

The Way of Truth

Vol. 78

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

No. 3

GOD AT WORK IN THE PHILIPPINES

For report, turn
to page 19.

**MARCH
2020**

WILL OUR GENERATION PLEASE GOD?

I AM THINKING about our present generation and how we compare with previous generations in our attitude towards our Maker and our fellow man. When I speak of a generation, I am talking about the entire body of individuals born and living about the same time, or a group of individuals having similar ideas, problems, attitudes, etc., living during a given time frame.

The Hebrew writer tells us, "Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do always err in their heart; and they have not known my way" (Hebrews 3:10). This tells us that the Lord can be grieved with an entire generation. It follows then that He can also be pleased with a generation. O how I want Him to be pleased with our generation!

It is true that we live in perilous and wicked times. Nationally and internationally, mankind has strayed far from God and His truth, which doubtless causes Him much grief. Things are going on today which defy all standards of morality! I am amazed at the longsuffering of God. It is a wonder that He doesn't proclaim, "Enough!" and bring an end to it all.

We need to bear in mind that even in the darkest generation it is possible for individuals to please God. He can be grieved with a given generation, while being pleased with individuals within that generation.

The antediluvian world is a prime example. The world was plunged into gross darkness, inasmuch that the Lord decided to destroy it with a flood. But residing within this generation lived a man who pleased God. Genesis 6:8 declares, "But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord."

So even in the most wicked of generations, God was pleased with those who resisted the evil tide and served Him in spite of all the enemy could muster. Reading on in Genesis 7:1, "And the Lord said unto Noah, Come thou and all thy house into the ark; for thee have I seen righteous before me in this generation."

We read of the idol worshiping generation of Abraham and how God separated him from such influences and led Abraham to a better land. Then came Isaac, who fathered Jacob, who in turn fathered twelve sons. God had high hopes for this new generation and sent Joseph ahead into Egypt to prepare for the coming famine. The children of Jacob (Israel) relocated in Egypt and multiplied and prospered greatly. We know that eventually they were brought into cruel bondage to Pharaoh. Into this generation was Moses born, and when he was come of years fled into a strange land, there to be called by the great "I AM" to return to Egypt and deliver God's people from bondage. And the Lord did mighty miracles to set His people free.

That leads us to the generation of the children of Israel. This generation was a rebellious and ungrateful lot, of whom the Lord said, "They have corrupted themselves, their spot is not the spot of his children: they are a perverse and crooked generation" (Deuteronomy 32:5).

The reason the Lord was grieved with that generation is spelled out in Psalm 106. Verse 7 reads, "Our fathers understood not thy wonders in Egypt; they remembered not the multitude of thy mercies; but provoked him at the sea, even at the Red sea." Though the Lord delivered them out of Egypt with a great deliverance, they turned on Him at the first hint of danger. But even though He was grieved with them He delivered them. Verses 8-11, "Nevertheless he saved them for his name's sake, that he might make his mighty power to be known. He rebuked the Red sea also, and it was dried up: so he led them through the depths, as through the wilderness. And he saved them from the hand of him that hated them, and redeemed them from the hand of the enemy. And the waters covered their enemies: there was not one of them left."

Another reason God was grieved with that generation was because they rebelled against God-ordained leadership. Again, Psalm 106, this time verses 16-18, "They envied Moses also in the camp, and Aaron the saint of the Lord. The earth opened and swallowed up Dathan, and covered the company of Abiram. And a fire was kindled in their company; the flame burned up the wicked."

They also made their own gods! Verses 19-23, "They made a calf in Horeb, and worshipped the molten image. Thus they changed their glory into the similitude of an ox that eateth grass. They forgot God their saviour, which had done great things in Egypt; Wondrous works in the land of Ham, and terrible things by the Red sea. Therefore he said that he would destroy them, had not Moses his chosen stood before him in the breach, to turn away his wrath, lest he should destroy them."

This wicked generation refused to hearken to His voice. Verses 24-27, "Yea, they despised the pleasant land, they believed not his word: But murmured in their tents, and hearkened not unto the voice of the Lord. Therefore he lifted up his hand against them, to overthrow them in the wilderness: To overthrow their seed also among the nations, and to scatter them in the lands."

Now, Beloved, this editorial is more than a history lesson! We dare not pattern after those wicked generations. Let us look at I Corinthians 10:1-12, "Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; And did all eat the same spiritual meat; And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ. But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness. Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted. Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play. Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and

ABOUT THE COVER

The pictures on our front are from the Philippine Islands taken during the 2019 Convention in Paniqui. God worked in a wonderful way! Ministers from the U.S. have attended every year since 1991 and have always been blessed by the humble spirit of the saints there. Turn to page 19 for a report.

THE WAY OF TRUTH

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Vol. 78 March 2020 No. 3

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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Then came the generation of the Wesley's blazing the trail of holiness and sanctification.

Around the ushering in of the twentieth century came that wonderful generation of the evening light—D. S. Warner, E. E. Byrum, and others—with the Church of God message of unity of believers.

Unfortunately, ensuing generations allowed petty issues and personality conflicts to bring schisms and divisions among God's people, robbing the church of power and producing confusion. As the prophet proclaimed long ago in Jeremiah 23:1, 2, "Woe be unto the pastors that destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture! saith the Lord. Therefore thus saith the Lord God of Israel against the pastors that feed my people; Ye have scattered my flock, and driven them away, and have not visited them: behold, I will visit upon you the evil of your doings, saith the Lord."

What kind of generation will history record on our behalf? It is yet to be written. Will we follow previous generations which grieved God? Or will we from this moment be peacemakers and blaze a trail leading to a return to the beauty of oneness in Christ? Will we truly "let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves" (Philippians 2:3)?

May it be said of us, "This is the generation of them that seek him, that seek thy face, O Jacob" (Psalm 24:6) †

fell in one day three and twenty thousand. Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents. Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer. Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come. Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."

We should learn from previous generations and see to it that as much as lieth within us, our generation pleases the Lord.

Even the generation at the time of Jesus Christ failed to honor God. Jesus referred to the people of His day as a "generation of vipers," an "evil and adulterous generation," "this wicked generation," and a "faithless and perverse generation."

It was this generation which crucified our Lord!

But after His resurrection another generation was established! The early-morning church was on fire. "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light" (I Peter 2:9).

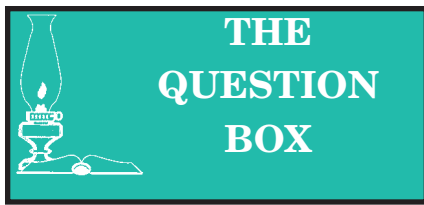
The glory of the Lord was manifest, the apostles performed miracles, and Saul was converted on the road to Damascus. What a generation!

After that there was a falling away and for generations (1260 years) the world fell into the dark ages when the world was ruled by Roman Catholicism.

Martin Luther then led his generation in the truth, "The just shall live by faith." Light began to shine again!

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



QUESTION: How can we do greater works than Jesus did (John 14:12)?

ANSWER: First of all, please note that Jesus said we would. That settles that! How? Jesus said, "Because I go unto my Father." He ministered for only 3½ years; His field of labor was very limited, for He was sent only to "the lost sheep of the house of Israel." Ours is the entire world. Some have assumed this verse meant we would do some outstanding thing that Jesus did not do, but that is not the thought. Please note the word "work" is used in the plural, "works," and surely ALL who believe on Him combined, can do more than He did. This has no reference to His great sacrifice of giving His life for our salvation—nothing could be greater than that, as far as we are concerned. There is one thing the disciples did that Jesus did not do, and His true ministers are still doing today, and that is laying on hands and praying for new converts to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

QUESTION: It is clearly written that it is impossible for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God. Is this really true?

ANSWER: You say it is clearly written, but you do not say where it is written. It is NOT written in the Bible! Jesus did say, "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God" (Mark 10:23). Jesus was not saying it was impossible, but He was saying that riches keep many people out of the kingdom of God. Why? Because they trust in their riches, their heart is set on their riches, and they do not seek salvation. The disciples were astonished at what Jesus said, and asked Him, "Who then can be saved?" (Matthew 19:25). Jesus replied, "With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible" (verse 26). The Bible teaches that it is the will of God for all to be saved, but each must meet the conditions.

QUESTION: When one goes to heaven, shall he see God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit separately, sitting on three thrones?

ANSWER: We have the statement in the Bible that Christ is set down with the Father in His throne (Revelation 3:21), but there is no reference anywhere in the Bible that the Holy Spirit will have a throne upon which He will sit. That in which the Bible is silent, we will have to be silent, too. We do know this, the Spirit is eternal, Christ is eternal, and God is eternal. The Three will have their appointed places in eternity. We shall have to wait to see what the Third Person in the Trinity, does.

QUESTION: Can you give me more details of Luke 16:1-10?

ANSWER: The parable speaks of a man who was a "steward," one who was responsible to another for the others' goods. This steward had "wasted" his lord's goods. The lord—or rich man—heard of what his steward had done and required him to give an account of his actions.

Before this, he let some pay less than they were supposed to, that he might gain their favor, so when he was put out of his job, "they may receive me into their house," for he did not want to go out and labor, as many others had to. Now, did the rich man "commend" the steward for his dishonesty? No! He commended him for his initiative in looking out for his own material welfare.

We certainly are not to get from this parable that God in any way puts His approval on thievery or dishonesty, for He certainly does not.

Those that are living for the material alone, or "wise," are looking out for their own welfare, but verse nine lets us know the end of such is not good.

What is the lesson for the Christian? Just as the steward puts forth much effort to look after his material welfare, the Christian needs to be just as diligent, or even more so, about the things of God. It is sad, but true, in many instances the materially-minded are more diligent about their material things than children of God are about spiritual things. We need to remember, we too are stewards and we will be required to give an account of our stewardship.

QUESTION: Explain John 14:30. Who is the "prince of this world" in this verse?

ANSWER: There are various opinions about this! Some who interpret the original language have expressed the belief that Jesus was referring to Himself. Others have expressed the belief that it was the Roman ruler. But taking it as we find it in our King James Bible, it seems clear to me He was talking about Satan. In II Corinthians 4:4 we read, "In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, ... And in Ephesians 2:2 we read, "Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience." I don't think there is any question about Paul speaking of Satan in these verses, so if he is called "the god of this world" and "the prince of the power of the air," why not "the prince of this world"?

QUESTION: What is the significance of "Ash Wednesday"?

ANSWER: As far as I am concerned, there is no significance! It is the first day of "Lent," when people put ashes on the forehead as a sign of penitence, which as far as I know, Roman Catholicism carried over from paganism.

QUESTION: What's the meaning of the name "Jesus"?

ANSWER: In Hebrew, "Jesus" has the same meaning as *Jeshua*, *Jehoshua*, *Joshua*, which is "Jehovah is salvation." †

During Life's Storms, Jesus Is a Refuge and Foundation

2019 Cayman Convention Message by Bro. Ray Hydes

I WANT TO speak on what the Lord has laid on my heart. Every one of us goes through many storms. The only how we can ride out our storms is to hold on to Jesus. The song says, "Your ship has lost anchor, And the storm's got your drifting, But the night's almost over, So ride out your storm." Many a day I am happy that Jesus is my Captain. Nothing lasts forever, My Friends. Once Jesus is in the midst, He will care for us.

If you have your Bibles, please turn with me to Luke 6:47-49. I have a couple scriptures I want to go through with you today, so please bear with me. "Whosoever cometh to me, and heareth my sayings, and doeth them, I will shew you to whom he is like: He is like a man which built an house, and digged deep, and laid the foundation on a rock: and when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently upon that house, and could not shake it: for it was founded upon a rock. But he that heareth, and doeth not, is like a man that without a foundation built an house upon the earth; against which the stream did beat vehemently, and immediately it fell; and the ruin of that house was great."

The thought of my topic is, "During Life's Storms, Jesus Is a Refuge and Foundation." We have to always believe that no matter what we're going through, there is a purpose for it. Quite often I tell the church, when I have an opportunity to, don't ask God to let the storm pass you by, but ask Him to give you the strength and faith to deal with whatever you're going through. He wants to do something for us so we can come out victoriously. How would He test our faith unless He puts us through a test?

I often thank God though, that He, for whatever reason, hasn't severely tested me yet. I thank Him for that. I often tell myself that maybe I can't deal with a strong, strong test, and I thank Him for that, too. But the fact is, no matter what happens in life, God is in control. We have to understand and believe that He is in control. Our convention theme is, "In the Strength of the Lord We Stand." Why? Because we're built on the Rock. Jesus Christ is that Rock. Jesus Christ is our Foundation.

We know what a foundation is. As a builder, if you don't start with a good foundation, everything else won't be any good. Nothing above the foundation is worth your building unless you start with a good foundation. You have to start with a good foundation.

We have to be grounded in God. Our foundation has to be in God; otherwise, what we're building on won't be any good. We have to be anchored and grounded in God.

What is a *refuge*? "A condition of being safe or sheltered from pursuit, danger, or trouble." God is our Refuge. Let me tell you, when you build on this Foun-

dation, He will always be your refuge. I thank God that He is my Refuge. It's a place in which I can run to and shelter in. Bro. James quite often uses the "hen scenario" with us here, because there are so many chickens all over the place. So the minute any danger is around, or those chicks have a fear of something, the mother hen gathers them together under her wings. They're protected; they're covered. Under His wings, we are safe, praise the Lord! We thank God that He is our refuge.

I have a reading from one of our devotionals—

My 92-year old uncle lives by himself in Sarasota, Florida. As Hurricane Irma was about to hit southern Florida, he really didn't want to leave his house, but his kids convinced him that it was time to go. He packed everything that meant something to him in two suitcases and left.

How simple things became during a storm! When it came down to choosing what to take in my uncle's case, 92 years of life fit into two suitcases. News coverage is full of stories of people who prepared for, evacuated from, and returned after record hurricane events. Some quotes we hear are: "Our house can be replaced, but family can't" and "The dangers awful, but we're so glad everyone is okay." Repeatedly during storms we see material things lose their importance, and things that really matter come to the forefront.

In today's scripture passage, we see that both men go through a storm. Their outcomes are different only because their foundations are different. This parable illustrates that the Christian life isn't about escaping the storms that come our way but about being able to weather storms because of our foundation in Jesus Christ. The thought there is: during life's storms, Jesus is always our Foundation. No matter what happens, we have to have our foundation strong. We have to strengthen our foundation so that we can be successful.

How do we strengthen our foundation? We discussed a few things in our minister's meeting yesterday, and I said to the ministers, "We have to have a made-up mind. We have to have our minds made-up that we're going to build on a good foundation, because if our foundation starts to become weak, we're going to be weak."

Invest in your Foundation. Invest in Jesus Christ. If you invest in your Foundation, everything else will fall in place. You may grow slow, but it's okay. Your Foundation is strong. You may take five years to build that house, but you're building a strong house on a strong foundation. In the strength of the Lord we stand, praise the Lord! Christ is our Foundation.



If you would, please turn with me to Psalm 27:1-6: "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? When the wicked, even mine enemies and my foes, came upon me to eat up my flesh, they stumbled and fell. Though an host should encamp against me, my heart shall not fear: though war should rise against me, in this will I be confident. 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, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in his temple. For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion [under His wings]: in the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me; he shall set me up upon a rock. [Rock is solid.] And now shall mine head be lifted up above mine enemies round about me; therefore will I offer in his tabernacle sacrifices of joy; I will sing, yea, I will sing praises unto the Lord."

Look at verse 5 again: "For in the time of trouble he shall hide me in his pavilion." Christ has a secret place in His tabernacle for me, where nobody can find me. The devil will only do with you what you will allow him to do, but the Lord has a real little secret place for Bro. Ray and for you in His tabernacle, where nobody can reach us. I thank God many days for that little secret spot that He has me in. Most of the time when you're quiet, you are able to hear from God. The fact is, when you're alone in a quiet place, you can commune with God. I'm learning to get there. I've learned to hide in a quiet place and just commune for a few seconds with God. I block everything out while communing with Him.

I tell people all the time, even if I feel sick or weary, I go to church. Why? It's my getaway. It's where I come to get refueled. I leave my cell phone in the car, and I block everything out for the short time I'm in church. This is where we come to commune with God. I make sure I do that. Unless I'm gravely sick, I'm there. "Bro. Ray, you don't have to knock down the church door every time it opens." No, but I need to be in church, My Friend, because we live such a hectic life that whenever we have the opportunity to meet and be with God, we need to. I'm convinced of that, and I'm not going to stop preaching about it, because whenever an opportunity arises for us to be with God, we are to do so. Take advantage of it. We need to. I'm not here because of Bro. James. I'm not here because of my wife. I'm here because I want more of God. I can't find that in the world. Every time you talk to some people in the world, it's nothing hardly spiritual anymore. They talk about everything else but the spiritual, as if their life is not going to end. They want more, want more, and want more. In the strength of the Lord we stand.

Go to Psalm 91, please. Psalm 91:1-4: "He that dwelleth [Praise the Lord!] in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge [a condition of being safe or sheltered from pursuit, danger, or trouble. The devil is always in pursuit. He never leaves us alone.] and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust. Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence. He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings ['...

even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings.' God takes care of His people. We have to understand and believe that He will take care of us. Once we're under His wings, we're safe, but when we drift too far from those wings, we'll find ourselves in trouble.] shalt thou trust: his truth shall be thy shield and buckler."

Psalm 91:5, "Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flieth by day." There is no fear when you're under God's wings. Little chicks are tucked in and covered by the mother hen's wings. They go straight to sleep. They're protected. It's a good feeling to know that we're protected by God. We're sheltered and comforted. When no one else can comfort us, God can. When husbands can't, God can; when wives can't, God can; when Grandmother can't, God can; when Mother can't, God can. Under His wings, we are safely abiding.

I know things are tough. As Bro. James says all the time, "We live in a real world." We live with people, although some are difficult to live with. Thank God for our pastor. He's been encouraging the church so much. He encourages us to stay close to God. You have to think on things that are spiritual. You're not going to find that out in the world. As a matter of fact, sometimes you're not going to find it among friends.

We want to protect ourselves and those whom God has entrusted to our care. What could you do physically to absolutely insure and protect yourself against anything earth or hell could throw at you? Nothing. So what is a man to do? The Psalm [91] holds the answer. Verses one and two describe that one thing gives confidence and nothing you can do physically makes it work. It is not a matter of guardedness, but of godliness; not of fighting but offaith. The Psalm elaborates and explains, but verses one and two are clear. Your only real place of security is in God.

This Psalm gives you no option. There's only one Person that we can depend on, and that's God, because most of the time, most things fail. Most human beings fail, because we're human, but God never fails. He never leaves us, so no matter what happens to us, we can run to God. What a feeling to know that no matter what we do, God is there!

The Lord does not look at your report card and say, "He's 80 years old with so much sins, I'll have to take three days on him." Absolutely not! No matter how bad your record is, He's willing to forgive. "Oh, Bro. Ray, you don't know." I don't need to know. God will forgive and set you on the right path. What a good God! I thank Him He's not like man.

Mark 4:35-41: "And the same day, when the even was come, he saith unto them, Let us pass over unto the other side. And when they had sent away the multitude, they took him even as he was in the ship. And there were also with him other little ships. And there arose a great storm of wind, and the waves beat into the ship, so that it was now full. And he was in the hinder part of the ship, asleep on a pillow: and they awake him, and say unto him, Master, carest thou not that we perish? And he arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. And he said unto them, Why are ye so fearful? how is it that ye have no

faith? And they feared exceedingly, and said one to another, What manner of man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?"

It was a scary moment for the disciples as the waves were beating into the ship. They were human, too. Let me tell you, I've fished with my dad many times and I remember a time when the boat took on water. Being in the ocean with water in a boat is not a good feeling. You're in a boat because you don't want water in a boat. So, I thought to myself, we look at this story and say, "O ye of little faith," but if we were in a boat that was filling up with water, I'm not sure what we would do. I would be afraid, too. I'd be looking around to see how close it is to land that I could try to swim to safety.

Jesus was in the ship, asleep on a pillow. It could only be Jesus doing that in the midst of the rough waves. All of us would be scared and afraid, but Jesus was resting on a pillow. He was secure because God was on His side. The disciples awoke Jesus and said, "Master, carest thou not that we perish?" Jesus arose and rebuked that wind and said, "Peace, be still." The wind ceased and became calm. Praise the Lord! I thought to myself, after He did that, He must have said to His disciples, "Now find a pail to bail this water out. The storm is gone." Jesus had said to them, "Why are ye so fearful? how is it that ye have no faith?" They were fearful because the ship was filling up with water. But one thing they forgot: the Master was on board. "And they feared exceedingly, and said one to another, What manner of man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?" The disciples had the Master of the sea in their ship with them, and yet they were fearful.

If I had Jesus in my boat, knowing what I know about Jesus now, I might not have been so afraid. After all, Jesus is Jesus. The disciples had witness at that point that Jesus had done many miracles, but what they were experiencing must have been bad, because the wind was so great. Let me tell you, living on an island like I am, you can only imagine being in a small boat with the wind and the rain. It's a bad feeling, Friends. I'm not saying that because of what my dad told me. I'm saying that from experience. It's the worst feeling in the world being out in the open ocean in a small boat with nothing but water around you; but I thought to myself, if Jesus was in my ship, I wouldn't feel that way. As a matter of fact, the disciples took a long time to awake Jesus. At the first little rocking of the boat, I would go, "Captain, please come. I need you. You can't be sleeping, Sir." The disciples said to one another, "What manner of man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?" We see here that Jesus even astonished His disciples that were so close to Him.

Jesus is our Foundation. He will protect us, no matter how high the seas rage, or how full of water our boat may take in. Once Jesus is in the ship, we can smile at the storm.

With Christ in the vessel we can smile at the storm,

Smile at the storm, Smile at the storm,

With Christ in the vessel we can smile at the storm,

As we go sailing home.

I was thinking, Jesus could have probably gotten out of the ship and said, "Come with Me, the ship is sinking," but He illustrated to them that even the wind and the sea is obedient to Him. Can you imagine? He didn't call this one and that one for help. He said, "Peace, be still." He spoke and it happened. What a mighty God! What a wonderful God! He's the same God we are serving today.

I think we have a tendency to say, "Well, that was God back then." He was for then; but I promise you, He's the same God. We just have a lot less faith. That's the unfortunate part. Our faith has been watered down. Maybe it's because we have too much, materially speaking, but God is still God. During our storms, Christ is still our Foundation. We have to believe that, Church. We have to hold on to His promises; we have to hold on to Him. No matter how big the storms may get, "With Christ in the vessel we can smile at the storm."

James 1:2-5: "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing. If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him."

If we will ask God, He will give us the desires of our hearts. Our problem is, sometimes our desires are not strong enough. We quite often desire the wrong things. Have you ever thought of that? The Lord is not going to give us anything that we don't need. He's going to only give us what we need, but we want too much at times. "Lord, you know I need a new truck." Then you hear the little whisper, "But you bought one of those six months ago." We have so much to be thankful for, but yet we want more. Be careful, Church. Get to the point in life where you only want what you need. You only need what you need. Contentment is the greatest thing in this world. Cayman is flourishing. Everywhere you see buildings and cars, but what is lacking? People are lacking the Foundation, which is Jesus in their storms. As a matter of fact, some people are so caught up with material things that they don't realize they're in a storm and can turn to Jesus.

Instead of sympathizing with them and offering them comfort in the face of their struggles, James urges them to consider their trials all joy. That's a hard one sometimes. "I'm going through a tough time, but it's all joy." Ask the Lord to help you, and be joyful in whatever you're going through. At first glance, James' words sound insensitive, like someone telling a friend to be gladder he or she is unemployed or sick. But James wasn't doing that. Instead he was urging them to rejoice because of what God would accomplish in their spiritual lives through their trial.

Our biggest problem is, we have so much, materially speaking. We have everything we want, but what about the spiritual? "Lord, you know I can't go to church today. I had a hard day. My children were this, my children were that. Lord, you understand." Christians may have said those words to the Lord. "Well, you know the Lord understands." Of course, He does. He's an understanding God, but ask Him for more spirituality. How do you get that? Spending time with God, not making excuses

why you shouldn't spend time with God, and not making excuses why, on a Wednesday night, you can't go to church. Some of us make the most frivolous excuses why we don't want to meet with God.

Thank God, He is not like man; otherwise, a lot of us would be stricken, because our spirituality is so low compared to everything else we have. He has blessed us in abundance, but yet our spirituality is so low. The Lord wants us to be connected with Him. He wants our foundation to be strong. How do we do that? By building on the Rock; by connecting to Jesus; by holding on to Jesus; by communing with Jesus; by meeting with Him. Thank God, He is merciful. Thank God, He is always, always merciful, because we will falter.

Church, let us be encouraged. If we don't get anything more out of this convention, let us get our foundation stronger. If your foundation is weak in one corner, strengthen it up. No one knows you better than yourself. Jesus doesn't have to tell us where we're lacking. We know where we're lacking. Every single person under the sound of my voice knows where they're lacking. Work on it. We expect, though, to get things done without working on it. Our problem is, we want everything right now. We live in an instantaneous world. Isn't this catching on in modern media? "Lose five pounds instantaneously." It took me 55 years to put this weight on. How am I going to lose that in five minutes? We live in a microwave world. We have to get back to the basics. I am convinced that until we get back to the basics, we're not going to grow more spiritually. We're not going to get more grounded on our Foundation.

What are the basics? Being close to God. Pulling ourselves away and getting close to God. He wants us to be close to Him. He desires for us to be close to Him. God desires for our foundation to be strong, so that when the waves and the seas come, the foundation stands. You may lose a piece of shingle, or a part of your roof, but Satan's not going to touch your foundation, because you're grounded. Church, sometimes you have to put two anchors out to hold the ship strong, but if you have to do that, do it. We have to have a made-up mind to do whatever it takes to stay close to God. Sometimes it's not easy.

Spend time with God when you have the strength to. Some of us wait until we're so weak. Give the Lord His time while you're strong. Young People, I'm happy to see you. I'm happy to see young people serving God. Quite often we come to God when there's nothing left. We give Him the dregs of our life, and that's sad.

Get grounded in God. Come and get what we can get out of this convention. Let us get filled up. Even if we are 5% more spiritual from this convention, it would have been worth every time we got together, or every service we've been in. We're building on the Foundation and making ourselves stronger.

I, too, have to have a made-up mind or I'll start to back off. The Lord has called me to do a work. I said, "Lord, use me." I'm happy to be doing that for the Lord. He has been so good to me. I thank Him for realizing that there's time for everything.

Let us stand. †

WINNING A CROWN

By the late C. W. Naylor



Part XIX

Principles of Divine Law

LAWS ARE of two kinds. First, there is arbitrary law, or law based on the will of the lawmaker, or upon his caprice or whim. Such laws are not based on considerations of right or justice; they are based on authority. They may be just or unjust, or partly just and partly unjust. Such laws as these have characterized tyrants in all ages of history. In making them men have consulted only their own wills or their own pleasure. There is another kind of law, that is, reasonable law, which is based upon the principles of reason and justice. Such laws embody the principles of right; they are based upon right, not upon authority.

God being a God of justice, His laws embody the true principles of justice and righteousness. They are not arbitrary in their nature. God does not command things just because He has the authority; back of every requirement is a just and adequate reason. In speaking of God's law in the New Testament, Paul says, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation ... For therein is the righteousness of God revealed" (Romans 1:16, 17). From this scripture we see that in giving His law (the gospel) God had no selfish purpose. He did not give it as the result of a mere whim or caprice. He has no desire to command things just to show His authority. His law reveals His righteousness. It can do so only if it is truly just and reasonable. Some people seem to think that God is a tyrant and that He requires of us some very unreasonable things, even impossible things. He does command things that are not acceptable to us in our sinful state, but when we are once saved, we can say with him of old, "O how love I thy law!" (Psalm 119:97). John said, "His commandments are not grievous" (I John 5:3). This is the testimony of everyone who is of a willing heart to serve Him. Micah puts it in this way: "He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" (Micah 6:8). God's laws seem extreme and harsh and rigid only to those who have not the spirit of obedience in their hearts.

God is a being of the greatest benevolence. God is love. His highest happiness, like ours, must come from unselfish purposes. There is a sort of selfish happiness, or a happiness that we may have and still be selfish or that may flow from selfish purposes, but that happiness is a very low form of happiness. The higher and truer form of happiness can come only through unselfishness; therefore, it must come largely from the happiness of others. Our truest happiness comes from making others happy and having their happiness reflected in our own life. This is true of God as well as of man. He finds His happiness most truly in making others happy. Any laws, therefore, that He has given His creatures

are for the purpose of making them happy. Every law that He has made for us is for our good and is necessary for our safety and well-being.

His laws are not intended merely to restrict us nor to prevent in any measure our happiness. On the contrary, all restrictions are wholly with a purpose to increase our happiness by preventing that which would be fatal to our highest happiness. He requires us to give up nothing but what is harmful to us. He never requires anything from arbitrary selfishness. He requires us to give up sin and the follies of this world because they work destruction to our own happiness, to the happiness and good of others, and to our eternal interests. Selfish happiness is the lowest type of happiness; so He forbids it that we may be more happy. He does not place a single restriction upon us unless that restriction is necessary in its very nature. To secure felicity for us is the chief object and purpose of all His laws, and all His working for us, and all things that He requires of us. He knows that in order for us to be happy we must be holy; so He requires us to be holy and to give up all that would prevent our being so. True happiness can come only from correspondence with God, so He requires this of us. So long as our own happiness is the end in view in our lives, we can never be truly happy. If our own happiness is the thing we seek, our purpose is purely selfish and can never result in real happiness. God never seeks His own happiness as an end. He would be selfish if He did, and so could not be truly happy. True happiness always results from unselfish and pure purposes and acts. If we are righteous for righteousness' sake, happiness is the result.

The New Testament is not a book of rules, but a revelation of principles. God deals not with technicalities but with principles. In the Old Testament most of the laws were specific, as was necessary for that time, and revealed the principle only through some special application. In the New Testament the principle is usually revealed and the application of it to the details of life left to us. In every case we are to endeavor to get a correct understanding of the principle involved. "The letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life" (II Corinthians 3:6). As already stated, the New Testament is not a book of rules, though many persons have looked upon it as such. This has led to many and serious errors. This view is a prolific source of fanaticism and extremism. Every command of the New Testament is based on some broad principle of righteousness. We need to go back of the letter of the command; we need to get the principle. If we are technical in our interpretations, we shall almost invariably miss the principle involved, and when we miss the principle, we have only the empty shell without the kernel. There is a "why" back of every requirement, and until we learn what this is, our fulfillment of the requirement will be only a blind submission to authority.

People often adhere very rigidly and literally to some precept or teaching while they freely violate the principle in other things. This is well illustrated in the case of certain monks in a monastery in Europe. They are said to have had a prolonged controversy among themselves as to who could obey in the most Christian way Christ's command, "Whosoever shall smite thee on

thy right cheek, turn to him the other also." So one would smite another on the cheek, and the one smitten would bear it with all the equanimity possible. Then he in turn would smite the other upon the cheek with all his might, and that one would bear it as well as he was able. After such contests of stoicism they would fall to quarreling most violently as to which one had shown the most Christian spirit. While they were doing literally what Christ commanded, they were in reality violating its principle in the most open manner. How careful some people are to keep the Sabbath holy (?) who during the week can lie, steal, cheat, or do almost anything of the sort without troubling their conscience! Only when we learn the principles involved and then apply them in all the activities of our lives are we truly Christlike, truly obedient.

To illustrate what I mean by the principle and the precept, or the difference between them, I call attention to Matthew 6:17, 18. In warning the disciples against the hypocrisy of the Pharisees in their fastings, Jesus gave directions how a person should fast. Here is the precept: "But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face." But here is the principle: "That thou appear not unto men to fast." Today, under changed conditions, we must either violate the precept or the principle. At that time and in that country it was common for people to anoint their heads every day; at this time and in this country there is no such custom. If, therefore, we should carry out the precept now, anointing our heads when we fasted, it would appear to all men that we were fasting; if we would not appear unto men to fast, we must not anoint our heads on that special occasion. The principle is the thing of importance; and if we have learned that and apply it in our lives, it will fit all occasions and all customs. If we cling to the letter of the law, we shall oftentimes find ourselves missing the real intent and purpose; we shall have the shadow without the substance, the letter without the spirit.

God's laws are flexible in their nature, except where moral principles require rigidity. They are adapted by infinite wisdom to man's state and need in all ages, climates, states of society, and stages of enlightenment. The sacred books of other religions are adapted only to the nations, the geographical location, and the state of society existing where they were given. The New Testament is different. It is a revelation of broad principles; therefore, it is applicable to every time and in every place and to every condition. It says that we shall love one another, but it does not mention all the variety of ways in which that love will manifest itself. It does not enumerate all the things that love will lead us to do, nor describe all the feelings that love will cause us to have. It says, "Do good to all men," but it does not explain fully to us what this means; it leaves us to make the application ourselves when we once learn the principle. It teaches us that we should dress in modest apparel, but it does not tell us all about what modest apparel is. It does not give us a list of all the things that may be worn and say, "This is modest" and "This is immodest"; in fact, it has very little to say as to what is and what is not modest. It leaves to each age and time and place the formation of a definition of modesty.

The principle, however, applies in all ages and to all people, from the king upon his throne to the ordinary citizen and even down to the slave. It teaches us that we should not steal nor swear nor lie, but it leaves to us to formulate a definition of these things; and if we are willing to regulate our lives according to His will, He will help us to find a definition that is satisfactory both to Himself and to us.

God's law is flexible. An absolutely rigid code would defeat its own end. If God had required men to measure up to an absolutely perfect moral standard, the result would have been that no one could have been saved. For that reason, His law must be flexible. It must fit all conditions, all times and views and circumstances. Under the Mosaic law God permitted divorce for many causes, even though it was contrary to the true principles of marriage. Under the New Testament He tolerated polygamy, also slavery and the moderate use of intoxicating liquors. These were evils that could not be extirpated immediately. The leaven of Christianity must work until the people were raised to a height of understanding where they could see the evil of these things and lay them aside. This flexibility of the law is shown in the case of Naaman. Though he promised to serve the true God only, he was permitted to return and go with his king to worship in the idol's house and even bow down with the king. He was required by his position to do this, and the prophet did not ask him to surrender his position. See II Kings 5:18, 19.

As nations or individuals become more enlightened, they become able to apply the law in a more perfect way. Things are wrong to some that are not wrong to others, since some are more enlightened and can better apply the principles. We are never justified in doing a thing just because others have done it or are doing it. Each of us is required to live to his own highest standard. Slavery, once esteemed all right, is now considered a great evil. Society has come to see a higher standard of human rights. Science has taught us the evils of the use of alcohol and narcotics, and so a higher standard has come to prevail in regard to their use. God overlooked what He could not at the time prevent, and His law by its flexibility was adapted to the needs of the age. Its flexibility now makes provision for our failure to understand and apply it perfectly to our own lives, but that accommodativeness can never cover willful disregard of duty. The Bible, not the fathers, is our standard. It may pass over our ignorance, but never over willful wrong-doing. God is ever as lenient as He ought to be, but never more so. His law was made to be kept, not to be broken. †

VIEW OUR WORSHIP SERVICES LIVE!

As many of our readers know, we can be found on the internet at www.wayoftruth.org where in addition to reading past issues and other information, you can view our general services every Sunday LIVE at 10:40 A.M. and 6:00 P.M. E.S.T. Enjoy Spirit-filled singing and preaching. Also, our mid-week service at 7:00 P.M. Wednesdays is aired live. Tune in and worship with us!

CHRIST IS PRECIOUS

Radio Message by the late Bro. Alvin Craig

(aired 11/13/94)

I WOULD LIKE to speak on the thought, "Christ Is Precious." We read in I Peter, chapter 2, verses 3 and 4, "If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious. To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious."

Doubtless, as we journey through life, there are many things that are precious to us. My children are precious to me, my grandchildren are precious, my companion is precious to me, and my brothers and sisters in the Lord are precious to me. Yes, there are many things that we would consider precious.

I feel sure that there are some who consider some things precious that are not really worthy of being considered precious. It would do us good to consider what will be precious when we come to the end of our earthly sojourn, for we will come to the end. "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment" (Hebrews 9:27). So, it would do us good to consider what will be precious to us when we come to the end of our earthly sojourn, and what will be precious when we stand before the Lord in judgment.

The word *precious* means, in part, according to **Webster's New World Dictionary**, "of great price or value; of great desirability; held in high esteem; beloved; dear."

First of all, I would like to point out the fact that *Christ is precious to the Father*. When Jesus was baptized by John in the river Jordan, there came a voice from heaven saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Beloved, that carries with it a thought of someone who is precious, someone who is esteemed, someone who is beloved, someone who is of great value and desirability. So Christ is precious to the Father.

Christ is precious to the angels. When Jesus entered into the wilderness after His baptism, and fasted for forty days and forty nights, He was faced, at the end of that fasting, with three great temptations. Then after Jesus had successfully met those three temptations, the Scriptures tell us in Matthew 4:11, "Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him." So Christ is precious to the angels.

Christ is precious to the saints. I Peter, chapter 2, verse 7, "Unto you therefore which believe he is precious." Every child of God considers Jesus Christ to be precious. Every child of God considers Christ to be of great price, of great value, of great desirability, and every child of God holds Christ in high esteem. He is indeed beloved. He is dear; and so to every child of God, He is precious. "Unto you therefore which believe he is precious" (I Peter 2:3). We have tasted and have found Him to be gracious. "If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious." You have to taste to really know how gracious the Lord is. You have to receive Him for yourself to know how precious He is.

Christ suffered for our salvation. He bled and died on the cross of Calvary. He gave Himself to redeem us. Notice I Peter, chapter 1, verses 18 and 19: "Forasmuch

as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." Our redemption costs the precious blood of Christ. That is the reason why He is so precious to the child of God, because we realize and know our that our salvation, our redemption, our deliverance and forgiveness of sin was made possible only by and through the precious blood of Jesus Christ. We were not redeemed with corruptible things, such as silver and gold, no! nor our vain conversation received by traditions by our fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a Lamb without blemish and without spot.

Jesus also suffered for our sanctification. We read in Hebrews 13:12, "Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate." Christ not only paid for our redemption from our committed sins, but He also paid for the experience of sanctification wherein the depraved nature is cleansed and the precious Holy Spirit is allowed to take up His abode in the redeemed soul.

Jesus also suffered stripes upon His back for our healing. "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed" (I Peter 2:24). So, our redemption was paid by the blood of Christ, our sanctification was paid for by the blood of Christ, our healing was paid for by the suffering of the stripes that was lashed upon His back; and doubtless, blood was shed on His back also. So Christ is precious to the child of God. His blood is precious because only through His blood do we have redemption.

Christ is also the Head of the church. Whenever you are saved, salvation makes you a member of the church. God's church does not have an earthly man as head, neither does His church have earthly headquarters in a city in the United States, or in Italy, or in any other country. Jesus Christ is the Head of the body, the church. We read in Colossians 1:18, "And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the first-born from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence." God have mercy upon these men in the religious world who are exalting themselves, professing to have power to forgive sins, taking upon themselves titles which belong only to God, and people bowing before them. Notice what Paul said: "And he [Christ] is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence."

The Scriptures tell us that even after we have done our best, we are yet unprofitable servants, having done only that which we should have done. So, if we're going to walk with the Lord, we must walk humbly. God hates a proud look. The prophet Micah records for us that the Lord requires that we love mercy, that we do justly, and walk humbly with our God. The apostle Paul, in his first letter to the church at Corinth, said to them, "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." God is the One who gives us life and breath and all things. We have nothing of ourselves to boast of or to be carnally proud of. We are

servants of God and we are blessed in being permitted to be servants of God. Therefore, let us take our place at His feet. He has the preeminence. He is to be worshiped, honored, and He is to be recognized as the Head of the church.

Christ is also the Foundation. The church has a sure Foundation. When Jesus said to Peter, "Upon this rock, I will build my church," He was not talking about Peter. Peter was a stone. Every Christian is a stone, but Peter was not the rock. Jesus Christ is the Rock. So the church has a sure Foundation. "Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste" (Isaiah 28:16). Surely, we all know that Isaiah was prophesying of Jesus Christ. God was speaking of Jesus Christ. "Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste." Yes, Christ is precious because He is the Head of the church. He is precious because He is that precious Stone, that tried Stone. He is that sure Foundation.

The apostle Paul, in writing to Timothy, said, "But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth." So, Christ is precious to the Father, He is precious to the angels, and He is precious to the saints of God. He is precious because He gave Himself to redeem us, to sanctify us, and suffered stripes on His back to heal us.

There is something else that is precious that I would like to mention; and that is, your eternity-bound soul. You do have a soul inside of that house of clay. There is a spirit in man, and so your soul is precious. God would not have given His only begotten Son to suffer, to bleed, and to die for you if your soul was not precious. Your soul could not be purchased or redeemed with gold and silver, nor with the blood of bullocks and rams, but by the precious blood of the Son of God. The greatest price that could be paid was paid for your soul.

How do you regard your soul? Do you regard it and consider it as something precious? Jesus asked the question, "What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" Many people today are selling their souls very cheap for the fleeting things of this world and for the things that are so soon to pass away. Yes, many are selling their souls for fleshly pleasures, for fleshly gratifications, which shall end so quickly. Moses chose "rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season." Sin does have pleasure, but it's for only a season, and many times a very short season.

There are thieves that come to steal and to rob you of your soul. Jesus said in St. John 10:10, "The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." Satan is using this material world to captivate the hearts and minds and affections of people so that he might damn their souls in an eternal hell. He is that thief that comes "to steal, and to kill, and to destroy"; but Jesus said, "I am come

that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.”

If today, Christ is not precious to you, I would like to encourage you to consider the love that God had for you in giving His precious Son. Consider your soul and its value in light of the fact that Jesus died on a cruel cross so that you could be saved. Will you not consider your soul valuable when God has and when Christ has? If they consider your soul valuable, certainly you should consider your soul valuable. Why not pay attention to your soul? Why not build upon that sure Foundation? Build your house, build your life upon the Rock so that when that the storms of life come, it will stand. Otherwise, you’ll be as one of the foolish who built his house upon the sand, and great was the fall of it. Christ is precious. Your soul is precious. Could I encourage you to consider your soul today? †

THE CHILDREN'S CORNER



THE SHINING ARROW

A Bible Lesson by Bro. Brian Richards

In Proverbs 4:18 we read, “But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.”

The November 2016 issue of *The Way of Truth* carried a Children’s Corner that featured a children’s lesson taught by Brother Brian Richards, a young father in our congregation. It was called, “The Straight Arrow.” A few Sundays ago, Brother Brian taught another lesson to the children. It was called, “The Shining Arrow,” and it was a sequel to the remarks he made three years ago. I’d like to share his lesson with you in this Children’s Corner.—Sister Rebecca Bland

You may remember that I talked to you a while back about an arrow, and how we can learn from it the importance of being straight and true in our living so we can hit the mark and make heaven our home.

Well, as you can see, I have brought an arrow again to show you this evening. But this time we are going to look at a feature of the arrow that we did not talk about the last time.

The arrow has several parts to it, and each one plays an important role. Do you see this little part on the end of the arrow? It has a name. Do you know what it is called? It is called a “nock.” The plastic nock on the end of the arrow is often overlooked, but it is a very critical component. The nock is what holds the arrow onto the bowstring. If the nock fails, the arrow becomes useless until the nock is replaced.

We’re going to dim the lights here in the sanctuary for a few moments because I want you to see something you might not notice otherwise. The nock of this arrow

is special, and I want to see if you can tell me why. Now that it is darker in here, can you see something different about it? Yes, it is glowing!

There are some special nocks known as “lighted nocks.” Lighted nocks have an LED light and battery built into them that fits down into the inside of the arrow shaft. The whole nock is very small, yet it is very bright when it lights up. The light comes on as the arrow leaves the bowstring, and it stays on until you turn it off.

The lighted nock serves an important purpose. Do you know what that could be? The lighted nock provides a means for the archer to see the path of the arrow’s flight in low light conditions. This helps in determining if the target was hit. It also helps in the recovery of lost arrows. A person can lose an arrow in the woods and come back after dark and the bright LED light will guide the person directly to the arrow.

What can we learn from this lighted nock that we can apply to our own lives? We want our lives to be like the little lighted nock on that arrow. The apostle Paul said, “I press toward the mark.” What mark was he talking about? Just like an arrow flies toward the mark that the archer has aimed toward, so we can aim our lives toward heaven and ask God to help us fly straight and true toward that mark.

We want others to be able to follow us, as well, toward the mark of heaven. Our lives are following a path, and if we are serving the Lord we want the path of our lives to be clear and able to be followed. We want others to be able to see our good deeds so that God may be glorified and others can follow us to Christ.

Let’s remember the lesson we have learned from the lighted nock on this arrow. Let’s ask the Lord to help us be a brightly shining light for Him.

Activity

Brother Brian quoted the apostle Paul when he said, “I press toward the mark.” Can you find the scripture where these words of the apostle are found? See if you can fill in the blanks with the rest of the words the apostle wrote about this subject.

_____ 3:13, 14: “Brethren, I count not myself to have _____: but this one thing I do, _____ those things which are _____, and reaching forth unto those things which are _____, I press toward the mark for the _____ of the _____ of God in Christ Jesus.”

Answer to Last Month’s Activity

1. The “Sermon on the Mount” is found in Matthew 5-7.
2. Jesus gave this sermon from a hilltop in northern Israel.
3. The first part of the sermon begins with a series of statements that begin with “Blessed are ...” This section of the sermon is often called “The Beatitudes.”

4. In this sermon, Jesus said that we as Christians are “the salt of the earth.”

5. In this sermon, Jesus said that, just as God takes care of the birds and flowers, so He will take care of us. We do not need to waste time worrying about what might happen in the future.

6. In this sermon, Jesus told a story about the wise man and the foolish man. The wise man built his house upon a rock. As Christians, we must build our lives upon Jesus, the Rock of our Salvation. †

BIBLE LESSON OF THE MONTH

SANCTIFICATION

THE OLD TESTAMENT TYPE

Scriptures: Exodus 40:17-34; Hebrews 9:2-7.

Exodus 40:17 And it came to pass in the first month in the second year, on the first day of the month, that the tabernacle was reared up.

18 And Moses reared up the tabernacle, and fastened his sockets, and set up the boards thereof, and put in the bars thereof, and reared up his pillars.

19 And he spread abroad the tent over the tabernacle, and put the covering of the tent above upon it; as the Lord commanded Moses.

20 And he took and put the testimony into the ark, and set the staves on the ark, and put the mercy seat above upon the ark:

21 And he brought the ark into the tabernacle, and set up the veil of the covering, and covered the ark of the testimony; as the Lord commanded Moses.

22 And he put the table in the tent of the congregation, upon the side of the tabernacle northward, without the veil.

23 And he set the bread in order upon it before the Lord; as the Lord had commanded Moses.

24 And he put the candlestick in the tent of the congregation, over against the table, on the side of the tabernacle southward.

25 And he lighted the lamps before the Lord; as the Lord commanded Moses.

26 And he put the golden altar in the tent of the congregation before the veil:

27 And he burnt sweet incense thereon; as the Lord commanded Moses.

28 And he set up the hanging at the door of the tabernacle.

29 And he put the altar of burnt offering by the door of the tabernacle of the tent of the congregation, and offered upon it the burnt offering and the meat offering; as the Lord commanded Moses.

30 And he set the laver between the tent of the congregation and the altar, and put water there, to wash withal.

31 And Moses and Aaron and his sons washed their hands and their feet thereat:

32 When they went into the tent of the congregation, and when they came near unto the altar, they washed; as the Lord commanded Moses.

33 And he reared up the court round about the tabernacle and the altar, and set up the hanging of the court gate. So Moses finished the work.

34 Then a cloud covered the tent of the congregation, and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle.

Hebrews 9:2 For there was a tabernacle made; the first, wherein was the candlestick, and the table, and the shewbread; which is called the sanctuary.

3 And after the second veil, the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of all;

4 Which had the golden censer, and the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein was the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant;

5 And over it the cherubims of glory shadowing the mercyseat; of which we cannot now speak particularly.

6 Now when these things were thus ordained, the priests went always into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the service of God.

7 But into the second went the high priest alone once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people.

Memory Verse: For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.—Hebrews 9:24.

Aim: To locate the shadow of sanctification.

INTRODUCTION

GOD conceived the entire plan of salvation before He created the world, and with each succeeding dispensation a little more light was disclosed in regard to His plan, until in these last days the full light is shining. During the age of the law, when God first gave His Word in written form and instituted the worship in the tabernacle, there were practices and articles that were representative of the experience of sanctification in the gospel age. The understanding of those will help to improve our knowledge of God's plan. The ultimate purpose of getting this information is to better our own experience and help others to a like experience.

MEDITATIONS

GOD'S COMMAND OBEYED—Exodus 40:17-19—The tabernacle was reared ... as the Lord commanded Moses—The secret of having a good experience with the Lord today is to do as He has commanded. No wonder the glory of the Lord came upon the place so mightily and so gloriously! God had been obeyed in every detail. God had made His plan known to Moses. Moses had understood it and carried out God's will in every part, not substituting his ideas or the ideas of anyone else. God's Word is just as plain to us today, and His favor can be obtained just as surely, if we will take His way and walk in the light He sheds upon us through His Word.

THE MEMORY VERSE—Hebrews 9:24—Christ is not entered—The aim of this lesson is to locate the shadow of sanctification. Hebrews 9:24 says, “Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true ...” The two rooms of this tabernacle which Moses had constructed according to the pattern God gave him, were the figures of the true tabernacle or holy places. Hebrews 9 deals with the same construction that is defined so carefully in Exodus. If you will read the Daily Bible Readings given at the beginning of this lesson, you will recognize the description in Hebrews 9.

THE FIRST TABERNACLE—Hebrews 9:2; Exodus 40:22, 23—We will consider Hebrews 9:2 first, “Wherein was the candlestick, and table, and shewbread.” This typifies the experience of justification. There was no way into the Holiest place without first going through this room. The candlestick represents Christ as our Light, and the shewbread represents Christ as the Bread of life. Exodus 40:22 says the table was placed on the north side of the tabernacle without the veil. Verse 23 says the bread was placed upon it. Verse 24 says the candlestick was put in the same room with the table on the south side. Exodus 40 describes the Holiest place first and then says the table was placed without the veil, meaning on the other side of it, or in the first room. Verse 29 mentions the brazen altar and verse 30, the laver. The brazen altar received the sacrifice made for sins, which, of course, typifies Christ, the great Sacrifice. The laver contained water where Moses and Aaron and his sons must wash before entering the tabernacle, lest they die. This symbolizes the “washing of regeneration” (Titus 3:5).

THE HOLIEST OF ALL—Hebrews 9:3—After the second veil—Coming from the first room into the second, one had to lift the second curtain. The curtain over the doorway into the first room was usually called the curtain, and this second one, the veil. Or it might be called the second veil. So after the second veil came the second room of the entire tabernacle, or the “Holiest of all.” **Verse 4—The golden censer**—We read in Leviticus 16:12 that the high priest was to fill the censer with coals from off the altar and bring “his hands full of sweet incense” into the Holiest place and put the incense on the burning coals in the censer that “the incense may cover the mercy seat that is upon the testimony.” The mercy seat was the covering of the ark, where the cherubims were, verse 5. The great Spirit of God designed this place for His habitation. His will now is to dwell in the heart of the believer, which is more precious to Him than this throne of gold was. Inside this golden ark was the “golden pot that had manna,” which represented the heavenly manna upon which our souls would feed when He dwelt within us in sanctifying grace. “Aaron’s rod that budded” symbolized the Holy Ghost leadership in the sanctified experience. “The tables of the covenant” were the tables of stone on which God wrote the Ten Commandments with His finger. This foreshadowed the Holy Ghost’s writing God’s Word on the fleshly tables of our heart. (See Hebrews 10:16 and Jeremiah 31:33, 34.)

Exodus 40:20, 21—Put the testimony into the ark—This was the first thing that was placed in the ark; the other things were added later. This gives the order in which the furniture was placed in the whole tabernacle, starting with the ark in the furthest room. **Verse 26—The golden altar**—This was placed just outside the second veil in the first room, because it represented the preparation to be made in order to enter the Holiest of all. In Exodus 30:10 we read that Aaron made an atonement on this golden altar once a year with the blood of the sin offering of atonements which, of course, foreshadowed the blood of Christ. This corresponds to Hebrews 9:7.

THE GLORY OF THE HOLY GHOST FORESHADOWED—Exodus 40:34—Filled the tabernacle—This is plainly a shadow of the experience in Acts 2:2-4 on the Day of Pentecost, when the Holy Ghost came and filled the hearts of the believers. It also says, “There came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.” The command in Ephesians 5:18 is, “Be filled with the Spirit.” Just as God filled the tabernacle with His glory so long ago, so now He wills to fill us with His Spirit, as we find in I Corinthians 6:19, “Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost?”

CONCLUSION

If we have read carefully the Daily Bible Readings and have studied this lesson prayerfully with an open heart, we have, no doubt, been able to locate the shadow of sanctification, and we can now see more clearly our privileges in the gospel. It is our privilege today to be sanctified wholly by faith in the blood of Christ. We can be filled with God’s glory and have His approval upon our souls. We can offer up to Him the spiritual sacrifice with which He is well-pleased. He can use our consecrated labors to bring others to the light. Praise God for His marvelous plan of full redemption! May we seek constantly to render unto Him the praise and honor and glory that is due His matchless name. May we ever seek His favor by walking in the light and obeying His every command diligently.

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

1. What do the laver and the brazen altar typify as being essential in obtaining salvation?
2. To what do the candlesticks and the table of shewbread correspond in the experience of justification?
3. What is the meaning of the golden altar?
4. What experience was obtained beyond the second veil? What was there that was not to be found in the first room of the tabernacle?
5. How does this show the fulness of salvation in the work of sanctification?
6. Explain Hebrews 9:24, “The holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true.” †

OUT OF BOX 88

Dear Brethren,

Thank you for your devotion to the gospel of our loving Savior. I truly appreciate **The Way of Truth** magazines. They have enlightened me on many confusing questions about the division of the Church of God. The article by Bro. Greg Tyler, “The Diotrephes Syndrome,” and many others have really enlightened me on how God wants His children to be.

—T. M., Georgia

The Way of Truth,

Enclosed is an offering that we pray will be of some help in all the work that you are doing in the name of the Lord. We enjoy reading your wonderful publications and the messages contained therein. May God bless and keep all of you. Thanking you for all that you do.

—E. & L. B., Florida

Dear Christians,

Greetings in Jesus’ name. Just a note to send this money order for receiving your wonderful, encouraging monthly paper. God bless all you dear ones. What a blessing your paper is to me!—M. G., Pennsylvania

HEALTHY JOINTS

Message by Sis. Rebecca Bland

(Delivered 07/14/19 at Hagerstown, MD)

I HAVE TWO different texts of scriptures that I would like to read this evening. The first one is I Corinthians 12:12: "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ." Verse 18: "But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him." Then I would like to read from Ephesians, chapter 4, beginning with verse 11: "And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by **that which every joint supplieth**, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love." This message is entitled, "Healthy Joints."



Just recently, we had a Sunday school lesson about the members of the body of Christ and how He has set them in the body as it pleases Him. It's a beautiful analogy that the members of Christ's body are comparable to the members of our own body. I didn't read all the different parts of the body that Paul mentioned, but he wanted us to think about how we can't all be an eye, because if everyone was an eye, then how would the body hear, and if everyone was an ear, then how would the body smell? So we all have different roles to play when we're in the body of Christ, and the Lord puts us in a place where He sees we can best serve Him. But I really want to dwell on the part of verse 16 that says "the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth." A joint—not really a member; it's a place where members of the body meet, where they're connected.

The apostle Paul is very clear that the joint supplies something that's important. Without that smooth connection, the body parts, no matter how good they are, are no good. They can't accomplish anything. Joints let you bend and turn your body. How do they do that? Two things, especially: one is, *cartilage*. You've heard of cartilage. It's a smooth, sort of rubbery connective tissue. Part of your body is mostly water. Your ears keep a shape, but they're not bones. Cartilage is really important. It's in our joints, too. Then there is something

called the *synovial fluid*, with a viscosity of an egg white. It's really important too, because it keeps the joints lubricated so the cartilage that covers the ends of the bones cushions them as they meet together. So the synovial fluid that lubricates it all is important. That's what a joint supplies in a human body. If the cartilage and the fluid become damaged, or are not enough, then the body has real joint problems.

I wonder if anybody here knows anything firsthand about joint problems? "Yes," Bro. Greg said. I'm so sorry, Sis. Kaye and Sis. Helen, because I know you know firsthand what joint problems are. They occupy your thinking and feeling when you have them. If your joints are not right, then your body is not able to operate. No matter how good that upper leg is, or that lower leg is, if that joint's not working, you can forget about it. Those body parts are useless to you because of the joint problem. So it is in the body of Christ. We are members, but we don't work in isolation. We interface with each other, and those joints are really important.

Damaged cartilage—I'd like to talk about that a little bit. Physically speaking, there are three things (I know heredity plays a part in it) that can damage the cartilage which comes between those two bones. Did you ever hear of someone saying, "The doctor told me my joints are so bad that they're rubbing bone-on-bone"? That's what it is. The cushion's worn away. It's bone-on-bone, and that doesn't feel good, I'm sure. It doesn't feel good when you're trying to move and it's bone-on-bone. If there's something there in the joints causing bone-on-bone, that doesn't feel very good, either, in the body of Christ. That can be a problem, can't it? Wear and tear on your cartilage is caused by three major factors: increasing age, injury, or carrying too much weight.

Well, there's wear and tear on spiritual cartilage, too. Remember, cartilage is smooth and tough, but it is in constant use, and it can get damaged. Spiritual cartilage can be damaged by the same things, in a way, that can damage physical cartilage.

The first thing that can damage spiritual cartilage is *increasing age*. You might think, "Well, how?" Well, a lot of us have been together for a long time, haven't we? and that's good, but it can also be problematic. As church family relationships age, we can never start taking each other for granted. Just because we've been together for a long time, we can't take each other for granted. That will wear and tear on our spiritual cartilage. Age and maturity are good for a relationship as long as that relationship maintains the fire and the enthusiasm of youth. It's true in human relationships and true in spiritual relationships.

I watched the young people at camp meeting time. It was wonderful to watch them. So enthusiastic! Young People, we prayed for you. We prayed earnestly for you that this camp meeting would be a watershed moment in your spiritual walk with God, that it would be something you could always look back to, and think of, even if you didn't remember specific instances. We prayed that it would strengthen your walk with the Lord. As I watched you, you reminded me of myself when I was young. I heard Bro. David talk about some of the young people that got together and had prayer meetings;

prayer meetings you initiated on your own, and it was wonderful. It just gratified my heart. I remember we used to do that when I was a young person.

I remember inviting everybody to my house for an early morning prayer meeting. It wasn't around camp meeting time. It was just a random time. I remember Bro. Greg being at that prayer meeting. He had just been saved a short while before. It was so beautiful to watch Bro. Greg learn about God. He had something that was more special than you normally see. I had known about God all my life and I'm thankful for that, but Bro. Greg was just learning about God, and he learned really fast. It was a wonderful thing to be there and experience that with him. I think, maybe a couple times when Bro. Greg was learning to pray, he called the Lord, "Sir." Maybe it seemed kinda funny, and yet, there was something about it. Such fire and enthusiasm and the wonder of it! We can't lose that. It will tear down our cartilage. We have to keep it fresh and alive. Young People, you show us the way. May we always be examples to you of keeping those relationships with each other strong and exciting, and experiencing the Lord together.

The Bible tells us in John 13:35, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." We can't let that cartilage become damaged—that working together—the joints in the body of Christ. We can't let that become damaged, because those who look on won't even recognize us as Christ's body if we don't show love for one another. If we begin to take those relationships for granted, and let them age, then we don't really have that excitement and fire anymore.

The second thing that can damage spiritual cartilage is *injury*. Injury is something we need to guard against in our church family relationships. We need to have a determination in our hearts that we won't let anything come between us. What shall separate us? It's the same in a marriage. In a marriage, both people have to determine down inside that nothing is going to come between them. "We will work out whatever it is." If you don't have that determination, then things that come along can rock your relationship, because there will be things that come. There are determinations that we should make that there are certain things that we should never say. You can always ask forgiveness, and if you say something hurtful to someone, you should; but there are certain things that even when you ask forgiveness, you can't unsay them. They stick in someone's mind.

"Husbands and wives (You read it all the time. I'm sure every advice book, or online magazine has this in there.), don't use the 'd' word." Sometimes people say things just because they want the other person to know how strongly they feel. They will say something really strong so that you'll pay attention, and "now I'm really upset," but not that word *divorce*. "Well, maybe we should just get a divorce." How do you unsay that? You can ask to be forgiven for it. I'm sure lots of people with strong marriages have said that word, but it isn't a good idea, and the same thing in our church family. It's not a good idea to say, "Well, if they don't do something about ..., I'm just going to go to another church." Maybe they don't even mean that, but they just want people to know how upset they are. How do you unsay that?

So those are things that tear down cartilage. They tear down that cushioning between the body members as we try to work together. The apostle Paul wanted us to pay as much attention to the joints as to the body members, because he made a point of saying that "each joint supplies something important to the body."

Another thing you read that you should never say to your spouse, or to a good friend (someone who you have a close relationship with and want to keep it), "I wish you were more like somebody else." What have you done to that person's self-esteem or self-confidence? It makes them think, "Well, I'm just not good enough. I thought I was your special one, but now you want me to be like somebody else. Why don't you just go and be with that somebody else?" Well, we can't do that in the spiritual body, either. "Bro. So-and-so does a lot better job with such and such than Bro. So-and-so." That's the same thing. That's harmful. That's hurtful to the cartilage. It tears it down, and then it's going to be bone-on-bone pretty soon. We can't have that, not if we want a smooth, effectual working together of the body.

There's a third thing that you read in those articles that tell you things you should never say. Young People, listen; don't say these things. You still have a chance. Those of you who are not in a relationship yet, these are some things you should never say: downing your friend or your spouse in private or in front of other people. It's an awful thing to do. It should never be done. Spiritually speaking, it should never be done. Downing people—saying things about them to other people. What does that do to the whole body? Does it strengthen it? No! It hurts those joints. It hurts that working together.

I remember years and years ago I was talking with someone, and I was in a situation where I couldn't remove myself. I was there for the duration, and I kept hearing ... (Now, I'm not going to say I've never said anything negative about anyone before in my life. I wish I could stand right here and say that I've never made a negative comment about anyone. I'm happy that I can say I've never had a drink of alcohol in my life and have never smoked a cigarette. I'm proud of that. I would be just as proud if I could say I've never said a negative comment about anyone in my life, but I can say that I'm asking the Lord to help me to be more careful to not do that. It's so easy to do.) ... but as I was saying, I kept hearing the person saying negative things about person after person. I don't know how many people it ended up being. I thought to myself, "I think I'm supposed to say, 'I don't want to listen to this.'" But I wasn't that brave. I felt like I should say, "You shouldn't be talking about people," but I wasn't that brave, so I thought of a little backdoor way to get in, and maybe kind of make this go away. I said, "Is there anyone that you know, one that you respect so much that even if you knew that person had a fault, you wouldn't feel comfortable telling anyone about it?" "No," the person said. "Okay," I said to myself, "that didn't work." And the person said, "Do you?" What is the point of talking about people's faults? What is the purpose? No good purpose. Nothing good.

Again, back to Ephesians 4, verse 11: "And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; [and opinion-

ators].” Opinionators is not in the Bible, is it? But if you listen, sometimes you would think it was. “I have a job. I’m an opinionator. I’m going to observe and then I will give my opinion.” God has never set anybody in the body with that role, but we see people trying to fill it. Oh, I don’t want to be one of them! Lord, help me not to be one of those, because it breaks down the cartilage and then it’s going to be bone-on-bone. No matter how wonderful the body part is, it’s not going to work, because the joints aren’t supplying what they’re supposed to supply. Verse 12: “For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.”

Opinionating does not perfect or edify, and it’s condemned by the Word of God. I’d like to read a few scriptures. James, chapter 5, verse 9: “Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned: behold, the judge standeth before the door.” God’s always there. He sees. We don’t have to be the observers and the opinionators. God sees everything and He judges. He’s always right there. The Judge is at the door. That scripture always gives me the feeling of when you go into a courtroom and the bailiff says, “All rise,” and you know who is on the other side of that door. The judge. Well, we should have all that much more feeling about God always being there. He sees. He judges. That’s not our job.

Galatians, chapter 5, verses 13-15: “For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another.” Consumed—which one? The one who’s doing the biting? Both of them—“one of another”—because you can’t hurt someone else without hurting yourself. No, not in the body of Christ.

The words of Jesus Himself—Matthew 18:15—“Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother.” That should be our goal. We shouldn’t have the goal of tearing someone down. If there’s a problem, go to that brother. Now you’ve fixed things. Now things are smooth again. You have fellowship. You’ve helped that joint, not torn it down and made it even worse.

Back to Ephesians 4, starting with verse 13: “Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: ... But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ.” Verse 16 talks about “making increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.” Notice what verse 15 says: “Speaking the truth in love.”—four words. So much there in those words. “The truth [not hearsay, not gossip], in love”; with a loving attitude, and only when necessary. Some people excuse harsh comments about others by saying, “Well, it’s true. In the Bible it does say, ‘Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report.’”

This past year, there was a student who insisted that it was her job to let another student know that he smelled bad. First, she told him by her actions—pulling her shirt up over her nose. But he didn’t seem to get it, and so she just opened her mouth and said to him, “You smell bad.” I said, “Honey, come here.” She said, “Well, he does.” I said, “Come here; you shouldn’t be saying things like that to him. That’s hurtful.” She said, “Well, aren’t we supposed to tell the truth?” What do you say to that? “Yes, we’re supposed to tell the truth—at the right time and in the right way.” That’s a lesson we all need to learn, not just children.

The third thing that can damage spiritual cartilage is *carrying too much weight*. You know, the Bible tells us to “lay aside every weight,” doesn’t it? There are several ways that we can carry weight. Sometimes it’s not our doing. Sometimes people in the body have too much that they’re trying to do because they don’t get enough help. I can’t say that I see that around here so much. This congregation is very helpful. Think of the camp meeting we just had. All the people worked so hard together. But there are times, like Bro. Goble said, “Just because it’s not here, doesn’t mean it’s not in some other places.” There are places where one or two people are carrying the whole load. That doesn’t help, does it? That doesn’t help the body.

Sometimes people are carrying too much of the load because they forget the young people can help. We sometimes forget. “Oh, you know what? They’re capable. They’re not little children anymore.” We need to remember that they can help, too. These are things that we all need to guard against, because as the apostle Paul said, “Those joints are important.”

I’d like to say just a little bit about that other part of the joint that’s so important: *synovial fluid*. I told you earlier it is like egg white; kind of a lubricant. What would you compare that to in the body of Christ? I would compare it to love. We read in the first verse of I Corinthians 13, “Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity [love], I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.” In other words, *I can be as perfect for my place as possible, but if a joint between me and another member is not functioning, I can’t accomplish anything*. Paul sort of tells us that in the following verses, because he says, “And though I understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; ... And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, [but if that love has leaked out of the joints, I can’t accomplish anything].”

Who is responsible for keeping these joints healthy? All of us! The joint is not a body part; it’s a joining. We all interface with each other, so we’re all responsible for keeping those joints healthy. To do that, we can’t be focused on ourselves. We have to focus on having the relationship with each other that God would be pleased for us to have, and not doing anything to tear down that relationship. If I don’t have love, the joint between me and my brother isn’t working, and I can’t walk, and I can’t accomplish anything in the body.

How do we keep those joints healthy? Going back to the physical—we are told, “If you want to have healthy joints, you need to watch your diet and you need to exercise.” Those are the two main pieces of advice that

we're given to keep healthy joints. Well, I would say that applies also in the body of Christ. **Watch your diet.** Do you know if you're watching your diet for medical reasons, you have to cut out some things, and you have to add some things? We have to cut out salt sometimes. That's hard to do. Usually, the things we're asked to cut out are not the things we want to cut out. They would not be on the top of our list for cutting out, but we have to cut them out anyway if we want our joints to be healthy.

In our spiritual diet, if we want healthy joints, we have to cut out *gossip, criticism, or listening to criticism*, because you know what they say, "Silence gives consent." *Refusal to cooperate* (unless it's done our way), *favoritism*—just to name a few. We have to cut those out of our diet and add in **prayer**. When I would complain about some things that somebody did that I didn't like, my mother's answer was always, "Pray about it." She was right. Add prayer. You can't ever add too much prayer. Next: **compliments, smiles, empathy**. You don't know what the other person is going through, but you can ask the Lord to help you to feel for that person. That's always better than criticizing.

Galatians 6:1. Very familiar. "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted." We're not perfect. Opinionators aren't perfect, either. No, I don't want to be one of those. Lord, help me!

Exercise—Galatians 5:13—I've read it already, but I'll read it again: "For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another." That's good exercise—"serve one another." We can't do too much of that. This morning in Sunday school class, Bro. Doug asked, "How would we know if we are walking humbly with God?" Someone gave the answer, "In our relationship with others." That's how we know if we're serving one another. That's a hallmark of humility. Considering others better than ourselves is humility.

I'd like to close with something really positive. Damaged joints can be healed. Sometimes that cartilage wears away and the joint doesn't work very well anymore. There's pain, swelling, stiffness, and it's hard to move that joint. You might have to have a knee replacement. That happens to our human body. What does that mean? They go in there and take out that damaged cartilage and replace it with some kind of man-made material.

Can there be such a thing as a spiritual knee replacement? I think so. If we find that the cartilage has worn out because we weren't as careful in our interactions with others as we should have been, it can be repaired. We can remove and replace. Remove things that stand between us and replace criticism with patience and ask for forgiveness. It can be painful. It doesn't feel good to admit you're wrong. For me, I don't get excited about asking for forgiveness. I sort of dread it, but it has to be done sometimes. We have to ask for forgiveness, and then we have to replace those things that were cut out with the right kinds of things. We won't regret it.

We want the body of Christ to be working. We don't want this bone-on-bone going on in the body of Christ. So if we have to do a spiritual knee replacement, may we have the grace to do it, because it will work for nothing but good to us and to all the members of Christ's body.

Sometimes we do have to ask for forgiveness, and we kinda wish we had never done those things in the first place, but if we ask the Lord to help us, He can make it like new again. He's pleased when we make that effort.

I'd like to look one more time at Ephesians 4:16—"From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love." I have my work to do in the body. You have your work to do in the body. Christ has set us in the body as it hath pleased Him, but we're joined together so that we can do effectual work for the Lord, and those joints are highly necessary. As Bro. Goble said in his message this past camp meeting, "Unity isn't the final goal; unity is necessary for us to have in order to reach our goal of spreading the gospel and winning souls." To achieve that unity, we need "that which every joint supplieth." Strong and loving and effectual working together for the faith of the gospel.

The Lord bless us each one. †

For Poetry Lovers

ONLY A FEW SHORT YEARS

O. F. Linn

Only a few short years of life
In which to work and pray;
Only a while to wage the strife,
Till comes the close of day.

Only a weight of anxious care,
Before the long relief;
Only a struggle short to share—
The battle of life is brief.

Only a while to sympathize
With care-crushed souls in need;
Only a while to hear their cries
And do a kindly deed.

Only some wakeful hours to spend,
Till comes the long repose;
Few times a kindly hand to lend
Or share another's woes.

Only a few short years, O God!
Not one of them is mine.
Oh, may my actions, thoughts, and words,
Prove I am wholly Thine!

CHRISTLIKE

Author Unknown

Christlike—Christian, let it be
Watchword, countersign for thee:
When thy way is hedged about,
Christlike leave the world without;
Seek in secret, strength to stand;
Then go forth, and hand to hand
Fight the fight of faith, for He
He'll vouchsafe thy victory.

Christlike when self-love declares
Self-indulgence has no snares;
Christlike when thy pride of heart
Would resent the scorner's smart;
Christlike when the place of power
Brings thee to thy trial hour;
Christlike, aye, our pattern He
To the death upon the tree.

HUMILITY

Daniel S. Warner

There is a grace few mortals find,
A star all heaven loves to see;
It is a meek and lowly mind,
The gem of pure humility.

No ornament on earth so rare,
No jewel in all heavens' mart,
Can beautify a soul so fair
As deep humility of heart.

O God, hath e'er Thy balance weighed
A jewel so sublimely sweet
As that pure life that's ever laid
All humbly down at Jesus' feet?

All earthly crowns shall turn to mold,
All glittering pride and vanity;
But meekness decks the soul with gold
That shines through all eternity.

Within my hidden man, dear Lord,
That priceless ornament bestow,
The sweetest gift in all the world;
O Jesus, keep me meek and low.

A SWEET REFUGE

Author Unknown

I know a little land-locked bay
For souls upon a stormy sea:
What light on all the hills around!
What songs of birds in every tree!

No billows roll, no rocks do rend,
No wildly wrecking winds are there;
But tiny ripples whisper, "Peace."
That little land-locked bay is Prayer. ✞



Dear Young People,

I trust that the Lord has blessed you with strength and grace. Please be encouraged to stay close to the Lord. He is your most devoted Friend, your most trusted Confidante, and your strongest Defense. There has never been another who is more deserving of our love

and allegiance. Study the Scriptures. Pray to Him with an earnest heart. He will help you along the way. He will help you to learn more about Him. And the more you learn about Him, the more you will love Him.

This month we have an article written by Sis. Lauren Swain, from our local congregation. This young lady has a sweet, loving spirit and many talents that she willingly shares with us. We are thankful for her.

Keep fighting for the Lord!

With love,

Sis. Crystal Gossard

CHRISTIANITY: FACT OR FANTASY?

By Sis. Lauren Swain

“Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ” (II Corinthians 10:5).

CHISTIANS must be able to defend their faith and refute deceptive philosophies. If Christians cannot answer the questions posed by doubtful philosophers, then there is no reason to believe in Christianity above any other philosophy. However, due to scientific discoveries, evidence points more and more toward an intelligent, creative, and powerful God. The reasons for believing in Christianity are many and convincing. This article will discuss two small examples of the many organisms and creatures that exhibit God's design.



Plant Cells

A typical plant cell is between ten and a hundred micrometers in size. Yet one microscopic plant cell contains a nucleus, central vacuole, ribosomes, mitochondria, chloroplasts, and Golgi bodies as well as other organs for life. Has this intricacy of design ever been achieved by human beings?

“The living cell is the most complex system of its size known to mankind. Its host of specialized molecules, many found nowhere but within living material, are themselves already enormously complex. They execute a dance of exquisite fidelity, orchestrated with breathtaking precision. Vastly more elaborate than the most complicated ballet, the dance of life encompasses countless molecular performers in synergetic coordination.”—Paul Davies

Even famed physicist and evolutionist, Paul Davies, acknowledges the inestimable complexity of one tiny cell, thereby reducing the plausibility of the claim that random chemicals and matter joined without any intelligence to form complex organs such as cells.

DNA

In 1869, deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA) was discovered by Friedrich Miescher. It is interesting to note that “DNA can only be produced with the help of at least 20 different types of proteins. But these proteins can only be produced at the direction of DNA. Since each requires the other, a satisfactory explanation for the origin of one must also explain the origin of the other.”

—Walter Brown

While evolutionary process could have evolved both DNA and its composite proteins concurrently, the chance of this is so small that it is not a plausible possibility. A much more reasonable explanation of this fact is that a powerful and intelligent being designed it. Even Antony Flew, a staunch atheist, returned to belief in God mainly because of DNA: “What I think the DNA material has done is that it has shown, by the almost unbelievable complexity of the arrangements which are needed to produce (life), that intelligence must have been involved in getting these extraordinarily diverse elements to work together.”

These two examples, DNA and plant cells, are only two of many that point people to a Divine Creator who orchestrated the design of every part of nature. Such intricacy has never been achieved by human beings; how could random processes ever have formed such complex structures as the cell? How could the chemicals in DNA ever have ordered themselves to create a code for life? In essence, the evolutionist and atheist believe that “something came from nothing!” After researching and examining the intricacy of DNA and plant cells, I believe even more that a Creator, an Intelligent Being, designed the universe and everything in it. †

prises and let them alone; for it is evident that in such a case many more would be saved because of their ignorance than will ever be saved through the preaching of the gospel. But the entire historical setting and the genius of Christianity are opposed to such a course; for the religion of the Bible is universal in its nature and was given for the express purpose of reaching and benefitting all men, and its adherents have always felt it to be their duty to attempt the evangelization of the world by aggressive efforts.

The subject of moral responsibility is a deep and important one. The principle is the same in all men, whether heathen or other. Men are not counted sinners because they possess an inborn sinful disposition—for this they are not responsible. The sinful nature within has not the power to propel any man into sin. To affirm such is to deny individual responsibility and the freedom of human will, that great principle, which, above all others, differentiates man from the lower orders of animate life. We cannot shift the responsibility and place all of the blame on Adam. Man is more than the steam-engine or the electric motor, which are more capable of acting only as they are acted upon. What sin is it that men must as by a fixed law commit? Is it murder? No; not all men take human life. Is it stealing? Not all men are thieves. There is no sin that men *must* commit. James says, “Every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin” (James 1:14, 15). The apostle does not affirm that a man’s lusts are his tempter, but Satan seeks *through that means* to tempt and entice him to the commission of wrong. But he is not obliged to yield; he can use his will to reject such temptations. The first act of the free will to commit sin, however, fixes moral responsibility, and after the will has once been surrendered to the enemy, it is not an easy matter to resist wrong, and the person soon becomes practically a slave—“led captive by the devil at *his* will.” Then it matters not how binding the sinful habits become, he is responsible because of his wilfulness in taking the first steps which lead to such a condition. So while there was a time when he could have resisted sin, he is soon made helpless by its practice. “Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are *accustomed to do evil*” (Jeremiah 13:23). “Having eyes full of adultery, and *that cannot cease from sin ...* An heart they have exercised with covetous *practices*; cursed children” (II Peter 2:14).

If there must be an act of the will in order to fix moral responsibility, it is evident that there must first be some knowledge of God and of right and wrong. Are the heathen entirely ignorant in this respect? Let the apostle Paul answer: “That which may be known of God is manifest in them [*to them, margin*]; for God hath shewed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; *so that they are without excuse*” (Romans 1:19, 20). The entire history of our race shows conclusively that men everywhere recognize, in some form or other,

ARE THEY RESPONSIBLE?

By the late F. G. Smith

(concerning how the heathen will be judged)

THE QUESTION concerning the responsibility of the heathen has been discussed over and over again. Many maintain that the heathen are entirely responsible for their sinful condition; while others hold that their ignorance of divine truth serves as an excuse for them in the sight of God. There seems to be no middle ground to take; therefore we must commit ourselves to one side of the subject or the other.

A careful consideration of the facts in the case, taken in connection with certain scriptures bearing on the subject, will, I believe, convince any fair-minded person that all intelligent beings are morally responsible to the God who made them. If ignorance of certain truths is ground for justifying the heathen, then it would seem to be an act of mercy to give up our missionary enter-

the existence of a higher Power to which they are morally accountable. And this is not all. God has made a subjective revelation in the human consciousness which defines the greater moral questions sufficiently to fix responsibility. This the apostle also affirms. "For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: Which *shew the work of the law written in their hearts*, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another" (Romans 2:14, 15). This text does not teach that men are finally saved by that inner law and by their conscience; but, taken in connection with the context, it is an argument that all men are by that means responsible and are therefore sinners before God when they disobey the law of their conscience. Everywhere love and hatred, justice and injustice, veracity and falsehood, are distinguished, *and everywhere men are conscious of committing sin*. After affirming that the Jews also are sinners and quoting from their Scriptures to bind the argument, the apostle further says, "We have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, *that they are all under sin*." "Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and *all the world* may become guilty before God" (Romans 3:19). "For *all have sinned*, and come short of the glory of God" (verse 23).

If man was compelled, as by a fixed law, to commit sin, then no punishment could in justice be administered to him. To sentence him to destruction for doing what in the nature of things he was obliged to do would be at war with every known principle of justice. But every one is aware that the idea of individual guilt involves the will in doing what is known or believed to be the wrong. If, however, men are not compelled to do wrong, then we have to account for the universality of sin; "for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." When the individual reaches the age known as the age of accountability, he learns of his moral obligations and of certain wrongs to be avoided, before he has become able to understand in any great sense the true nature of wrong-doing or its awful consequences. In fact, none of us can have a correct estimate of this subject, for who is able to comprehend in a perfect sense the idea of infinite punishment? This thought, taken in connection with the evil principle in man's nature disposing him to wrong-doing, will, I believe, account for the reason why all men do at some time or other *choose* to do that which they feel to be sinful. If the temptations of Satan, acting upon fallen nature, are so strong that men who have the greatest knowledge of the nature of sin and its consequences will choose to do wrong why it is that those who have fewer advantages will yield to sin after reaching the age of moral responsibility. So the heathen who have not been blessed with the written law of God are responsible; and "as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law" (Romans 2:12). This will be the certain result unless we carry to them the glad tidings of mercy and deliverance offered in the salvation of our Lord Jesus Christ. †

—Reprinted from April 1989 issue

PHILIPPINE CONVENTION REPORT

PANQUI, TARLAC,

DECEMBER 26-30, 2019

THEME: "CHRIST IS COMING BACK: BE SPIRIT-FILLED AND ESTABLISHED IN THE FAITH"

II PETER 3:10-12

THANK GOD for giving me [Bro. Harley McClung] another privilege to attend the convention in the Philippines. It was truly an honor to be there with those precious saints. As they always do, they extended to Bro. Duane Jeffries and me a very warm welcome, and their hospitality, as usual, was wonderful.

God blessed us with safety as we traveled from Grand Cayman and West Virginia to Atlanta, then to Japan, to Manila and on to Paniqui, Tarlac, and on our return home. He also blessed us with a glorious Spirit-filled convention from the first 6:00 A.M. service to the very last service on Monday night.

Much prayer and fasting prepared us for these services, and God answered the prayers of His people, giving us victory as Satan was defeated. God gave liberty to His ministers to preach with power and authority. The Holy Spirit was present throughout as prayers ascended from hearts full of faith.

The singing was, as always, special. The young people were very active, taking their part inspiring us all. What a delight it was to see them endeavoring to live for God's glory! They are dedicated and want God to place them where He can use them in His kingdom.

People responded to the messages God sent, coming to the altar for a closer walk with God, salvation, sanctification, healing, etc. God's Spirit was in every service as we worshiped Him in Spirit and in truth.

There was wonderful harmony, not only in the services, but also in meal preparation, placing the hundreds of people to their sleeping arrangements, service assignments, games, altar work, music, and in all the activities. This has been the norm every time I've been there. Such peace, such joy and heaven borne love prevailed as we were so delighted to worship God for His blessings, especially the freedom we have in His great salvation.

Some of the victories we witnessed were the reported 60 souls saved. They came with a broken and contrite spirit, testifying that God had indeed freed them from sin and Satan's bondage, praise the Lord! My prayer has been that God will keep each of them in the hollow of His hand and they will always be determined, in His grace, to stay on the course of holy living, keeping the faith and fighting the good fight.

The convention was very well-attended from the beginning to the end. And, as always, this large number was quickly and efficiently fed. What a wonderful attitude of working together that these precious people displayed!

Again, I have a heart full of gratitude toward God and the Filipino saints for all that was accomplished. So much planning, preparation, and devoted work went

into this great effort, and all to and for the glory of God.

It has always been a special blessing to me to be a part of this yearly event, and this convention was no exception.

I was blessed to travel with Bro. Duane Jeffries from Grand Cayman/Honduras, his first time. I observed with pleasure Bro. Duane's delight to be in the services and with the Filipino saints.

Again, I thank God for favoring us with His precious Spirit's power and leadership.

The following is a report, service by service account of the convention by Sis. Gladys Eve Bagayan—

What a beautiful life it is serving and praising the One who gave us His! The privilege of being in the five day convention with the saints was a foretaste of heaven. Many brethren from Luzon, Visayas, and Mindanao were present at the beginning until the end of the services. Bro. Harley McClung from "almost heaven," West Virginia, Bro. Duane Jeffries from Grand Cayman, and Bro. Amba Kingsley from Dubai, both for the first time were with us as well. There were about 600 in attendance. Thank God for the safety of those who traveled from afar. Indeed, there is power in prayer and fasting. He blessed the services and filled them with His presence and gave victory to those who knelt at the altar. Sixty souls got saved from sin. Praise the Lord for technology that all the services were LIVE on *The Church of God Philippine's Facebook* page. There were meetings about the expansion of some church buildings held during lunch breaks.

Thursday

6:00 A.M.—Speaker: Bro. Rey Fabian, Host Pastor. Title: "The Purpose of His Second Coming." Text: II Peter 3:10-12. Excerpts: "Christians are peculiar people. We are the pilgrims who need to make preparations to face Jesus, for the time is at hand."

10:00 A.M.—Speaker: Bro. Manny Yangco from Paniqui, Tarlac. Title: "Fear God." Text: Ecclesiastes 12:13. "We must deny ourselves, consecrate our lives, and have a godly fear as we serve Him and show our love for Him, for it is the whole duty of men."

2:00 P.M.—Speaker: Sis. Meldy Santiago from Sta. Maria Bulacan. Title: "The 7 F's That Christians Must not Do to be Faithful Until He Comes." Text: Revelation 22:8-13. "God has let certain things, whether good or not good, to happen in our lives for us to exercise our faith with boldness, courage, strength, truthfulness, prayers, and thanksgiving until He comes."

7:00 P.M.—Speaker: Bro. Harley McClung from West Virginia. Text: John 3:16. Excerpts: "Unbelief is a sin, and it turns the heart into stone. Those who do not value the love of God are going to perish when the Lord comes back. He is the only hope for humanity to obtain eternal life if only each and everyone in this world would believe in Him."

Friday

6:00 A.M.—Speaker: Bro. Frank Palencia from Signal Village, Taguig. Excerpts: "Staying faithful, pleasing, and right in the eyes of God, even when no one is looking, is what we should aim for in this present

time. The treasures of this earth are nothing when we compare it to the place He has prepared for us in glory."

10:00 A.M.—Speaker: Bro. Antonio Dumrique from Barang, Paniqui, Tarlac. Title: "Christ is Coming Back; be Ready!" Text: II Corinthians 5: 9, 10. Excerpts: "Preparing for various things in life takes too much time and effort. However, our souls are at stake if we waste our lives on these earthly matters. Everyone has a talent as a gift from God. If we use it for His glory until the end, the reward is more than all the treasures of this world combined."

2:00 P.M.—Speaker: Bro. Ed Coraraton from Sulop, Davao Del Sur. Title: "Jesus Christ: the Anointed One." Text: Acts 10:38, 40. Excerpts: "We must not be at ease in Zion in these perilous times. Jesus Christ has given us an example to live. Technology is advancing, so should our souls to holiness."

7:00 P.M.—Speaker: Bro. Duane Jeffries from Grand Cayman/Honduras. Text: Matthew 25:31-46. Excerpts: "It is the will of God for all to get to heaven, but it is our choice which path to take. To which group in the Parable of the Ten Virgins do we belong? Are we all prepared to meet Him in our present situation? We must seize the time being true and faithful to Him. He is a merciful God, but He will be the Judge in the final hour."

Saturday

6:00 A.M.—Speaker: Bro. Luis Gamboa from Ibaan, Batangas. Title: "A Prepared Place." Text: John 14:1-3. Excerpts: "Our God should be our inspiration in this world that we live in. After all these things, only the people who have served the Lord faithfully shall see the place He has prepared."

10:00 A.M.—Speaker: Sis. Rose Marzan from Katarungan Village, Muntinlupa. Title: "Walk With God Until He Comes Back Again." Text: Colossians 2:6, 7. Excerpts: "If we truly walk with God in our lives, it would show in the way we live each day. He sees everything, and He knows who is preparing for His second coming. Those who have pure and humble hearts will always be a blessing. Give it all to Jesus before it is too late."

2:00 P.M.—Speaker: Bro. Rudy Delos Reyes from Nipaco, Paniqui, Tarlac. Title: "The Needed Traits of Christians for Jesus' Second Coming." Text: II Peter 3:14. Excerpts: "Some people in this world are excited about the pleasures sin gives, but the difference in Christianity is that we have the real treasure everyone can obtain. The faithful servants of God have peace, are blameless, and are holy people. Jesus Christ's traits reflect on us as we seek Him and as we strive to be perfectly fit for heaven."

7:00 P.M.—Speaker: Bro. Harley McClung. Title: "Who Is Man's Best Friend?" Excerpts: "A lot of people consider dogs to be man's best friend. However, there is one faithful Friend incomparable to anyone or anything of this world. A hymn says: 'What a friend we have in Jesus, All our sins and griefs to bear! What a privilege to carry, Everything to God in prayer.' We are His friends if we love and obey Him. Sin would take us farther away from His presence, so we must choose what kind of friendship we would want to have until our death. Would it be with Jesus or the devil?"

Sunday

8:00 A.M.—Sunday School. Teacher: Bro. Arnaldo Chichioco from Paniqui, Tarlac. Sunday school Topic: “What Is the Purpose of Christ’s Second Coming?” Scriptures: John 14:3; II Peter 3:12; Acts 1:10, 11; 17:30, 31; II Timothy 4:1; II Thessalonians 1:7-9; Revelation 20:11-15; I Corinthians 15:24. Aim: To set forth the truth that Christ is coming, how He will come; and the purpose of His coming.

10:00 A.M.—Speaker: Bro. Jet Batalla from La Trinidad, Benguet. Title: “The Spirit-Filled Church.” Text: Acts 2:1-5. Excerpts: “We need to give up everything for the sake of Jesus Christ just like His apostles did. The Holy Spirit baptized the early morning church because of their dedication to Him. Sanctification is a must for every Christian who wants to be with the Savior. As long as we serve the One who can provide all we need to endure this spiritual warfare with constancy, we shall win victoriously until the end.”

2:00 P.M.—Speaker: Bro. Arnold Ordonio from Balaoang, Paniqui, Tarlac. Title: “How To Survive in These Perilous Times.” Text: II Timothy 3:1-5. Excerpts: “The Bible is always reminding us about the end of time. Nothing is new under the sun. A lot of people have not changed the pattern and the cycle of their choices that lead them to spiritual death. We must stand firm in the words of God to survive these perilous times.”

7:00 P.M.—Speaker: Bro. Duane Jeffries. Title: “The Potter’s House.” Text: Jeremiah 18:1-6. Excerpts: “God created us in His image through the Word, Jesus Christ. The Potter has never failed us yet, even so, we are only clay. We have two choices to make. It is either to let Him mold us, or let the enemy destroy us. God has been so good to us; we cannot complain! There is no reason for us to fail Him now.”

Monday

6:00 A.M.—Speaker: Bro. Rogelio Eupenia from Dagupan, Pangasinan. Title: “Prepare for the Second Coming of Our Lord.” Text: Matthew 24:44. Excerpts: “The Holy Spirit only lives in a clean heart. It makes a person humble, content, and filled with love perfected by the Lord. Therefore, a Christian who is genuinely serving the Lord would not show any signs of bitterness, greed, hatred, nor pride. We must look and focus on Jesus so He may find us faithful and prepared to meet Him.”

10:00 A.M.—Speaker: Bro. Greg Escullar from Candani, Negros Occidental. Title: “Be Alert; it’s Your Last Day!” Text: II Peter 3:10-12. Excerpts: “Our God is powerful and mighty, yet He gave us a free will. When we seek Him, we would see all the carnalities we have. Submitting ourselves to Him is the best thing we could do for our souls because He only uses clean and pure vessels for His kingdom and glory.”

2:00 P.M.—Speaker: Bro. Bernard Neri from Kalilangan, Bukidnon. Text: Psalm 139. Excerpts: “Spiritual erosion is one of the destructions we might experience if we stop searching ourselves in the Lord. Sometimes God needs to break our hearts so we would be closer to Him. Even so, He made everything according to His plan to prepare us a ready heart and a surrendered life to face eternity in heaven with the saints.”

7:00 P.M.—Speaker: Bro. Harley McClung. Title: “What’s the Return on Your Investment?” Text: Mark 8:34-37. Excerpts: “The way we live on earth will affect our final destination. We all have an equal amount of time, but we invest it individually. If we spend more time on material things, we might fail to reach the purpose of forsaking all for Christ. ‘For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?’ ”

We are in the last days. I hope and pray that all who attended the services would see each other again in the next convention if God permits. May we all strive to live a holy life, Spirit-filled, and established in the faith until He comes and takes us with Him. May God bless us all!

—Sis. Gladys Eve Bagayan

The following comments by Bro. Duane Jeffries on his first visit to the Philippines:

I thank the Lord for the privilege of attending the 2019 Filipino Convention. I was invited a few years ago by both Bro. Harley and Bro. Greg, but for some reason the Lord opened a way for me to go this year.

I had heard so many wonderful things about the wonderful Filipino brethren from so many who attended before, and I wanted to experience it for myself. I can say, without hesitation, that the convention was a tremendous blessing to me. I was deeply moved by the humility, dedication, and tenderness of the Filipino people. I found their ministers to be very able ministers; they have a strong grasp on the doctrines and teachings of the Church of God.

I was especially impressed with their emphasis on sanctification, and I watched as almost all of their ministers touched on the subject in each of their messages.

The Filipino people are so tender and easy to preach to. They listen attentively, and they are keen to respond to the gospel. The short week we were there we saw over 50 people give their hearts to the Lord. They are loving people, very hospitable to visitors, and they go out of their way to make you feel welcomed.

I came back from the convention very inspired, encouraged, and uplifted. I pray that God will continue to bless these wonderful people as they labor for His kingdom.

—Bro. Duane Jeffries

Final note:

I’m not sure what God has in mind for me to make future visits to the Philippines. I’ve stated that this was likely my last time to go there. I did not stand as General MacArthur did, and proclaim “I shall return!” but as God knows my heart, I want Him to have His way in the decisions I make. To go again will be God’s choosing, not mine. If my traveling to that land is over, then, I can truly say, I will miss going, not the trip, but the precious people, the God-fearing Filipino saints whom I love and deeply appreciate. And with a blessed, God-given assurance, we’ll meet in heaven someday if we stay true.

In His service,
Bro. Harley †

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