lived.

My grandmother would be there—she would probably be sitting in her favorite lawn chair under one of the big old maple trees. She would be watching the lane for our arrival. I could imagine her smile as she stood up to greet me when I jumped out of the car. Her arms would open wide. "Welcome home!" she would call to me in that laughing, silvery voice I loved so well.

Dad's car pulled up to the old iron gate that opened onto our big lawn. Sure enough, there sat Grandma under the shade of a red maple tree. I jumped out of the car before it even stopped moving.

I saw Grandma get up from her lawn chair. She moved ever so slowly. Her legs shook and she held on tightly to a cane.

When did Grandma start using a cane? I wondered.

"Grandma!" I called at the top of my voice. I ran toward her.

"No!" I heard her say, her quavering voice filled with alarm. "No! Please! You'll knock me down! No!"

I stopped short. *Was she talking to me?*

I was close enough now to look into Grandma's eyes. There was no smile in them—only a blank look of fear.

A line from one of my mom's recent letters flashed into my memory. *Grandma is getting quite forgetful, she had written. Don't be surprised if she doesn't remember who you are when you get home.*

Of course, she'll remember me, I had thought to myself. *Grandma could never forget me—I've always been her own special grandchild.*

But Grandma had forgotten me. I could see it in her face. She did not know who I was.

In the days and weeks that followed, I tried my hardest to help Grandma remember me. But she only

shook her head. Sometimes she called me Pearl, and sometimes she called me Virginia. They were people she had known long ago. She could not remember the names of any of her grandchildren.

But although her memory had slipped away, never to return, she was the same dear Grandma who had taught me Bible verses and read me Bible stories. She had shown me how to get along with others and how to smile even when my feelings were hurt. Nothing could take away the valuable lessons she had taught me.

Our wise saying this month comes from Proverbs 20:29, which says, "The glory of young men is their strength: and the beauty of old men is the grey head." You may notice that older people have wrinkles. They don't move as fast as they used to. Their voices quaver, and they are sometimes forgetful. But as our scripture tells us, older people are a beautiful treasure. They have stored up much wisdom and experience. Listen to their advice and let it guide you. You will never go wrong by showing respect to the older people in your life, especially those who are godly examples. The Lord will be pleased, and you will receive a blessing.

Activity

Can you name the grandparents of these well-known Bible characters?

1. Jacob's grandparents
2. Joseph's grandparents
3. King David's great-grandparents
4. King Solomon's grandfather
5. Timothy's grandmother

Answer to Last Month's Activity

The scripture "man shall not live by bread alone" can be found in three different places in the Bible:

1. Deuteronomy 8:3, "And he humbled thee, and suffered thee to hunger, and fed thee with manna, which thou knewest not, neither did thy fathers know; that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live."

2. Matthew 4:4, "But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."

3. Luke 4:4, "And Jesus answered him, saying, It is written, That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God." †

A TRIBUTE TO FATHER

Byron P. Tousignant

A father is a guiding light sent to us from above.

He listens to our sorrows and soothes them with his love.

A father is a teacher whose place no one could take,
For he's the source from which we learn to think and navigate.

A father is a gift from God from which we learn to be
Patient, strong and loving, Filled with integrity.



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

QUESTION: As I read the Bible I have seen that the children of Israel—God loved them. Were there any people in the world God disliked or were not sinning?

ANSWER: I think I understand what you are asking. God loves everyone, but He does not love sin. God wanted a people for His name, a separate people, a people who would love and serve Him. So He entered into a covenant relationship with Abraham, and from him came the nation of Israel. Israel was God's "church" in Old Testament times, at least those that obeyed Him, and He loved them just as He loves the church today. That does not mean He does not love those who are not in the church, for He does. Jesus died for all.

QUESTION: Please explain Romans 14:22, "Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth." Does it just mean meat or anything?

ANSWER: It could not possibly mean anything or everything. That would do away with the Bible and leave everyone free to do as he might please. Nor is it limited to meat. In this chapter Paul is dealing with what we might call personal convictions, or conscience matters. In such matters a person is to be convinced in his own mind what he should and should not do. When it comes to the teachings of the Word, i.e., loving God with all your heart, living holy, not the wearing of gold, pearls, costly array, dressing modestly, etc., these are not conscience matters. When the Word sets forth a given standard, that's it.

QUESTION: Is there any chapter in the Bible whenever you read it that will help you to recover anything that you want from God?

ANSWER: The Word of God is given to man to live by. It is not a book of magic, it is not an instruction book on how to get rich quick. It reveals to us God's will and plan for man. It reveals to us a holy and true God. It reveals to us His nature and His love. It also gives us some precious promises, and there are things we can get through faith in Him and His promises if we will live in obedience to His Word. A true Christian is not to ask for that which he knows to be contrary to the will of God.

QUESTION: What does Psalm 51:5 mean? "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me."

ANSWER: Some seem to have gotten the idea that David was speaking of his mother conceiving him in an act of sin on her part, but such is not the thought of this statement.

This Psalm is a prayer of repentance on the part of David, after he had been told by Nathan that his sinful act with Bathsheba was known. So David is dealing with his state, not his mother's.

This fifth verse has been accepted by Bible teachers for many, many years as referring to what some call the carnal nature, or Adamic nature, or native depravity.

Adam Clarke, commenting on verse five, says: "A genuine penitent will hide nothing of his state; he sees and bewails, not only the acts of sin which he has committed, but the *disposition* that led to those acts. He deplores, not only the *transgression*, but the *carnal mind*, which is enmity against God. The light that shines into the soul shows him the very source whence transgression proceeds; ... I believe David to speak here of what is commonly called original sin; the propensity of evil which every man brings into the world with him, and which is the fruitful source whence all transgression proceeds."

The Church of God has taught this through the years.

D. O. Teasley, in his book, *The Double Cure*, referring to the "Moral Effects of Adam's Sin on His Posterity" uses Psalm 51:5 as referring to "native depravity," i.e., the carnal nature.

R. R. Byrum, in his book, *Holy Spirit Baptism and the Second Cleansing*, says: "The psalmist David was a believer in native depravity from one's earliest existence. In his penitent prayer in Psalm 51, he said, 'Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me' (verse 5). 'They go astray as soon as they be born, speaking lies' (Psalm 58:3)."

According to Byrum, in his book, *Christian Theology*, a British monk, by the name of Pelagius, about the beginning of the fifth century, was the one who started teaching the idea "there is no native depravity ... that sin consists in acts, not in a tendency of the nature. ... In short, he denied that Adam's sin had any effect on his posterity morally, mentally or physically, except that Adam set an evil example by sinning."

Byrum, commenting on this, said: "Since a theory is so thoroughly contradictory to the common experience of mankind, who constantly struggles against evil desires and passions, that its adherents have never been numerous" (page 340). Yet, some today would have us believe that this error is "Seventh Seal Light"!

Milton S. Terry, in his book, *Biblical Hermeneutics*, refers to Pelagius as "the most distinguished heretic of the ancient Western Church." And he further states, "His defective views of the nature of sin and the work of divine grace in salvation disqualified him both as a profound exegete and a theologian."

QUESTION: Would you please explain Mark 9:1, "And he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power"?

ANSWER: The Lord simply meant what He said. There were people standing there hearing Him speak who would be living when the kingdom of God came with power. This was fulfilled on the day of Pentecost †



Dear Young People,

Thomas Paine once wrote, "These are the times that try men's souls," and surely we are living in such a time! But it is also true that in difficult times we often find strength unlooked for in easier days. The reservoirs of God's power and strength are often un-

tapped because we don't feel our need fully enough to seek them with all of our hearts. This "Heart Talk" by C. W. Naylor speaks to the need for bravery and I found it inspiring especially at this time. May God grant us the strength to not only survive but to prosper spiritually! To push back against the forces of evil around us and shine forth a light of freedom and hope that the world so desperately needs. Only Jesus Christ offers hope for the weary souls around us, so let us be an example for Him, proclaiming the gospel message with bravery and courage!

Blessings,
Bro. Doug Shenberger

Heart Talks

(Talk Forty-Six)

By C.W. Naylor

Be brave. Only the brave are strong. The coward is a weakling; if he has strength, he dares not use it. We must be brave, for life is a battle. The forces of good and evil are in deadly combat. You cannot avoid having a part in the conflict. You must fight whether you will to do so or not. There will be obstacles to meet no matter where your path may lie. You must overcome them or they in turn will overcome you.

Do not dream of a time in this life when all your obstacles will be overcome. There is no day so bright but the darkness follows. There is no ship that sails the sea, but must meet the storms. No tree sinks its roots so deeply into the soil but its strength is tested by the gale.

Upon you will blow the piercing winds of adverse circumstances. Things will come that you cannot foresee. Do not shrink before them when they appear. Lift up your head, throw back your shoulders, look them squarely in the face, and with courage born of faith meet them in the strength God will give you.

Sometimes it may seem that to endure is impossible. Your strength may fail, but when you have come to the end of yourself, God will add strength, and that added strength will mean victory. Be brave. It is only when you bravely face the foe that you can know the measure of your strength. There can be no defeat to him who

will not be defeated. Circumstances may prevail against you for a time, but if you fight manfully on, the seeming defeat will end in victory.

Napoleon once fought a battle and lost. His troops were driven back. One of his marshals, who with his troops had not arrived in time for the conflict, came up during the retreat. Napoleon said to him, "We have lost the battle." "It seems so, sire," was the reply, "but there is still time to fight another." Encouraged by the words of his marshal, Napoleon rallied his troops, attacked the enemy, and won a great victory.

If defeated, never count that defeat final. Attack the foe again and keep at it till you win. Bravery is a quality of mind and soul. You may be weak in body, you may be timid and shrinking, but if you will, your soul may rise above all this and wax strong in God. Courage is the basis of your strength. It will bring strength from God. But should he give you ever so much strength, only through courage can you make use of it.

I will end these thoughts with a poem by Josiah Gilbert Holland:

GIVE US MEN

Give us Men!

Fresh and free and frank;
Men of thought and reading,
Men of light and leading,
Men of loyal breeding,
The nation's welfare speeding;
Men of faith and not of fiction,
Men of lofty aim in action;
Give us Men—I say again,
Give us Men!

Give us Men!

Strong and stalwart ones;
Men whom purest honor fires,
Men who trample self beneath them,
Men who make their country wreath them
As her noble sons,
Worthy of their sires;
Men who never shame their mothers,
Men who never fail their brothers,
True, however false are others:
Give us Men—I say again,
Give us Men!

Give us Men!

Men who, when the tempest gathers,
Grasp the standard of their fathers
In the thickest fight;
Men who strike for home and altar,
(Let the coward cringe and falter),
God defend the right!
True as truth the lorn and lonely,
Tender, as the brave are only,
Men who tread where saints have trod,
Men for Country, Home—and God:
Give us Men! I say again—again—
Give us Men! †



GOD CARES FOR YOU

W. C. Ramsay

God sees and knows, but does He care
When trials hard I have to bear,
And when I cry in deep despair,
Oh, does He hear my humble prayer?

God knows, He cares, your cry He hears,
He sees your sorrow and your tears,
And in His own good time and way
He'll turn your darkness into day.

His voice can hush the stormy wave,
His mighty arm is strong to save;
Just trust His grace from day to day,
His love will drive the clouds away.

And when you come to death's dark vale,
When earthly friends and comfort fail,
In life's last hour you'll prove how true
Has been His love and care for you.

CALM

Horatious Bonar

I stand upon the Mount of God
With sunlight in my soul;
I hear the storms in vales beneath
I hear the thunders roll.

But I am calm with Thee, my God,
Beneath these glorious skies;
And to the height on which I stand,
No storms nor clouds can rise.

Oh, this is life! Oh, this is joy!
My God, to find Thee so;
Thy face to see, Thy voice to hear,
And all Thy love to know.

OUR NEIGHBOR'S BIBLE

Author Unknown

I am my neighbor's Bible,
He reads me when we meet,
Today he reads me in my home,
Tomorrow in the street.
He may be relative or friend,
Or slight acquaintance be,
He may not even know my name,
Yet he is reading me.

Dear Christian friends and brothers,
If we could know
How faithfully the world records
Just what we say and do.
Oh, we would make our record plain
And labor hard to see
Our worldly neighbor won to Christ
While reading you and me.

ONLY BY GRACE

Edward M. Brandt

I do not merit your glorious love,
Nor anything else from heaven above;
Only by grace are blessings outpoured,
Your undying compassion my great reward.

So Jesus to you my thanks I give,
Stay in my heart and forever live;
With you in my heart I am from self set free,
Now you are in charge and no longer me.

TODAY

M. E. Detterline

'Tis easy to say, "Tomorrow"
To the things that must be done.
But the word "today"
Is the word to say
If the battle's to be won.

'Tis easy to say, "Tomorrow
I will do a kindly deed";
But alas, too oft,
With an answer soft,
We have missed the one in need.

'Tis easy to say, "Tomorrow
In a hopeful sort of way.
I will start anew
Worthy things to do,"
And we lose a good "today." †

JESUS, THE GREAT HEALER

2019 Cayman Convention Message by Bro. David Shaw



IT IS ANOTHER year's convention and we're coming near the final service. Certainly, the Lord has blessed us. We have had a great week. We were properly informed in so many ways. Every thought that has come across this week brought something new. I think we've all learned something from this week's convention. I trust we are going back home energetic and bold. May God help us to be firm and steadfast and unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, inasmuch as we know that our labor is not in vain in the Lord. May we stand on God's promises, because they are secure, and there's no failure in them.

I'd like to call your attention to Psalm 103:3: "Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases." My thoughts are on this point: "Jesus, the Great Healer." David made two comments in this Psalm: "*forgiveth* all thine iniquities; who *healeth* all thy diseases." I wonder why he mentioned *iniquities* in the first statement. It is all because iniquity will hinder God from hearing us. David said, "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me." Don't think it as an ordinary fact. It is a great fact that sin separates us from God; and so when we come to God, we must realize we must first seek to be in His will and way. Then we can make our request made known unto Him.

David was a man after God's own heart. As a matter of fact, God said that David was a man after His own heart. That is something to look into this morning. It is really an exalted state for God to make such a statement of a man. Because David had such a sympathetic heart, a merciful attitude in his walk in life, God recognized him and exalted him. So God said he was a man after His own heart. David realized that God was merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy and truth. So whenever sin was brought into the picture, David made sure it was taken away. He was then able to have peace with God and an assurance of the blessings he requested of God.

David, at one time, did something very awful. He looked to God and said, "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness; according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me." David was honest in his dealings, and so God loved him.

David recognized that Jesus came as the healer. At one time David made known to the world, "The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool." He was speaking of the Redeemer, the man Christ Jesus, who came into the world as the healer. There are hundreds of records written in the Scriptures of Christ's healing in various areas for different conditions. If you'll notice, the healing process of Jesus is not common to man.

There was a man who was living among the tombs. He slept there and was in distress. He was troubled and no one could help him, but Jesus came on the scene. The devils in him knew Jesus. Let me say something here before going on: we have doctors today for every ailment of the body, but I've noticed that whenever a person is in a mental state, the doctor can give an injection or some tablets and the person becomes calm for a period. After that wears off, the person goes right back to the mental state, because the doctor is unable to cure that mental condition. I want to tell you, Jesus came upon this same condition of that man living in the tombs, and all He did was speak the word and he was healed. When the people saw him, he was sitting, and clothed, and in his right mind. What a mighty God we serve!

We are told of a woman who had an issue of blood for 12 years. This poor woman spent all she had on physicians and received no help. Is there anyone here like her this morning? Are you almost out of cash and your condition is still the same? This woman heard that Jesus was passing by. She said to herself, "If I may but touch his garment, I shall be whole." I love that phrase in her statement: "I shall"; meaning, I know! That's for you to say, too: "I know." Unless you know, no one can know for you. You need to know in whom you believe and be persuaded that He is able. This woman knew if she could touch the hem of His garment, she would be made whole. On that day, it wasn't easy for her to get to Jesus, but she did anyhow. The Bible says that she pressed through the crowd. Can you imagine the condition she was in? After so many years of losing blood, I think she was weak, but the weakness in her did not hinder her from reaching out to Jesus. She made up her mind. Beloved Ones, we need to have a made up mind that we're going to trust the Lord with all our heart, with all our strength, and with all our mind. You know, our mind is a powerful agent, and many times we are disturbed by our mind.

Christ is what He said He is. He said, "I am the same yesterday, and today, and forever." He also said, "I am the Lord, I change not. My Word is forever settled in heaven." David has said, "He healeth all our diseases." Praise God for His merciful kindness He has extended to man! Many in this audience can say this morning, "The Lord healed me. I am a witness." Down through the years, the Lord has been good to us. Although we are unworthy in many instances, He has extended His mercies toward us. He forgave us of our iniquities and cleansed us from our diseases.

There was a young man sick of the palsy who was being brought to Jesus to be healed, but there was such a large crowd there that the four men who brought him was unable to get to Jesus. I admire their faith and

trust and their hope. When they could not get to the door of the house because of the crowd, they went on the roof so they could get this man to where Jesus was. Sometimes, My Brethren, we have to get on the roof, as it were, of our sicknesses. Uncover the roof and find a way in. So they went on the roof. They uncovered an area and let down the bed with the sick man right before Jesus. Glory to God! When that was done, Jesus admired their faith and took note of them. He said to the man on the bed, "Son, thy sins be forgiven thee." Certain of the scribes complained, but Jesus said, "Which is easier to say to the sick of the palsy, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk?" Do you know what the word *immediately* means? "Instantaneously; right away." It didn't take an hour, a day, or a week. Immediately the man arose, picked up his bed, put it on his shoulder, and I can just see him, by faith, as he walked through the crowd. Jesus commanded it and so it was! Jesus is the great healer. He is not just a healer, but the great healer, because there is none like Him, and there isn't anything He cannot do. He is the mighty One we serve, and He is able.

God in His mercy has made known His ways unto man. He lets us understand His nature and His care towards us as humans. After all, He made us. Don't be surprised that He's so caring. We are God's greatest masterpiece. There's no creature that God made like He did man. He put special interest and care in man. God loves mankind dearly. John looked at the picture and said, "God so loved the world." Look at how wicked this world is! So many people grieve God daily than those who please Him, yet He still loves man. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

God had a people called Israel. There were some dwelling in the land called Egypt. God intended to take them out of Egypt, but the ruler there and then was a bit stubborn. He didn't obey what God asked him to do. God said to him, "Let my people go so that they may serve me." Pharaoh did not intend to let them go, but God said, "Whether you're willing or unwilling, I mean what I said." God said, "I'm going to send a plague." Do you find your sickness a plague? It is indeed a plague. No matter what nature it is, the slightest symptom that you're struck with, it's a plague. That's why you want to get rid of it. God sent 10 plagues on Egypt before Pharaoh submitted. God said to His children when they were ready to leave Egypt, "If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the Lord thy God, and wilt do that which is right in his sight, and wilt give ear to his commandments, and keep all his statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians: for I am the Lord that healeth thee." Beloved Ones, if you will think back, you will remember He also told a man after He healed him, "Behold, thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee" (John 5:14).

Beloved, sin is always bringing dissatisfaction upon mankind, but mankind loves sin. Look at the world around us today. More people are indulging in sin than those who are living righteous lives. More people break

God's commands than those who keep them. Because of that, God is grieved, and He sees people going in their own directions, but the time will come when they are going to turn around to seek Him. Sin is a hindrance between men and God. Therefore, when we come to ask God for His favor, we need to make sure our heart is right in His sight. We need to make sure we are pleasing Him in every way and walking in His precepts, keeping His statutes, obeying His commands, and doing His good will. Let me remind you He said that His commandments are not grievous. His yoke is easy, and His burden is light, but most of the time we find it so hard to be submissive to God, and then when our back is against the wall, we cry. Let's live to please God, My Brethren. If we do, all favor will be given to us. God has promised that He will bless and protect us. He'll preserve and sustain. All that we need, He said, "I will be the provider."

In Isaiah 53:5, we see where God has promised that He will be the help of the helpless. Isaiah caught the vision. He said, "But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed." You see, sin is always the issue. As I mentioned awhile ago, sin is what brought the disturbance we are having in our land today. When Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden, the first thing that started to grow in the garden were prickles, and they bring thorns to the flesh. Those of you who are farmers know that when you're in the field to weed and prickles get inside your hand, it takes time to get them out. You can't continue to work until they're removed, because they keep on reminding you that they are there. So sin is causing the eruption we have, because in the beginning man disobeyed God, and man is still disobeying God today. Man is still rejecting God's Word.

There are only a few who are willing to be submissive to God. If we will humble ourselves before God, we can receive all the blessings we desire. Again, Isaiah says in chapter 53, "But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes [Glory to God!] we are healed." What a mighty God we serve! Christ healed all manner of diseases. He set the captive free. He didn't only heal, but He raised the dead.

When Christ was on Earth, He was encountered with many deaths and He raised them back to life. He raised Jarius' daughter. He raised Lazarus. Lazarus was dead and buried for four days. He began to decay. It seemed hopeless to Mary and Martha for him to be raised back to life. Jesus said, "Show me where he layeth." When they were walking toward his grave, Jesus said, "Roll away the stone." Some even mocked Jesus. With the voice of authority, Jesus said, "Lazarus, come forth." John 11:44, "And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with graveclothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go."

Jesus is speaking on your behalf today: "Loose him; loose her." You have been bound with sickness for many years. You've tried all physicians and have received no aid. I am praying that you will be loosened today.

Whatever be your status or affliction, be loosed today. Jesus wants to loose you. He wants to deliver you. Someone said, "Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief."

We see that Jesus Christ came as the great healer, and all manner of diseases were healed by Him. All who came to Him were healed. They were delivered. They went home and surprised their relatives. Today, this can be your day of surprise. We are reminded, "God is still on the throne, And He will remember His own; Though trials may press us and burdens distress us, He never will leave us alone." When you are sick, it's a burden. You have sleepless nights, comfortless days, and in many occasions, all you had has been spent. You borrowed until you are now ashamed to borrow anymore. You became destitute. You wonder if you died, if it would be better for you. Have any of you in this building ever said, "To me, it would be better if I die"? You get to a point where you're so sick and cast down and it seems it would be better to die.

I have been to the sickbeds of individuals. They have said, "Bro. Shaw, I'm going to die." I told them, "No, you're going to live." A brother back home passed away last Wednesday. About two years ago when I went to his bedside to pray for him, he said, "Bro. Shaw, I'm going to die." I said, "No, you have some more time to live." He was so sick and weak. He had no desire to live. He lived two years after he was prayed for. I have had so many who have said they were going to die, but they lived for many years.

There was a sister in Jamaica who had a stroke. She couldn't talk. I told her husband she's going to be okay, and she's going to live to bury you. Her husband died while she was still alive. God can make something out of nothing. That sister even preached after she recovered, but I heard she became sick again. I wanted to go to see her, but I was on my way to Hagerstown for a convention, so my time was limited. I asked the Lord, "Would you let her live until I return?" I was in the States for 13 days, and on my return, I went to look for her. When I went to her house, she talked and sang with me. We prayed together. She said, "Bro. Shaw, I'm depending on you. You prayed for me." That's the God we serve! He'll answer your prayer. "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you" (Matthew 7:7).

You will not receive anything if you doubt. We can't ask in faith wavering. "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him" (Hebrews 11:6). His promises are true. There is no failure in God. Even if you don't get what you've requested from God, there is no failure in Him. The fault is not on God's part. It's on the human side. On many occasions, we doubt.

If you'll notice, when Jesus Christ was about to do some miracles, He would put people outside. This happened in the raising of Jarius' daughter. He took the mother, the father, and Peter, James, and John only. He didn't want the crowd around Him. He put them outside, because they were doubters and mockers. Do you know what shocked them? When they saw Jarius'

daughter walking outside. Jesus is still the same today. He can do all that we ever ask or think.

There was a gentleman in Jamaica who didn't walk for 16 years. Bro. Shippy and I went on a Monday to his house and had prayer. On Tuesday morning, his wife saw someone outside, and she was shocked. When she recognized who it was, it was her husband. After 16 years, he was able to roll out of his bed and walk outside. In a few days, he was at church. He was leaping and shouting and praising God. He lived for about two years after. Thank God for Bro. Shippy. We labor together and have seen God working with us in many instances. We have seen miracles wrought. God is still the same today.

Let me read Psalm 147:3—"He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds." Are you here today with a broken heart? Are you full of doubt and fear? Do you feel there's no hope? Your heart can be healed today. If that heart is healed, all that you ever ask or think, God will give it to you. Sometimes we don't ask things to God's glory. We tell God something, but in our mind, we mean something else. God knows what's in our mind. Be honest with God. He will give you the desires of your heart; but if you don't want to glorify God in your body and in your spirit, He will not give you health to serve the devil. When you are sick, you stay right at Jesus' feet, but after He healed you, He can't find you. You go and leave Him.

Sometimes we're given a little ailment to keep us humble. Beloved Ones, we are living in this world, but there are conditions to be met. Our requests are conditional. God knows what is best for us. All we have to do is to surrender ourselves to the Lord. Sometimes we sing, "Have Thine Own Way, Lord," but how many of us know what we're singing?

*Have Thine own way, Lord! Have Thine own way!
Thou art the Potter; I am the clay.*

*Mould me and make me after Thy will,
While I am waiting, yielded and still.*

*Have Thine own way, Lord! Have Thine own way!
Hold o'er my being absolute sway!
Fill with thy Spirit till all shall see
Christ only, always, living in me!*

What are we singing? What if God's way is sickness? That is what will keep you. If you ever get well and are able to function, you might become so proud and high-minded that not even God could talk to you.

When we ask God to have His way, whatever be His way, let us say, "Amen, Lord." Let us say as Job, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him." Job's wife did not feel like Job felt. As he was passing through a cruel condition, she said to him, "Dost thou still retain thine integrity? curse God, and die." Job said, "Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. I will wait until my change come." When will your change be? It can be today, tomorrow, or it could be your status for life.

Let's ask God to help us and to be humbled in any way He sees fit. Let us be willing to follow in the path He leads. "I will follow thee, my Savior, Wheresoe'er my lot may be; Where thou goest I will follow, Yes, my Lord, I'll follow Thee." †

WINNING A CROWN

By the late C. W. Naylor



Part XXII Fellowship with God

SOME PEOPLE would have us believe that after God created the world He went off about His business elsewhere and now pays no attention whatever to mankind nor to their interests. They think that whatever happens now is merely the result of the operation of natural forces. If they consider God to be anything more than force, they think Him so far away as to be totally out of our reach. They scoff at prayer and of our speaking of having personal relations with God. Such teaching does not alarm the Christian, nor disturb him in any way. Its advocates might as well tell him that there is no sun shining in the heavens when he feels the glow of its warmth and sees everything around him lighted up with its beams. The Christian knows God. He is no more a stranger nor a foreigner, but he has been brought into personal and tender relations with God. John says, "That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ" (I John 1:3). Fellowship does not imply cold and formal relation, or no relation at all. It implies that the relations are close and intimate. John believed that there is something very practical and very real about the relations that we are to sustain to God, and after telling us about this relationship, he said, "And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full" (verse 4). There is something in this fellowship that creates joy. Every true Christian knows that this is true. He knows it, not as a matter of theory, but as a matter of his own experience.

Fellowship implies a likeness of nature and of interests. There can be no fellowship unless there is a mutual correspondence. "For what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? and what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? and what agreement hath the temple of God with idols?" (II Corinthians 6:14-16). Sinners cannot have fellowship with God. They are utterly unlike Him; they have no correspondence with Him. There are tens of thousands of church members who have never known from their own experience what fellowship with God means. They are still sinners and know that they are sinners; therefore, they are shut off from fellowship with Him. John says, "If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth" (I John 1:6).

God makes the Christian like Himself in nature and character, and therefore the Christian is in a position to have fellowship with Him. Speaking of this, Paul says, "For we are made partakers of Christ" (Hebrews 3:14). In Hebrews 12:10 he says, "That we might be partakers of his holiness." Peter, speaking on this point,

says, "Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature" (II Peter 1:4). It is because God implants in us His very nature and likeness that we have correspondence with Him. When we have the same nature, it is natural that our interests should run in the same channel.

Fellowship implies a partnership. "We are laborers together with God" (I Corinthians 3:9). We become, as it were, business partners with God. We are saved to serve, not saved for idleness. God has a great work to do in the world. For that work He wants many partners. He can fill many hands with activity. God's work is to save the world, and how glorious it is that we can have fellowship therein or have a part in this great work! We are partners with God in the salvation of our own souls. True, we are to work out our salvation with fear and trembling, but, at the same time, it is God that worketh with us. Some seem to think that the burden and responsibility for saving their souls lies entirely upon their own shoulders; others think that they can do nothing to bring about their own salvation, but that it is a matter wholly dependent upon God. Both these views are extreme. We have a part and God has a part. God is as much interested in our being saved as we can be interested; therefore He joins His forces with ours, and together we work out the glorious accomplishment of His purpose. We have burdens to bear, but He is our helper. We have difficulties to meet, but He is our strength. What we can do, He expects us to do; but what we cannot do, He is ever ready to do. Dear Soul, God wants your life to be a success here in this world, and He wants you to reach heaven safely in the end. He desires it so much that He has agreed to go into partnership with you and to throw all His resources into the balance to enable you to accomplish His purpose. You do not have to fight your battles alone; you do not have to bear your burdens without help. Your strength is too small for this, but you have a glorious partner, one who will help you in every time of need; therefore look to Him and lean upon Him. Trust Him, and you will make a success of it. You are sure to win if you trust your partner and do your part.

We are partners in manifesting His grace to the world. He cannot show His grace as He would like to except through humanity. He wants us to give ourselves to Him and let Him so manifest His grace in us that others may know how glorious it is. The world can know God most easily through His children, and so God gives to us the supply of His grace, not only so that we ourselves may be benefited, but so that the world may know the riches of His grace in us and, seeing it in us, may be led to seek it directly from Him.

We are partners with God in saving others. God saves souls largely through the human instrumentality. Our part in this partnership is the giving of ourselves—our hands, our feet, our tongues, our ears, our minds, our hearts, our all, in fact—to be dedicated to this high and holy work. Let us not hold back ourselves from this fellowship. Let us join in it with all our ransomed powers, that the world may be saved.

Fellowship implies friendship. Jesus said, "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. Hence-

forth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends" (John 15:14, 15). We were once enemies, but now being reconciled by His blood, we have become His friends. On that friendship He places one condition; that is, that we obey Him in all that He tells us. In our partnership with Him, He must be the managing partner. His children are glad to have Him be such. Abraham was called the friend of God. God does not want us to have merely a speaking acquaintance with Him; He wants us to be on terms of close and intimate friendship. Human friendship means much to us. The man who realizes that he has no friends is lonely indeed. How little of good the world holds for him! How little his life seems to amount to! How fortunate the one who has many friends! How these ties enrich his life! If human friendship means so much to us, how much more will the divine friendship, and how much more will our lives be enriched by it! What a wonderful privilege it is, then, to be the friend of God, to have Him who is greatest of all for our friend! But God is in heaven, and we are upon earth. Friendship is blessed even though we are far from our friends, far separated by space from their presence. How our memory loves to dwell upon them! How well we like to think of the associations of former days! How we desire their presence with us now! How we appreciate letters from them and news from them! But it is when we meet them and see them and hear their voices that our joy is stirred. Will God be to us only as a far-away friend? Will He be only "our Father which art in heaven"? Ah, no! our fellowship with Him will be something more than this.

Fellowship means companionship. Fellowship with God means companionship with Him. The angel said, "They shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us" (Matthew 1:23). Jesus said, "If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him" (John 14:23). "He that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself unto him" (verse 21). What gracious promises these are! Again, He says, "I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world" (Matthew 28:20). "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee" (Hebrews 13:5). What can be dearer to us than being in the presence of those whom we love? These promises are not mere words; they are to be realized as facts of human experience. God is with us. He is not with us merely in the sense that He is everywhere, but in a special sense He comes to abide with us, to dwell in us, to sup with us, and to be our companion through life. Words cannot express what the Spirit is to the Christian. Our eyes cannot see the Holy Spirit, our ears cannot hear Him, our hands cannot handle Him, but nevertheless that divine presence is with us, and in our inmost heart we feel Him and see Him and hear Him and know Him. Nothing can be sweeter than the conscious presence of God abiding with us. His presence is not secret. He is not present without our knowing it. Christ said, "I will manifest myself unto him." Oh, how blessed this companionship! How satisfying to the inmost soul! If the world could know it, how they would hasten to secure Him to be their friend! but alas! they

do not know it. It is a thing hidden from their eyes; it is a thing of which they cannot truly conceive. Its sweetness, its depth, its glorious realities, are hidden from them. It is also hidden from many professors of religion. It has a strange sound to them when we speak of it. They do not understand what we mean. They look at us with uncomprehending eyes. They know nothing of the kind in their own experience. This is because their religion is a matter of externals, leaving the soul cold and empty. If they will but surrender really to Christ and receive Him into their hearts, they may know this blessed companionship. If they will forsake their sins and submit themselves to His will, He will gladly come unto them and let them taste of the sweetness of His love and the blessedness of His presence.

Fellowship not only implies companionship, but communion. He is our Father, and we are permitted to have intimate relations and privileges as sons. There is a sense of understanding between the soul and God. It knows God, and it knows that God knows it and understands it. How sweet is this sense of being understood! How blessed it is to go into the secret of His presence and lay before Him all the troubles of our souls, to tell Him our desires, our aspirations, our thoughts, our purposes, and to know that He understands them all and that He gives to us His sympathetic affection! If others misunderstand us, He will not. He knows and He cares. Even when words fail us, so that we cannot tell Him what we would, we know that He can read the secrets of our hearts. He not only hears, but replies. He speaks to us in our inner consciousness in a way that the soul can understand, and when He speaks to us, how sweet the sound of His words and how our souls are stirred! Like the disciples of old, we may say, "Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked with us by the way?" The sound of His voice causes our hearts to leap with joy and to burn within us. In vain do we try to describe this experience.

Fellowship with God means a partaking with or sharing with Him. This glorious privilege we are permitted to enjoy. Not only do we partake of the divine nature when we are saved from sin, but He opens the storehouse of His kingdom and gives to us of His treasures. He is not selfish with His pleasures. He wishes us to enjoy them with Him. The Psalmist says: "How excellent is thy loving-kindness, O God! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings. They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house; and thou shalt make them drink of the river of thy pleasures" (Psalm 36:7, 8). Jesus said, "These things have I spoken unto you that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full" (John 15:11). It is as though the heart of God overran with joy into our hearts. There is joy in heaven over one sinner that repents; there is joy in our hearts at the same time. How we rejoice to see the wanderer come home! How we rejoice at the prosperity of Zion! How we rejoice in the rejoicing of God's children!

We are made partakers of His peace. Jesus said, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you" (John 14:27). Again, it is written, "Great peace have they which love thy law" (Psalm 119:165). Paul says, "The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall

keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:7). How wonderful is the fellowship of God's peace! It comes into our hearts dispelling all our fears, quieting all our troubles, and bringing a great calm, a joyful calm which brings our hearts and minds to sweet repose. The surface of our lives may be stirred by many a storm and the waves of trouble may beat upon us, but down underneath all the commotion there remains that settled calm—the peace of God. Sorrow may come and cause our tears to fall like rain; business disasters may rob us of our possessions; but underneath all is the peace of God in the heart. Oh the peace of God! How inexpressibly sweet it is to the human heart! and how blessed to be allowed the privilege of the fellowship of His peace!

We partake of His grace also. Of the early church we read that "great grace was upon them all" (Acts 4:33). We partake of His love. "The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us" (Romans 5:5). How rich the fruitage of this glorious union with God! It is hidden from the eyes of the world; how little they know of it! The Christian knows of it. He enjoys the realization of it in his own heart. It is the very life and strength of his soul. But he cannot tell it to one who does not know of it from personal experience, any more than he can tell the flavor of a fruit to one who has never tasted it. We must taste ourselves and see that the Lord is good; and this is the privilege that God freely gives to us if we will serve Him. The way to partake of this fellowship is to draw nigh to God. The nearer we come to Him, the more intimate relations are established between our souls and God, the more perfectly we partake of this fellowship and the richer and sweeter it becomes to our souls.

There is another phase of this fellowship quite different from that of which I have been speaking. Paul says, "That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings" (Philippians 3:10). He explains this in Colossians 1:24—"Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh." In Philippians 1:29 he says, "For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake." Suffering is a thing from which most people shrink. They marvel that it should be a part of the Christian life, but it is a part, nevertheless. In speaking to Ananias of Paul, Christ said, "For I will show him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake" (Acts 9:16). When we read his life, we find that it was a life of suffering.

But why should the Christian have to suffer when he has turned away from his sins and is doing what he knows to please God? Why should suffering be laid upon him? Is it not a burden that he should not be asked to bear? Ah no, it is not such a burden! It is one of God's blessings to us. It is God's most useful tool in forming Christian character. Only by pain can He make us into His image.

Behold how our Master suffered for us. What ignominy, what shame, yea, what cruelty, came upon His devoted head! He suffered for us that He might bring us to God; but after He had suffered the utmost that

was in the power of His enemies to inflict upon Him, He went back to heaven, and now they cannot reach Him. He is not here in fleshly form so that evil men may vent their wrath upon Him now as in the days of His flesh. He still dwells here, but He dwells in the hearts of His people, and all the enmity and wicked rage and malice of sinners that would be directed toward Him if He were here in person, is still directed toward Him, but it is directed toward Him in the hearts of His people. So Paul, looking at the matter thus, called his sufferings filling "up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ" (Colossians 1:24). Paul looked at his persecutions as being directed, not toward him, but toward the Christ in him. It was the Christ in him that suffered. It was the Christ in him that men hated; therefore, it was the Christ in him at which their evil words and actions were directed. And so, my brother, sister, the things that come upon you because you are Christ's come upon you, not because people hate you, but because they hate Christ in you. "If ye were of the world, the world would love his own," Christ said, but "ye are not of the world ... therefore the world hateth you" (John 15:19). We have only to grieve Christ out of our souls and to go back to the world again, to find that it will receive us and welcome us and love us, and that all our persecutions will be at an end.

Since Christ has suffered for us, shall not we bear the little suffering that comes to us, without regret and without murmuring? Shall we not, as our ancient brethren, rejoice that we are counted worthy to suffer for His name? What a privilege to bear a part of that suffering which would have fallen upon the Lord had He remained in this world! Shall we shrink from it? Nay, but rather let us glory in it. When some Christians are tried and tempted and persecuted, they wonder why it is. It seems a very strange thing to them that it should be so. Sometimes they question themselves and think there must be something wrong with their lives or their hearts, or they would not have to endure these things. On the contrary, this is rather a proof that they are Christ's. Why should the world hate us? Why should Satan hate us if we do not belong to God?

Peter explains the matter to us. He says: "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: but rejoice, inasmuch as we are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy. If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified. But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evil-doer, or as a busybody in other men's matters. Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf. Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator" (I Peter 4:12-16, 19). Reader, you will do well to study these scriptures until you fully get their meaning, until you comprehend their depth.

Paul says, "The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed" (Romans 8:18). Our trials and temptations

and persecutions and all the things that we suffer because we are Christians are only seeds which we are planting. From them we shall reap in the days to come a glorious harvest of joy. We may sow in tears, but we shall reap with rejoicing. As Peter says in the verses just quoted, “that when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.”

Shall we, then, shrink from the fellowship of His sufferings? Shall we, then, shrink from that which may come upon us in this life? Ah, no! let us rather glory in it. Let it be our delight. Not that it is joyous in the present. It is oftentimes grievous to us and sometimes hard to bear. It requires courage and fortitude, but did it not require the same thing for Him to suffer? Remember the agony of Gethsemane. Remember the heartbroken words on the cross. He still suffers what His children suffer. God’s great heart is too tender not to be touched with the feelings of our infirmities. The stripes that are laid upon us smite Him; the pains that we feel are felt in His great heart. Jesus endured for the joy that was set before Him; so let us endure for that joy also, for we shall be partakers of that joy as we are partakers of His suffering. If we suffer, He knows just how to give to us the balm of consolation. He knows just how to heal the wounded heart; He knows just how to help; He knows just how to strengthen. Let us, therefore, with joy fellowship His suffering and press on from day to day, counting it a glorious privilege. To view it thus will help to lighten our burdens, to sweeten our bitterness, and to give joy for our sorrow. It will make us strong to bear. It will give us courage to endure. It will help us to face the odds that are against us and in His name to overcome. Be strong, therefore, and endure. Bear the little portion of His suffering that falls to you; then in the day of crowning, you will have rejoicing, and He will treasure you throughout eternity as one of His precious jewels. †

RECOGNIZING THE DEVIL

By Sis. Ronda Baggett

(Jamesville, North Carolina)

Just like the military, every Christian is in a warfare. Those fighting in wars use strategies on their enemies to keep them from overcoming them. One of these strategies is learning how the enemy operates. If we have that knowledge, we can know what to do to gain the victory. The military sends spies to obtain this information, but Jesus is our Captain and He can help us to “see” more clearly.

Some of the tactics of the devil are:

Fear—There are different forms of fear, such as: worry, anxiety, and panic (sudden fear). Fear comes from the devil, but the devil is a liar.

Doubts—There is fear, even in doubts. Doubts give us a feeling of insecurity and make us feel fearful.

Pressure—means, “to do something or not to do something.” This pressure can come to us directly or through someone else. Pressure usually comes with a feeling of being rushed ... not giving us time to think about it.

Anger—The devil brings thoughts that cause us to have a bad or a wrong attitude. Even Christians will feel anger from time to time, which is natural, but when wrong attitudes and wrong desires start creeping in, that’s when the devil is getting us to see things in a wrong way. Just like Jesus looked beyond our faults when we were in sin, we are to look beyond the faults of others and see their need. The more we are able to recognize the devil, the better we’ll be able to get the victory. Jesus is always there to help us at a moment’s notice any time we need Him.

May the dear Lord bless each one as you work for Him. †

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We are very grieved to announce that our annual Convention is canceled this year.

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic and the associated governmental restrictions, we feel that under the present circumstances we will not be able to host our annual meeting planned for June 30-July 5.

Make plans now to attend next year's meeting which, Lord willing, we will host June 29-July 4, 2021!

THE FAMILY

"No other structure can replace the family. Without it, our children have no moral foundation. Without it, they become moral illiterates whose only law is self. Ordained by God as the basic unit of human organization, the family is ... the first school of human instruction. Parents take small, self-centered monsters, who spend much of their time screaming defiantly and hurling peas on the carpet, and teach them to share, to wait their turn, to respect others' property. These lessons translate into respect for others, self-restraint, obedience to law—in short, into the virtues of individual character that are vital to a society's survival."—Sel.

ADD A NAME TO OUR MAILING LIST

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

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