



The Way of Truth

Vol. 78

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

No. 5

*Mother's
Day
Issue*

May 2020

IN TIMES LIKE THESE

WE ARE living in troubled times! Who would have guessed a few months ago that a little virus would wreak havoc and bring the whole world to its knees? Who would have thought it was possible to close down businesses nationwide, close down schools indefinitely, and bring death to thousands in this great country? But that is the place we have come to.

Even before COVID-19 unleashed its attack on our world, we as Christians were living in perilous times—times where sin was accepted as unavoidable; times where mind-altering drugs were readily available; times where homosexuality was flaunted as “normal”; times where mothers aborted their babies in great numbers; times when our nation had forsaken God and the Bible; times when religion was either dead or deceptive; times where people were disillusioned with life. Then, when added to the mix is a devastating pandemic, despair attacks the human spirit.

In times like these we need an anchor! Our faith is being tried. Saints of God, we must cling to our Lord’s blood-stained hand. The apostle Paul proclaimed in II Corinthians 4:8-10, “We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body.” He preceded those verses with, “But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.”

The secret to standing unshaken in times like these is in the fact that the power is of God, not us. God has given us, as Christians, treasure in these earthen vessels—the treasure of salvation—the treasure of peace—the treasure of His love being shed abroad in our hearts. Nothing Satan throws at us can rob us of this treasure—especially COVID-19!

We are troubled on every side—by people—by sickness—by our own inadequacies and failures—by financial pressures—by the devil who as a roaring lion walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.

But we are not distressed! This is because we have hills to look to—Psalm 121, “I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth. He will not suffer thy foot to be moved: he that keepeth thee will not slumber. Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep. The Lord is thy keeper: the Lord is thy shade upon thy right hand. The sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by night. The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil: he shall preserve thy soul. The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth, and even for evermore.”

We are perplexed which means, “confused, bewildered.” We are perplexed by our own unanswered questions—why is this happening? We are bewildered by our lack of understanding—why did God let that happen?

But we are not in despair!

We are not in despair because we acknowledge God’s wisdom and sovereignty—Isaiah 55:8, 9, “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.”

Though perplexed, we are not in despair because of our faith—II Timothy 1:12, “For the which cause I also suffer these things: nevertheless I am not ashamed: for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.”

We are persecuted. “Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution” (II Timothy 3:12). We suffer persecution by the world—by our family (sometimes even our companion)—by sectarians—those who would like to see this work destroyed. Bro. Nadish Riaz and other faithful saints in Pakistan are being persecuted by Moslems right now—some even killed for their faith!

But we are not forsaken! Jesus will never leave us nor forsake us—Romans 8:31-39—“What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God’s elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

We are cast down—by discouragement—by failure—by trials and temptations—even cast down because of this present pandemic.

But we are not destroyed! This is because we have a protector—Isaiah 43:1-3—“But now thus saith the Lord that created thee, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. For I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour.”

We have hope in God—Psalm 42:5-11—“Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted

ABOUT THE COVER

Mother’s Day is May 10. It is a day set aside to honor mothers for their place in society. Inside this magazine you will find several articles dealing with motherhood. We trust you will find them inspirational. To each mother we bid God’s richest blessings!

THE WAY OF TRUTH

(Registered Trademark)

Vol. 78

May 2020

No. 5

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.

Published by the Church of God which assembles at 12819 Point Salem Road in Hagerstown, Maryland. Publishing office: 12811 Point Salem Road, Hagerstown, Maryland, U.S.A.

The Way of Truth is published without any given subscription price, and is supported by freewill offerings from our readers and funds supplied by the local congregation. It is sent out free to anyone who is interested enough to ask for it. We shall continue this policy as long as God sees fit to make it possible. FOREIGN READERS are requested to write us at least once a year if they wish to continue receiving the paper the following year. Address all correspondence to: The Way of Truth, P. O. Box 88, Hagerstown, Maryland 21741, U.S.A. Always when writing, give your name and address clearly, please.

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in me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance. O my God, my soul is cast down within me: therefore will I remember thee from the land of Jordan, and of the Hermonites, from the hill Mizar. Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of thy waterspouts: all thy waves and thy billows are gone over me. Yet the Lord will command his lovingkindness in the daytime, and in the night his song shall be with me, and my prayer unto the God of my life. I will say unto God my rock, Why hast thou forgotten me? why go I mourning because of the oppression of the enemy? As with a sword in my bones, mine enemies reproach me; while they say daily unto me, Where is thy God? Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God."

Let us stand unshaken so that Christ be made manifest in us. In these perilous times let the beauty of Jesus be seen in us.

Therefore let us stand unshaken, Saints—unshaken from our faith in God—Acts 20:24—"But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God." Let us stand unshaken from our determination to serve Him—I Corinthians 15:58—"Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."

Let us stand unshaken from the precious truth of the Bible—I Thessalonians 3:8—"For now we live, if ye stand fast in the Lord."

Let us stand unshaken from holiness—Galatians 5:1—"Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage."

Let us stand unshaken though others depart from the faith—Philippians 4:1—"Therefore, my brethren, dearly beloved and longed for, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, my dearly beloved."

Let us stand unshaken till Jesus comes—Hebrews 3:14—"For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end."

Though things look bleak today, remember God is still on His throne! He will protect and deliver us—Psalm 46:1-5—"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; Though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof. Selah. There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the most High. God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved: God shall help her, and that right early." †

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Five Godly Mothers

Mother's Day Message by the late Bro. Alvin A. Craig, delivered 5/12/13



OUR THOUGHTS are entitled, "Five Godly Mothers." I'll read just a portion of scripture from the book of Proverbs, chapter 31, verses 10-12; 25, 26 and 31: "Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies. The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil. She will do him good and not evil all the days of her life. Strength and honour are her clothing; and she shall rejoice in time to come. She openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue is the law of kindness. Give her of the fruit of her hands; and let her own works praise her in the gates."

To many people, the sweetest name in the English language is "mother"; and we know that not every mother lives up to the standard that the Bible sets for mothers, but we do thank the Lord for those who are endeavoring to do and to be what God would be pleased for them to be.

JOCHEBED, MOTHER OF MOSES

There was a young man by the name of Amram, who was the grandson of Levi, and there was a young lady that the Bible says was a daughter of Levi. We do not understand that to be literal, but she was a descendant of Levi, so these two were related. We're not sure just how close the relationship was, but they fell in love and got married. In the due course of time, they had a daughter that they named Miriam. Four years later, they had a son and they called his name, Aaron.

After Aaron was born, Pharaoh was disturbed and troubled by how greatly the Hebrews were increasing. He thought in his mind that if an invading army came into Egypt that the Hebrews would rise up and assist them to defeat the nation of Egypt, and so he increased their labor. The Hebrews were slaves. This Pharaoh that I'm speaking of had forgotten about what Joseph had done for Egypt, and he had made them slaves and increased their labor greatly, thinking that the toil and labor would cut down on the number of births; but rather, the births increased. Pharaoh instructed the midwives of the Hebrews to save all the girl babies that were born and to kill all the male children that were born. However, their handmaidens feared the Lord and they did not carry out his command, so he said to his people, "Whenever you find out a Hebrew male baby has been born, take it and throw it in the river and see that it is killed."

Three years after Aaron was born, Amram, and his wife, Jochebed, had another child. This was during the time that all the Hebrew male children were to be killed, but Jochebed saw that her child was a proper child, and she did not fear the king's wrath, so she took him and hid him and kept him secret for three months. Maybe by that time his lungs were strong enough and he began to cry loudly, so she figured she would have to do something about it. She made a little ark for him, daubed it, and made it waterproof. Jochebed put her

three-month-old baby in that little ark, and she told her seven-year-old daughter, Miriam, to stand by and watch.

Although the Bible does say that Jochebed didn't fear the king's wrath, I am sure that this mother was very apprehensive. Doubtless, she was concerned and was praying about the safety of her little three-month-old child. The princess and her maidens came into that area for the princess to bathe. I would assume that the palace and the grounds probably had a swimming pool that she could have bathed in. But for some reason, some people seem to think it was because of a religious riot of some kind that the princess came to that area; and as her maidens were walking along the edge of the river, they spotted this little ark and the princess instructed them to go and get it.

Whenever they opened the little ark, the baby was crying, and God moved upon the princess' heart and she had compassion on this little one. She said, "This is one of the Hebrews' children." About that time, Miriam showed up and said to the princess, "Would you like for me to get a nurse maid for this little one?" "Yes, I would." We don't need two guesses as to know where she went. She went home and got her mother and the baby's mother. I tell you, we serve a miracle-working God. Here is a baby who was supposed to be put to death, and here the princess is telling this baby's mother, "You take it and nurse it and I'll pay you for doing it." God saw that Jochebed got paid for taking care of her own baby. There's nothing impossible with God. So Jochebed took the baby and nursed it and kept it, presumably, until it was about seven years of age and weaned it. During those seven years (I'm sure the father had something to do with it, too.), she filled that little heart with the knowledge of the true God. Then she turned him over to the princess.

For 33 years, Moses (He was called *Moses* because he was taken out of the water.) was exposed to the teachings of Egypt, to the religions of Egypt, to the ways of the Egyptians, but when he became the legal age of 40, he made a choice. The Hebrew writer tells us that Moses chose to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.

After Moses was an adult, he went out and he saw an Egyptian mistreating a Hebrew. Moses was aware of the fact that he himself was a Hebrew, so he slew that Egyptian and buried him in the sand. The next day, he went out and he saw a Hebrew fighting another Hebrew. Moses questioned him about it. The one that was at fault said to him, "Who made thee a prince and a judge over us? Did you intend to kill me like you did the Egyptian?" Moses realized and knew that what he had done was known. Pharaoh knew it, too, so Moses left the land of Egypt and journeyed into the land of Midian and sat down by a well.



There was a priest of Midian that had seven daughters. They were taking care of their father's sheep. Shepherds came and drove them away from the well where there was water. Moses saw it and intervened. He drew water for these ladies and their sheep. Whenever they went home, the father said, "How is it that you are at home so early?" They answered, "There was an Egyptian man that ran away the other shepherds that were troubling us and he drew water for us." Their father asked, "Why did you leave him? Why didn't you bring him so we could show him hospitality?" Then they went and got Moses and brought him to their tent. Moses took a liking to that family. He started to live with them, and the father gave one of his seven daughters to Moses for a wife.

In the process of time, Moses came to the mountain of God, and there he saw a burning bush, but it was not consumed. He approached it and heard a voice saying, "Moses, take off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground." God said to Moses, "I have heard the cries of my people. I am choosing you to go back into Egypt and lead my people out of bondage." Moses gave excuses. One of them was that he wasn't able to speak very well. I don't know if he stammered or not, but anyway, God would not let him get off with his excuses. God said, "I'll give you your brother, Aaron, as a spokesman for you."

If you are familiar with the Scriptures, you know that Moses and Aaron went in before Pharaoh, and Moses said, "God said, 'You should let my people go.' " "Who's God?" Aaron threw down the rod that Moses had. God told him to take with him and it became a serpent. Pharaoh wasn't moved by that. He called two of his magicians in and they threw down their rods and they became serpents; but again, God showed His power because Moses' snake ate up the other two.

After the ten plagues, God led the children of Israel to leave and they came to the Red Sea. By that time, Pharaoh had changed his mind and was determined that he would go back after them and bring them back. They got scared and scattered, and Moses said, "Stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will show to you to day: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to day, ye shall see them again no more for ever." God sent a wind that blew all night and divided the waters of the Red Sea and the children of Israel walked through on dry ground. The Egyptian army pursued to do the same thing, but God closed the waters and they were drowned. When the children of Israel got on the other side of the Red Sea, Moses and the men of Israel rejoiced and praised God, and Miriam took the ladies aside and worshiped. You can read in the book of Exodus what Miriam said in praising the Lord.

Now, we've heard a lot about Moses, and rightly so, for he was doubtless Israel's greatest leader, but we also need to take note when we talk about this mother, Jochebed. It wasn't just Moses that she taught. She also taught Aaron and Miriam. Both of them played a very important part in the escape of the Israelites. In fact, Aaron became the first high priest. After the tabernacle was set in order, God made Aaron the high priest, and Miriam was called a prophetess. So it was not just Moses alone that this mother nourished and

taught the things of God, but she taught all three of her children. All three of them were God-fearing children. All three filled an important part, but Moses filled the most important part of all. This shows us that regardless of how hostile the environment may be, godly parents can still teach their children about God.

We live in a very perilous time, but it is still possible for God-fearing parents, God-fearing mothers to teach and to train and to instill in that little heart the fear of God. The greatest accomplishment that a mother can accomplish in this life is to rear her children for God. It's not becoming president of the United States. I know we see things differently than what most people see, but endeavor to see things as God sees them.

HANNAH, MOTHER OF SAMUEL

The next mother I want to mention is Hannah. After the children of Israel came into the land of Canaan, they brought the tabernacle with them and they set it up at a place called Shiloh. The ark of the tabernacle was there between 300-400 years, and that was the religious center of the nation of Israel. We find Hannah there, but let me say something about Elkanah first. Elkanah, Hannah's husband, had two wives, and he was a godly man. His first wife, Peninnah, had children, but Hannah was barren. She had no children. Peninnah taunted Hannah and tortured her, mentally speaking, because she did not have any children.

It was Elkanah's habit to go to Shiloh once year to make offerings and sacrifices to God, and so on this particular occasion, even there at Shiloh, Peninnah taunted and tormented Hannah. She provoked her so much that she didn't eat. Elkanah came to Hannah and questioned her as to why she wasn't eating. She let him know how burdened her heart was. When the time came for Elkanah to offer, he gave Peninnah and her children portions, but he gave Hannah a goodly portion. One commentator said, "Twice as much." The Bible says that Elkanah loved Hannah. Whenever she unburdened her heart to him, he said, "Well, you know, I love you, and I love you so much that I should be as good to you as ten children." Well, Elkanah was a good husband, but that did not satisfy Hannah's desire for a child. But to please her husband, she went and ate something. She then went off to herself and started praying.

Eli the priest who was there was not a very spiritual man. He saw Hannah praying. Her heart was so burdened. The Bible says, "Only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard." Eli accused Hannah of being drunk. She said, "No, I'm not drunk; I am burdened, for my heart is troubled. I want a son." Hannah had told the Lord, "Lord, if you'll give me a son, I'll give him back to you as long as he lives. He'll be a Nazarite all the days of his life." So whenever Eli heard that, he said, "Well, the Lord grant you your desire." Before the next year came around, Hannah had her son. She said to her husband, "I'm not going to go up to Shiloh now. You and the rest of the family can go. I'll stay here and keep my little son." She, too, presumably, kept him until he was seven. Then she took him to Shiloh and left him there with the priest. She, too, had done an excellent job in filling that little heart with the things of God. She named him Samuel.

When Samuel was around 12 years of age, God spoke to him, and he went to Eli and said, "Here am I; you called me." Eli said, "No, I didn't call you. Go back and lie down." Samuel went back and lay down. Again, the voice called him, and he went back to Eli and said, "You did call me." Eli said, "No, I didn't call you. Go back and lie down." The third time Samuel went to Eli, and then Eli woke up to the fact that it wasn't him calling Samuel, of course, but it was God that was calling. Eli said to Samuel, "Now, if you hear the voice again, you say, Speak, Lord; for thy servant heareth." So Samuel heard the voice again and answered as he was instructed. The message that God gave Samuel was not a very encouraging one. It was against Eli and his ungodly children who were committing adultery or fornication, even there at the tabernacle. All Eli could say, "Why are you doing this?"

Samuel grew and God was with him. The Spirit of God was resting upon him, and all Israel knew that God had called him to a special work. It has been said that Samuel was the last judge and the first prophet. Samuel was a faithful man all through his life. The reason he was, at least in part, was because of those seven years that his mother had him. Every year she would take him a new garment, but she had very little time with him, so the real training was in those first seven years.

Whenever Israel clamored for a king, Samuel tried to warn them against it, for it would be to their detriment and not to their good, but they insisted. He asked them to prove, "Where have I taken anything that didn't belong to me?" "Samuel, you have not done anything wrong. We have no complaints against you. You have lived a righteous, virtuous life before us all your days." But they still wanted a king, and they got one to their detriment.

SARAH, MOTHER OF ISAAC

The next mother I want to mention is Sarah, the mother of Isaac. You know, Abraham was a very outstanding character. We judge him as being one of strong character, but there were some things in the life of Abraham where he didn't prove himself all the man he should have been. Abraham was 75 years old when God promised him a son by Sarah. A famine came to the land of Canaan and Abraham and Sarah left there and journeyed into Egypt. Before they actually got into Egypt, Abraham said to Sarah, "You're a beautiful woman. When you get to Egypt, they're going to want you. You tell them that you are my sister." Well, that's what she told them. Pharaoh was told what a beautiful woman she was and he took her and put her in his home, but he did not have anything to do with her at all. God plagued Egypt and Pharaoh came to realize that Sarah was a man's wife and he returned her to Abraham, and he let Abraham know he didn't appreciate him telling Sarah to tell him that she was his sister. The reason I say that Abraham wasn't the man he ought to have been at certain times is: he exposed Sarah to conditions that a man should never expose his wife to. That wasn't the only time Abraham did that.

There was another time when Abraham told another king, "This is my sister," and he sent for her, too. She must have been a real beautiful woman for

sure. God appeared to this king and told him, "You're a dead man," and He told him what he had done. So the king returned Sarah to Abraham and gave him a rebuke. Abraham said, "Well, she is my sister. We have the same father but not the same mother," so she was his half-sister. Abraham wasn't exactly lying but he was leading the king to believe a lie. So this king gave Abraham some money and told him to get some cloth and have Sarah to cover her face. I guess that's where the origination of cloth head-coverings came from.

Anyway, when Abraham was approaching 100 years of age, and Sarah was 90, God fulfilled His promise and Isaac was born. Sarah lived to be about 127 years old, so she had quite a while with her son, Isaac, longer than the other mothers had. But she and Abraham taught Isaac, and although Isaac was not a strong-willed man as Abraham, he was a godly man. So Sarah was a mother and she loved her son. She proved to be a good mother to her son.

MARY, MOTHER OF JESUS

The next mother I want to mention is Mary, the mother of Jesus. Mary is an example, not only from the standpoint of being a mother, but she is an example of consecration. Here is a young lady who was betrothed to a man by the name of Joseph. The archangel Gabriel was sent by God to the little village of Nazareth and he gave her the message that she was to conceive in her womb, bare a son, and they should call His name Jesus. Mary said to the angel, "How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?" Indeed, she was a virgin, just like the Bible says. The angel explained to her that the power of God would come upon her and she would conceive in her womb. In those days, a young lady that did what supposedly, she did, could have been stoned to death; but she did not question the angel after that. After the angel explained to her how she would become with a child, she said, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word." That's an example yet for us today. Whatever God's will is for us, we should say, even as Mary said, "Be it unto me according to thy word."

Mary had to tell Joseph about this and he was heartbroken, but he did not want to make her a public example. He didn't want to have her stoned to death. He was of the mind to put her away privately. In a dream God revealed to Joseph what the truth was, and He told Joseph, "You take her to yourself." He did what God told him to do. For the taxation, they returned to Bethlehem, and there Mary's time was fulfilled, and she brought forth her firstborn child.

The Catholics would have us to believe that Mary was ever a virgin. There's no truth to that. First of all, Mary would not have been true to the Word of God if she would have refused to be a wife to her husband. She was not a lawbreaker. Secondly, the Bible says that she brought forth her firstborn but not her only one. The Bible mentions four sons that she had, and she had daughters as well, so we don't really know how many children she had. We do know God chose a pure, holy woman to be the mother of the Son of God. He would not have chosen anyone else.

The angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph and told him to take the mother and the child into Egypt to avoid

the child being slain by Herod. Herod had all the children in Bethlehem two years and down, slain. So Joseph took Mary and the child to Egypt and stayed there until Herod died, and then they came back to Canaan and were returning to Bethlehem when they found out that Herod's son was ruling. They turned aside and went to Nazareth.

The next picture we have of Jesus was when He was 12 years of age. This was when they took Him to Jerusalem to one of the holy seasons. They left to go home. They journeyed for a day, thinking that Jesus was with the crowd. Whenever they got ready to camp for the night, Jesus wasn't with them, so Mary and Joseph went back to Jerusalem. It took them three days in all to find Jesus. When they found Him, He was in the temple talking with the lawyers and doctors. He was answering questions for them and asking them questions. Mary asked Him, "Why have you done this to your parents?" Jesus said to them, "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" The Bible says that He went home and was subject unto them.

At the age of 30, old enough to teach, Jesus went to the Jordan River and was baptized. He went into the wilderness for 40 days to fast and to pray. Then He entered into His earthly ministry. He chose 12 disciples to be apostles. Jesus went about doing good to all men. Mary traveled with Him during some of His travels. Evidently, Joseph had died. Whenever Jesus moved to Capernaum, He took His mother with Him. Since He was the oldest child, He was responsible to take care of her.

Mary was with Jesus when He went up to Jerusalem to be crucified. She was there at the cross. Again, can you imagine how His mother felt as she stood there and saw her Son with His back beaten, a crown of thorns on His head, and a portion of His beard being plucked out? There He hung on the cross. The apostle John was there was His mother, and Jesus said to John, "John, behold thy mother! Woman, behold thy son!" In other words, as Jesus was in His dying hour, He still had love and concern for His mother, and He wanted to make sure that she was taken care of. So He gave John the responsibility of taking care of her.

The last we see of Mary was when she was there in the upper room with the 120. That's the last you'll read of Mary in the Bible, but she was a good, godly mother; otherwise, God would not have chosen her, I say, to be the mother of the Lord Jesus Christ.

EUNICE, MOTHER OF TIMOTHY

The last mother I want to mention is Eunice. On their first missionary journey, Paul and Barnabas went into the area where Eunice, and her mother, Lois, and Timothy lived. It is thought that Timothy was converted at the time when Paul went through the area the first time. Later on when Paul and Silas was on their second missionary journey, they went through that same area, and a good report was given of Timothy. What a good and godly man he was! Paul asked Timothy to join his party as part of his missionary group. Timothy left his mother and grandmother and journeyed with Paul and his group. Later on, Paul in writing to Timothy said, in effect, "The faith that is in you today was in your mother and in your grandmother. Your mother instilled

the Scriptures in your heart. From a child thou hast known the holy Scriptures." So we have another godly mother that gave birth and reared a godly child. Eunice's husband was a Greek so her task might not have been quite so easy as it might have seemed. She was Jewish and he was Greek. Nevertheless, she raised her son in the light and teachings of the Scriptures.

Again, Timothy traveled with Paul. Paul sent him to different places. I don't think it was anybody in the missionary group or in the time of Paul's life that was any closer or dearer to him as Timothy. Paul referred to Timothy as his son in the faith. When Paul was in jail and facing death in Rome, he sent for Timothy to come to him. The Scriptures do not enlighten us as to whether Timothy got there before Paul was beheaded or not, but I feel confident in saying that when Timothy got that message, he headed for Rome. He was a loyal and dedicated servant of God. He was also a loyal and a faithful laborer with Paul.

We have before us five women who did a marvelous job in training their children for the Lord.

May God bless all of our godly mothers here this morning. If you are a mother and you're not a Christian, you are failing your children. Consider it today. †

PRAYING MOTHERS


Radio Message by Bro. Greg Tyler

(delivered 5/14/89)

*Mother is the sweetest word,
You and I have ever heard;
Mother, Oh! how dear the thought,
A bit of heaven you have brought.*

*Mother, Mother, and no other,
Dearest name in all the earth;
Mother whom the angels cherish,
That precious one who gave us birth.*

—Edward M. Brandt

 **OUR THOUGHTS** are entitled, "Praying Mothers."

I would like to read a portion of scripture: II Timothy 1:1-5, "Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, according to the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus, To Timothy, my dearly beloved son: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord. I thank God, whom I serve from my forefathers with pure conscience, that without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day; Greatly desiring to see thee, being mindful of thy tears, that I may be filled with joy; When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also."

When we think about a mother, we think about a very, very special person, for God instituted motherhood, not by accident, but by design. He knew that every human being that comes into the world would need a loving, caring mother. But I'm made to wonder

what is happening to our mothers today. When Paul wrote to the man Timothy commending him of his faith, he remarked that the faith that Timothy had was first found in his grandmother and in his mother. It is no wonder that it was passed on to Timothy, for mothers are to be examples. Mothers are to care, not only for our physical well-being, but also our spiritual well-being. I firmly believe that it is the will of God that every mother be a praying mother.

Beloved, we live in a prosperous nation, and America seems to have everything in a material sense; but as we look around and read the news of our day, we find sin and wickedness reigning on every hand. Something has gone haywire; something has gone wrong. I believe that we can pinpoint the very foundation of that which is gone wrong to the home, for America's homes are not what they once were. America's homes were once a place where God was able to move and work, where God was able to reveal His will and His purpose.

Ofttimes it was through Mother opening up the Bible storybook, or reading from the pages of God's holy Word to the children sitting around her in a little circle. She taught them, not only about the words Jesus said, but how they pertain to the children's lives. It doesn't seem to be so anymore, sad to say. Beloved, many of our mothers have forsaken the home. The priority is making money and oftentimes the children are gone neglected.

Oh, Beloved, we would like to stir you to the fact that America needs praying mothers. America needs women like Lois and Eunice that we read about in the Bible. They need to pass down to their posterity—faith, hope, respect, trust, love—attributes that form young people who will be an asset to the world. While the children are young is when they can be formed into the type of people God would have them to be.

We would like to challenge you to determine to be a praying mother. Every single day, seek God for wisdom and grace. Fathers have a responsibility also, but this is Mother's Day, and we would like to point our remarks to the mothers in our listening audience.

Mothers, carry a burden for your children. Don't just send them out into the world without any direction and hope for the best. Pray and labor. Carry a burden for them that they might turn out to be children that will do the will of God. I'm not talking about being fanatical. I'm not talking about going overboard for religion. I'm talking about being a praying mother. I trust it is your desire to be that kind of mother. So many mothers in this world are selfish and self-centered and could care less about their children, but we trust you're not that type of person. We trust that it is your desire to be a good mother.

From a sincere heart, let me say, I believe to be a good mother, you need to be a praying mother. You need to take time with your children. You need to develop all of their abilities, not to fear to be challenged by the things of the world, but to take up the task of living for Christ in this ungodly world. If Lois and Eunice were able to pass on to Timothy "that unfeigned faith," Mother, you can pass on to each one of your children attributes that will carry them through life.

May God bless every mother in our audience is my prayer. †



Greetings, Young People,
My wife and I are blessed to work with the local young people's group in the Hagerstown congregation. Our burden is to see them grow deep in the things of God and to become rooted and grounded in truth. I am truly proud of them for having a true experience

of salvation and for taking a godly stand. I trust the words we have to share with you through this column will be an encouragement. I challenge you with thoughts from I Timothy 4:12, "Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity."

This month we have an article written by Sis. Julie Shenberger from our local congregation.

In Christ's love,
Bro. Doug Shenberger

Preparing for Motherhood

By Sis. Julie Shenberger



MOTHERHOOD may seem like a distant word or dream. However, I would like to stir your hearts with the thought of "Preparing for Motherhood."

I believe God has placed in each little girl a natural desire to love her baby doll with a mother's heart. I have watched each of my three daughters as they tenderly care for their dolls and the oldest as she now delights in tending to her baby cousins. Their nurturing love radiates and speaks of a longing heart to some day care for their own precious children, Lord willing.

There are many accomplishments and high positions to gain in the business world, but none are as influential as being a mother. A mother influences souls for eternity. Her husband's heart safely trusts in her, knowing that as she cares for the children she is fulfilling his desires and visions for their home. I can truly say motherhood is one of life's highest honors and greatest responsibilities. My desire is that I would have known more on how to be a godly mother. Sometimes I long to go up on a mountaintop and speak to God as Moses did as he led the children of Israel to the Promised Land. My heart longs to lead my precious children

The Way of Truth

to heaven. Although I may not be able to speak to Him face to face, I am blessed to daily seek His guidance through His Word, and commune with Him in prayer. I need the Lord to lead me as I endeavor to lead my precious children.

Therefore, I would like to challenge the young sisters to prayerfully consider some thoughts that may help prepare you for this beautiful experience. If it is the Lord's will for you to become a mother, it is a real treasure. Few joys can compare! However, you won't just happen to become the person you'll need to be when your first little one is placed in your arms. Yes, motherhood is a journey and God will help you grow, but you'll be thankful for any preparations you made along the way. Please ponder some virtues of a godly mother and strive to cultivate these and others throughout your life.

A Submissive Spirit: I challenge you to find great delight and satisfaction in submitting your life to the Lord. Say as Jesus did, "Nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done." Rest in knowing that God wants the very best for your life. There will be many times you will desire to know the outcome, but it will be out of your control. Questions such as: Is it God's will for me to get married? Will we be blessed with children? Will our baby be healthy? How can I watch over the children all the time to keep them from harm? These questions can seem overwhelming, but take comfort in knowing that the Master is in control. Cling to the promise that is given in Romans 8:28, "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." Only do your very best to love and serve Him and surrender to the unchangeable to God. "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths." If you can learn this kind of trust and submission to almighty God, it will prepare you to be a helpmeet. Although only human, a godly husband and father desires only that which is best for you and your family. You can rest under his leadership knowing that as he follows Christ, he is endeavoring to lead his family. Your children will sense your submission and follow your example in honoring their father. They will learn at an early age what it means to be under proper leadership.

A Prayerful and Studious Spirit: Put forth much time and effort in becoming a prayer warrior and student of God's Word. Most likely you'll never again have as much time as you do now. Develop good habits in your devotional life. Study and memorize scriptures. May you say as the Psalmist said, "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee." Learn to call out in prayer and touch the hem of His garment through faith. Pray and fast for the burdens of others. Know what it's like to weep before His throne and pray through. I heard a godly man once say, "Cry out in prayer for things before they are a desperate need." Be proactive in your prayer life, not just reactive. Pray for your godly companion before you even know who he is. Pray for your children's salvation before they reach the age of accountability, not waiting until they're deep in sin. Prevailing prayer is a mighty weapon. Many

battles will be won on your knees. Blessed is the family who has a praying mother!

A Servant's Heart: Our life is not for ourselves. I encourage you to seek to have a servant's heart. May your prayer be at the start of each new day, "Help me to touch someone's life today. Help me to lose myself and find it, Lord, in Thee." Enjoy your youth and reward yourself for your labors, but be purposeful in giving your time and resources to others. Make sacrifices at times that deny your own desires for the benefit of someone else. Those who live only for themselves are the most unsatisfied. They fight all their lives for their rights and their happiness, only to find emptiness in the end. But those who have learned to live a selfless life exemplify contentment and happiness. Their joy is felt because of what they have given, not what they expected to receive. This is a godly mother's heart! She lives for her family. She enjoys her quiet moments with God, but thrives in the busyness of serving her family. There are mothers who resent their family because they feel robbed of their time and ambitions. They have never learned the true joy of living for others. May you abound in a selfless life!

In conclusion, there are many virtues of a godly mother, and this merely scratches the surface. The desire of a mother's heart is to have all the fruits of the Spirit as mentioned in Galatians 5:22, 23, "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law." However, we realize that we are frail human beings who need our wonderful God to help us each and every day. I trust I have given you sweet young sisters some food for thought. May your life be one that draws you nearer to the heart of God. My prayer is that you will keep unspotted from the world's philosophies and find your life hidden in Him. My desire for the young brethren in seeking a wife is taken from Proverbs 31:10, "Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies." May I leave all of you with the challenge from Micah 6:8, "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?" †

MOTHER

Cleve Green

A friend to us, one who's been true,
Someone who's cheered us when we're blue—
We'll never, never find another
Who equals this, our loving mother.

Someone who's kind and good of heart,
Someone who's never shirked her part,
Through long, hard toil she's done her best—
Our mother dear has stood the test.

Our mother's love has led us right,
She's watched our steps from morn to night;
Her prayers have followed each of us,
Have helped us ever in God to trust.

THE POETRY

PAGE



MOTHER'S DAY

Lois O. Painter

She's just a little mother
With smiling, wrinkled face,
But oh, those eyes are shining bright
With love and inner grace.
Sometimes the load's been heavy,
And she has made mistakes ...
She's had a heap of trouble
To keep the children straight.

But someday, round her humble head
There seems to come each year
A halo, and for one brief day
It's your day, Mother dear;
The quick words go unspoken,
Instead, a pleasant smile—
They bring her sweets and flowers
And bid her "rest awhile."

And so, while others praise her
Her own heart meets the test:
"Dear Lord, you know my blunders,
I hope I've done my best."
Then when the day is over—
The hours have flown so fast—
She smiles and wonders in her heart
Why Mother's Day can't last.

A MEDITATION

W. C. Ramsay

For mothers everywhere we pray;
Lord bless them all this Mother's Day.
May we to them give honor due
And to their high ideals be true.
Help us by what we do and say
To prove our love for them each day.
Grant every mother, Lord, to see
The sacred trust she has from Thee
To train her child how he should go,
And by a right example show
The path of virtue and of truth
That he should walk in day of youth.

MOTHER

Mary Wahl

In looking down life's avenue
A primrose path I see
'Tis fraught with golden memories,
That are most dear to me.

There is a cottage on the hill
Where lilacs sweetly bloom;
In memory I see it still—
Happy childhood, what a boon!

As in the dear, sweet bygone days
Within the cot' a voice I hear,
So gently, sweetly, raised in song,
As I brush aside a tear.

My childhood's primrose path again
I tread with Mother near;
Again I roam the woodland meadow
Without a care or fear.

And in the evening by the lamplight
At her knee I kneel in prayer;
I kneel by her who shaped my life,
Who taught me love and light to share.

Ah, Mother, your kind heart,
Your sweet, undying love,
Will guide me each and every day
Till we meet in heaven above.

JUST MOTHER

Floyd R. Nalls

As life's end is drawing nigh
And the years go rolling by,
I often see a vision and sigh
Of a mother gentle and shy.
Ever willing to lend a hand
To her neighbors throughout the land,
Always faithful and ready to stand
In God's Word spoken to man.
Through the years the memory lingers
Of her caress and work-worn fingers,
Fingers that tucked me in to sleep,
After she prayed at Jesus' feet.
What a friend she will always be,
Brother and sister to you and me,
In your sorrow, heartache, and pain,
Always so near and ever the same.
Remember the toils and trials she bore
Long ago in days of yore;
When life's curtain falls from high,
I hope to meet her in the sky. †

THE CHILDREN'S CORNER



STILL HUNGRY

A Bible Lesson by Sis. Rebecca Bland

"Have you fed the calves yet?" my father asked me.

"No sir," I answered. I looked through the milking parlor door to where my younger sister, Wilma, stood waiting. I had promised to show her where some wild hyacinths were blooming.

"I didn't think so," said my father. "I can hear them bawling."

I listened. Sure enough, the calves were crying to be fed. I had been so anxious to go look for flowers that I hadn't even noticed.

I ran outside and motioned for Wilma to join me. "We have to feed the calves before we can go pick flowers," I told her. Together we entered the storage room where the feeding bottles and calf formula were stored.

"There are four calves and two feeding bottles, and so we'll have to make two trips," I said to Wilma. "We can each feed one calf per trip."

We measured enough formula powder into the mixing bucket for four calves, and then we added the appropriate amount of water. With our hands we mixed the powder with the water. "Make sure to get all the lumps out," I reminded Wilma, "or the system will clog up and the calves won't get the formula."

"I don't know how the calves can drink this," Wilma said, wrinkling her nose. "It doesn't smell like real milk at all."

"I know," I agreed. "But they'll fight each other to be first to get it."

After we had filled the first two bottles, we walked down to the calf pen my dad had built in one corner of the livestock shed. When the calves saw us coming, they crowded up to the rail. Four hungry mouths opened, and four heads butted each other away from the two bottles we held tightly in our hands.

"Move over!" I said to one of the calves. "You can have your turn when we come back the second time!" But the calf paid no attention to what I said. He didn't want to wait. I stuck the bottle into one calf's mouth only to have it butted away by the other.

Wilma was having the same problem. "What are we going to do?" she asked me. "They're never going to take turns!"

"Dad showed me a trick one time," I told her, "but you're not going to like it."

"What is it?" my sister asked.

"Watch!" I said. I put my hand into one calf's mouth and the bottle into the other's. "Quick!" I said. "You do the same thing!"

"Eeeew!" my sister replied, but she followed my example. All four calves stood quietly "drinking" despite the fact that only two were getting any milk.

When the bottles were empty, we headed back to refill them so we could feed the other two calves.

"The calves' tongues were like sandpaper," said Wilma as we left the calf pen, "and now my hand feels slimy!"

"Mine too," I agreed. "But at least the trick helped us feed the calves in peace."

Today, when I remember the way we fooled the calves, it reminds me of how people are sometimes tricked into thinking they've been fed when, in reality, they are still hungry.

Our wise saying for this month is found in Proverbs 13:25, which says, "The righteous eateth to the satisfying of his soul: but the belly of the wicked shall want." We may think of this "eating" in two different ways. Eating with your mouth makes your stomach satisfied. Eating with your mind and heart satisfies your soul.

The Bible tells us that "man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." When we read and study the Bible, our souls are fed. We become spiritually strong and healthy.

If we neglect the Bible and fill our time with worldly pleasure, we are not feeding our souls. The temporary feeling of satisfaction may make us feel that we are being fed, but in the end we will still be spiritually hungry. Only God's Word can truly satisfy the soul.

Activity

The scripture "man shall not live by bread alone" can be found in three different places in the Bible. Can you locate all three of them?

Answer to Last Month's Activity

1. honest
2. honorable
3. righteous
4. virtuous
5. blameless †

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. There is a chatroom where you can interact with us and share your prayer requests. Tune in and worship with us!

Please pray for people worldwide
during this distressing time!

A VIGILANT SOLDIER

2019 Cayman Convention Message by Bro. Leston Mann



PRAISE THE Lord! It is good to be back again in another convention. Thanks to Bro. James and the congregation for the invitation. We enjoy being with the saints. The songwriter says, "I love the thrill that I feel when I get together with God's wonderful people; ... What a sight just to see all the happy faces, praising God in heavenly places; I love the thrill that I feel when I get together with God's wonderful people." The Psalmist said, "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!"

I bring greetings from the saints in Honduras, especially from Pastor Johnson. Continue to remember us in your prayers. As I thought about our ministers in Honduras, a lot of them have been passing on; nevertheless, the Lord is faithful. But at the same time, I realize we're not staying young. We thank God for His goodness.

I have the privilege this morning to stand for the Lord. From the time we accept to take a service, our environment changes and our mind changes, but it is good to be about our Father's business.

This is a beautiful theme for the convention: "In the Strength of the Lord We Stand." I'd like to read Ephesians 6:13: "Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand"; and from II Timothy 2:1-4: "Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also. Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier." I'd like to speak to you on the subject, "A Vigilant Soldier."

All believers are soldiers in the army of the Lord, but we have all sorts of soldiers. We have some good soldiers and some that are not so good. There may be some lazy ones, but I'd love to focus on the vigilant soldiers of the cross.

Being called to serve the Lord is a great privilege in which I don't take lightly. I thank God for the day He called and chose me and separated me to be a follower of His. At the age of 18 years, the Lord called me to follow Him, and I've found great joy and delight in serving the Lord. It has become my reason for living. I thank God for His goodness and His mercy. I understand that He has called me to be a soldier of the cross, and I endeavor to be faithful to this call.

It is important for the soldier to take unto himself the whole armor. If you're going to be a good soldier of the cross, you need to take unto yourself the whole armor. The apostle Paul says to us, "Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand." Take the whole armor of God. We are to put on

the breastplate of righteousness. It is very important that we clothe ourselves with the whole armor. A lot of soldiers are short of the armor. Soldier of the Cross, I want to encourage you to take unto yourself the whole armor.

The word *vigilant* means, "to be observant; attentive; alert; to be awake and on guard; concentrating; to be careful; cautious; to be prudent; heedful; to be mindful, prepared, and to be ready." I believe this is what God requires of us all. I believe that is what you want to be. That's the kind of soldier I want to be for Christ. I trust that's the kind of soldier you want to be for Christ. This is not a light thing, but a great thing.

What a blessing it is to be a servant of the most high God! When we were preparing to come to this convention, some sacrifices had to be made. I know this congregation that's hosting this convention had to make sacrifices as well. Surely, we want to go back home with our cups full. We want to get all we can because we will need it tomorrow. A vigilant soldier is to be on the lookout, especially for danger; not only for danger, but for opportunities as well.

A soldier of the cross must be a servant. Sometimes we say too much and we observe too little. It is good to focus, to observe. We have to be very attentive in this race because our adversary the devil is like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. Therefore, it behooves us to always to be on the alert, to be awakened, to be on our guard. The enemy looks for us when we're off guard and when we least expect him. He is cunning, but the Word of God tells us that we are not ignorant of his devices. God has enabled us to be ready. He enables us to be prepared. We have to have our focus on what we want, where we are headed, and not lose that focus on our journey.

I'm afraid many soldiers of the cross have lost their focus. Their affections have been turned to things that don't become us as soldiers of the cross. We need to be careful. We live this Christian life very carefully. By the grace of God, we keep our testimony clean. We try not to get involved in things or say things that would hinder us and damage our testimony. The Psalmist said it like this: "Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength, and my redeemer." We are to be cautious; we are to be prudent.

I love the words of James 3:17: "But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy." We do need that wisdom that cometh from above. It is first pure, then peaceable, and easily entreated. A soldier of the cross is to be heedful. People should be able to talk to you. You should listen. We should never think that we're

too high to be corrected. Anytime we find ourselves in a place “no one can’t tell me anything,” we’re on dangerous ground. We have to be heedful. The vigilant soldier takes heed. The Word of God says, “Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.” We are to be heedful. Listen when people are talking to you; listen when your elder speaks to you; listen when your brother speaks to you.

We also are to be mindful. We are our brother’s keeper. I need to look out for my brother. My brother needs to look out for me. Isn’t it a blessing to have somebody looking out for you, to have somebody to say to you, “You have my back, I’m praying for you”? It makes you feel like you’re not alone. Thank God, in the Church of God, we are not alone. We are brethren. We’re the household of faith. We fight for one another; we pray for one another; we intercede for one another. We are soldiers of the cross. Thank God we are one.

A soldier of the cross needs to be prepared. Sometimes we feel like we’re not prepared. Sometimes ministers feel they’re not prepared to preach a message. Sometimes we might ask, “Is it me, Lord?” But we must be ready. We need to be ready to share our faith. We need to be willing to share our faith. I’m afraid that many believers are ashamed to share their faith. The apostle Paul said, “I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation.” Don’t be ashamed to share your faith. A vigilant soldier of the cross will share his faith. “I believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and I have a testimony to share.” A soldier of the cross must be ready to share his faith. You know, sometimes people catch you off guard. A person once said to me, “Share with me your faith,” and that really caught me off guard. I didn’t expect that person to say that to me, but we must be ready at all times to share our faith that we believe in, that we stand firm on, and we’re willing to die for. We must be ready to share our faith.

A vigilant soldier seeks opportunity. Sometimes there’s an opportunity that opens up to you to share Jesus with an individual. It might be your co-worker or your companion. We must be vigilant. When an opportunity is there, don’t allow it to slip away from you, because it might be the last time that person will have the privilege to hear of Jesus Christ. By you telling him about the love of God, it may just change his heart and mind forever. Vigilant soldiers embrace opportunities that are presented to them. I remember once, while driving a car, there was a man sitting next to me. I was pondering in my spirit because I wanted to share Jesus with him. I wanted to tell him about the Lord. When I finished telling him, he said to me as he was getting out of the car, “I was expecting that from you.” Many times people are expecting us to tell them about Jesus but sometimes we remain silent. We fail to embrace the opportunity that is presented to us. May the Lord help us that we won’t fail to share these opportunities but embrace them.

I would like to deal with a few points of a vigilant soldier. First, *self-preparation*. A soldier of the cross needs to prepare himself. A soldier of the cross has to

study the Word of God. The people of God have to study the Word of God. “Bro. Leston, I become sleepy.” Learn how to fight it. It’s better to go to sleep and get up early to read the Word. Servants of God must learn how to study the Word. Find time to get alone. I’m not just talking about taking up your cell phone and reading a scripture and running off. I’m talking about taking some time and meditating on the Word of God. One doesn’t have to be a preacher to study the Word. Preachers are not the only ones who need to know about Christ. Jesus said, “Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.” A vigilant soldier prepares himself to study the Word. He finds time to study the Word.

A vigilant soldier must be *prayerful*. He has to have a prayer life. Jesus said, “Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation.” A vigilant soldier has to have a prayer life, a prayer life to sustain his testimony. If you have a good prayer life, you will be able to stand in these evil days because you’ve done all to stand. You must have a prayerful life. What a blessing to talk to the Lord!

*Sitting at the feet of Jesus,
O what words I hear him say!
Happy place! so near, so precious!
May it find me there each day.
Sitting at the feet of Jesus,
I would look upon the past;
For his love has been so gracious,
It has won my heart at last.*

What a place with a sense of God to be at the feet of Jesus! It is there where you have fellowship with God. You’ll find joy in just tarrying before the Lord. “There I love to weep and pray; While I from His fullness gather grace and comfort every day.” We have to have a prayer life, one that stands out. If you don’t have a prayer life, you won’t be able to be a vigilant soldier. It requires a prayerful life. Vigilant soldiers also have to fast. We have to make a sacrifice so that the inner man can gain strength from the Lord. What a blessing it is to tarry before the Lord!

We have to prepare ourselves. Let me use an example taken from I Samuel 17. I Samuel 17:38-40 says: “And Saul armed David with his armour, and he put an helmet of brass upon his head; also he armed him with a coat of mail. And David girded his sword upon his armour, and he assayed to go; for he had not proved it. And David said unto Saul, I cannot go with these; for I have not proved them. And David put them off him. And he took his staff in his hand, and chose him five smooth stones out of the brook, and put them in a shepherd’s bag which he had, even in a scrip; and his sling was in his hand: and he drew near to the Philistine.”

David was going to face a giant. We need to prepare ourselves before we get to the battlefield. Don’t wait until we’re in a problem to start a good prayer life, but many times it starts there because we’re right down in the valley. A soldier must be prepared. David took off that armor he was given, for when he was going to face Goliath, he was going in the name of the Lord. David knew in himself that he needed to make that prepara-

tion. We know God will fill our mouths with the Word, but we have to study it. God will use us, but we must do some preparations ourselves. David went to face this giant, but when he got to the brook, he got five stones because he knew he would need them. Brethren, we need the whole armor.

A vigilant soldier prepares himself for the battle. David didn't go to the battle empty-handed, for he knew there was something for him to do. So he got those five stones. He only needed one, but he said, "I want to have enough. I don't want just enough. I want to have more than enough." Sometimes we feel like we have enough, but we need to have more than enough. We don't know when we'll need it. Don't just live on enough. "I'm barely making it." Get all you can while you can, for you will need it on the journey. Prepare yourselves. That was one of the problems with Peter. Jesus told him to pray, but he went to sleep. Jesus woke him up again and told him to pray, but he fell asleep again.

Let me say here that to be a vigilant soldier, we need to be willing. The love of God constrains us. It constrains us to go forward. A vigilant soldier will always want to pray. A vigilant soldier of the cross knows that the success of his prayer life is in prayer. He doesn't have to be forced to pray. You don't have to force him to study. There's something in his inner being that tells him that he needs and has to do it because there's too much at stake. He's prayerful. He loves the service of his God.

A vigilant soldier loves the *fellowship of the saints*. I become concerned when saints keep missing services. The Bible says that it is there where the Lord bestows His blessings, even life forevermore. It is in the assembly of the saints that the glory of God comes down. When we walk out of that door, we feel like we can fight another battle because iron sharpeneth iron. "Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend" (Proverbs 27:17). It encourages us to go forward. When I hear what Bro. James is facing, then I realize if he made it through his battle, I can make it through mine. Your testimony will encourage me. My testimony will encourage you. "But woe to him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up" (Ecclesiastes 4:10). We can't be alone. We have to love the fellowship of the saints.

A vigilant soldier realizes that *there are some things he doesn't need to be carrying*. Sometimes what happens is, he is loaded down with other things that are not of any help to him. These hold him back from where God really wants to take him. He has to leave some things from off him. He says, "Take this; I don't need this."

Sometimes people want to load us down with things that are not of God. I love how the apostle Paul wrote it: "Let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us." We have to lay some things aside, some things that are not of God, and some things that would hinder us from succeeding to where God wants to take us. God wants to do a work in our lives. We can't run this race with patience by carrying things that we can let go: bitterness, hatred, malice. Those are things that hinder us. They will stop our fellowship.

Resentment in the heart—get rid of it! If it's not helping, take it off.

I heard a story once of a man who was an idolatrous man. He was on a ship and the ship began to sink, but before it sank, he ran back inside and took his little idol with him. He jumped off the boat and he began to swim with one hand while holding his little idol in the other hand. After a long time swimming, he came to himself and said, "If you are my god [idol], you should be saving me, not me saving you." So the man threw away his idol. He didn't need something that wasn't helping him.

If there is something in your life that is not helping you, get rid of it. Get rid of it! There are some things you just don't need. They are of no help to you. Get rid of them! Lay them aside for your own good. There are some things you have to do for yourself. Don't allow people to load you down with things that are not helpful to you. Lay some things off and move forward with the Lord. There are blessings awaiting the faithful.

The vigilant soldier is *faithful*. The definition of *faithful* is "to be loyal, constant, and true." A vigilant soldier has some qualities that sets him aside; makes him different. What a blessing it is to be loyal to the cross! A soldier of the cross must be dependable. If Bro. James doesn't have dependable members, it would be hard to succeed. If he appoints someone to do the business and asks, "Sister, did you do the job?" and she says, "I forgot, I didn't have the time," then she needs to learn to be dependable. We have to be dependable. God has to be able to depend on you. You have to be dependable. Don't fail your post. Fill it as you are responsible. Be responsible in your duty; be responsible in your office. I'm talking about being a vigilant soldier, a watchful soldier. The Bible calls him "a good soldier of Jesus Christ."

A vigilant soldier must *endure* some things. He has to learn to endure some hardness and to endure them without complaining and quitting. He has to endure them without giving up or backing down. "Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ." Endure some things. There are people who do not want to endure anything. They want everything smooth and at their disposal. They want to just slide right through. We have to endure some hardness. People speak mean things about you, but you must keep on going. Don't let that take your testimony away.

Sometimes people go through hard things and they don't want to testify anymore of how good God has been to them. They go through hardness and they don't have a song anymore. They don't want to sing. When you're going through hardness, keep on moving for God. Just because things are hard, don't give up. It is then you should press on. The apostle Paul said, "Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

Endure hardness for the elect's sake. Endure the difficulties on the journey. You wonder sometimes if some people have any hard times. They always have a

smile. They always show up for services. They always have a testimony. They can always sing a song and you wonder if they ever have hard times. Some of them are going through some difficult times. Some have unfaithful husbands and unfaithful wives, but they are vigilant soldiers of the cross. They still give God the praise. We will face some hard times, but we must still give God the praise because in the Lord is our strength. In the Lord is where our strength is. In the strength of the Lord we stand. We have to stay close to God.

Don't allow anything to separate you from the Lord. Don't allow anyone to separate you. The apostle Paul was able to say, "None of these things move me." Some things will come to move you, but when you're a faithful soldier of the cross, you won't allow those things to move you. You will learn that this also will pass away. It will only endure for a moment, but the Lord will see you through. Endure hardness as a good soldier of the cross.

There are some things soldiers of the cross don't entangle themselves with. There are some things we don't involve ourselves in. It may even seem right sometimes. It seems right, but many times it's not right. There's a way that seems right, but after careful consideration, God begins to reveal Himself to us, and says, "That's not the way, My Son; that's not the way, My Daughter. There's a better way."

In this Christian race, we face some hardships. We face some difficulties, but we look at the end. Though we may have to endure some hardships, we look at the end. We remind ourselves and encourage ourselves, and Jesus tells us, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."

Verse four of our text (II Timothy 2) says, "No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier." You are chosen to be a soldier. Jesus said, "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you." We were chosen to be soldiers. Who chose us? Christ Himself. He came seeking for us. Lost in sin, He found us. He found us in that horrible pit. He found us in the miry clay of sin and set our feet on the Rock. He established our goings and has put a new song in our hearts. He has put songs of praise and thanksgiving in our hearts. We are chosen to be soldiers. What a privilege to be chosen! We are chosen by the Lord to be a witness. We are chosen by the Lord to be a testimony. He is not ashamed to call us brethren because He has prepared a place for us. Isn't that a blessing?

The ultimate goal of a vigilant soldier is to please God. That's our ultimate goal, even though we have to deny ourselves in the process. When we please God, He will work everything out for our good. Sometimes we may be struggling in some area of our lives and wonder what to do and where to turn. Let us focus on pleasing God. We may have to suffer in the process, but we want to please God.

In closing, Matthew 7:21 says, "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." That's our ultimate goal. "No man that

warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier." What a blessing it is to please the Lord! We know that when we please the Lord, it will be well with us.

The Lord bless you this morning in Jesus' name. †

BIBLE LESSON OF THE MONTH

SANCTIFICATION

WHO CAN BE SANCTIFIED?

Scriptures: John 14:16, 17; Acts 5:32; Matthew 5:6; Luke 11:13; Acts 2:38; Ephesians 5:25-27.

John 14:16 And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;

17 Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.

Acts 5:32 And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him.

Matthew 5:6 Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.

Luke 11:13 If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?

Acts 2:38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

Ephesians 5:25 Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;

26 That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,

27 That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.

Memory Verse: Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word.—Ephesians 5:25, 26.

Aim: To teach who can be sanctified.

INTRODUCTION

THE WORD of God teaches that all things were created by God, for He alone is the true and living God and the source of all energy and power. Therefore, man is a product of His great wisdom and creative power, made in His image, an offspring of God. We learn from the Scriptures that God is no respecter of persons; so it follows He would, if permitted, bestow upon all His created people the richest blessings that He has to offer. He is not at liberty to impart His rich blessings promiscuously, but only as men conform to the teachings of His Word. So in a broad sense all can receive the blessing of sanctification if they will, and all do who meet the requirements.

MEDITATIONS

THE PROMISE TO THE DISCIPLES—John 14:16—He shall give—In answer to the prayer of Jesus, the priceless Gift of the Spirit was to be made available to the disciples, and not only to the disciples of that day, but also to all who should follow after. Jesus, who had comforted them while on Earth, was soon to depart; but He promised to send a Comforter who would abide forever, which was the Holy Ghost, whose coming into the heart by faith would cleanse it, making it a fit place for His dwelling.

COMFORTER FOR BELIEVERS ONLY—John 14:17—Whom the world cannot receive—Here is further proof that sanctification is a work separate from justification. Sinners (“the world”) cannot receive the Holy Spirit. They must first be converted.

OBTAINED BY OBEDIENCE—Acts 5:32—That obey him—The first step in obedience is to yield to the convicting Spirit of God in turning away from a life of sin. The next step is to hunger and thirst to the point where seeking begins, which is rewarded by asking in faith.

DILIGENCE REWARDED—Matthew 5:6—Hunger and thirst—He who has a good appetite for the things of the Lord is sure to receive a good supply of His bounties. However, the blessings of God are valuable and are not passed out as pearls before swine. If we would receive the blessings of God, we must deeply desire them and be subject to them. He who has a deep desire for God’s ways is blessed indeed.

THE SEEKER REWARDED—Luke 11:13—That ask him—According to God’s plan, to receive we must ask. This verse teaches that God is eager and ever ready to sanctify, to bestow His Spirit upon the believer who asks Him. A good parent gives gladly and freely to his child, but God will give His Spirit more freely and more gladly; so none needs to be destitute of the Spirit of God. Remember, however, it is only the redeemed who are in a position to receive.

WHO CAN RECEIVE THE SPIRIT?—Acts 2:38—Ye shall receive—Those who had repented and embraced the doctrine of water baptism as a testimony to the world of the remission of sins were in line to receive the Holy Ghost with His heart cleansing. (We are not saying a person cannot be sanctified before being baptized—Paul was and so was Cornelius and his household.) He comes into the heart only as an invited guest, and as such we must treat Him.

SANCTIFICATION FOR THE CHURCH—Ephesians 5:25, 26—Sanctify it—It is quite evident from this scripture that to receive the blessings of sanctification we must first be members of God’s church. Membership is gained not after the modern pattern of church joining but by the new birth. So all who are born again, thus being members of God’s church, are eligible to receive sanctification. Again, this proves beyond refutation that sanctification is a work separate from justification. Consequently, they who teach that the experience is received in justification shut themselves against the receiving of the Spirit. He who fails to

receive the Spirit is soon going to find himself powerless in the face of temptation, resorting back to the popular defense that it is impossible to live without sin.

CHURCH TO BE PURE—Ephesians 5:27—Not having spot or wrinkle—The church in the justified state is not so powerful, beautiful or dependable as in the sanctified state. In a normal congregation, there are always certain to be babes in Christ who must be led into the sanctified experience. It is the work of the ministry to teach and exhort, but the Holy Ghost does the cleansing.

CONCLUSION

In this lesson we have presented scriptures that show sanctification is for the true disciple of Christ, one who is truly saved from his sins. For John has quoted the Master as saying “the world” cannot receive the Holy Spirit.

As we receive light we must walk in it. So if you are saved and have not yet been filled with the Holy Spirit, it is your sacred duty to obtain the experience by presenting your all to the Lord a living sacrifice.

We would like to point out that sanctification is Holy Ghost baptism and Holy Ghost baptism is sanctification! The Bible does not teach these as separate “works” as some religious groups do. Neither does the Bible teach that one must speak in “tongues” as an evidence.

Having received such a wonderful experience you need to impart this truth to others, for he who has or receives the experience has something that far exceeds anything the world has to offer.

Peter declared in Acts 2:37, 38 that the promise was to as many as the Lord shall call, and in His calling He declared, “It shall come to pass that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved.”

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

1. Describe God’s attitude toward His people.
2. What hinders God’s giving sanctification to everyone?
3. What are the acts of obedience that are required in order to receive the Gift?
4. Can half-hearted seeking bring the blessing?
5. How willing is God to give the blessing? (Luke 11:13).
6. Can anyone outside God’s church receive the blessing of sanctification?
7. What does sanctification do for the church?
8. Why is a man blessed because he hungers and thirsts after righteousness? †

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WINNING A CROWN

By the late C. W. Naylor



Part XXI

Adorning the Doctrine

IN TITUS 2:10 we read, “That they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things.” The doctrine of God as revealed in the New Testament is a glorious system of truth. His law is a high and holy law, and one that excites our admiration. When it is preached, it draws men unto it and unto God. Even in the worst of men there is something that approves it. It is strikingly beautiful and high. It has a grandeur all its own. The problem of the Christian is to translate it from words into deeds and life and character. When this is done, the gospel is seen to be a practical reality, and not a lofty and impossible standard.

Our lives are to adorn the gospel in all things. To adorn means to ornament, to beautify. Only that which is beautiful and attractive can adorn; hence if we adorn the doctrine of Christ we must be attractive and beautiful in character and life. But can our lives and characters be such as to adorn the doctrine? God has promised to “beautify the meek with salvation” (Psalm 149:4). In Psalm 29:2 we are told to “worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.” In the sight of the Lord, therefore, holiness is beautiful. It is also beautiful in the sight of men when they look at it with unprejudiced eyes. Sin, on the other hand, is unlovely and defiling in all its aspects. There is nothing in it to adorn the life or the character. It is ruinous. “Sin is a reproach to any people” (Proverbs 14:34). Only when we are made holy can we adorn the doctrine of Jesus Christ our Savior. Only when we are made partakers of the divine nature and have in us the beauty of the Son of God can we shine so as to adorn the doctrine as jewels. Speaking of His children, the Lord said, “And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels” (Malachi 3:17). Speaking of His people collectively as His bride, the Lord says, “And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints” (Revelation 19:8). This shows a condition in which His people must be in order to adorn His doctrine, and this is the condition to which He will bring us if we but give Him the opportunity. Jesus said, “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven” (Matthew 5:16). It is in this way that we adorn the doctrine. The doctrine teaches such good works, and when those good works are seen in our lives, it reacts to the glory of the doctrine and to Him who gave the doctrine.

If we desired to adorn ourselves, we should not put on old rags, stick lumps of clay around over our clothing, nor put on anything that was repellent. We know very well that such would attract no one. We would not smear our faces with soot or dirty grease to render ourselves attractive. How ashamed the housewife feels when visitors come and find her children with dirty

hands and faces and clothes ragged and unclean! As these things destroy attractiveness, so does ill conduct. One who professes to be a Christian and yet whose life and character are not Christlike cannot adorn the doctrine. Unkindness in a person does not attract us to him nor to his religion. Untruthfulness or insincerity is not only a blot on his own character and life, but a blot on his religion if he professes to be a Christian. To be harsh or rude or unreasonable, to be selfish or self-willed, or to be proud, is to dishonor God instead of honoring Him.

Sometimes persons are hard to please. Do as you will, you cannot satisfy them. They are always wanting things some other way. These same persons are sometimes very well pleased with themselves, but nobody else can come up to their standard or do as they desire him to do. This is not a characteristic of holiness. This is not something that will honor God. Instead of these things and other things like them being an advertisement of grace, they show the lack of it. What would such persons do if they were to go to heaven? The mere transference from earth to heaven will not change our moral state. If there is anything in us here that we should not like to have in us in eternity, here is the place to get the change made. Here is the place to have our lives made as we desire them to be in eternity. Here is the place for character building. Here is the place to become Christlike. Here is the place to adorn the doctrine, that men may see your good works. God has told us that nothing that defiles shall enter heaven. Only that which is beautiful and good will be there.

Oh, for more holy lives! Oh, for more consistency among those who profess to be Christ's! Oh, for more of the glory of the Lord resting upon hearts and lives! Oh, for more of the beauty of salvation, the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit! Many professors of religion adorn themselves outwardly with gold, pearls, and costly array, with feathers and flowers, and with many other things that they think adorn them; but oh for that inner adornment of heart that is precious in the sight of God and that lets the beauty of God's light shine out into the world! How often outward adornment covers a heart filled with iniquity! How often such adornment is the outward show of that inward pride which God hates! How often it reveals the corruption of the nature instead of its purity!

God wants our lives to be adorned with jewels, and the gold in which those jewels are to be set is purity. This is the background upon which all the jewels of character are to be displayed. It is the fundamental requirement in every life. If we are not pure, our lives will not be pure, and God will not be glorified. Impurity in word or thought or desire cannot long be hidden; it will manifest itself, and always in a way to dishonor the individual and his God. The pure in heart and life always shine for God, and they always adorn His doctrine. God wants us to be true and faithful. He desires “truth in the inward parts” (Psalm 51:6). He desires truth manifested in the life. He wants all our words to be true. He does not want us to speak evil of any man. He does not want us to speak that which dishonors Him, or that which is evil in His sight. He wants us to be faithful, “showing all good fidelity,” as He has said.

Fidelity is one of the most glorious of Christian virtues. God wants us to be faithful to our word, faithful in our dealings, faithful in our public life and in our private life, and faithful in every way. In this way we can adorn the doctrine. If we are unfaithful, we dishonor Him. He wants us to be earnest and sincere, to be gentle and meek, to have the law of kindness in our tongues. He wants us to be kind in our thoughts, in our actions, in our words. He would have the sound of His own kindness in our voices, the look of His own kindness in our eyes, and His own pity and tenderness in our feelings. He desires us to be temperate—temperate in our lives, our actions, our words in every way. If we are to adorn the doctrine, we must avoid excesses and extremes. We must also be reasonable in the positions we take, in our actions, and in the things that we require of others. By this means people will see that we are Christlike, and the doctrine will be glorified and adorned as no earthly jewels can adorn it. Men will listen to it and say that it is true, for that person lives just as the Book teaches. †

GOOD WILL TOWARD OTHERS— A CHARACTERISTIC OF CHRISTIANITY

Radio Message by Bro. James Arch

I WILL be reading from the third Epistle of John, the latter part of the New Testament, verses 2-4: “Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth. For I rejoiced greatly, when the brethren came and testified of the truth that is in thee, even as thou walkest in the truth. I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.”

We live in a world of much hostility and conflict. It seems like it's endless; and everywhere we turn, we enter conversations with other people, and we hear comments, such as, “Well, these are the last days” and “These are signs of the last times.” Yes, the world is going through some serious problems, but thank God, Jesus came into the world to make a difference in the life of the individual person. Individuals make up the world.

When the angel announced the birth of Jesus, he was joined by a multitude, saying, “Peace on earth, good will toward men.” I said that to say this: there is no space in the heart of a Christian for ill-will. I thank God for Christianity—the Christian way—the way of salvation. I can't promote anything else because that's all I know. I was born into the kingdom of God. God changed my life. He gave me something to live for and turned me around and took me off the course I was on. So I can only promote what I know. I thank God for it.

Sometimes even Christians fall short in manifesting a Christlike attitude toward others. It is a real problem in our world today. You will find it in all circles of humanity. Let me say in passing that people are people. It doesn't matter where we're from, what nationality we may have, we're all people. We're all alike in some ways.

We find in the book of Genesis where a quarrel arose between Abram's herdsmen and Lot's herdsmen. Abram took the Christian attitude. He said, “Lot, you take this, and I'll take that, for we be brethren.” Those were not the exact words from the Bible, but that's what the Bible meant. Abram bent backwards for peace and for the Christian way. “We be brethren”; what a statement! Even Christians sometimes can't get along together. Supposed Christians, at least, can't get along with one another. It's not a good image to present to the world.

We cannot be right with God until we are right with our fellow men. Reconciliation is stronger than revenge. Thank God for reconciliation. There is always a way out with God. When it seems impossible, there is still room for reconciliation. God can even bring marriages back together, homes together, husbands and wives together, co-workers together, and family members together. That's what God does. It must be hard to live with grudges, envy, and hate in the heart. It must be rough to live that way. You see, Christianity is based on love, and it rejoices in another's success. John mentions love 25 or more times in his epistles. In fact, he was called “the apostle of love.”

The text that I read was written to a consistent Christian named Gaius. This text emphasizes sincerity, hospitality, and Christian character. Gaius was worthy of affection. John said that he walked in truth. “For I rejoiced greatly, when the brethren came and testified of the truth that is in thee, even as thou walkest in the truth.” Why is it so difficult for so many people, seemingly, to walk the walk of God? There's a lot of talk. This is not something we talk and talk and talk. This is something we walk. It's a life. It's not just sitting down in a church building for a couple of minutes and then going home. It's a life that we live. Christianity is a practical life, and God never designed it that we couldn't live it. It's a practical life.

Gaius was given to hospitality. III John, verses 5, 6: “Beloved, thou doest faithfully whatsoever thou doest to the brethren, and to strangers; Which have borne witness of thy charity before the church: whom if thou bring forward on their journey after a godly sort, thou shalt do well.”

Again, John was called “the beloved apostle.” He learned the lessons of love in the school of Christ. Let me tell you, Jesus was a teacher. He was not only a preacher but a teacher. If you'll look into the thirteenth chapter of St. John, you will see there, “Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of his disciples, whom Jesus loved.”

John was intrusted with the care of Jesus' mother. Do you remember the story in the nineteenth chapter of St. John? “Now there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son! Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home” (verses 25-27).

John was full of energy and ambition. If you'll look into the tenth chapter of Mark, you will see there, “And James and John, the sons of Zebedee, come unto him,

saying, Master, we would that thou shouldst do for us whatsoever we shall desire. And he said unto them, What would ye that I should do for you? They said unto him, Grant unto us that we may sit, one on thy right hand, and the other on thy left hand, in thy glory" (verses 25-27).

The love of God in John's heart caused him to wish for his brother in Christ two outstanding blessings. Notice the verse I read earlier: "Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health." First of all, John loved Gaius. He said, "Whom I love in the truth." There is nothing again in the world like love. "Love covereth a multitude of sins," the Bible tells us.

It was the love of God that brought Jesus into the world. It was love for us. It was love for the cause of Christ that caused the old pioneers of the church to travel around on horseback, in boats, and in covered wagons to preserve this wonderful truth and gospel that we have today.

John wished for Gaius to prosper in his spiritual life. "Above all else," he said. What a wish! "I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health." When a lot of people make a little bit of strides for the Lord, and avail themselves and come up, other people become jealous and try to beat them down and discredit them. They won't do it themselves and they don't want somebody else doing it. That's how it is.

John wished and hoped and prayed for Gaius' spiritual prosperity above all else and also his temporal undertakings in life. In whatever Gaius pursued, John prayed and wished that he would prosper and be blessed of God. "I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health." He prayed for Gaius' physical health as well—"even as thy soul prospereth." It seems he was already prospering in his soul, but John wished him well in his body, too. Thank God for the power of God in a man's life or a woman's life that can reach out to other people. Gaius would have to do the things for himself that would help him to retain good health. The Bible tells that we must work out our own life and our own salvation with fear and trembling. We, too, have to do the things we need to do to keep ourselves fit and in order.

Ill-will is bad for our health. Envy, jealousy, etc., are not good for people's health. The Bible gives us the prescription. It says in the thirty-seventh Psalm, "Fret not thyself because of evildoers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity. Trust in the Lord, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed. Delight thyself also in the Lord; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart. Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass. And he shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noonday. Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him: fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass." My Beloved Friends, "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths."

Love prevents and cures a lot of problems. We live in a very preventive conscious world today. The Bible says in I Corinthians, chapter 13, "[Love] suffereth long, and is kind; [love] envieth not; [love] vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. [Love] never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. And now abideth faith, hope, [love], these three; but the greatest of these is [love]." †

SPIRITUAL AFFECTIONS

By the late C. E. Orr

THIS MORNING while the rippling book, the forest tree, and the autumn flower were declaring the glory of God to my heart, and the early bird and gentle breeze were singing an inspiring song to my soul, I fell to meditating upon the goodness of God and the affection of the human mind for Him. Very naturally this text of Scripture came to mind: "Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth." My meditations were delightful and edifying to my soul.

By spiritual affection we mean that disposition of the heart and mind which so fondly and warmly attaches us to God and holy things; that endearing feeling which gives a relish for prayer and for reading the Bible, and makes all the service of God delightful. The Psalmist beautifully sang: "O taste and see that the Lord is good," and, "How sweet are thy words unto my taste." Now it is through the affections that the soul has those sweet tastes of God and His Word. It is the taste which we have for foods that gives us such a relish for them. It is the affections that give relish for heavenly things; therefore we cannot fail to see the necessity of keeping a strong affection for things above, otherwise the worship of God will become insipid and unenjoyable. To keep the affections strong for heavenly things, they must not be "set" on earthly things.

It is through the affections that we have experience. Some may say that it is through faith that we have experience, and they say not wrongly. But true, genuine faith reaches and awakens the affections of the heart, and gives sweet taste, which is really experience. It is faith that brings the Word of God in contact with the affections, and we taste it and have actual experience. It is not what you read or hear or mentally comprehend, but what you taste down in the palate of your soul that gives you inner experience.

If you would know whether you have sincere affection for things above, look to your taste and see what



sweetness, what savor, what relish you find in them. Is the closet communion truly delightful to your inmost soul? Oh, is it sweet, precious, and heavenly? Is it that dear and delightful place where the moments speed by on too swift wing? Is the Word of God so savory that you become unconscious to all else in your enjoyment of it? Do you have such a love for the mansion Jesus has prepared for you in heaven, that you think much more about it than you do things here below? It is by this delicious taste that the soul is nourished, faith is strengthened, and the Christian life is made a most heavenly life. It is through the affections that the soul finds a “feast of good things” in the hour of communion with God, and finds “wine on the lees well refined” in reading the Word of God.

When it sometimes pleases God to withdraw the sense of divine love, the affectionate soul will thirst for Him like a little flower thirsts for the evening dew. If you can look back to a time when you had a keener relish for God and His Word, for prayer and prayer meeting than you have now, your taste is impaired, and something is working death to your soul. †

—Reprinted from January 1975 issue



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



QUESTION: Is it right for one who claims to be a true minister of God to pray to God to destroy his enemies?

ANSWER: Jesus rebuked His disciples for wanting to “destroy” people. He said He did not come to destroy but to save. God does not act contrary to His Word. Sin does force God to pour out His wrath, but we are to leave that to Him. Jesus said we are to love our enemies. Are you going to pray for God to destroy someone you love?

QUESTION: Please explain John 20:21-23.

ANSWER: Jesus sent His apostles to preach the gospel and empowered them to declare authoritatively the principles of righteousness and salvation. When He breathed upon them and said, “Receive ye the Holy Ghost,” He did not give them the Holy Spirit, for that was not given until the day of Pentecost. Compare John 16:7, 13; 14:25; 7:39. When He said, “Whose soever sins ye remit they are remitted and whose soever sins ye retain they are retained,” He did not give them power to forgive sins of their own will and choice or to refuse to forgive sins, but He empowered them to tell men how they might receive remission, the conditions they must meet, and He gave them authority to declare that those

who had met those conditions were acceptable to God. On the other hand, He gave them authority to proclaim that those who refused to meet those conditions could not be saved. In other words, it was authority to execute the judgments of God in the world according to the revealed truth of God.

QUESTION: What is the difference between conscience and the Spirit of God in man?

ANSWER: The Bible speaks of one's conscience, especially the New Testament writings of Paul, but nowhere does it give us a description of it.

Random House Dictionary says it is “the sense of what is right or wrong in one's conduct or motives, impelling one toward right action.” Since the Bible speaks of some having a conscience seared with a hot iron, it would not always be safe to follow. The Bible is given to us to live by; our conscience is to be guided by it.

The Spirit of God is the third person in the God-head. If you speak of man's spirit, we understand it to be the “nonmaterial self,” that which goes to be with the Lord—if you have been regenerated—when you die physically, that which leaves the body at death.

QUESTION: Why were the two men on their way to Emmaus unable to recognize Jesus as soon as He joined them?

ANSWER: Luke 24:16 tells us, “But their eyes were holden that they should not know him.” Mark tells us, Mark 16:12, “After that he appeared *in another form* unto two of them, as they walked, and went into the country.”

QUESTION: We understand the gift of languages to be the ability to speak a language you had not learned. Paul was not among the apostles at Pentecost. Does his statement about speaking in languages “more than all of you” imply that he was endowed with the natural ability of speaking different languages?

ANSWER: Paul was an educated man who KNEW various languages. We have no record in the Bible of his being given the gift of languages. Note what Paul says in I Corinthians 14:18, 19, “I thank my God, I speak with tongues [languages] more than ye all. Yet in the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue.” From this we see, with his knowledge of different languages, he could speak them anywhere, but when it came to a worship service where he wanted to teach people the gospel, five words that could be understood would do more good than ten thousand that could not be understood.

QUESTION: In Romans 14:23, does the word *doubteth* mean to “be uncertain” or to “be convinced it's not God's will”?

ANSWER: I will quote Adam Clarke on this verse: “This verse is a necessary part of the preceding, and should be read thus, *But he that doubteth is condemned*

if he eat, because he eateth not of faith. The meaning is sufficiently plain. He that feeds on any kind of meats prohibited by the Mosaic law, with the persuasion in his mind that he may be wrong in so doing, is condemned by his conscience for doing that which he has reason to think God has forbidden. ... Whatever he does, without full persuasion of its lawfulness (see verse 22), is to him sin; for he does it under a conviction that he may be wrong in so doing.”

I would like to add this to what Clarke has said: Imputed sin involves a person’s will! When you do that which you believe to be wrong, whether it really is or not, you have sinned, for your will has consented to do wrong. You are saying, I am willing to disobey God; even if it is wrong, I am going to do it. †

SIN—WHAT IT IS AND WHAT IT IS NOT

By Bro. Richard Lehman

What sin is:

Common definitions are—

- Missing the mark.
- An immoral act considered to be a transgression against divine law.
- A word, deed, or desire in opposition to the eternal law of God.

It is also a conscience matter, as we must comprehend “sin” to be found guilty of it. “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; In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel.”—Romans 2:14-16.

The objective of the gospel is to introduce us personally to Jesus Christ so we can be forgiven of our past sins, and to enable us to walk in a new life. A life without having to commit sin anymore.

This is why Jesus told the woman that was caught in the sin of adultery, “Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more” (John 8:11).

But some would attempt to make avoiding sin an impossible objective. They do this by redefining what sin is. They claim that a temptation to sin is sin. Or that a mistake is sin. But what does the Bible teach us about these things?

From the beginning, sin was not a mistake nor a temptation. In the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve were warned clearly what sin was to them (eating from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil) and what the consequence would be: death—“And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.”—Genesis 2:16, 17. So when Adam and Eve acted out against this very clearly understood commandment, they

sinned. “Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die.”—Genesis 3:1-4.

The temptation from the serpent was not sin. But their intentional action was a sin. It was not a mistake. They fully understood that they were going against the commandment of God. “And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.”—Genesis 3:6.

James clearly identified for us when sin takes place: “Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him. Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death. Do not err, my beloved brethren.”—James 1:12-16. So James clearly shows us that “enduring temptation” and being tried by temptation can be a blessing; because we don’t give into the temptation, to do the evil.

And James shows us how we are tempted: when a person “is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.” But he goes on further to show that sin only happens when “lust hath conceived.” Conception in the physical world happens when the egg is fertilized. Sin happens when the temptation penetrates into the heart’s desire, and the person from his or her heart acts upon the temptation to do it. “Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.”

Sin is spiritual death, because it separates us from God, our spiritual source of life.

What sin is not:

Sin is not a mistake.

Something can be “legally defined” to be a sin. But if it was done mistakenly, without the knowledge that it was a sin, it is not a sin that separates that person from God. Because the purpose “to sin” never entered into the heart desires of the individual.

In addition, something done without pre-thought, as a sudden reaction to an external happening is not a sin.

A common example of this is: before salvation, a sinner can form many “reactionary” habits. Things that they do without even thinking about it. For example: the habit of cursing whenever anything goes wrong. Many form this habit over the years. Then they get saved—they ask Jesus to forgive them of their sins. Then later something bad suddenly happens, and by habit, without thought or intention “to sin” they let out a curse word. Though technically this is a “bad” thing

to do, it was not done intentionally, but by reactionary habit. A habit they must now begin to work on to change.

So, technically, there are actions that are defined as sin, but to the one that does it by mistake or by reactionary habit, it does not separate him or her from God spiritually (because the will to sin is not involved). But when someone sins willfully against God, that brings spiritual death, just as it did for Adam and Eve.

“My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world. And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him.”—I John 2:1-5.

The context of forgiveness is immediately followed with the purpose to no longer sin again. †

THE MARK OF THE BEAST

By the late Harold Barber

IN THESE days of war and chaos much is being said about the “mark of the beast” and a world dictator. “Would-be” prophets have spun fine theories to the public, telling them that a time will come when we will be brought under a world dictator and be compelled to receive a mark in our forehead or right hand before we can sell or buy anything. This theory is based upon a misinterpretation of the scriptures, and has no biblical foundation whatsoever.

In Revelation 13:16-18, John the Revelator is speaking of the image of the beast, and the power he has to “cause all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: and that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is six hundred threescore and six.” Before we could rightly say that the mark of the beast is, we must be able to locate the beast and know what or who he is. The last verse says: “Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his number is six hundred three score and six.” Here in this verse John has told us how we can locate the beast. When we begin to look for this man with the number six hundred three score and six, where else could we look in the spiritual world than to the Pope of Rome? The lettering on the crown of the Pope of Rome is, “Vicarius Filii Dei.” The numerals as used by ancient Rome, made up from the lettering on the Pope’s crown, make a total of six hundred threescore and six, the same figure John gives us in verse eighteen.

V I C A R I U S F I L I I D E I
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The scriptures point the Pope out particularly as the “man of sin,” “the son of perdition” (II Thessalonians 2:3, 4). He is the head of the Roman Catholic Church, who claims himself to be the visible head of the true church here in the world, the vicar (deputy) of Christ. The Latin words “Vicarius Filii Dei” represent his official title and name, and mean “Vicar of the Son of God.” He is the official head of the Church of Home, and John said the number of the beast was the number of a man. Then the scripture points directly to the Roman Catholic Church as the first beast John speaks of in the 13th chapter of Revelation. Study the nature and characteristics of the beast, place them beside church history and you’ll find the Roman Church fits in the picture perfectly.

The Second Beast

In verses 11 and 14 we read, “And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth, and he had two horns like a lamb and he spake as a dragon. And he deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by the sword, and did live.” The first beast of Revelation 13 is Papal Rome and John saw him rise up out of the sea (meaning people, multitudes and nations, Revelation 17:15). Papal Rome originated out of the ruins of Pagan Rome, which crumbled before the onward march of Christianity. Pagan Rome denied Christianity and finally was subdued by it, and then Papal Rome came acknowledging it. Now the second beast John saw came up out of the earth (the earthly institution of Catholicism), and caused the people to make an image to the first beast. This second beast symbolizes Protestantism. During the period of time between A.D. 530 until A.D. 1530 the entire world was held under the power of Papal Rome, without a Christian nation on earth, but the bursting forth of the Sixteenth Century Reformation brought about a new era in the world of religion. It was at this time that the second beast appeared on the scene, the two-horned beast symbolizing Protestantism. Martin Luther and other reformers began preaching the Bible as best they understood it, and according to the light they had. They preached, “The just shall live by faith,” and many accepted it and broke loose from the bondage of Catholicism. England and Germany became Christian nations. Many declared their freedom from Catholicism through the preaching of the Sixteenth Century reformers. Then came the days of sect making, the birthday of Protestantism or sectarianism. The reformers could not agree on some doctrinal points, so they broke away from each other and divided the people and created sects of their own. The first Protestant creed was produced in 1530, the “Augsburg Confession,” and was the result of the reformers breaking away from each other and dividing the people. They were divided into hostile sects and began to oppose each other, and even put armies on the battlefields to support their creeds. Hence, the second beast formed into an ecclesiastical organization in imitation of the Hierarchy of Rome, the first beast. The Bible pictures the close relationship of Roman Catholicism and Protestantism. In Revelation 17:5 we have a symbol of Catholicism as a vile prostitute and the mother

of harlots. Protestantism is her harlot daughter, for she came out of Catholicism and bears its image. The Roman church is a humanly organized institution governed by a group of fallible men. They make and prescribe the theology her members believe. Protestantism is also a humanly organized institution governed by man or a conference of men. They also make and proscribe the rules of faith, the creed and doctrines, and practices for each of their members. Hence, we see the exact image of Catholicism in present day Protestantism.

The Mark

The image of the beast (which is sectarianism) was to cause all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads; and that no man might buy or sell save he that had the mark or the name of the beast, or the number of his name. In making the sect image in imitation of the papal original, the principle of marking was also copied. Papal Rome marks her subjects by instilling the teachings of Catholicism in their minds and acknowledges as Christians only those who subscribe to her belief, hence, the mark in the forehead and in the right hand. When one wishes to identify himself with any Protestant church today he must receive the mark. He must agree to conform to their rule of faith (creed), and practices, which marks or distinguishes him from members of the other denominations. If he does not know their teachings he must agree to support and maintain them and is accepted into fellowship on these grounds and thus receiving the mark in the right hand. He then goes out to live by a set of man-made rules and practices, and supports and maintains them, thus becoming a beast (sect) worshiper instead of worshiping the Lamb of God who died for him.

“No Man Might Buy or Sell”

This does not refer to buying or selling literal goods, but has direct spiritual application. Members of every denomination are marked by the belief they have and will not accept (buy) another doctrine; neither will they give out (sell) any other doctrine. Also each denomination requires a minister who wishes to work among them to preach their particular doctrine, and in order to do this, he must take a course in the seminary of that particular denomination. They are buying (receiving) the doctrinal teachings of that denomination and then go out to sell (preach) it to that same denomination. He can't buy or sell among other denominations. Protestantism as a whole is a man-made system of worship; its doctrines and practices are based upon man-made creeds. The creeds are the thing that builds a middle wall of partition between them, thus demanding some system of marking the subjects to distinguish them from the members of other sects. The Bible strongly condemns division among so-called Christians (I Corinthians 1:10). On the contrary, it teaches that Jesus is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us (Ephesians 2:14). “For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit” (I Corinthians 12:13). Jesus prayed that His people might all be one that the world might believe the Father sent Him.

May 2020

Reader, are you a true child of God, worshiping the Lamb of God who died for you? Or are you merely a member of some denomination and living by and supporting some man-made creed? God has a people in this world today who are separate from all the isms of men, who neither have received the mark of the beast, nor the name of the beast, nor the number of his name. They're standing upon the Sea of Glass (Word of God), shouting the victory, for they have victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, and over the number of his name. †

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THE CHURCH OF GOD STANDS FOR

An eternal God	Psalm 90:2
A divine Christ	John 1:1, 14
An infallibly inspired Bible	II Timothy 3:16
Salvation from sin	Matthew 1:21
The new birth	John 3:1-7
Entire Sanctification	Ephesians 5:25, 26
A holy life	Titus 2:11, 12
	Hebrews 12:10-14
Unity of God's people	John 17:21
	I Corinthians 12:13
Divine Healing	James 5:14, 15
The ordinances	Matthew 28:19, 20
Eternal life	Matthew 25:46
	John 3:15; 6:54; 10:28
Eternal punishment	Mark 9:43-46
	Revelation 20:15

YOU SHOULD KNOW MORE ABOUT THE CHURCH OF GOD

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

COMING MEETING

The following meeting is tentatively planned.
The dates may have to be adjusted depending
on the status of the present pandemic.



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