

The Way of Truth

Vol. 79

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

No. 2

HOLY BIBLE

OUR MISSION IN THE WORLD IS TO BE . . .

“A Living Bible”

SEE PAGE 10

MARCH 2021

ETERNITY

THE ONLY verse in the Bible that uses the word *eternity* is found in Isaiah 57:15, “For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.” However, *eternal* is used 47 times. *Eternity* means, “infinite time; duration without beginning or end; the state into which the soul passes at a person’s death.” I am amazed that people look at eternity as insignificant. The decisions they make in their lives are so shallow that eternity is not even considered. Yet, the decisions we make and how we live determine where a person’s soul spends eternity.

We are all just passing through a small span of time as a proving ground for our ultimate destination. So why then does the world’s focal point rest entirely on the material and temporal? Don’t people know that this life will swiftly be concluded, then comes long, long eternity?

James 4:14 warns, “Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.” So true! But there is something beyond this life according to Hebrews 9:27, “And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.”

The soul of man is eternal. “Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it” (Ecclesiastes 12:7). This goes for every human being that comes into the world. Therefore, Christians look at life differently. “While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal” (II Corinthians 4:18).

It is very clear that there are only two destinations for the soul of man after this life has come to an end. We see these made evident in Matthew 25:46, “And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.”

It is very difficult for finite beings to understand eternity. World without end is hard to wrap our minds around. So let us try to bring it down to a level we can comprehend. Let us suppose that eternity consists of 100,000 years. It is far more, of course. But for reasons of comparison, let us suppose eternity is limited to a mere 100,000 years. Now, let us assume our life on Earth is as long as 100 years. We would doubtless consider that a long life. Some live to see 100, but certainly not all.

Now, to put things into perspective, let us reaffirm that the choices we make, and the life we live during this our 100 years determine our destination for the remaining 99,900 years of eternity. Let us say that by choosing sin you would receive everything your heart desires for 100 years—all the money you want, all the fame, all the power over others—but you knew there

were 99,900 years of torment, pain and sorrow awaiting after your 100 years expired. Would it be worth it? Would that be a wise trade? Of course not!

Let’s turn it around. Suppose that by accepting Christ as your Savior you were destined to be tortured for 100 years—bearing pain, sorrow, and agony during this life of 100 years, but you were guaranteed 99,900 years of joy, peace, and bliss once your spirit left your body. Would that choice be wise? Would it be worth it? Yes, yes, a thousand times, yes! The apostle Paul saw this powerful truth: “For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.”

But this hypothetical example doesn’t tell the whole story! The contrast between the two choices is much more stark in reality. You see, Dear Reader, when one chooses sin, he doesn’t get all he desires. Proverbs 13:15 declares, “Good understanding giveth favour: but the way of transgressors is hard.” The sinner struggles through a desolate life of 100 years and then faces 99,900 years of torment, sorrow, and agony on top of that. Who would choose such a path?

On the other hand, when one chooses to follow Christ, he is not in reality doomed to a difficult and hard life of 100 years. Yes, there is a cross to bear and trials to press through, but in all of this, he is blessed with One who promised never to leave His child alone. Christ fills the believer with joy, peace, and love during his walk in this fleeting life, and then when it is over he has 99,900 years of bliss and glory in heaven. What a choice! The reasonable soul could not consider any other choice but to become a Christian.

Remember, that eternity is far more than 100,000 years, but if it were limited to that, the choice would be very clear.

To better understand eternity, I want to use an example from a pioneer Church of God minister, H. M. Riggle. Although eternity cannot be “spent,” neither can it be described by “years,” yet we can begin to understand the vastness of the realm to come by a simple example. Everyone is familiar with how big the number one million is. And we hear of the term, billion and even trillion. But what is beyond that? A thousand trillion is a quadrillion; a thousand quadrillion is a quintillion; a thousand quintillion is one sextillion; then septillion, octillion, nonillion, decillion. One decillion looks like this:

1,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000.

To understand what one decillion years would entail, think about this. A college group of students wanted to see how much land mass would be covered by one decillion of these itty-bitty seeds. They drilled a hole in a plank, counted the mustard seeds that filled it, and then began to calculate. When they reached one decillion mustard seeds, they had enough seeds to cover the whole state of Maryland, and Pennsylvania, and Texas. In fact, they

ABOUT THE COVER

This old world needs the Word of God, not only in text as found in the Holy Bible, but people need to see the principles of God’s Word lived out in the lives of professing Christians. One of the greatest failures of nominal Christianity is to teach that it is impossible to live out the Bible.

THE WAY OF TRUTH

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

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—Gregory E. Tyler, Editor

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had enough to cover all North America and South America, too! Believe it or not, one decillion mustard seeds would cover the entire surface of the earth. How deep? One foot? More than that! How about a mile deep? Beloved, one decillion mustard seeds would cover the entire surface of the earth in thickness from the surface of the earth to the moon!

Now, think of one mustard seed representing the time span of one year, and the number of mustard seeds covering the surface of the earth in thickness to the moon, and it will astound you! But think of this: eternity is far longer than one decillion years. It is a decillion times a decillion and eternity would just be beginning. And whether we die saved or lost determines whether we “spend” eternity in heaven’s bliss or hell’s torment. Therefore, everyone should put at the very top of his or her priorities the necessity of being saved and staying saved. Nothing else in life is as important. When the world comes to an end, or we suddenly come to death and are ushered into long eternity, it will be too late. Now is the time to prepare. Now is the time to repent. Now is the time to give your heart to the Lord. Be serious about serving the Lord. It is the very best way to live in this time world. And after this life, each one of us who accepted God’s offer of salvation will be gloriously rewarded for years without end—one decillion times one decillion times one decillion ...

But if you reject God’s offered grace and refuse the Son of God as your Savior and Lord, then you will struggle through a rough life here below and then suffer an eternity of torture beyond compare. It is my prayer that you and I will be prepared for long, long eternity. †

ETERNITY

By D. O. Teasley

I stood at the time-beaten portals, Where many a pilgrim had passed
Out into the infinite future, To be with the pure and the blest;
And, musing in silent devotion, Eternity seemed to draw near;
And strains from the choir of the faithful I seemed in my fancy to hear.

Oh, eternity! Long eternity!
Hear the solemn footsteps of eternity.

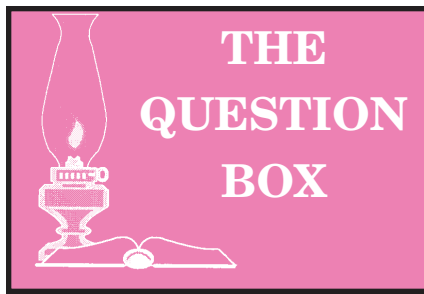
I lingered, and silently listened to the dull, heavy tread of the years,
And tho’t of the fate of the guilty, When Christ in his glory appears.
A shudder came over my spirit, As I tho’t what a moment might cost;
For eternity’s stillness was broken by the groans and the sighs of the lost.

I saw then the Judge in his splendor, As he stepped to his great judgment seat,
And tho’t of the crashing of ages, When time and eternity meet.
For Time, who has laid many millions to slumber in death’s silent shade;
Shall reel at eternity’s presence, And sleep in the tomb he has made.

Let us work while ‘tis day, brother, sister, For soon shall the Master return
To garner the wheat that we harvest, The chaff in his fury to burn.
Then in haste let us rush to the rescue, But few can we save at the most:
Soon millions shall be at the judgment, Forever, eternally lost. †

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



QUESTION: What is Christian fellowship?

ANSWER: Christian fellowship would start with a true experience of salvation. This gives you fellowship with God and with Christ (see I John 1:3). It also gives you fellowship with other Christians. Fellowship, in part, is a mutual sharing; a group of people with like interests, goals, aims, desires and purposes. Again, for it to be truly Christian it must start with having fellowship with God.

QUESTION: Don't you think that when Christians are stricken with disease it is because they have somehow failed God?

ANSWER: Not always. When Jesus healed the blind man, He was asked who did the sin—the parents, or the one healed. Jesus answered neither, but that God might be glorified. It is true, however, that sometimes God does permit sickness in order to help His children in some way.

QUESTION: Are the Jews God's chosen people?

ANSWER: I assume you are speaking of the literal Jews. If so, the answer is no. God entered into covenant relationship with Abraham and from him came the Hebrew people, the literal nation of Israel. God, through Moses, gave them what we call the "Old Covenant," but the Old Covenant expired when Jesus died on the cross. The New Testament teaches us that God has concluded all under sin and He has broken down the middle wall of partition. Jesus is the only Savior for the Jews as well as for the Gentiles.

Paul said the Christians are the "Jews" now. So all of God's saved people are spiritual Jews, and all unsaved people are "Gentiles"! The saved are the ones that make up God's Israel today; in other words the Church of God is God's nation today. "For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God" (Romans 2:28, 29). "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise" (Galatians 3:28, 29). "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, *an holy nation*, a peculiar [separate] people; that ye should shew forth

the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light" (I Peter 2:9).

QUESTION: Would you please explain Isaiah 65:17-25? I am particularly interested in verse 20. I don't know what it means. Is "dying" any longer in the New Jerusalem, or does the chapter have another meaning? Please explain in full detail.

ANSWER: This is a favorite passage of those who believe in a literal kingdom here on Earth. Notice that in verse 25 reference is made to "my holy mount." It is our understanding that God's holy mount in this New Covenant age is His church, the New Jerusalem, which the Hebrew writer tells us is the "church of the first-born."

So Isaiah is speaking of God's promise to His people under the New Covenant, or spiritual Jerusalem. God's people in this age are not literal Jews, but spiritual Jews—the children of God. The "seed of Abraham" are those who have accepted Christ and are children of God through spiritual birth. Salvation makes all things new for a person, for, "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (II Corinthians 5:17).

Those who have been saved and sanctified have lost the old destructive nature, and have been made partakers of the "divine nature," that Peter speaks of.

QUESTION: In light of I Peter 2:23, should a saved and sanctified person retaliate or defend himself when being falsely accused and reviled, or should he keep quiet?

ANSWER: In the verse you refer to, we are told that Jesus, "when he was reviled, reviled not again," but I do not think your question can be answered by a simple yes or no. Of course, a Christian should not retaliate. I think the Scriptures are plain on this point. "Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good," we are told. But the Scriptures also state that the law was made for the lawless.

If a man had you arrested and taken to court, falsely accusing you, would you not have a right to defend yourself by telling the judge the truth? If you were involved in a car accident and the other driver told the officer it was your fault, when it was really his, would you not have a right to tell the officer the truth?


I think there are times and conditions under which we can state the truth without "defending ourselves" in a carnal way. The apostle Paul spoke in his defense a number of times, as recorded in the book of Acts.

QUESTION: How can you explain that meekness is a virtue?

ANSWER: Virtue is described as "moral excellence, goodness, a good quality, chastity and purity." Meekness is described as "patient, not easily angered, mild, forbearing and submissive." It should be easy to see that meekness is a virtue. †

SAVED FROM AND SAVED FOR

Radio Message by the late Bro. Alvin A. Craig

 ON TODAY'S broadcast, I want to speak on the thought, "Saved From and Saved For." I will read, as our text, Titus 2:11-15—"For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee."

We notice from this passage of scripture that I read that God takes away and He adds to. He does not leave a void there. "For the grace of God teaches us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts [but in their place], we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world."

I'm sure you've heard the expression "the other side of the coin." There are many things in life that we could say are two-sided. "The other side of the story" is often expressed.

Salvation has its two sides: what we are saved from and what we are saved for. *We are saved from hopelessness.* We read in Paul's writings to the church at Rome in Romans, chapter 3, verse 23, "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." Sin is indeed a hopeless state. Sin does not offer anything good or desirable. It offers no hope whatsoever; but in salvation we are saved from hopelessness, and *we are saved to hope.* Again, referring to Paul's letter to the church in Rome—Romans chapter 8, verses 24, 25—"For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it." We do have a hope, and that hope is in Jesus Christ. That hope will not be disappointing, and we will not be forsaken in that hope.

In our hymn book, we have a hymn by the late William G. Schell. The chorus of it says, "We have a hope within our souls, Brighter than the perfect day: God has given us his Spirit, And we want the world to hear it, All our doubts are passed away." Yes, our hopelessness and our doubts are passed away, and in Jesus Christ we have a hope. "We have a hope within our souls, Brighter than the perfect day: God has given us his Spirit, And we want the world to hear it, All our doubts are passed away."

I realize there are those in the religious world who would have you to believe that you can't really know that you are saved, but the Word of God does not teach such. To the contrary, the Word of God teaches us that we know that we have passed from death unto life because we love the brethren. When we were dead in trespasses and sins, we had no hope, but regeneration

(the new birth) gave us spiritual life. I'm sure you know that you have physical life, so if you have spiritual life, you should know that also. We have in Christ a hope, not only in this time world, but in the world to come.

We are saved from a life of sin. Again, I realize there are those in the religious world who would have us to believe that we just continue on in sin, even after we become a Christian. But again, that is not what the Word of God teaches. We are saved from a life of sin. In Paul's writings in Colossians, chapter 3, verses 8 and 9, we read, "But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds." So we put off the old life of sin, of evil, and wickedness. *Salvation* in itself means, "deliverance." God translates us out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of His dear Son. Again, He takes us out of that horrible pit and from the miry clay, and once He lifts us out, He doesn't turn us loose and let us fall back into it. The Psalmist said He sets our feet upon a rock, and establishes our goings. So we are saved from a life of sin when we are born again (regenerated).

We are saved for godly living. We're talking today about being saved from and saved for. So we are saved from sin and we are saved for godly living. Again, referring to Colossians, chapter 3, verses 10, 12-15: "And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him: Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful." Can we not see that we are saved from sin and we are saved for godly living? "And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful." The apostle Paul tells us in Romans 5:1, "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." In having peace with God, we are to live in peace with our fellow men. Yes, we are to live in peace, and let the God of heaven rule our hearts and rule our lives.

We are saved from ignorance. I Corinthians 2:14, "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." When I speak about being saved from ignorance, I'm not talking about a high school education, or a college education. I'm speaking from the spiritual standpoint. So Paul says here, "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."

While a person is living in sin, he cannot discern spiritual things nor spiritual truths, but we are saved from ignorance and *we are saved to knowledge.* I Corinthians 2:15, 16, "But he that is spiritual judgeth all

things, yet he himself is judged of no man. For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? but we have the mind of Christ." Isn't it marvelous that through salvation, through receiving Christ as our Savior that we can have the mind of Christ? The mind of Christ is not one of filth. It isn't one of evil and ungodliness. The mind of Christ is pure, holy, and righteous. We are saved from ignorance to the knowledge of God, the knowledge of salvation, and we have the mind of Christ.

We are saved from Satan's bondage. We read in John 8:34, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin." Notice what the Lord has said here: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant [or the slave] of sin." Remember, Jesus said that we cannot be the slave of two masters. We're going to make a choice. We're going to love one and despise the other; we're going to hold to one and hate the other, but when we are truly saved, we are saved from Satan's bondage.

We are saved for God's service. We read in Romans, chapter 6, verses 12 and 13, "Let not sin therefore reign [or rule] in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God." I would say in regard to this passage of scripture what I said in regard to our text—God takes away the sin, the wickedness and the evil, and He does not leave a void there, but fills it with something else—"The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world." Again, Paul said, "Let not sin therefore reign [or rule] in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God."

When we yield ourselves (our members of our body) to God, He uses us then to live righteously and godly in this present world. Paul said, "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?" So Paul tells us here to "yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead"; meaning, those that are saved, those that have been resurrected, those that have had part in the first resurrection, which is salvation. And then we are to yield our members as instruments of righteousness unto God.

We are saved from the oldness of the letter. II Corinthians 3:6 tells us that the letter killeth. *We are saved for the newness of the Spirit.* Again, II Corinthians 3:6, "Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life." So we are saved from the oldness of the letter and we are saved to the newness of the Spirit.

We are saved from works. Ephesians 2:8, 9, "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of your-

selves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast." So we are saved from works. We are saved from works and *we are saved for works*. Notice the difference there. James 2:17, 18, "Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works." We are not saved by works, but works must follow the life of those who are saved. Our works do not save us. Our righteousness is as filthy rags in the sight of God, but once we are saved, once we are children of God, there must be good works that follow our life. I know there are some people who say, "There is none good, no, not one," but that is not what the Scriptures teach. Barnabas was a good man. Every Christian is a good person because salvation makes them a good person. It is not our goodness, it is not our righteousness, but God's goodness.

We are saved from alienation. Ephesians 2:12, "That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world." That is the state of the lost soul. It is not a desirable state. Let me read that scripture again: "That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world." What a pitiful state that is!

We are saved from alienation and *we are saved for God's family*. Ephesians 2:19, "Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household [or the family] of God." Isn't that marvelous? Everyone can have this experience. They can have this knowledge that they are a part of the family of God. "Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household [or the family] of God." No more aliens, no more strangers, no more in a state of hopelessness, but now a part of the family of God!

We are twice blessed. God has delivered us from all that would defeat and harm us. He has delivered us for all things that are good. Let us never look back, but always live in newness of life. ✠

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THE DEPTH OF GOD'S GRACE

Message by Bro. Duane Jeffries, delivered 04/11/15

I THANK the Lord for another privilege to be back in the house of God. We are laboring for the Lord. Please bear me up in your prayers that the Lord will help me to do my part for Him. Precious souls are at stake and we want to do all we can to win them to the Lord.

If you have your Bibles tonight, I want to invite you to turn to a very familiar passage of scripture: Titus, chapter 2, verses 11 and 12—"For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world."

If it were possible for a man to measure the boundless ocean, he still could not measure the depth of God's grace. If it were possible for a man to count the sands on the seashore, he still could not measure the depth of God's grace. What wonderful thoughts!

The only reason we are here tonight is by the grace of God. So many things could have befallen us. So many things could have happened to us, even in the course of one day. When we sit down and think about it, we are here only by the grace of God.

When I read the writings of the great apostle Paul, I find there are moments in his life where he felt so unworthy. Paul felt so small. There was a time when he said, "I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle." Why did Paul say such a thing? Because Paul reflected on a past sinful life, a life lived in sin, and he recognized the great work God had done in his life. He felt small and unworthy. I've been there many a time. Each and every one of us have a history, a past life in sin. "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." So the great apostle Paul was reflecting on this, and he said, "I am not meet to be called an apostle." I also read in another place where he said, "But by the grace of God I am what I am."

Thank God that His grace was so boundless that He looked past my sins and He saved me from them. He cast them into the sea of forgetfulness. It is only by His grace that I am here tonight. This is why, when I see people struggling in their lives, I try to be careful not to point fingers or to criticize. When you see a staggering drunkard on the street, tossed to and fro, there go you and I, if it wasn't by the grace of God. Had it not been for His grace, where would we be? Sometimes when I reflect on my past life, I could be somewhere locked up in a prison cell, somewhere wandering on the street, somewhere out there in the cold barren land of sin, but thank God for His grace tonight. Thank God for His unmerited love and favor. "Amazing grace! how sweet the sound, That saved a wretch like me! I once was lost, but now am found, Was blind, but now I see."

There's a song that says—

*I was a captive, but mercy released me,
I was in darkness, but now I can see;
Over the mountain, where lonely I wandered,
Jesus, my Savior, came looking for me.*

*Wonderful Savior; Wonderful Savior,
Now and forever my boasting shall be;
Over the mountain, where lonely I wandered,
Jesus, my Savior, came looking for me.*

When I was at the lowest point in my life, when I was lost and undone without God and His Son, my Savior reached down for me. Thank God for His grace to me.



We read in a scripture where a woman was brought to Jesus. She was taken in the very act of adultery, a sin, according to the tradition of the Jewish people, death was done by stoning. I reflect on that story many times. How many times when we were in sin were we worthy of death, or maybe even worse? This woman was found in the very act of adultery, and those religious people of the day could think of nothing more than condemning her. They brought her to Jesus with the purpose of entrapping Him. They said, "Master, we found this woman committing adultery. The law of Moses demands that she be put to death."

Jesus looked around at each one of them and He could read the intent of their hearts. All He could see was hatred; all He could see was envy; all He could see were bad intentions. They cared nothing for that woman. They had no compassion on her. All they wanted to see was her destruction, but they brought her to Jesus. Even though she was guilty, even though she had sinned, all Jesus could see was His masterpiece. All He could see was a precious soul in need of love and compassion. I can imagine what was going through her mind as she anticipated the very worse. She could see what the people wanted to do, and she didn't know what the outcome would be; but the Bible says that Jesus ignored those religious people and stooped down on the ground and began to write. Whatever Jesus wrote on the ground, it had a bearing on their conscience. He stooped down and wrote, and one by one they walked away. Jesus looked at the woman and said, "Woman, where are those thine accusers? hath no man condemned thee?" She said, "No man, Lord." In His love and compassion He said, "Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more." When justice demanded her destruction, the Grace of God stood up and said, "This is my child; go, and sin no more."

Jesus was walking and traveling through a little town called Jericho. He found a man there who had a very bad reputation among the people. He was a tax

collector. According to the Scriptures, he defrauded the people. Zacchaeus was his name. Evidently, the things that Zacchaeus had done were eating away at his conscience and he wanted to see Jesus. The Bible says that he climbed up into a sycamore tree, for he knew Jesus was to pass that way. I believe with all my heart that Jesus went to Jericho with the purpose of seeing Zacchaeus. Zacchaeus went up into the sycamore tree, and even though the crowd was around Jesus, Jesus could see him. He said to Zacchaeus, "Come down, for I am going to your house today."

Those religious people did not like what Jesus said to Zacchaeus. They began to murmur. "If Jesus really knew who this man was, He would have no association with him." Sometimes we're too quick to pass judgment. Sometimes we're too quick to condemn others. Jesus only saw a soul. He saw someone that He could love and someone He could save. Jesus didn't look at all of Zacchaeus' faults. I tell you tonight, if God were to take into account and hold us to all that we have done, not one of us would be here tonight. Not one of us would be saved.

While Jesus was at Zacchaeus' house, Zacchaeus said to Him, "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold." Zacchaeus well knew what he had done, so there were no ifs about it. He was guilty. He was a thief. He had taken things that were not his own. He defrauded people. He knew in his conscience that he was guilty, but what did Jesus do? Did He condemn Zacchaeus? Did He turn him away? Jesus said to him, "This day is salvation come to this house."

Beloved Friends, no matter how far in sin you might have drifted, how broken you might be, how beaten and battered, and how low down your life might be at this very point, I'm here to tell you that God is able to save you. His grace is boundless and deeper than the widest ocean.

I remember hearing Bro. James mention in his preaching about a man he ministered to. The man said to him, "Bro. James, I don't know if God can save me." There are people who feel that way. They are in such a state that they feel that they are beyond the reach of God. I'm here to tell you tonight, that is the biggest lie from a devil's hell. I don't care how far sin might have taken you, or how low down your life might be, God is able to save you. His grace is able to deliver you.

A hymn writer wrote, "Grace Greater than Our Sin"—

*Marvelous grace of our loving Lord,
Grace that exceeds our sin and our guilt,
Yonder on Calvary's mount outpoured,
There where the blood of the Lamb was spilt!*

*Grace, grace, God's grace,
Grace that will pardon and cleanse within!
Grace, grace, God's grace,
Grace that is greater than all our sin!*

When Jesus prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane, His sweat was as it were great drops of blood. I believe and feel that tonight. Do you know why? Because on

that very day, Jesus felt the weight of the whole world on His shoulders. He was human. He felt the agony of the cross. He anticipated every pain, everything He was about to go through. He prayed to the Father, "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt." He walked down the painful road to Calvary, bearing the sins of the world on His shoulders. The crown of thorns, the piercing in His side, the spikes in His hands and feet, and every ache and pain were for you and for me. Even there on the cross, writhing in pain and agony, He was still full of grace.

A dying thief next to Jesus cried out for mercy. He lived a life so wicked and worthy of death. He was guilty, but Jesus was innocent. The dying thief cried out for mercy, and Jesus said to him, "Verily I say unto thee, Today shalt thou be with me in paradise."

Part of a hymn says, "The dying thief rejoiced to see that fountain in his day; And there have I, though vile as he, Washed all my sins away."

*Grace, grace, God's grace,
Grace that will pardon and cleanse within!
Grace, grace, God's grace,
Grace that is greater than all our sin!*

Romans 5:1-8, "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; And patience, experience; and experience, hope: And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us. For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

*Grace, grace, God's grace,
Grace that will pardon and cleanse within!
Grace, grace, God's grace,
Grace that is greater than all our sin!*

John 3:16, 17, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved."

*Grace, grace, God's grace,
Grace that will pardon and cleanse within!
Grace, grace, God's grace,
Grace that is greater than all our sin!*

Beloved Friends, if you're here tonight unsaved, I want to tell you that every pain and ache and agony that Jesus experienced on the cross was for you and for me. He is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

We sing the hymn, "Jesus Paid It All." Yes, He surely did. He paid a price that we could not pay. It took the blameless Lamb of God to come into this world to suffer and to die for each and for every one of us and to

The Way of Truth

give us a hope of eternal life. “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast” (Ephesians 2:8, 9). It is God’s unmerited love, His unmerited favor for you and for me. His grace is sufficient to cover all sin. The Bible says, “Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.” Do you believe it tonight?

We’ll close with us singing this chorus one more time—

*Grace, grace, God’s grace,
Grace that will pardon and cleanse within!
Grace, grace, God’s grace,
Grace that is greater than all our sin! †*



Greetings!

This month’s article is written by one of our local young people, Bro. Tom Harris. It was taken from the December 2020 edition of “The Young Christian.” Bro. Tom is the editor of this paper, and I am proud of him for his burden for this outreach. My prayer is that the Lord

will continue to bless and use him for the furtherance of the gospel.

If you are interested in receiving this monthly newsletter by email, please contact Bro. Tom at tpharis95@gmail.com.

Blessings,
Bro. Doug Shenberger

CONTENTMENT

By Bro. Tom Harris

I WANT us to consider contentment. I was recently struck with a rather specific thought on contentment that I’m going to get to later. Let’s first think about what contentment is. We all want it, but what is it? It’s not that difficult to define.

I would say *contentment* is simply “a state of satisfaction.” There are different types of contentment: material, monetary, physical, etc. We can be content with a job well done, a nice meal, or something we have bought or put time into.

There is also mental and spiritual contentment. This is the type of contentment we will consider. Often this type of contentment is associated with the present status of our lives: satisfaction of mind given your current circumstances. I believe, especially for young people in the world today, that contentment is more of an abstract idea than a reality. It is considered something to reach for, rather than to have.

Oftentimes contentment is associated with a goal—something that will come when I finish “this”; something that will finally come when I get “that”; something that will come when I finally make it where I want to be in life.

Often the goals people associate with contentment change because they are reached, and they don’t end up actually bringing contentment. So people just wander from one thing to the next, looking for satisfaction and contentment. “Contentment will come when I graduate.” “I will be happy with my life when I get a high paying job, when I get to go on vacation, when I get a raise, when I retire, when I get healthier ...” The list is endless.

Many think contentment will come when they finally get to a place in life where they can say, “I have achieved my goal.” But these goals keep changing because they never actually bring contentment. Why is this? The reason is simple, and yet, it eludes so many. People are looking for spiritual contentment, yet trying to find it in material and physical goals.

But what about the Christian? We often sing the lyrics, “Who but the Christian is happy and free?” And yet, I think that contentment is something that we, even as Christians, may find difficult to fully grasp. There are two primary verses that I want to refer to in talking about the Christian and contentment. Philipians 4:11, ... for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.” And, I Timothy 6:6, “But godliness with contentment is great gain.”

The Christian has a lot to be thankful for and to be content about: purpose in life, the love of God, peace, etc. However, it would seem as though both of these verses talk about contentment as being something more. Even Paul, the great man of God, said that he had to learn to be content. He didn’t just say, “I am content in whatever state I am in.” Instead, he said, “I have learned.”

Paul told Timothy that godliness with contentment is great gain. Godliness in itself is considerable gain, but godliness with contentment is great gain. Paul is almost portraying contentment as another level—a greater height to achieve. It would seem as though we could have God and yet not always find ourselves content. Not that we find ourselves discontent with God directly, but with our present circumstances. Contentment isn’t necessarily something we just master the moment we get saved. We certainly obtain a great level of it, but as with so many other things, we must grow in it. If we fail to learn and grow, the trials and temptations of Satan will outpace our contentment.

We, even as Christians, with all of the blessings we have access to, may find ourselves feeling discontent. I do not believe this is unusual. However, this is not a state we should allow ourselves to stay in. Rather, we should learn, and by so doing, grow, and find contentment again.

We may begin to lose our contentment if we base it on some future milestone or goal. This may be graduating from high school or college, getting a job, getting married, having children, etc. “I’ll be content when the world settles down and goes back to normal”—this one hits close to home for all of us.

It is good to have milestones and goals to look forward to. Right now, you might not be where you ultimately want to be in life. As Christian young people, we no doubt have goals, goals that we know will bring a lot of happiness and fulfillment. These aren’t bad

things, but we cannot let these goals become so inflated in our minds that we are discontent in life until we reach them. If we base our contentment too strongly on a goal in our life, we may come to esteem that goal so highly that we don't hear God saying, "Hey, I have something better for you over here." We cannot let ourselves associate contentment in life with material and temporal goals.

If you think that you don't have contentment now, because it is waiting for you at your next goal, then you will never find contentment in life.

Paul said he learned to be content in "whatsoever state I am." Whatsoever state! that's a lot of states. You know the state in which it can be hardest to find contentment? The transient state, or, the "in between" state. Most of the time, we live in a transient state—between one thing and another. That is when we can find it most difficult to be content. The world is in a transient state now. Unpredictable. But we can't say, "I'll be content when things settle down again." We need to learn to be content in "whatsoever state." This doesn't mean that we don't want anything to change. We want the world to settle down, and we want to reach our goals, but we can't let our contentment be based on these things.

The question then becomes: If we recognize that we have been discontented, and we realize that we need to do better and grow, what do we do? If we see that we have been putting too much faith and confidence in some future event to bring us contentment, what should we do?

Recently, I was struck with the connection between contentment and a commandment that God gave to Moses and the children of Israel. In the 14th chapter of Exodus, we read how the children of Israel were trapped between the Red Sea and the Egyptian Army. They were certainly in what we could call a "transient state." They were not content in their situation, and they let Moses and the Lord know it. "And when Pharaoh drew nigh, the children of Israel lifted up their eyes, and, behold, the Egyptians marched after them; and they were sore afraid: and the children of Israel cried unto the Lord." They began questioning the Lord, and even told Moses it would have been better to continue serving the Egyptians rather than to die in the wilderness. Then we read the Lord's response in verse 15: "And the Lord said unto Moses, Wherefore criest thou unto me? Speak unto the children of Israel, that they go forward."

Go forward! I believe contentment in life is found by *doing*. It is found by doing for the Lord and doing for others; by taking action. There are two truths that I hold paramount in my mind, truths that I have heard others preach through the years. The first pertains to abundance: "true abundance in life is found by giving." The second deals with joy: "true joy is found by serving." I would add to this list: "true contentment is found by doing."

It is a wonderful thing to do for the Lord. It brings satisfaction. It's a wonderful thing to be tired and worn out for the Lord. To be worn out because you've been helping a saint, to be worn out because you've stayed up late reading and studying the Bible, to be tired from staying up late to finish writing a letter of encourage-

ment to one of the saints. Those things bring contentment. In your Christian walk, if you are feeling discontent, you can find contentment by busying yourself about the Lord's work.

There is always something that we can be doing. It seems as though lately, I realize more and more that there is always something I can be doing for the Lord. This brings us contentment because it brings us the joy of serving. It brings contentment because it gives us abundance from giving of our time and efforts to others. Doing for the Lord and others will help us grow in the abundance of life, the joy of life, and, consequently, it will bring us contentment. Contentment is found by being busy about the Lord's work and having a continual desire to see the kingdom of God advance, and a desire to look over each day and be able to say, as we read in Ecclesiastes, that the end has been better than the beginning. This is contentment—being able to say that the end has been better than the beginning, because "I have accomplished for the Lord."

So if you think you need more contentment, busy yourself about the Lord's work. Say as Jesus said, "I must be about my Father's business." †

BIBLE LESSON OF THE MONTH

PRACTICAL CHRISTIAN LIVING

LIVING FOR CHRIST IN OUR HOME

(Attitude of Parents to Children)

Scriptures: Colossians 3:21; Deuteronomy 6:7; Proverbs 22:6; Ephesians 6:4; I Timothy 3:4; Proverbs 13:24; 19:18; 22:15; 23:13.

Colossians 3:21 Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged.

Deuteronomy 6:7 And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.

Proverbs 22:6 Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.

Ephesians 6:4 And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

I Timothy 3:4 One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity.

Proverbs 13:24 He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes.

Proverbs 19:18 Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying.

Proverbs 22:15 Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child; but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him.

Proverbs 23:13 Withhold not correction from the child: for if thou beatest him with the rod, he shall not die.

Memory Verse: Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.

—Proverbs 22:6.

Aim: To show the responsibility of the parent to the child.

INTRODUCTION



WE ARE warned in the Bible that a child left to himself will bring his mother to shame. This has been proven true many times in every generation. Perhaps the situation is much worse now than it has ever been with the prevalence of television, the theater, the internet, and the availability of the automobile. Children are being given liberties that were unknown in other generations, and, as a result, moral character is fast decaying. To combat this, we must set forth the Bible standard and bring our children back under the blessed influence of the gospel of the Lord Jesus. The glaring fact of the depravity of every human being that makes his way into the world is overlooked by educators, religious leaders, and parents. A depraved human being is one who is morally degenerated from his original created state. No amount of education or training can restore a depraved soul to the original state. Education can only lead to the place that restoration is possible by the blood of Christ. But only the proper education can lead in this direction.

MEDITATIONS

FAIRNESS TO CHILDREN—Colossians 3:21—Provoke not—Some parents develop a picking and critical attitude toward their children, criticizing every failure and never commending good points. This has a discouraging effect upon the children. A child is very sensitive and the greatest care should be used in giving him every advantage in developing a normal life.

DILIGENCE IN TEACHING—Deuteronomy 6:7—Teach them diligently—He who is successful in so rearing his child that he is faithful to God to the end has amassed an eternal fortune that is greater in value than the sum total of all existing things. Therefore, the greatest diligence should be used in imparting to the child the truth of the Word of God as it is in Christ Jesus. It is not enough to put a Bible in your children's hands and send them to Sunday school. They must be brought into contact with God and have developed in their heart fellowship with Him.

GOD'S PROMISE TO PARENTS—Proverbs 22:6—Will not depart—Any parent who trains up a child in the way he should go has assurance from God that the child will never forget what he was taught. This cannot mean that parents can raise a child that would never sin; in that case, the child would not need a Savior. But this is a promise parents can cling to in their endeavor to keep their children from going into deep sin. When we have done our best, then we must call upon God to do the rest.

REARING CHILDREN FOR GOD—Ephesians 6:4—Admonition of the Lord—Where can we get the admonition of the infinite God of heaven? By giving heed to the Word of God through the leadership of the Holy Spirit! It is the duty of the parent first to be fully instructed and led of the Spirit and then to cause the child or children to walk in his steps.

THE MINISTER, A FATHER—I Timothy 3:4—Ruleth well—A God-called minister must be an example in child-rearing. How far short many come on this point! So it isn't unusual that many lay members

are unable to rule their homes well. A child left to himself defies authority. He must be kept in subjection to God-appointed authority.

USING THE ROD—Proverbs 13:24—Spareth his rod—The devil has been successful in removing bodily punishment from the schools and in many cases from the modern home. An unpunished child who is disobedient is unrestrained in transgression. Thus, our generation finds youth deep in sin. We do not help our children or manifest love when we let their disobedience go unpunished; rather, we harm them.

THERE IS A DEADLINE—Proverbs 19:18—While there is hope—From this scripture we are made to see that the time will come when correction will be impossible. How it makes our souls tremble to think that one of our children might be lost! With this startling truth before us, may God stir every heart to the performance of his duty toward his children.

STATE OF CHILDISH HEART—Proverbs 22:15—Foolishness is bound—A child has everything to learn and the parents, experienced by years of life, must act as a guide for the inexperienced child. They are more bent on foolishness than sobriety. The rod of correction will change this picture.

ACCOMPLISHING THE PURPOSE OF PUNISHMENT—Proverbs 23:13—He shall not die—From the cries of a child being punished, it would seem as if the child were being killed. The child soon learns that strong crying will stop the correction, for he is more interested in escaping the punishment than in arriving at the place where he is able to do right from choice. Therefore, the child must be corrected judiciously until his spirit of rebellion is broken. Of course, the "rod" is not the only means a parent can use in correction of a child. Seek God to know what method will be the most effective.

CONCLUSION

It is impossible for anyone to rear children as they should be reared unless he (the parent) has first been brought into subjection to the great Spirit of God. He who is outside of God is in rebellion against the government of God. He who is right with God can then begin to train his children correctly. Before a child is corrected, he should be told plainly the reason why—that he has disobeyed not only his parents, but God also. Then prayer should be offered that God may accomplish His purpose. If the child repents, he still must receive the punishment promised for disobedience. No parent should ever fail to keep his word in regard to punishment promised for disobedience. A child soon learns if a parent means what he says, and acts accordingly.

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

1. What will happen to any child who is left to himself?
2. In what way are parents often unfair to children?
3. How important a place should the teaching of the Scriptures have in training children?
4. What promise has God made to him who trains a child rightly? †

A LIVING BIBLE

Message by Bro. Greg Tyler , delivered 12/27/20



OUR TEXT comes from II Corinthians, chapter 3, verses 1-3: “Do we begin again to commend ourselves? or need we, as some others, epistles of commendation to you, or letters of commendation from you? Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men: Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart.”

I have entitled my thoughts, “A Living Bible.” There are different versions of the Bible. I think the King James Version is the best version. That’s what I use myself. I think as far as versions of the Bible are concerned, the King James is the very best and the most sacred, but I’m not talking about versions of the Bible this morning. I’m talking about Christians.

Christians are living Bibles. Christians are to exemplify what the Bible teaches. They’re to do what the Bible says to do and not to do what the Bible condemns. They’re to show the attitudes the Bible approves of and treat people as the Bible instructs.

I know you’ve heard this saying before: “we’re the only Bible some people will ever read.” I’m reminded of the little chorus we have in our chorus book—

*Do you know, O Christian, you’re a sermon in shoes?
Do you know, O Christian, you’re a sermon in shoes?
Jesus calls upon you to spread the gospel news,
So preach it and teach it, a sermon in shoes.*

*Do you know, O Christian, you’re a sermon in shoes?
Do you know, O Christian, you’re a sermon in shoes?
Jesus calls upon you to spread the gospel news,
So live it and give it, a sermon in shoes.*

Each one of us are children of the most high God. We’re a sermon in shoes. People are watching our lives.

Biblical principles are more than just theory. Some people might think that the Bible is just full of good theories, but the Bible is more than just theories. It is to be lived out in our lives. It has powerful precepts. People need to know what the Bible teaches. They need to be able to look at a Christian’s life and find out somewhat what the Bible teaches by the way they live.

Stephen was a living Bible. He preached the gospel to the men of his day, and as a result, he was stoned to death; but as he was being stoned to death, he cried out, “Lord, lay not this sin to their charge.” He was exemplifying the spirit of Christ. We could go on with a lot of biblical examples of men and women who were living Bibles in their generation. In our generation, we are the Christians. We’re the ones that are left to live the testimony that people can know that the Bible is true. The Bible changes lives.

How are we to be a living Bible? By being an example of what the Bible teaches. 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.” An example of what the Bible teaches.

Let’s break down this scripture a little bit to see what we are talking about:

We’re to be an example *in word*—Colossians 4:6, “Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.” To be a living Bible, we need to be careful what we say, what comes out of our mouth; never a lie, never gossip, never running other people down, but having pure speech. We’re a living Bible, so we need to show people how we should speak and what we should say.

In conversation—our conversation is our manner of living (how we live). I Peter 1:15, 16, “But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.” There are a lot of people that don’t believe it is possible to live a holy life. But the Bible teaches that we are to be holy. Christians should exemplify through their lives by what the Bible teaches. “Be ye holy; for I am holy” means to do what God would have us to do, and resisting temptation. That’s what holiness is. Holy conduct is following Jesus’ example. Isn’t that what Christians should do? They were first called Christians in Antioch because they were Christlike. They were trying to exemplify Christ. We ought to do the same today. As the people of God, we are doing the same today. We are endeavoring to follow Jesus’ example in our conversation, in the lives that we live. Holy in attitude, but never holier-than-thou. To be truly holy, we don’t have a holier-than-thou attitude. We have a humble attitude.

In charity—or love. I Peter 1:22, “Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently.” We are a living Bible in love. We’re to show the world what love really is through the lives that we live. Live out love in our lives—to “love one another with a pure heart fervently.” Love is a beautiful and powerful thing. People do not only need to hear about love, but they need to see it in action. I Corinthians 13 tells us what love is: “Charity [love] suffereth not, and is kind.” So we are to be a living Bible. We show that we are a living Bible by being kind to people. Living out love in our lives. “Charity envieth not; is not puffed up. Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil.” Love is a wonderful thing and people need to see it. I think we are able to see it in our congregation. We’re not fighting with one

another, but supporting and loving one another with a pure heart fervently. That is being a living Bible.

In spirit—I Corinthians 2:12, “Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God.” There are two spirits—the spirit of the world—the spirit which is of God. They’re contrary to one another. Christians are a living Bible. We should exemplify the spirit which is of God and not the spirit of the world. We are to be humble and meek like our Savior. Jesus was the most powerful man who ever lived. He was the meekest of men.

In faith—we are to be examples in faith. II Corinthians 5:7, “For we walk by faith, not by sight.” Faith is not only getting answers to prayer, but faith is continuing on when we don’t get our prayers answered. “Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us” (Ephesians 3:20). That power comes from faith. We are to be a living Bible and exemplify faith. We must have faith in God. Pressing on! This has been a difficult year we’ve been through. I trust and pray that 2021 will be better, but whatever comes our way, we need to have faith in God and not allow the circumstances of life to rob us of our faith.

In purity—I John 3:3, “And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.” We are to be pure. We are to have a pure heart, a pure mind, and pure motives. We are to be a living Bible for others to read. We are not to allow ourselves to become defiled with the sins of this generation. We live above the sins of this world. By the help of the Lord, we are able to have a pure heart and a pure mind. Peter wanted to stir up the saints’ minds by way of remembrance. So we are to be examples in all these things if we are going to be a living Bible. That’s what God wants us to be. He’ll help us to be. People read us. They know how we live. They know what kind of people we are. We are what we are by the grace of God.

In word—James 1:21-25, “Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls. But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.” Everyone who professes the name of Christ is to be a living Bible. We are to live out the Bible in our lives that people can see. We do that by being a doer of the Word. James said that if one is a hearer and not a doer, he is like a person looking into a mirror, and seeing a spot on his face, he goes away and forgets what manner of man he is.

If we’re going to be a living Bible, and we see a smudge in our lives, we need to take a cloth, as it were, and clean it up, and be a doer of the Word and not a hearer only. We are to “lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness.” There are some things we

lay apart to be a living Bible. People who are hearers only deceive themselves. Each one of us needs to be a doer of the work; a doer of the Word of God. It takes time for people to see and understand what kind of people we are. So we need to be consistent in our spiritual lives, and remember, we are a living Bible for God to use to spread the gospel.

Now, I want to ask some questions: Can people learn what the Bible teaches by reading our lives individually? Salvation brings a change. II Corinthians 5:17 says, “Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.” If there has been no change, there’s been no salvation, but people should be able to see the change wrought by coming to Christ.

Number 2: Can people see that there are spiritual priorities that must take hold in a Christian’s life by watching your life? Matthew 6:33 says, “But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.” Can people see in your life that you have spiritual priorities and you put God first? They read your life. They know by the life you live where your priorities are and what’s important to you. The things of God should be the most important thing in all the world to you.

Number 3: Do people watch you and learn that the Bible says, “Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together”? Can they see your faithfulness in attending worship services? I commend each one who is out this morning. I wish we had a full building, but I know many can’t be here because of COVID-19 going around. People need to look at us and know we love going to church. “I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord” (Psalm 122:1). People should be able to see that in your face, in your language, and in the life you live. Can people learn what the Bible teaches by watching and reading your life?

Number 4: Can people learn that living for Christ brings joy into your life? I Peter 1:8, “Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory.” Can a person watch your life and realize that there’s joy in serving Christ, or are you complaining and finding fault all the time? Are you negative? I don’t think we should be negative. Christians should be very positive people. We should be able to have joy and peace. People should be able to see our joy. Don’t you agree? The joy of the Lord is our strength. We are to be a living Bible. People should be able to read in us that there’s joy in the Lord. We sing about it in church, but when we’re at our job out there in the world, people should be able to see as they read our lives that there’s joy in the Lord.

Number 5: Can people, when they look at your life and read your life, realize that you should obey the preaching of the Word of God? Hebrews 13:17, “Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.” Can people as they read your life realize that the Bible teaches that you should obey the preaching of the Word, or do they get some signal from you that you’re willing to obey

certain things and not other things? That's a question to ponder. We are to be a living Bible so people can see in us the eagerness to live out what the preaching of the Word of God brings to us from week to week. Those who have the rule over you have a great responsibility, and we are to be a living Bible that as people look at our life that it's incumbent upon us to obey the preaching of the Word of God. The preaching of the Word of God is not for our detriment. It's for our good.

Number 6: Can people as they look at your life realize that Christ fills the life with love? "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another" (John 13:35). Can they realize by watching you and reading you that God fills the life with love? Love should ooze out of a saint of God. It should flow freely out of a saint of God. We are a living Bible.

Number 7: Can people as they read your life realize that the Bible teaches us to dress modestly? We don't hear too much about that, but that's part of the gospel as well. I Timothy 2:9, "In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array." The Bible does teach modesty. Can people as they read your life count on you that this is a part of the gospel? We don't have much trouble with that in the wintertime as in the summertime, but it's true 365 days in a year. The Bible teaches modesty, and people should be able to see our lives and read our lives that the Bible teaches modesty by the life that we live.

Number 8: Can people as they read your life understand that Jesus satisfies the soul? Paul said in I Timothy 6:6, "Godliness with contentment is great gain." Can people, when they read your life, read a life that is content? Jesus satisfies the soul. We are complete in Him. He's all we need. People should be able to realize that as they read your life.

Number 9: Can people as they read your life as a Bible understand that the Bible teaches us to love our enemies? Jesus said, "Love your enemies, do good to them that hate you." Do people realize that as they read your life? Do they see that Christians are tenderhearted and forgiving? "And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you." Do people see that out of your life? Does it shine out of your life? You're a living Bible; and again, you're the only Bible some people will ever read. They need to see a person that is tenderhearted and forgiving. True Christians don't carry a grudge.

Number 10: Do people as they read our lives see how husbands and wives should treat one another? The Bible has something to say about husbands and wives. I Peter 3:7, "Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered."

Men, when people read your life, does respect for your wife shine out? Do they learn from watching you that a man should respect and give honor unto his wife? There's another scripture that says that men should love their wives, even as Christ also loved the church. You don't call your wife an "old hag" or the "old woman."

People are reading your life and they should see a devotion, a love flowing from you for your wife. It's the same way with a wife towards her husband. Ephesians 5:22, "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord." I Peter 3:6, "Even as Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement." I'm not going to stand up here and tell the wives that they need to call their husbands "lord," but they are to treat them with respect and honor. There should be flowing from a husband and wife, a love, a respect, and honor for one another. The world sees that. I believe the Church of God should have the very best marriages, don't you? They should shine. People should see that as they read us as a living Bible. They should see in us how husbands and wives should treat one another.

Children can be a living Bible as well. Ephesians 6:1-3, "Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honour thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise; That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth." "Children, obey your parents in the Lord" is how they can be a living Bible. People can see well-behaved children treating their parents with respect and being obedient to them. There's nothing more beautiful than to see an obedient child having respect for his or her parents. The world knows very little about this. Too much disrespect out there in the world. The Bible doesn't teach such. Children are to obey their parents in the Lord. Children, you can be a living Bible as well.

The Word of God and the Spirit work together, so when I speak about being a living Bible, I'm not just speaking about the Word, but also the Spirit, because the Spirit is necessary. II Corinthians 3:6 says that the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life. "Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit." We need the Holy Spirit to make our living Bible effective. We can't afford to allow our living Bible to be a dead letter. The Spirit gives life, so we need to be proclaiming the truth of the Word of God throughout our lives, and also the Spirit of God to work together with the Word of God.

Adam Clarke says something about our text, but I'll read the text again. II Corinthians 3:1-3, "Do we begin again to commend ourselves? or need we, as some others, epistles of commendation to you, or letters of commendation from you? Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men: Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart."

Adam Clarke says—

"Ye are in our hearts, and Christ has written you there; but yourselves are the epistle of Christ; the change produced in your hearts and lives, and the salvation which you have received, are as truly the work of Christ as a letter dictated. Not tables of stone where men engrave contracts, or record events; but in fleshy tables of the heart—the work of salvation taking place in all your affections, appetites, and desires; working that change within that is so signally manifested without. The hearts of the Corinthians [Chris-

tians] are the substance on which the writing is made. The Holy Spirit produces that influence by which the traces are made, and the mark becomes evident."

The principle of living Bibles is something that has been passed down from generation to generation. Through our lives, shine the Word of God and the Spirit of God. "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind" (II Timothy 1:7). What kind of spirit do you manifest? You are to be a living Bible, not only in word, but in spirit. Jesus said to His disciples, "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of." Some people can have knowledge of the Word of God and have the wrong spirit. We don't want that. We want the right Word with the right Spirit.

We also need to proofread ourselves. What does this mean to us? It means in our lives when we examine ourselves and we see something out of tune, or out of line, we need to make corrections on it, because we have a great responsibility of being a living Bible in this generation. II Corinthians 13:5, "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?" Examining ourselves is not an easy thing to do, but we need to be honest and straightforward with God. If we see something out of order in our lives, then we make a correction on it. We don't want people reading typo's in our lives. "Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men."

I trust these few thoughts have been a blessing to you. †

WINNING A CROWN

By the late C. W. Naylor



Part XXX

Acceptable Service

WE READ in the Bible of the form and the power of godliness, and when we look about us in the world, we see more of the form than we do of the power. There seems to be so many people who are merely playing religion. They attend services and go through the form of worship. They are sometimes very strongly devoted to their creed and greatly attached to the organization of which they are members; but when you look for the power of godliness in their lives and the power to render acceptable service to God, you do not find it. This make-believe religion will do very well sometimes, if it is not considered a matter of very much importance. It may sometimes ease the conscience for a time, but it will not bring us into a position where we can render acceptable service to God and where our own souls will be satisfied to their depths. People may manage to get along with such a religion in this world, but it will not stand the test of eternity. Of course, it will not stand the real test for this life. The soul who has the form without the power of religion can never have that satisfaction and peace that true religion gives.

There are many people who go through the forms of religion and try to serve the Lord, but who never know whether their service is acceptable or not. I was once talking with a lady who had professed to be a Christian for many years and had prayed often. Speaking to me on the subject of prayer, she said, "I cannot say that God has ever answered my prayers." Think of it! Twenty years of praying and never a prayer answered! Still, there are many who would have the same confession if they would open their hearts. Their religion has so little of reality in it that it seems almost nothing to them. It is natural for such Christians to testify that they "make many crooked paths for their feet" and that they "serve God in their weak way and manner." Such persons are not usually weak when it comes to serving self and the world.

The religion of too many people is like that of a man whom I once knew. Two religious parties had been holding their regular services in the same house. At last a strife arose among them as to which should have complete control of the house. This man who was leader of one faction told me that when they came together one day for a final decision of the case, he took off his coat, threw it down upon the seat, and said, "You lie there and my religion with you till I whip out these people." Religion that can be put on with the Sunday clothes and taken off as easily never goes very deep into the heart or life. The service of such persons is always weak, because there is no heart in it. While they profess to worship God, their hearts are far from Him.

A certain religious professor went to work with a gang of men upon a public contract. He worked with them several weeks and then came home. A friend asked him, "How did you get along working with that gang of wicked men up there? What did they have to say about your religion?" "Oh," replied the other, "they didn't find out anything about it. I didn't tell them." It is just that way with many people. You would never find out anything about their religion if they did not tell you about it. There is no manifestation of it in their lives or characters. It does not show out in their words nor deeds; in fact, you would never suspect they had any if you did not go to church and hear them testify. Sometimes people will rise in testimony meetings and say, "I know that my Redeemer liveth." In this they often turn the truth into a lie, for they do not know that their Redeemer liveth, for they are not redeemed. They are the same old creatures that they have always been. They have no personal knowledge of God whatever, unless it be of His condemnation resting upon them. Ezekiel speaks of this class of people and says of them, "They come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee as my people, and they hear thy words, but they will not do them: for with their mouth they shew much love, but their heart goeth after their covetousness" (Ezekiel 33:31). Isaiah, as quoted by Jesus, says of the same class, "This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me" (Matthew 15:8). Of what religion they have Jesus says, "In vain do they worship me" (verse 9).

Acceptable service to God can never be rendered with the lips alone. It must come from the heart. It is

the condition and attitude of the heart that counts most in everything. If our hearts are not in the service, then our service is vain. Service to God, to be acceptable, must be the most real of all things. It must be the great outstanding fact of life. God hates mere form. It is an insult to Him. He knows whether we are in earnest or not, whether our service is just form or means all to us. Modern ritualism is a curse to the world. A true Christian heart needs no such form. When we draw nigh to God with our hearts, the Spirit within us makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. It is from a heart thus in earnest that true worship and devotion comes. It is forth from such a heart that true service flows.

Acceptable service can come only from a holy heart. God's standard for His worshipers is "that ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God" (Philippians 2:15). Sinners cannot do that which is pleasing in the sight of God. Repentance is the one thing upon which God centers their attention. To repent is the first thing for them to do. God loves to receive the service of the holy. We may be weak and faltering, but our service is acceptable to God none the less if our hearts are right in His sight. As long as we are living in known disobedience to God, however, we might as well not try to serve Him. That disobedience will stand between us and God as a barrier, and He cannot count anything that we do, no matter what it is, as being a righteous thing. Our hearts must first be righteous before our lives can be so.

Service, to be acceptable, must always be willing service. God forces no one to serve Him. He lays down the principle that "if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath" (II Corinthians 8:12). Our service is not judged by our ability to do great things. A child can serve as acceptably as a man; the ignorant as well as the learned. The soul who serves willingly, takes God's way gladly. He does not ask to choose for himself; he only asks what will please the Lord, and, once knowing that, he gladly does it. Paul said of preaching the gospel that if he did it willingly he had a reward. It is only the willing service that has the reward. Willing service does have both a present and a future reward. Oh, for more willing workers who will not choose their own way or their own place or their own time, but who will give themselves into the hands of God and let His will be that which guides them from day to day, and thus find their pleasure in doing what is acceptable in His sight. God finds His pleasure in the willingness of the heart.

To be acceptable, our service must be sincere. Sincerity is the foundation of Christian character. Hypocrisy in anything is an abomination to the Lord. Deep sincerity and earnestness characterize every true Christian. Without these there can be no true Christian character and no Christian service. Many people are not sincere with themselves, with others, nor with God. They are not satisfied with their lives, and they know that God is not, and yet they go on professing to be what they ought to be. They try to appear outwardly what they really know they are not. They desire the world to believe them to be something that they know they are

not in reality. The people around us who gaze upon our lives, who listen to our words, and who see the play of emotions upon our faces know whether we are the true metal or not. God, who looks down from heaven and reads the very secrets of our hearts, knows also. God wants us to serve Him with a true heart or make no pretense of serving Him.

It must be a reverent service. The Psalmist says, "Stand in awe, and sin not" (Psalm 4:4). Hebrews 12:28 says, "Let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear." When our souls sense the greatness of God, we are then filled with a feeling of reverence toward Him, and it is only when we have this feeling of reverence that our service comes to have the quality of acceptable service. We cannot treat the service of God with careless indifference and have this reverence for Him. We must feel this before we can truly worship Him—before our worship will have that quality of genuine adoration that makes it worth while. If His fear is upon our hearts, we shall be very careful about our conduct. The question will be, not "Does this please me?" but "Will it please God?"

It must be an unostentatious service. Service that springs from true love never desires to display itself. What it does is not done for the eyes of men to behold; it is done as a loving tribute to the object of its love. Christ drew a contrast between the kind of service that is acceptable and the kind that is not. In Matthew 6:1, 2, He says: "Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven. Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward." The principle here set forth is that what is done with the purpose of being seen of men brings only the reward that men give; in other words, it is not accepted by the Lord as service to Him. Judged by this rule, much of the service of some so-called Christians is never, I fear, recognized in heaven at all. Our good deeds are to be done, not that men may see, but that God, who seeth in secret, may see, and reward according to His own will, and that He may regard them as service done to Himself and not for the reward of men's praise. It is simple, single-hearted service that pleases the Lord. Paul tells us the kind of life and service that pleases God: "That we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour" (I Timothy 2:2, 3).

We are told that a meek and quiet spirit is a thing of great price in the eyes of the Lord. Loud and boisterous conduct is not in harmony with the Spirit of Christ nor with true Christian character. Paul said, "Study to be quiet, and do your own business" (I Thessalonians 4:11). There is a quiet dignity about the work of the Holy Spirit, and if we are dwelt in and operated by the Holy Spirit, there will be a quiet dignity in our lives that will count vastly more than any self-assertiveness. It is not the showy bird that sings the sweet song. It is not the noisy and showy man that makes his mark for God. The man who is truly Godlike has no desire to put himself

upon exhibition. He thinks, "Not I, but Christ," and not only thinks it, but feels it in the depths of his heart.

Another thing contained in I Thessalonians 4:11 is that we should not meddle in other people's business. We are commanded not to be busybodies (I Timothy 5:13). Speaking of certain religious persons, Paul says, "Withal they learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house; and not only idle, but tattlers also and busybodies, speaking things which they ought not." Such things are no mark of the Christian. It shows a serious defect of character. Unless we take heed to this, we cannot be God's nor truly represent Him before the world. If you are going to please the Lord, you must not be a tattler nor a busybody. Your religion must get into your talk as well as into your heart, and if it gets really into your heart, it will manifest itself through your tongue.

Paul says also that we must be peaceable. We cannot be peaceful without being peaceable. Inward content comes only from a quiet and peaceable spirit, and, having such a spirit, we shall manifest it toward those around us. We are told that as far as lieth in us we should live peaceably with all men. We are also told that we should be no brawlers. A Christian will not stir up strife in his community. We are told that God is not the author of confusion but of peace. It is not strange, therefore, that His Spirit in us should be a peaceable Spirit and should make us peaceable to those around us. The command is, "Live in peace," and the promise is, "And the God of peace shall be with you" (Philippians 4:9). The strife and the contention sometimes seen among those who profess to be God's do not come from the Spirit of Christ, neither do they spring from a Christian character, but from an evil principle in the heart, from a lack of godliness instead of from the presence of it. A true Christian spirit is one of kindness, gentleness, meekness, forbearance, and mercy, manifested toward all.

Service, to be acceptable, must be honest. Rugged honesty is a characteristic of true Christian character. We must be honest with ourselves, with God, and with others. We must be honest in our business and in all the details of our lives. The kind of honesty required does not admit of any questionable practices—no short weights or measures, no misrepresentations of goods or stock, no putting up of prices just to advertise cut prices. Christianity bears just as real fruit in business as it does in worship. The man who leaves his religion at home when he starts to business would hardly miss it if it was gone when he came back. The true Christian has a conscience toward God in his business. He speaks the truth; he is honest; he does that which he ought to do; he does not stoop to sharp practices; he does not take advantage of those with whom he has business dealings. He is a God-man in his business as well as in his profession. True Christianity knows nothing of the days of the week: it is just as good on Monday or on Friday as it is on Sunday. It will stand the test of the store, the bank, the farm, and all of everyday life any time and anywhere. If the religion we have will not stand that test, it will not stand the test of the judgment.

The sincerity of a true Christian is manifested in truthfulness. He speaks the truth in love. Sometimes people speak unpleasant truths in a malicious and

vindictive way. As the Christian feels neither malice nor vindictiveness, he does not speak in that way. We are told that we must give an account of our words at the judgment seat of God. We cannot serve God with an untruthful tongue. We cannot serve God by practicing deceit. We are to commend ourselves to every man's conscience by manifestations of the truth (II Corinthians 4:2). The Bible is truth. God is truth; there is no lie in Him. If we partake of the nature of God and the Bible, we are truthful, and there are no lies in us; we do not speak lies nor act out lies.

Another thing every Christian ought to learn is to be silent when he ought to be so. Silence often counts more than speech. Silence is golden, but it is the wise man who knows how to get this gold.

The quality of our service is rated by the amount of love we put into it. It is not so much the acts that we do nor the consequences that flow from them, but the amount of love there is in the service. Love is what renders it acceptable to God; that is what makes it precious in His sight. It is the love of our hearts poured out to Him in service that He counts worth while; therefore, the more we love Him, the more acceptable and pleasing our service will be in His sight. If we serve Him well, He will not let us be in ignorance of it. He will give us the testimony of a good conscience. Enoch had "this testimony, that he pleased God," and we also may have it if we do please Him. God is not slow to recognize what we do for Him when it is prompted by right motives and pure purposes. Let us, therefore, walk humbly before God and serve Him in holiness and righteousness all the days of our life. †

OUT OF BOX 88

Dear Saints of God,

I am so thankful for The Way of Truth I get each month. It has been a help to me in my walk with God. I got saved at age 22. I am now 91. God has been so good to me.

I love the truth of God's Word. ... May the Lord keep blessing this truth as it goes out to this lost world. People need God.

—J. H., Kentucky

Dear Saints,

I continue to be blessed through The Way of Truth and the wonderful services I follow on YouTube. I thank God each and every day for the blessings I receive through all the saints in Hagerstown. ... God bless you all.

—S. M., Indiana

Dear Brethren,

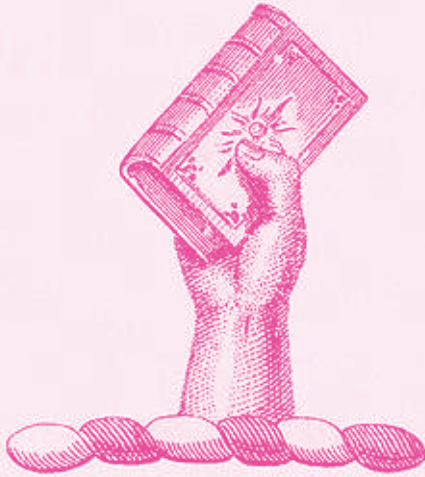
Since I was a child, I remember my dad receiving your magazines. I have received my parents' mail at my home address for a few years as I was their POA, and later their Estate Administrator.

As I read through your publication, there is not a time when it fails to minister to me in some form or fashion (II Timothy 3:16, 17; 4:2).

I will send an offering to your organization shortly. ... You may substitute my name in lieu of my dad's, or close his subscription and begin one in my name, whichever is simpler.

—S. J., Washington, DC ‡

For Poetry Lovers



THE ARM OF FAITH

Earl F. Hughes

The arm of faith is one that reaches
Far beyond the human eye,
To the land of the eternal,
Just beyond the azure sky,
To the storehouse where the many
Blessings of my Father lie.

Many times the earthly riches
Are withheld by human hand,
But I've access to the storehouse
Of the Owner of this land,
And He has no price of money;
Just by faith He fills my hand.

GOD'S WAY IS BEST

Lucille F. Bailey

In sin I walked my chosen path;
In darkness did I grope
Until I found God's way at last
And there received my hope.

God's way is best for all, you see,
There isn't any doubt;
He has no room or halfway mark
For flounder-ers about.

We must surrender all to Him
And keep ourselves that way,
So when the final judgment comes
In heaven we'll find our stay.

OUR GOD

T. T. Lynch

Say not, my soul, "From whence
Can God relieve my care?"
Remember that Omnipotence
Has servants everywhere.
God's help is always sure,
His methods seldom guessed;
Delay will make our pleasure pure,
Surprise will give it zest.

His wisdom is sublime,
His heart profoundly kind;
God never is before His time,
And never is behind.
Has thou assumed a load
Which few will share with thee?
Art thou carrying it for God,
And shall He fail to see?

MY SECRET CLOSET

Wilma Leatherman

I met God in the morning
Of a very busy day,
So I went into my closet
And there I went to pray.

I needed His assistance,
His guidance through the day,
So I went into my closet
And there I knelt to pray.

God helped me through the morning,
He gave to me a song,
When I went into my closet
The day seemed not so long.

Then I thought about the mornings
And the long and weary days,
When I forgot my closet
And did not kneel to pray.

The mornings were so dreary,
The days were, oh so long,
I was not very happy, and
I did not have a song.

I now have told my story,
I do not think I'm wrong,
If you meet God in the morning,
You'll praise Him all day long! ✠

PRAISE THE LORD FOR ALL HIS BLESSINGS!

THE CHILDREN'S CORNER



UNDERSTANDING

A Bible Lesson by Sis. Rebecca Bland

"Finally!" I said to myself as I breathed a sigh of relief. It had taken a lot of prodding and coaxing, but I had finally herded the cows from the far pasture to a gate in the fence that divided the pasture from the woods. I opened the gate, and the cows walked through. *No need to close the gate, I thought to myself. When I bring the cows back, they won't have to wait for me to open it. They can walk right back into the pasture, and then I'll close it behind them.*

I followed the cows over the narrow path through the woods. Now that I had gotten them started on their journey, they seemed content to continue on toward the barn. Barring any misfortunes, I would have them ready and waiting in time for my father to start the milking.

The cows trudged steadily, one behind the other, on the trail that wound around rock outcroppings and tall oak trees. I walked closely behind, swinging my stick, keeping the herd going. We had just crested a hill and were on our way down the other side when I heard a crashing sound to my right. I swung around quickly, looking through the trees for the source of the sound.

There, just on the other side of the fence was Lily, one of the cows that belonged with the herd. Somehow I had missed her when I drove the rest of the cows through the gateway into the woods.

"What are you doing over there?" I yelled. "You're supposed to be with us!" Lily gave me one glance and kept walking. She walked along the fence in the same direction the herd was walking, but she might as well have been miles away from us. There was only one way she could rejoin us: she had to turn and walk in the opposite direction, come through the gate, and then follow the path through the woods.

"Go back down to the gate! It's still open!" I yelled to her, but Lily continued to follow the fence, bawling in her frustration at being separated from the rest of the herd.

I stood irresolute in the middle of the path, thinking fast. If I went back to get Lily, the rest of the herd might scatter in the woods. I would waste precious time getting them back together and headed for the barn, and my father would get a late start on the milking. But if I took the rest of the herd to the barn and then came back for Lily, there would be no one to keep the cows moving through the chute and into the milking parlor for my father.

"Go back that way!" I yelled at Lily, pointing down the hill in the direction of the gate. *If only she could understand me!* I thought. She could save herself and me so much trouble. But Lily only bawled again in response. I knew I would have to go back and get her.

"Keep going to the barn!" I yelled to the cows in front of me. *Why are you even talking to them?* I asked myself. *They don't understand one word you are saying.*

With a deep sigh, I turned around and headed for the far pasture and Lily. Every minute, she was traveling farther and farther from the gate that led to where she needed to go. When I finally caught up to Lily, I turned her around and started her in the right direction.

Fortunately, when Lily and I caught up to the rest of the herd, they were still on their way to the barn. They hadn't scattered through the woods as I had feared. However, I was still upset with Lily. The whole way to the barn, I explained to her what she should have done. How much of it do you think she understood? Not one little bit.

Whenever I remember what happened with Lily that day, I think of how human beings sometimes act as though they have no understanding. But that is not true. We humans are not like animals. We have a mind and a soul that can understand right from wrong. We can hear the Word of God, and we can ask Him to help us understand it. We can make the choice to obey God's commandments. We can make the choice to serve Him with all of our hearts.

Our wise saying this month comes from Proverbs 9:6, which says, "Forsake the foolish, and live; and go in the way of understanding." There is a pathway that leads to eternal life. God calls us to follow that pathway. Let us hear Him with understanding hearts. Let us do His will and obey Him so that one day we may live forever with Him in heaven.

Activity

Can you complete each of these scriptures that tell us how important it is to understand the will of God? (HINT: All of the scriptures are found in the book of Proverbs).

1. _____ in the Lord with all thine _____; and _____ not unto thine own understanding.
2. _____ is the man that findeth _____, and the man that getteth understanding.
3. _____ is the principal thing; therefore get _____: and with all thy getting get understanding.
4. O ye simple, understand _____: and, ye _____, be ye of an understanding _____.
5. For the _____ giveth wisdom: out of his _____ cometh _____ and understanding.

Answer to Last Month's Activity

1. **Jacob** saw angels ascending and descending on a ladder to heaven.
2. **Gideon** was told by an angel that God would use him to deliver the Israelites from the Midianites.
3. **Samson's mother** was told by an angel that she would have a child that would deliver the Israelites from the Philistines.
4. **The shepherds** were told by angels that the Baby Jesus had been born in a stable and laid in a manger.
5. **Peter** was rescued from prison by an angel. †

CHOICES

AND HOW THEY AFFECT OUR LIVES

Radio Message by Bro. James Arch

I AM going to be speaking on "Choices and How They Affect Our Lives." I'll be deriving the few thoughts from the 15th chapter of St. Luke, which records the parable of the prodigal son.

We all know that mankind was created with the power of choice. We find that very clearly in the Scriptures. In fact, it wasn't very long after God had placed Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, and even after they had their offspring that we were able to see the choices that they made. Eve made a choice to listen to God's command or listen to the tempter. She listened to the tempter and succumbed and disobeyed God. Adam and Eve lost that holy estate by which they were created.

Moses decided to go with God and His people, rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin, and to spend a life of ease and comfort in the palace of Pharaoh. A good long time into his life, Moses made that choice. He said, "Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season." We know that God called Moses to lead His people away from Egyptian bondage into the Promised Land. God was with them.

Saul made a choice, who was later called Paul. He responded to the call of God, rather than to stay on the course that he was on. Every day we make choices. We choose this, we choose that, and we choose the other. Everything that we do in life almost involves a choice. Paul made a decision, and it wasn't very long when God began to use that man in an outstanding way. Paul has gone down in history as one of the greatest missionaries to walk on this earth. He was an apostle that established churches and helped mankind.

God has set two ways before us. Jesus Himself said, "One is broad and one is narrow, and many there be

which take the broad way." The narrow way refers to walking the strait path, walking and following Jesus.

In most cases, we are to blame ourselves for our choices and the consequences that follow them. Unfortunately, that is a fact, and so very real. I'm sure most of us, if not all, made choices that we wished we had not made.

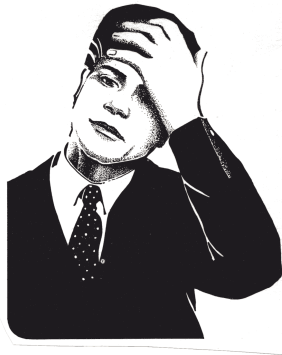
No one is predestined to be lost or saved. The gospel is clear. The Bible says "the whosoever will." If it was not that way, the power of choice (the right to choose), would be taken away from us. So every man has a choice to make. The Bible says that God sent His Son into the world. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that *whosoever* [Listen to that word I just said.] believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

When Jesus was on Earth, He called many people. Some of those people followed Him and others rejected Him. In fact, the Bible says, "He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God." Jesus instructed the 70 disciples that He sent out to brush the dust off their feet if their message was refused, and to go elsewhere. That is found in the Bible. Jesus Christ never imposed Himself on anyone. He called and they accepted or they refused.

One of the most outstanding accounts of making a decision is found in the 15th chapter of the book of Luke. The spiritual application to this parable is: the true picture of the redeemed sinner. The prodigal represents the sinner and the father represents God in His great mercy and love. This young man made a decision. "And the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living." The father had two sons. This is talking about the younger one. He began a very long journey in search for life's meaning that would prove vain. "And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living." What a picture! Even today in the temporal sense that can apply. We see it happening all the time. People are leaving home and going away, rejecting authority, and doing this thing and the other thing. This young man made a decision. Let me tell you, it was a long journey. The song says, "Sin will take you farther than you want to go."

It did not take long for the prodigal son to find out his mistake. "And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want." What a picture! He was far away from home and he began to think. Some people go so far from God. Many never come back to Him. Many just keep going and going and going, refusing the wonderful offers of salvation, and the grace of God that He has brought to mankind. The Bible tells us, "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world" (Titus 2:11, 12).

This young man "went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine." He found himself abased, forsaken, and



friendless. When his money was finished and everything was gone, he found himself in an unusual plight that he never thought he would find himself. You see, the devil doesn't paint these kinds of pictures to young people and old people, either. They just keep drifting, drifting aimlessly without any purpose in life, and are making the wrong choices all the time. Jesus Himself said, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden [burdened down with sin and guilt], and I will give you [soul] rest." What a beautiful scripture taken from the 11th chapter of Matthew!

However, this young man woke up to what he had left behind. Yes, he went so far that perhaps, he couldn't go much further. "And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him. And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!" He wasn't even offered the husks that the pigs did eat. How far away can we really get from God?

This young man was now humiliated and made another decision. Do you know he made two decisions? He made one to leave and one to come back. "I will arise and go to my father." He just didn't leave it there. He just didn't wake up to his plight. He said, "I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, And am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants." He now realized his mistake. He felt ashamed and humiliated and so unworthy. Sometimes we get so far from God that we believe He can't save us and help us. We must never believe that, My Beloved Friends.

A song says—

*I am coming to Jesus for rest,
Rest such as the purified know;
My soul is athirst to be blest,
To be washed and made whiter than snow.*

*I believe Jesus saves,
And his blood washes whiter than snow;
I believe Jesus saves,
And his blood washes whiter than snow.*

This young man was unworthy perhaps, but he acted on his decision. "And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him." Oh, for the love of God! What love! "The love of God is greater far than tongue or pen can ever tell; It goes beyond the highest star, And reaches to the lowest hell." Could we ever comprehend the love of God and His redeeming love for mankind?

Verses 22-24 of our text, Luke 15, show the acceptance and reconciliation by his father and the happy return: "But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry: For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry." The Bible tells us, "Likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner

that repenteth more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance" (Luke 15:7).

The apostle Paul summed this up in very beautiful words taken from the 5th chapter of the book of Romans, verses 1 and 2: "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God." *Justified* means, "to be acquitted." That is what God does for us. We are set free from our committed sins. Verse 2 speaks of the deeper work of grace, or sanctification, or being filled with the Holy Spirit that gives us the power to stand against wrong and evil, and to live a holy, godly life in this very troubled world that we live in today.

God's Word stands sure, My Beloved Friends. It never fails. God never fails one human being. There is always room at the cross. So many have come, but there is still room for some. There is always room at the cross for everyone that comes to God. Thank God for the truth of this beautiful gospel of Jesus Christ.

The father didn't reject the young man that came back. We go so far from God sometimes that we never remember Him, yet He still remembers us. We get so deep down and so far way from Him, yet His love still reaches us. It doesn't matter where we have gone, what we have done, and how much we have rejected Him, "the love of God is greater far than tongue or pen can ever tell." †

PHILIPPINE CONVENTION REPORT

**First Virtual Convention
held by the Church of God**

December 26-28, 2020

Theme: *God's Faithfulness in the Midst of Trials and
Temptations*
(II Thessalonians 3:3)

The convention of the Church of God in the Philippines was a very different one from previous years. In the past nine months, there were lots of restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic in our country, and we were thinking whether we would have the privilege of having our convention. But we are so thankful to the Lord that He made a very special way for us, not only for our brethren all over the Philippine Islands, but also for the brethren around the world to be in our three-day "Virtual Convention." Praise the Lord we were able to have it!

I usually say that our convention would not be complete without our American brethren, but thank the Lord we were able to have three American evangelists from the United States for our three-day virtual convention through Facebook LIVE and via Zoom. Romans 8:28 says, "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."

The good Lord made it possible for our convention brethren, friends, relatives, and others from far-flung

areas of our country, and from all over the world who had access to an internet connection to tune in. They were able to be with us and to interact with us through this amazing invention God has given to mankind when used according to His will to bring precious souls to our Lord Jesus, and great blessings and edification to His church, and every saint wherever they were in this world.

Thank the Lord for the blessings we received, and hopefully, we will be able to have our convention this year as was done in previous years.

Note: The evening of December 25th was a sad night for Bro. Jet and myself. Usually we get to the parsonage with the American brethren who came for the convention, but that night it was just us. I was imagining that our brethren from Mindanao, Luzon, Visayas, and other nearby islands were already there, but darkness and silence in the mess hall met us.

When I woke up the following morning at four o'clock, I was straining my ears in anticipation of hearing voices of those in charge of preparing the food for the day, but there was only silence. Nevertheless, when our first morning devotional service started, I was so glad to be with those who were able to come personally at the chapel, and with those virtually, via Facebook LIVE and Zoom. †

—Sis. Judith Batalla

WATER!

By the late Bro. H. R. Matthews

THE natural resource on which man is most dependant is probably water. The physical man cannot long endure without water. Water is the most common solvent used in cleansing surfaces and mechanisms where cleansing becomes necessary. This would include the atmosphere. Much of the food we eat is produced from the soil. A crop failure would result because of insufficient rainfall. Also, because of insufficient rainfall, fertile soil becomes a dust bowl. Insufficient rainfall creates a tinder box wherein wildfires destroy large areas of timber, buildings, etc. Insufficient rainfall would hinder streams and reservoirs from producing electrical power. Insufficient rainfall has produced desert areas where population growth is hindered. This has been overcome to a great extent by irrigation projects.

When God created the heavens and the earth, “the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters” (Genesis 1:2). This caused the waters to divide and become oceans, seas, streams, and lakes. This also caused dry land to appear and become continents and islands, mountains and valleys, plains and rainforests. Oh, the

wonder of it all! Take away the oceans, the seas, take away the streams and lakes and soon the rainforests would disappear. Soon the plains would become desert, soon rainfall would cease, soon Earth would become uninhabitable and await the destroying flame on the last day. Yet water is probably the most, taken for granted, of all our natural resources.

Well chosen were the words of the scribe who penned them, “And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.” Water is well chosen then to symbolize time and eternity’s greatest spiritual resource, the Holy Spirit. Of the greatest importance was the statement made by Jesus that began with the words, “Verily, verily.” Confirmation of the importance of this introduction is followed by Jesus saying, “I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God” (John 3:5). “There is not a message from the entire Word of God more powerful than those few words. In those few words, man’s eternal destiny is spelled out. Water in this verse is not speaking of literal water. Water in this verse is not speaking of water baptism. Water and the Holy Spirit in this verse are synonymous.”—Adam Clarke.

John the Baptizer declared, “I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance.” When Jesus began His ministry, His message was, “Repent: for the kingdom of God is at hand” (Matthew 4:17). Soon Jesus was expounding to Nicodemus, “Except a man be born of the water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God” (John 3:5).

In John’s message of repentance, he continued by saying, “But he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire” (Matthew 3:11). Repentance brought a cleansing from the defilement of sin. Water baptism is merely a type of the cleansing that is effected by repentance. Water baptism became only a witness to an inward work effected by repentance.

The water from Jacob’s well never cleansed from one sin, but Jesus was using the water from Jacob’s well to teach a lesson to the Samaritan woman whom He met at the well. Jacob’s well was a sacred place to the woman of Samaria, for when Jesus began His spiritual discourse with the woman, He asked her for a drink from the well. The woman was amazed that Jesus, being Jewish, would ask of her, a Samaritan, for a drink. Jesus then said to her, “If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith unto thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water” (John 4:10). Still not understanding, she said to Jesus, “Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then hast thou that living water? Art thou greater than our father Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his children, and his cattle?” In His divine wisdom, Jesus continued the discourse that would give her the understanding of the living water. “Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.”

In further discourse, Jesus made Himself known unto her. "The woman saith unto him, I know that Messias cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things. Jesus saith unto her, I that speaketh unto thee am he" (John 4:25, 26). What a thrill to the soul! There she stood in the presence of the Lord of lords, and the King of kings; the Messiah, the Son of the living God who offers that living water to all men. By faith, we see Him today, for He will never leave us, nor forsake us. "Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory" (I Peter 1:8). Let us drink of that living water.

After Jesus had given up the ghost, a Roman spear pierced His side and forthwith flowed blood and water. It would seem that both the blood and water were emblematic, for neither the blood nor the water in themselves had the power to effect a spiritual cleansing. As with the woman at the well, it was not the water of the well that converted the woman to a new creature in Christ; it was the living water of which the water from the well was emblematic of a spiritual cleansing.

In full salvation, there are two cleansings. The first is justification and regeneration, where forgiveness and cleansing from sin takes place. The second cleansing, called sanctification, is where the sinful nature is cast out. "Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate" (Hebrews 13:12).

Let us consider now, chapter 5, verses 25-27 of the apostle Paul's epistle to the Ephesian church: "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church [those who are justified], and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, 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."

The moving of the Holy Spirit upon the face of the waters was a very important part of creation, for in the process of forming Earth from an uninhabitable mass to a planet of lush valleys and beautifully forested mountains, to a planet of a great expanse of plains, streams, and bodies of water, planet Earth was transformed into a life-sustaining dwelling place for the beasts of the field, fish of the sea, fowls of the air, and a dwelling place for mankind. But there is an anti-type to all this wonderful work of God's hands. The day will come, which is called the last day. On this last day, this wonderful work of God's hands will have fulfilled its mission and will pass away with a great noise and will be burned up. On this last day, man will be judged according to his works and will go to his long home. The anti-type of the Holy Spirit moving upon the face of the waters is the Holy Spirit moving upon the hearts of mankind, bringing joy, happiness, love, purity, and delivering mankind out of the kingdom of darkness and into the kingdom of God's dear Son.

Dear Reader, Jesus left the glories of heaven and came to Earth to save His people (all mankind) from their sins. Wrong doing always requires a penalty. Jesus came to Earth to pay the debt that man could not pay.

March 2021

He came to Earth to bring about reconciliation between God and man. The cross, the blood, the water that flowed from His side were only emblematic of the price Jesus paid to reconcile man to God. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). "And whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely" (Revelation 22:17).

Of the ten virgins of the gospel of Matthew, chapter twenty-five, five were foolish, for as the bridegroom was coming at the midnight hour, they were to go out and meet him, along with the five wise virgins, but the oil for their lamps had run out. While they were gone to buy oil for their lamps, the bridegroom came, the door was shut, and they were not able to enter. Through neglect and complacency, their oil had run out. As with the church of Ephesus, they had left their first love. In the Scriptures, oil symbolizes the Holy Spirit.

From the model prayer, Jesus was instructing His disciples of the importance of prayer. We read, "Give us this day our daily bread" (Matthew 6:11). "If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give them a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? Or if he ask for an egg, will he give them a scorpion? If ye then, being evil [earthly], 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?" (Luke 11:11-13).

Water, oil, and bread, then, would be symbolic of the Holy Spirit. Jesus, in speaking to His disciples shortly before returning to His Father in heaven, said, "But ye shall receive power, after the Holy Ghost is come upon you" (Acts 1:8).

What all is the Holy Ghost to us as He comes upon us?

- He reproves us of sin;
- He becomes our Comforter;
- He becomes our Teacher;
- He guides us into all truth;
- We become His temple in which He dwells;
- He bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God;
- He imparts spiritual gifts to whom He will;
- He helps us to pray, for we know not how to pray as we ought;
- The anointing oil for divine healing of the body represents the Holy Ghost.
- "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance" (Galatians 5:22, 23).

Reader, the well is deep and the drawing is toilsome, but oh, the water is pure, the water is sweet, and it so satisfies our thirst that we never shall thirst again! On the vessel with which we draw is engraven, "Jesus, the Fountain of living water."

Come, Dear Ones, and drink of the water of life freely! †

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Alvin A. Craig, Radio Minister

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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