

The Way of Truth

Vol. 79

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

No. 4

Mother's Day Issue

MAY 2021

GODLY MOTHERS ARE LIGHTS IN THIS WORLD OF DARKNESS

I HEARD about this little girl who was about to say her part in an old-fashioned Children's Day program. When she got in front of the crowd, the sight of hundreds of pairs of curious eyes focused upon her threw her into a panic. Every line that she had rehearsed so carefully faded from her mind, and she stood there frozen in her tracks, unable to utter a single syllable.

In the front row her mother was almost as frantic as the little girl. She gestured, she moved her lips to form the words that her daughter was to speak, but it availed nothing. Finally, in desperation the mother whispered the opening phrase, "I am the light of the world." Instantly, the child's face relaxed. A smile appeared where there had been clouds before. And with supreme confidence the little girl began, "My mother is the light of the world."

Of course, we know that Jesus is the light of the world. But through the years mothers have beautifully reflected the light of Jesus in their countenances and in their lives. Godly mothers are indeed the light of their children's world. The problem is that there are too few godly mothers having a righteous influence upon the current generation. Godliness has ceased being associated with motherhood.

Women have been essential to the progress of the nation and the church in particular. I quote an unknown author:

"Many feminists today blame Christianity for the plight of women in the world. They point to biblical passage that seem to limit women in leadership roles and consider it evidence of Christianity's culpability in holding down women. This is historical revisionism. No other religious system in history has elevated women in society like Christianity has. Consider the plight of women in the eastern religions, in Judaism, and Islam, the worst of all."

Paul praised women in his ministry: Phoebe (Romans 16:2), Euodias and Syntyche (Philippians 4:3). Also, consider Jesus' relationships with women. He treated them with respect and equality. It was women who ministered to Him during His life. Women stayed to watch the crucifixion. Women came to the tomb to anoint the body of Christ, and by that were the first witnesses of the resurrection. Jesus recognized the worth of women, appreciated their efforts, and received their following.

Nothing is so powerful as a mother filled with Jesus, the light of the world. She is a reflection of all that is good in life.

"The most important occupation on Earth for a woman is to be a real mother to her children. It does not have much glory to it; there is a lot of grit and grime. But there is no greater place of ministry, position, or power than that of a mother."—Phil Whisenhunt.

Mothers, are you reflecting the light of Christ in your motherhood? Do you brighten the corner where

you are? Are you having a godly influence on your children?

A well-known Bible teacher had just finished speaking to a large class of people on the Christian's responsibility to be a "light" in the world. He emphasized that believers are to reflect the light of the world, the Lord Jesus. After the class, one of the members related to him an experience she had in her home which had impressed upon this same truth. She said that when she went into her basement she made an interesting discovery.

Some potatoes had sprouted in the darkest corner of the room. At first she couldn't figure out how they had gotten enough light to grow. Then she noticed that the cook had hung a copper kettle from the ceiling near a cellar window. She kept it so brightly polished that it reflected the rays of the sun onto the potatoes. The woman said, "When I saw that, I thought, I may not be a preacher or a teacher with ability to expound Scripture, but at least I can be a copper kettle catching the rays of the Son and reflecting His light to someone in a dark corner."

Love comes to the heart through the arms of a mother.

"The child, in the decisive first years of his life, has the experience of his mother as an all-enveloping, protective, nourishing power. Mother is food; she is love; she is warmth; she is earth. To be loved by her means to be alive, to be rooted, to be at home."—Erich Fromm.

Dear Lord, it's such a hectic day,
With little time to stop and pray,
For Life's been anything but calm,
Since You called on me to be a mom.
Running errands, matching socks,
Building dreams with building blocks,
Cooking, cleaning, and finding shoes,
And other stuff that children lose,
Fitting lids on bottled bugs,
Wiping tears and giving hugs,
A stack of last week's mail to read,
So where's the quiet time I need?
Yet, when I steal a minute, Lord,
Just at the sink or ironing board
To ask the blessings of Your grace,
I see then, in my small one's face
That you have blessed me all the while,
And I stooped to kiss that precious smile.

—Author Unknown

"Every mother has a favorite child. She cannot help it. She is only human. I have mine—the child for whom I feel a special closeness, with whom I share a love that no one else could possibly understand. My favorite child is the one who was too sick to eat ice cream at his birthday party—who had measles at Christmas—who wore leg

ABOUT THE COVER

Mother's Day is May 9 this year. Make an effort to honor that precious one if she is still in the land of the living. If she has been called home to heaven, honor her memory for she is worthy!

THE WAY OF TRUTH

(Registered Trademark)

Vol. 79 May 2021 No. 4

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

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

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

—Gregory E. Tyler, Editor

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braces to bed because he toed in—who had a fever in the middle of the night, the asthma attack, the child in my arms at the emergency ward.

“My favorite child is the one who messed up the piano recital, misspelled committee in a spelling bee, ran the wrong way with the football, and had his bike stolen because he was careless.

“My favorite child is the one I punished for lying, grounded for insensitivity to other people’s feelings, and informed he was a royal pain to the entire family.

“All mothers have their favorite child. It is always the same one: the one who needs you at the moment. Who needs you for whatever reason—to cling to, to shout at, to hurt, to hug, to flatter, to reverse charges to, to unload on—but mostly just to be there.”—Erma Bombeck.

The apostle Paul instructs the aged women, “That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed” (Titus 2:4, 5).

Mother, that child you bore has a soul!

“Countless times each day a mother does what no one else can do quite as well. She wipes away a tear, whispers a word of hope, eases a child’s fear. She teaches, ministers, loves, and nurtures the next generation of citizens. And she challenges and cajoles her children to do their best and be the best. But no editorials praise these accomplishments—where is the coverage our mothers rightfully deserve?

“Let your home be your parish, your little brood your congregation, your living room a sanctuary, and

your knee a sacred altar. Mother always sees the deeper meaning of a thing—the moral of the story.

“Mothers, your responsibility goes beyond the temporal. Satisfaction comes from having a lasting, positive impact on the lives of others. Nobody on Earth even comes close to a mother for having the potential for that kind of influence.

“Be an example of sacrifice, loving, doing one’s best, helping others in need.

“Be an example of following in Christ’s steps, being a light in this world of darkness.

“The future of our nation and our world depends on godly mothers setting a moral example for their children and to fill their lives with love.”—Selected.

Can your child paraphrase I Corinthians 13:4-8 like this? “Mother suffereth long, and is kind; Mother envieth not; Mother vaunteth not herself, is not puffed up, Mother doth not behave herself unseemly, Mother seeketh not her own, Mother is not easily provoked, Mother thinketh no evil; Mother rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; Mother beareth all things, Mother believeth all things, Mother hopeth all things, Mother endureth all things. Mother’s love never faileth.”

May the Lord bless each godly mother on Mother’s Day and always! †

HAPPY MOTHER’S DAY!

IN THIS ISSUE:

Thoughts Toward Mother	Page 2
<i>Radio message by the late Alvin A. Craig</i>	
The Poetry Page	Page 4
<i>Honoring our mothers</i>	
A New Name	Page 5
<i>Full-length sermon by Rebecca Bland</i>	
Young People’s Page	Page 8
<i>Article by Julie Swain</i>	
Gates of Hell Cannot Prevail Against the Church	Page 10
<i>Article by Richard Lehman</i>	
Bible Lesson of the Month	Page 12
<i>“Living for Christ Among Our Friends”</i>	
The Secret to Christian Unity	Page 13
<i>Admonition by Darrell Sanford</i>	
In Our Lifetime	Page 14
<i>Full-length sermon by Terry Deville</i>	
The Question Box	Page 18
<i>Our monthly feature</i>	
Winning a Crown	Page 19
<i>Part XXXII of the book by the late C. W. Naylor</i>	
The Children’s Corner	Page 20
<i>“Humble,” by Rebecca Bland</i>	

THOUGHTS TOWARD MOTHERS

Radio Message by the late
Bro. Alvin A. Craig,
delivered 5/09/04



IN OUR broadcast today, we want to direct our thoughts toward Mothers. I have said many times, of all the people in the world that should be honored, it is indeed our mothers. I am truly thankful for the mother that I had. She passed from this life many years ago, but I still remember her love and devotion to her family. So all mothers are worthy of honor. Some, of course, are worthy of more honor than others because of the way they lived.

We read in the book of Proverbs, chapter 14, verse 1, "Every wise woman buildeth her house: but the foolish plucketh it down with her hands." I think, if you have any spiritual insight at all today, you will agree with me that there is a Satanic power working in our nation and world, trying to destroy God's divine plan of the family—fathers, mothers, and children. There is an effort to do away with or to destroy the God-given plan that we find in the Bible.

We hear a lot in the world about some supposed anti-Christ that is to come yet in the future, but Beloved, the apostle John said that even in his day there were many anti-Christ's. I certainly say, there is a spirit of anti-Christ working in our nation and in our world today. One of the ways that this spirit of anti-Christ is working is in an effort to destroy our homes. We've often heard it said "no nation is stronger than its homes," and that's a fact; but we will also say that no congregation of God's people is any stronger than the families that make up that home. So Satan is trying to destroy, not only the family, but he's endeavoring to destroy God's church through his insidious efforts and work. But I am so thankful today for all of those who are God-fearing mothers and who are endeavoring to fill the place that God would have them to fill.

Now I am not going to say that there aren't some good mothers doing the best they know how without being a Christian, but I am going to say, no mother, no father, or anyone else can be fully what they should be and can be without Christ, for Christ makes such a great difference in the hearts and lives of individuals. That's why the apostle Paul said, "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."

I'd like for us to look into the Scriptures at some mothers that we read about. First of all, I am going to speak about the mother of the one that we know as Moses. I'm not saying that Moses was taught entirely by his mother alone, but I'm sure that he had a God-fearing father also. I believe though that his mother had a great bearing on him. You've heard the story of how Pharaoh had ordered that all the Hebrew male children be slain, but this couple did not fear the king's



command. They hid their little one for a while and then they made a little ark of bulrushes to put him in. The little ark was placed in the flags by the river's brink. The king's daughter came down to the river and when her maidens were walking along the riverside, they found Moses there in the water. About that time Miriam showed up and asked, "Would you like for me to get a nurse maid for the little one?" The princess said, "Yes," and of course, Miriam went home and got her mother. Rather than killing the child, Pharaoh's treasury paid this mother to take care of her own child. I rejoice in that fact, for it shows what a miracle-working God we serve. There's nothing impossible with God. So this mother took her little one and took care of him until he was old enough to be turned over to the princess. I am persuaded that during those few years that this mother had her little one, she endeavored to fill his heart and his mind with the truth of God.

Moses is given credit for writing, virtually all, of the first five books of the Bible. I'm sure the Spirit of God moved on him, and maybe he was given some divine revelations from God, but I am also persuaded that his parents taught him about God and His creative works. So whenever Moses grew to a young boy and was turned over to the princess and was educated there in the schools of Egypt, he did not get away from the truths that he was taught in his childhood.

The Bible says of Moses, "When he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt." I am persuaded that his mother had a great influence on him in making this choice. That is one of the things that makes motherhood so important. It is not just providing good meals and other comforts in the material way. The greater responsibility and the greater award await the mother who lives for God herself and teaches and influences her children to do likewise. After all, what do we have that is as valuable as our eternity-bound soul? I'm not saying that health and education aren't good things, and getting a good job, etc., for they are all important. All of those things are a part of the realities of life, but we're not going to stay here forever. We're going to leave this world, and the state we leave this world in will determine our eternal destiny. So the most valuable thing we have is our eternity-bound soul. I must conclude that Moses' mother had a great influence on him in the decision that he made: "Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season."

Another mother that I'd like to call your attention to is Hannah. We read about her in First Samuel. Elkanah was a man who had two wives. He loved them both. I don't question that. I do know that God ordained one man for one woman, and one woman for one man, but I also know that early in the history of man, man got away from God's divine plan and man started taking more than one wife. So here we have a man who had two wives. The one wife was bearing Elkanah's children but Hannah was unable to have children. Hannah was reproached, and doubtless, mocked by the

other wife who was able to have children. She went up with Elkanah to the place of worship as they did each year. At the place of worship, Hannah began to pray and pour her heart out to God. She wasn't praying audibly. Her heart was so burdened and so desirous of having a child that only her lips were moving.

The high priest, Eli, misunderstood Hannah and misjudged her. He thought she was drunk. She told Eli, "No, no, I'm not drunk. I have a burden, a desire. I want a child, and I promised God that if He'll give me a male child, I'll give him back to Him as long as he lived." So Eli told her that God would grant her the desire of her heart. God did grant her the desire of her heart and she had a child. She had a son; and faithful to her word, after he got old enough to be weaned and separated from his mother, he was taken to Shiloh and was left there with the high priest, Eli. Of course, we know this son is Samuel, one of the oldest Old Testament prophets that we find in the Bible.

Samuel was a very faithful man. God appeared to him in his childhood and revealed things to him that He did not reveal to Eli. Samuel was formed and fashioned after the things of God by the influence of this godly mother. She desired a son so much and she promised God that if He would give her this son that she would give him back to Him as long as he lived. All of us—mothers and fathers—should dedicate our children to God and should desire to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

Samuel faced some very difficult places in life. Everything was not smooth or easy for Samuel. He lived during the time of King Saul and during the time Saul tried to kill David. There were very difficult times that Samuel faced. The people desired a king and Samuel knew that it wasn't best for them. He tried to persuade them to not follow the nations that were around them and choose a king. He told them that it would be to their detriment. He explained how it would be to their detriment, but they disregarded him. They went ahead and demanded a king and God had Samuel to anoint Saul. Saul was a humble man at first and God was with him. God blessed him with some outstanding victories, but in the due course of time, Saul became careless in his service to God and lost out with God. He rebelled and disobeyed God. Eventually, Saul died a suicidal death.

Samuel was a man who was true, not only in his youth, but throughout his entire life. He challenged the children of Israel to show where he had ever taken a bribe or where he had ever handed down a bias judgment. They were not able. They told Samuel, "We have no charge against you. There's nothing we have to say against you." So Samuel was a faithful servant of God. I am persuaded much credit must go to his godly mother, Hannah, who prayed for him and received her answer to her prayers. I'm sure that after he was born she prayed many prayers for him also. Thank God for a praying mother. We need more praying mothers in our nation and world today. Yes, we need more God-fearing, praying mothers who will fear God and will endeavor to teach and to bring their children up in the nurture and in the admonition of the Lord.

There are a number of mothers that we could refer to, but I want to refer now to the mother of our Lord

Jesus. We don't have a lot of information as to her in regard to the training of the child, Jesus, but I'd like to refer, first of all, to her dedication and consecration to almighty God. This is a very important point for any and for every mother who desires to be what God would have them to be: consecrated and dedicated to God.

When the angel of the Lord appeared to Mary who was espoused to the man Joseph and told her that she was to be the mother of the Savior, she did not question his word or doubt, as far as doubting God, but she did wonder how this could be. She did ask the angel of the Lord, "How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?" It wasn't a matter of her doubting, but a matter of not understanding. So the angel of the Lord explained to Mary that the Holy Ghost would come upon her and that which would be conceived in her womb would be of the Holy Ghost. Whenever it was explained to her how it would be that she would become the mother of the Savior, she said, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word."

I believe Mary understood that she would be persecuted and be looked upon, maybe criticized, and her name would be cast out as something evil, because people would not believe that her Son was of a virgin birth. Nevertheless, in the face of that, she consecrated herself to God. "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word." So Mary became the mother of the Savior of the world.

Now I do not mean to distract or to take anything away from Mary. She is to be honored, she is to be respected as the mother of our Savior, but she was not, and is not, to be worshiped. We are not instructed in the Scriptures to direct our prayers to her or to any other saint. She is not the fourth person in the Godhead and she is not the co-redeemer of Jesus Christ. There is only one Redeemer, one Savior, and that's the Lord Jesus Christ. "There is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved," and that name is Jesus Christ. "There is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus." I say, Mary was the mother of the Lord Jesus, and she is to be honored and respected in that capacity. I am confident that she endeavored to be a good mother, not only to Jesus, but to any other children that God gave to her and Joseph. Mary was at the foot of the cross when our Savior was hanging there. She was in the upper room with the 120. In fact, she was one of the 120 when the Spirit of God was poured out upon them.

We also read in the Bible about Timothy's mother and grandmother. Both of them were good godly women. I'm sure that they both had a great influence on the young man, Timothy, who was a very faithful laborer with the great apostle Paul. We give great honor to Paul for the work that he did, but we should not forget that Paul had some very capable workers and Timothy was one of them. Timothy had a godly mother and a godly grandmother. What a blessing it is to have righteousness passed on down from generation to generation! It is indeed fitting and proper that we honor our mothers, but we should especially thank God today for all God-fearing mothers.

If you are listening to this broadcast today and you're not saved, could I encourage you to become a Christian?

Be a godly mother. Be what God would be pleased for you to be. You will not only be rewarded in this world, but in the world to come. Remember, the soul is the most valuable possession that anyone has. If you can teach and train your children in the fear and admonition of the Lord, you have accomplished more than the president of the United States or some king of another land. Again, I say, the soul is the most valuable possession that anyone has. †

THE POETRY PAGE

JUST MOTHER

Floyd R. Nalls

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

FLOWERS FOR MOTHER

Erene Angleman

Give her the flowers of beauty,
The rose and the orchid rare,
But give her the fairest bloom of all,
The flower of tender care.

Give her a little posy,
Picked from your garden plot,
But give her the one she loves the best,
The heart's forget-me-not.

Give her the blooms you gathered,
Treasured from day to day,
The smiles, the tears, the hopes,
She scattered about your way.

Give her her own carnation,
But together or far apart,
Give her the flower of love to wear
Always upon her heart.

THOUGHTS OF MOTHER

J. D. Eldridge

O Mother, I am thinking
Of the days when you were here;
The old home then was cheerful,
But now it's lone and drear.

Your old armchair is vacant,
Where many long days you sat
And read your dear old Bible—
On it are tear stains yet.

I almost hear your footsteps
And see your smiling face;
Each day I miss you, Mother,
There's none can take your place.

I hear your voice no longer;
I hear your pray'rs no more;
In heaven you are happy,
On that celestial shore.

MOTHER'S LOVE

Author Unknown

Her love is like an island
In life's ocean, vast and wide,
A peaceful, quiet shelter
From the wind and rain and tide.

'Tis bound on the north by Hope,
By Patience on the west,
By tender Counsel on the south
And on the east by Rest.

Above like a beacon light
Shine Faith and Truth and Prayer,
And through the changing scenes of life,
I find a haven there. †

"When all is said, it is the mother, and the mother only, who is a better citizen than the soldier who fights for his country. The successful mother, the mother who does her part in rearing and training aright the boys and girls who are to be the men and women of the next generation, is of greater use to the community, and occupies, if she would only realize it, a more honorable as well as a more important position than any man in it. The mother is the one supreme asset of the national life. She is more important, by far, than the successful statesman, or businessman, or artist, or scientist."—Theodore Roosevelt

A NEW NAME

Message by Sis. Rebecca Bland, delivered 02/14/21



I WOULD like for us to turn to Revelation, chapter 2. We'll begin reading with the twelfth verse: "And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write; These things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges; I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is: and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas was my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth. But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication. So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate. Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it." I'd like to use for a text that last verse (verse 17). My thoughts are entitled, "A New Name."

I'll give a little background about the apostle John who recorded the vision he saw in the book of Revelation. We know that he had been exiled to the isle of Patmos. I have seen pictures of the apostle John sitting on some rocks as an old man looking out over the sea, and I guess either ready to write, or having written the revelations that he saw. People live lives, don't they? John was there as a prisoner and he didn't have a peaceful time just sitting on a rock somewhere waiting for a vision to happen, or writing a vision. Bible scholars agree that John had been living in Ephesus, and then there was an emperor who really took a dislike to Christians, and John was exiled to Patmos at the time when many Christians were being persecuted.

There were some mines on the isle of Patmos. I don't know what kinds of minerals they were digging from the ground, but it was a hard labor. If you were exiled to Patmos, you were expected to work along side of people that we would consider the lower parts of society—hardened criminals, and people who had fallen out of favor with the emperor. John was an old man, and so I can't imagine that he had a lot of hard labor to do. I don't think he could have done hard labor, but I am sure that he rubbed shoulders with some really, really desperate people. I'm sure that he was a light. I wouldn't be surprised if he didn't lead some people to Christ while he was there on that island.

John didn't have a pleasant life. God doesn't promise us a life of ease, does He? I can imagine that sometimes when John did have some time—and he obviously had some time where he was given a break from his duties—that he looked down over the Aegean Sea, and I imagine he pictured another sea, the Sea of Galilee, a thousand miles away. When John was a fisherman

and Jesus called him from his nets at the Sea of Galilee, could he have pictured that he would end up a prisoner a thousand miles away on a forsaken island? Do you think he had regrets? Do you think that down inside he thought, *Why didn't I just stay with my nets? Why didn't I just stay in the fishing boat? I wouldn't be here.* Do you think he thought that for one minute? No. When we read the words the apostle John wrote, there's nothing in there of regrets. No sorrow that he chose to follow Jesus. He might have been in a hard situation, but Jesus was there with him.

I read in our Sunday school quarterly recently, "Light is truth, and truth is light." When you're walking in the light, the truth, you're not going to be in darkness, no matter what your situation is. You have the Light of life. There in Patmos, John did. He had the Light of life. I'm sure he had the temptation to feel lonely and discouraged, but I'm sure he didn't give into it.

One day when John was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, he saw a vision. Do you know who was in that vision? Jesus. It was Jesus, like he had never seen Him before. John walked and talked with Jesus when He was here in human form. John walked and talked with Jesus in Galilee and in Jerusalem, but if we'll look back to Revelation 1, just the chapter before this, and start with verse 12 again, we'll see, "And I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And being turned, I saw seven golden candlesticks; And in the midst of the seven candlesticks one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. His head and his hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and his eyes were as a flame of fire; And his feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the sound of many waters. And he had in his right hand seven stars: and out of his mouth went a sharp twoedged sword: and his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength. And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last: I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death." I'm sure John saw a lot of keys there on the isle of Patmos. He got locked into a cell many times, but those keys weren't anything compared with those keys in the hand of the Son of man. There's nothing that can stand against His power.

In Jesus' conversation with John, He had a message for each of the seven congregations, all of them in Asia Minor, which is what we call Turkey today. What we read at the very beginning this evening was part of the letter to the church at Pergamos. I'd like to talk to you a little about Pergamos. Pergamos was a large city,

population about 200,000 in Roman times. That's a sizeable city. It's quite a bit bigger than Hagerstown. It's more like the size of Richmond, Virginia.

I always pictured in my mind that the seven churches that the letters were written to were in little villages, and everybody pretty much knew the church, and all the town gathered together and read the letter that was sent to them. Reminds me of when I was a young woman living and teaching in Grand Cayman. There was a lady who assisted me in my classroom. Her name was Sis. Veta Smith. She was fascinated that I was from Hagerstown, because ever since she had become a Christian and started going to the church there, she thought every time she heard about Hagerstown that it was a place where God's people lived. She met a tourist once and she asked him where he was from. He said, "Hagerstown, Maryland." She was so excited, and she said, "Well, then you know Bro. Alvin Craig!" He said, "What?" She thought that the Church of God encompassed all of Hagerstown. So we might not realize that these seven churches were small congregations in the middle of huge cities. The congregations did their best to make their influence felt, but they had an uphill battle.

We read that Jesus said, "I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, even where Satan's seat is." No one is exactly sure what was meant by that, but probably there was a reference to something in Pergamos. I haven't been there, but I've seen pictures of it. It's on a huge group of hills looking down over into the Aegean Sea. Up on the very top of the hills, there was a huge temple to Zeus, a pagan god of the Romans. That huge altar has since been removed, and if you wanted to see it, you would need to go to Berlin in Germany. They have it there at a museum. It is quite a large, imposing altar, and pagan rituals took place there. That city was known for that huge temple to Zeus. Paganism certainly is where Satan's seat is and Satan had control of the pagan religion. That could have been what was referenced when it said, "You dwell at Satan's seat," because that pagan influence was rife throughout the city, and it even tried to creep into the congregation of the Church of God.

We also read where Jesus said, "So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate." It was a doctrine in which some people who professed to be Christians tried to compromise with the pagans and say, "Well, we know the flesh is evil, so we can't be responsible for what our body does. We can keep our spirits in line with God, but we just can't help what our body does." Not a lot has changed in the past 2,000 years, has it? We still have people who believe we cannot live above sin. "Our body is evil. Our body does things. We cannot help that. All we can do is pray for God to forgive our spirits." That was the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing, Jesus said, "I hate." He mentioned the martyr, Antipas, so we know that the congregation had suffered loss. It was not the most popular religious movement in that city, was it? And yet, Jesus had His eye on them. He cared and wanted them to hold fast, stay true, not yield to evil or false doctrine.

The next part of the verse that I want to look at, especially for the text this evening, is verse 17: "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto

the churches." This tells me that it is not just the people who worshiped God in the congregation in Pergamos that the letter was intended for. "He that hath an ear, ..." Do you have an ear? That's all of us, so we're going to listen to that letter tonight. Even though it wasn't directed to the congregation at Hagerstown, it's good for us, too, or it wouldn't be included in the Bible, would it? "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna [the bread of life], which God hath hidden from the wise and prudent, and hath revealed them unto babes." He has revealed His truth to us. What a privilege! The hidden manna.

"And will give him a white stone." When I read that recently, I thought, *I don't remember reading that before. What does that mean? I want to look that up. I want to see what that's about, because it wouldn't be included if it wasn't important.* When I was reading about it, I thought, *You know, I just wouldn't have known about the significance of the "white stone" because I live 2,000 years later. I wouldn't understand, because I'm from another time and another culture.*

When Sis. Kaye gave her prayer request tonight, she said, "I don't want to sound like a broken record." These little children sitting in front of me here tonight probably thought, *What's a broken record?* Now, when I was a little child, I knew what a broken record was. We had a record at our house with a big scratch on it. There was a lady who sang, "I've got the joy, joy, joy, joy, down in, down in, down in, down in," because there was a deep scratch right there and it wouldn't get past it. We would want to help her sing, "In my heart, in my heart, in my heart," but the singer couldn't get there because the needle would stick and somebody would have to get up and go move it a little bit, or else she would sit there all day and sing "down in, down in, down in, down in." That's what a broken record is. We don't see records anymore, do we? We went from records to 8-track, cassette tapes, and now CD's. That was a big improvement and is so convenient. At the school where I once worked, the music teacher did bring in some old records. She had an old record player that still worked, and once in a while she would play something for the students from an old record. One of the children said to her when she got it out, "My, that's a big CD!" Those children didn't know what a record was, but it does have the same shape as a CD, so they just thought it was a big CD because it made music. So, you see, we are sometimes removed through time from things that people would have thought, *I know what that is.*

When we were little girls, my mom would get so frustrated with our speed at doing chores. It just seemed like it took us forever, and she was fond of saying, "Come on, come on, put it in first gear instead of creeper." We didn't know that, a long time ago when she was a little girl, there was a gear in the car even lower than first gear. It went real slow and it was called *creeper*. We didn't know that, but from her tone, we knew we were going too slow. We didn't know what creeper was, but in her mind she knew.

So this analogy about the white stone was one that the Roman world would have understood, but we have to acquaint ourselves with it. I had to go and read *Adam*

Clarke's Commentary for a while to find out. He had already done a lot of research. I appreciate all the research that dear Christian man did. It helps shed so much light on our Christian pathway. The time he took to learn all those ancient languages and read all the ancient manuscripts to help bring about a deeper understanding surely helps us. He's not the Bible, but he surely does help us when we go to understand some of the wording that we read in the Bible.

Clarke writes that there was an ancient Hebrew practice that, when someone was accused of a crime and the judge decided he was guilty, he was given a black stone; if he was innocent, he was given a white stone. The white stone showed that he had been absolved from guilt. Clarke didn't quite think that that was what this white stone mentioned in Revelation was referring to. He felt like it had a meaning that the Romans knew and understood and that had been around for a long time.

There was something the Romans called *Tesserae Hospitales*. It was an actual stone and it had been cut in half. On the inside, names were carved. Our passage of scripture talks about a name, doesn't it? So this seems to make sense. (*holding up a white stone cut in half*) On this half, I read, "Gaius Claudia," a gentleman named Gaius Claudia. On the other half, I read, "Titus Sergia." Now, historians know about this because, not only is it in ancient literature, but many times this type of white stone called *Tesserae Hospitales* has been found in Roman ruins. You can see them in museums. What would happen? These two gentlemen were friends. They may have met in a big city—one traveling, the other actually living there—or both of them traveling but they met and became friends. They made a covenant. "I will always be your friend, and if you're ever in such-and-such a town or city where I live, if you come to my home, you present your half of this. I'm going to take your name and you take my name. You keep that half, and when I come and knock on your door years from now, when I find myself in your city, I will present this. It has your name on it and you have the matching one that has my name on it. Nobody else knows. It's between us." That white stone would have been stored in a special place in each household. Sometimes it was even passed down from one generation to the next. If someone came to your door and he had a white stone and it had your family name engraved on it, you knew. He was asking for your hospitality and your special favor and you were going to give that, because he had claim to it.

Let's look at that scripture again: "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it." What name does God hold in that white stone? (It's not a literal stone.) He has our name. When we come to heaven at the end of our lives, and before that, when we come to Him in prayer, we have His name and He has ours, and we present that. "What do you need? I'll give you whatever you need." And when we come to the end of our way, "Come into my home. You have that white stone that I gave you when you became my child, a name nobody else knows but you."

When we know God, we have our own private personal relationship with Him that nobody else totally

knows except for us. God knows us in a way that no one else does. We need to know God for ourselves in our own special personal way. That name in the "white stone." It's a promise.

It's referred to in the Bible in a few other places, not as a stone, but the same principle. Something that is called *the earnest of the Spirit*. It's not a literal white stone, but it's something that's just as real as any stone you could hold in your hand.

I talked to Charlie a little bit because she is a real estate agent, and I knew that the topic of *earnest money* is a very important one, a very important consideration when you talk about buying or selling a home. I'd like to read to you a little bit about what earnest money is. Some of you are probably very familiar with it. I'm not as familiar. It's been a long time since we bought our home, but *earnest money* is "a deposit made to a seller that represents a buyer's good faith to buy a home. It is sometimes called 'good faith money.' It's a deposit of money into an account by a buyer to show that he has the intention of completing a deal. Good faith money is often later applied to the purchase, but maybe non-refundable if the deal does not go through." Earnest money is real, sincere money. The word *earnest* comes from an old, old word from another language that means "pledge." "I'm serious about buying this home. I'm putting up earnest money which I'm not likely to get back, so it's a very sincere pledge."

The Bible talks about *the earnest of the Spirit* that's given to us as a pledge, a very sincere, real pledge from God. "I'm giving you the earnest of my Spirit, the witness of my Spirit." It's just another way of saying "that white stone." When you feel that witness in your soul that you belong to God and God belongs to you, that's that pledge to hang on to through all trials, all hard places, and never let it go. It grants you entrance. It promises you entrance into heaven. It promises you eternal life. It's God's way of saying, "I know you. You are mine. You hang on and I will receive you to Myself one day." That witness can take on many forms.

I can't forget the time, Bro. Greg, that you told us about the vision you had in Jamaica, where you saw that place in heaven prepared for you, with your name on it. The earnest of the Spirit—that promise, that witness. It's the most precious thing we can ever, ever own.

I'd like to read just a little bit out of Romans. This is a very familiar passage. Romans 8:16, "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." He lets us know it. I know we go through dry times where we get up in the morning and we go to prayer but we don't feel that special feeling. But that's not forever is it? We can all point back to times where God met with us and He let us know. We have to hang on to that. We can't let that slip out of our grasp. No matter what happens in our lives, we can't let go of that.

There are two other scriptures I'd like to read before I close. II Corinthians, chapter 1, beginning with verse 20: "For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us. Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; Who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts." That sincere prom-

ise: "You are mine, I am yours." And again, the words of the apostle Paul in Ephesians 1, beginning with verse 13: "In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory." That white stone; that name no one else knows. That white stone that God has the other part to. The promise that He is with us now, He is with us in the future, and we will be with Him in heaven if we hold on.

I'd like to read Revelation 2:17 again: "To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it." The priceless possession, that white stone with a new name written on it, a name God recognizes. We used to be an old creature, but when we were saved, we received that new name, a relationship with God.

In II Timothy 2:19, Paul wrote, "Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his." As long as we hold on to it, we have the promise of entry into heaven. Let no one take your crown; let no one take that white stone. Guard it. That was part of what those ancient Romans taught their children. "Let me tell you the story of this stone. We keep it in a special place, and if the person named on it ever comes to our door, or one day when you're adults and I pass this stone to you, if this person's son comes to this door and shows our name in a matching stone, all that we have is at his disposal." It's special, isn't it?

We all received that new name that God engraved with His promise to us. As I studied, I thought, *it's been our custom over the years that whenever someone comes to the altar of prayer and gives his or her heart to God, we have a song we sing, "A New Name in Glory."* But as I read the words to that song, I thought, *I still have the new name.* I always thought about the song as, *we have a new Christian in our midst. There's a new entry on the Book of Life.* But I think it means more than that. I had a new name written down one day. So did you. It's still there as long as we hang on to it. So that song is still for me and for you.

I'm going to sing a verse of it and you sing the chorus with me. It was written by C. Austin Miles. It's so wonderful and special to know we have this—

*I was once a sinner, but I came
Pardon to receive from my Lord:
This was freely given, and I found
That He always kept His word.*

*There's a new name written down in glory,
And it's mine, O yes, it's mine!
And the white-robed angels sing the story,
"A sinner has come home."
For there's a new name written down in glory,
And it's mine, O yes, it's mine!
With my sins forgiven I am bound for heaven,
Nevermore to roam.*

Let's hold on to it forever! Never let any discouragement, or temptation, or trial, or hard place ever take that beautiful white stone from us.

God bless us each one with that determination. †



Greetings!

This month's article is written by Sis. Julie Swain, from the Hagerstown, Maryland, congregation. She shared these thoughts in a Young People's Sunday evening service, August 2020. May it be a blessing to you!

Blessings,
Bro. Doug

GOD CREATED ALL THINGS BEAUTIFUL AND PURE

Julie Swain

WHEN God created the earth, He made all things beautiful. Can you imagine what the Garden of Eden must have been like? It was peaceful, beautiful, full of luscious fruit, cascading waterfalls, rippling brooks, and beautiful flowers. It was beyond what we can even imagine and it was in that idyllic paradise God placed Adam and Eve. They were a perfect couple who were pure in heart and enjoyed the most amazing gift of having God come down each evening to walk with them in the garden. What incredible fellowship that must have been! It is hard to believe that anyone would do anything to jeopardize that relationship with God and the blessings that they enjoyed. However, Adam and Eve were no different than we are today, and Satan was just the same then as he is now. He wants to destroy every beautiful thing that God created. He wants to take God's amazing creation and twist it into something ugly, grotesque, and unrecognizable. He wants to deceive each one of us and take us down the broad road that leads to hell. His goal is to make us see evil as not so bad, to see black as white, and to wear down our consciences until we no longer feel that sharp pain when we do something wrong. It says in I Peter 5:8: "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." We need to remember this verse because that is exactly what the devil is doing, and each of us is his target.

Sin separates us from God. It takes everything that is pure, holy, and lovely and turns it into something that is dark, ugly, and evil. What God created is no longer recognizable. If we can picture the most awful, evil thing we have ever seen, that is what our sinful hearts look like. There is no beauty, no peace, no hap-



piness. However, we don't have to stay in that state. We have an amazing heavenly Father that still loves us. He will take the most vile sinner, the most evil heart and make it into something incredibly beautiful. He will take that black heart and make it white. He will take those impure, wicked thoughts and make them pure, holy, and righteous. He will take a broken, shattered life and turn it into a vessel of honor. It's an amazing miracle! Only God, our Creator can do this.

Having experienced this transformation, do you think that a person would ever choose to lose this glorious experience? I don't think most people make a definite decision to turn their backs on God. I think, in most cases, it is a drifting away from Him that eventually causes death. A decision here and a decision there to allow other things to take God's place. A decision to watch or read this book instead of reading my Bible or praying. Entertainment is easy; it doesn't require anything of us. We don't have to put forth effort to be entertained. What I have experienced is that the more entertainment I allow into my life, the more I want to be entertained. When I start reading a book, I can't put it down. It is all consuming until I finish that book. That's all I can think about, and somehow I can find all kinds of extra time that I really don't have to read that book. The same thing is true about movies or TV shows and even radio stories. Everything is available now on Amazon Prime or on the Internet. We don't have to go to the video store anymore or even have a TV to watch shows. I can watch or listen to whatever I want right on my cell phone while I am making meals, folding clothes, etc. At times in my life, this has become a real problem. In order to overcome this I have to completely eliminate books, movies, and stories. I am mostly talking about novels when I say books, not real books. I have to eliminate them from my life for a period of time to reset my priorities. We can make all kinds of excuses to justify what we want to do, but the bottom line is this question: Is this drawing me closer to God, or am I losing my love for Him? I am not saying that it is wrong to read a good novel or watch a TV show or a movie on occasions, but if we are spending more time doing those things than we are with God, then our priorities are out of order. This is part of the devil's plan to destroy us: to slowly fill our time with entertainment so that we have less time for God and less desire to spend time with Him. The farther we drift from God, the more likely we are to give into temptations to sin.

Many times our choices of entertainment might start out on the conservative side, but as we continue to indulge, it is easy to lower our standards and soon we're reading or watching things that are far from beautiful or holy. Our goal is to keep our minds and hearts pure and holy. We don't want to lose the most lovely and incredible gift ever known to mankind. It takes effort to read the Bible and to study and to draw closer to God. It is not something that we can do passively. We have to put our whole heart into it, and it requires diligent consistent effort to become what God wants us to be. The beautiful thing about spending more time with God is that we then desire to be more like Him, to learn more about Him, to be closer to Him, and to spend more time with Him. And as we become

closer to Him, all those things we were choosing for entertainment will look like a cheap waste of time. They don't even sound interesting anymore because they are not even real. They can't compete with a close relationship with the real, living God. The more we turn our eyes upon Jesus, the more the things of this world will grow strangely dim. We need time to meditate on the things of God, to open our hearts to Him, to allow Him to speak to us, and to show us things in our lives that we need to work on. If we are always being entertained, constantly having input from something into our ears, our eyes and our head, then there is no time to reflect and no time to listen for God's voice. So instead of listening to or watching something while we are folding the clothes, or picking green beans, or cooking meals, or mowing the lawn, or whatever it is that we do, talk with God and listen for His still small voice. We need these quiet times to reflect on what God has done for us, to reflect on His goodness and His love, and to be refreshed.

I want to challenge, not just the young people, but myself and all of us to become all that we have the possibility of becoming. We need to actively fight against the wiles of Satan, to fill our heart and mind with things that lift us up and encourage us to be better. Our goal is to live a life of beauty that draws others to God. Philippians 4:8 says: "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things." Our thoughts are so important. We need to discipline ourselves to cast out every evil thought, every thought of self-pity, jealousy, envy, lust, and ingratitude, and to make a choice to think things that are positive, think the best of others, to think on things that are pure, lovely, and true. God is the only One who can take a broken, filthy, disgusting, evil heart and make it into something beautiful, pure, and holy; a vessel of honor. It is truly a miracle. Let each of us treasure and guard this miraculous gift from God and become all that He wants us to be; to guard our hearts against the temptations and the deceitfulness of Satan; to redeem the time that God has given to us, making the most of every moment.

Salvation is an amazing gift from God that we did nothing to deserve, yet He graciously gives it to all who will come to Him with a broken, repentant heart. He makes all things beautiful as only He can. Keeping our hearts pure is a lifelong battle. A quote from Jim Rohn says: "We must all wage an intense lifelong battle against the downward pull. If we relax, the bugs and weeds of negativity will move into the garden and take away everything of value." We must never relax, but every day make a determined effort to draw closer to God and to keep the weeds from the garden of our hearts. We want our lives to truly reflect God's pure heart. Remember that God is your dearest Friend, and He is always there to help you if you only ask. Wherever we are in our lives, if we are determined to serve God with a pure heart, and to daily draw closer to Him, then we can know with a certainty that the best is yet to come. †

Gates of Hell Cannot Prevail Against the Church

By Bro. Richard Lehman

BECAUSE of the hypocrisy of many who claimed to be the church throughout history, and today, there have been many doubters who have claimed that the gates of hell actually did prevail against the church. But hypocrites have never been a part of the true spiritual body of Christ, which is the true church. The church stands on a firm Foundation: Jesus Christ. He knows who His true people are, and only true and faithful believers will He allow upon His foundation. “Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.”—II Timothy 2:19.



The Catholic Church has claimed that Jesus gave Peter the authority to be the foundation of the church. Using Matthew the 16th chapter, they take advantage of people who don't understand the full context of scripture, nor the original language of this particular passage in scripture: “When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am? And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.”—Matthew 16:13-16.

Note: The rest of this scripture is a conversation about this truth that Peter just claimed about Jesus: “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God”—“And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.”—Matthew 16:17-19.

In verse 17, Jesus first addresses Peter by the name that was given him by his parents: Simon Barjona. Jesus, next (in verse 18), uses the name Peter (which Jesus gave to him) to draw an analogy for him, and for everyone to understand that, “salvation by Jesus Christ,” is the sure foundation of the church. Everyone else in the church, including Peter, make up the spiritual “stones” of the church building.

Peter, in the original Greek, is *petros*, which means, “a stone; a small movable rock.” And the testimony of Peter was certainly a movable stone, as he had to be

corrected by both Jesus, and later by the apostle Paul.

“This rock” (speaking of the rock foundation: “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.”) in the original, is *petra*, meaning, “a huge unmovable rock that you can build on.” And that rock that the church is built upon is Christ Jesus! “Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock.”—Matthew 7:24, 25.

Even the record we have of Peter in the Bible reflects an individual who was not a firm foundation, but rather a movable stone. Peter was moved a number of times in the wrong direction. But it was by the mercy of our Lord that he was corrected each time.

“Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste.”—Isaiah 28:16. So Jesus Christ is both the Foundation of the church, and the chief Cornerstone of the church.

Note: In relation to architecture, a cornerstone is traditionally the first stone laid for a structure. And all other stones are laid in reference to the cornerstone. And a cornerstone marks the geographical location, by orienting a building in a specific direction.

Even Peter himself acknowledged that every Christian is a stone in the spiritual building, the church. In his own epistle, he wrote about how Christ is the One whom we all align up with: “To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed. But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.”—I Peter 2:4-9.

The apostle Paul left us no doubt about who the foundation of the church is. And that any material placed on top of this foundation is going to be tried: to find out if it is worthy to be part of the spiritual building, the church: “For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building. According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; Every man's work

shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire. Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are."—I Corinthians 3:9-17.

Furthermore, back in verse 18 of Matthew chapter 16, Jesus also said: "And upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

To understand this term "the gates of hell" we must understand the context of the time in history that it was written, and what place in the world that it was written.

"Gates of Hell"—(*The Geneva Bible* study notes explains it this way):

"The enemies of the Church are compared to a strong kingdom, and therefore by 'gates' are meant cities which are made strong with wise preparation and fortifications, and this is the meaning: whatever Satan can do by cunning or strength. So does Paul, calling them strongholds (II Corinthians 10:4)."

Furthermore, in Bible times, the gate of a city was the place where judgment would take place. Wise men would be chosen for every gated city to sit at the gate entryway to the city. If there was an issue between people to be judged, it would happen at the gate of the city. Additionally, these wise men were set at the gate to determine who was allowed to enter into the city, and sometimes, who was allowed to leave. "Judges and officers shalt thou make thee in all thy gates, which the Lord thy God giveth thee, throughout thy tribes: and they shall judge the people with just judgment."—Deuteronomy 16:18.

So what Jesus was saying, when He said "the gates of hell shall not prevail against the church," is: the judgments or accusations of hell shall not be allowed to take down the spiritual standing of His true people. And throughout history, many times hypocritical leadership within a church hierarchy, would judge against true Christians, to condemn them to prison, torture, and death. But those true Christians who would suffer at the hands of the hypocrites would receive an eternal reward in heaven with Jesus Christ. The gates of hell did not prevail against true Christians. But they did prevail against the hypocrite judges, because the hypocrites were cast into hell. "No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper; and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment thou shalt condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord."—Isaiah 54:17.

"A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things. But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned."—Matthew 12:35-37.

As the apostle Paul plainly stated, every individual Christian will be built on top of Jesus Christ, the sure Foundation. And they will be tried by fire, to prove whether they are true Christians. The fire comes in two ways: by the trials that a Christian goes through, and by the Word of God preached under the anointing of the Holy Ghost.

The true church is not overcome by the gates of hell, because Jesus keeps His church clean by His Word.

"Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, 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."—Ephesians 5:25-27.

So back in verse 19, of Matthew the 16th chapter, Jesus plainly states: "And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."—Matthew 16:19. The Word of God preached under the direction of the Holy Spirit: together are the keys to the kingdom of heaven. They are the ones that open the door of heaven to those on Earth.

The abuse of the knowledge of scripture was harshly condemned by Jesus Christ Himself when dealing with the religious hypocrites of His day. The hypocrites would take away the key of the Scriptures, hindering other souls from entering into the kingdom of heaven. "Woe unto you, lawyers! for ye have taken away the key of knowledge: ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered."—Luke 11:52.

Keys can be used to open or close a door, or to lock up, or release something for someone. Jesus plainly stated that the keys belong to Him: "And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth."—Revelation 3:7. And Jesus also plainly stated that the same keys, also are the keys to hell and death, because those who reject the gospel, by the same key of the gospel, shall become condemned. "I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death."—Revelation 1:18.

It is the Word of God that establishes what is right and what is wrong. Therefore, we can only use the Word of God as the keys that give a soul liberty, or that binds up a bad spirit by exposing the sin in a person's life. This includes that we must follow the order that the Bible gives us, as we're dealing with problems in the church. "Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican. Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and

whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.”—Matthew 18:15-18.

The Word of God directed by the Holy Spirit is the key that has been sent to us from heaven through Jesus Christ. That is why they are called “the keys of the kingdom of heaven.” “And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.”—Matthew 16:19.

Again, it is not just the Word of God. But it is the Word of God under the direction of the Holy Spirit. The ministry cannot take the Word of God into their own hands and properly administer it without the direction of the Holy Spirit in their life. “And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.”—Ephesians 6:17.

So I state once more: the gates of hell have never prevailed against the church! because Jesus Christ is the only Foundation for the church. He is the chief Cornerstone that everyone in the church aligns up with. And He has provided to His true ministry the keys of the kingdom of heaven to administer the true gospel to the true people of God. †

BIBLE LESSON OF THE MONTH

PRACTICAL CHRISTIAN LIVING

LIVING FOR CHRIST AMONG OUR FRIENDS

Scriptures: Romans 12:10; II Samuel 9:1; Deuteronomy 13:6-8; Proverbs 17:17; I John 2:15; Genesis 31:38-44, 48, 49.

Romans 12:10 Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another.

II Samuel 9:1 And David said, Is there yet any that is left of the house of Saul, that I may show him kindness for Jonathan's sake?

Deuteronomy 13:6 If thy brother, the son of thy mother, or thy son, or thy daughter, or the wife of thy bosom, or thy friend, which is as thine own soul, entice thee secretly, saying, Let us go and serve other gods, which thou hast not known, thou, nor thy fathers;

7 Namely, of the gods of the people which are round about you, nigh unto thee, or far off from thee, from the one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth;

8 Thou shalt not consent unto him, nor hearken unto him; neither shall thine eye pity him, neither shalt thou spare, neither shalt thou conceal him.

Proverbs 17:17 A friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity.

I John 2:15 Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

Genesis 31:38 This twenty years have I been with thee; thy ewes and thy she goats have not cast their young, and the rams of thy flock have I not eaten.

39 That which was torn of beasts I brought not unto thee; I bare the loss of it; of my hand didst thou require it, whether stolen by day, or stolen by night.

40 Thus I was; in the day the drought consumed me, and the frost by night; and my sleep departed from mine eyes.

41 Thus have I been twenty years in thy house; I served thee fourteen years for thy two daughters, and six years for thy cattle: and thou hast changed my wages ten times.

42 Except the God of my father, the God of Abraham, and the fear of Isaac, had been with me, surely thou hadst sent me away now empty. God hath seen mine affliction and the labour of my hands, and rebuked thee yesternight.

43 And Laban answered and said unto Jacob, These daughters are my daughters, and these children are my children, and these cattle are my cattle, and all that thou seest is mine: and what can I do this day unto these my daughters, or unto their children which they have born?

44 Now therefore come thou, let us make a covenant, I and thou; and let it be for a witness between me and thee.

48 And Laban said, This heap is a witness between me and thee this day. Therefore was the name of it called Galeed;

49 And Mizpah; for he said, The Lord watch between me and thee, when we are absent one from another.

Memory Verse: A man that hath friends must show himself friendly: and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother.—Proverbs 18:24.

Aim: To make clear our responsibility to our friends.

INTRODUCTION

SOMEONE said, “It is hard to find a true friend.” This, doubtless, is true; yet many would outwardly act as if they were true friends when the weather is fair. We Christians should show ourselves friendly to all, always being the same in fair or foul weather. However, at no time can we be partakers of men's sins or fellowship their wickedness. We are always true friends when we resist sin. When anyone accepts Christ, in the full sense of the word, he is no longer his own, but becomes the property of God (willingly), and God can do what seems good to Him. This was acted out in life and death by Christ Himself. Jesus proved true to His friends, but also He died for His enemies.

MEDITATIONS

MANNER OF CONDUCT—Romans 12:10—Kindly affectioned—This speaks of a good temper in all of our dealings. To put ourselves in first place and to honor ourselves always lowers us in the estimation of others. The atmosphere around anyone who is kindly affectioned is always wholesome and pleasant. We should strive to develop this characteristic of life.

OLD TESTAMENT EXAMPLE—II Samuel 9:1—Shew him kindness—The old friendship between Jonathan and David was still alive, though Jonathan was dead. David tried to manifest it in a definite way by befriending someone who would have been dear to the heart of Jonathan. This was true friendship.

ATTITUDE TOWARD FALSE FRIENDS—Deuteronomy 13:6—Entice thee—The greatest possession we have is our soul. We should guard it with the most jealous care against the lure of false religion. We must turn our backs upon anyone, regardless of who it is, if he is set upon turning us from the worship of the true and living God. In our day the danger is the greatest it has ever been, because most false religions profess Christ, worshipping Him only after a form. If our friends

entice us to go after false religion, we must not go with them. **Verse 7—Gods of the people**—The Jews were few in number compared to the nations around them; and then, as now, it was easier to go with the crowd than to stand out against it. Today a Christian is surrounded by the gods of many religions; they would try to be good friends, but friendship is not fellowship in Christ. In such a case, we must choose to suffer the affliction with the people of God and stay clear of sectarian bondage. It is popular to court the favor of Babylonish ranks, but it is not safe. **Verse 8—Neither shalt thou conceal**—We cannot be passive in this warfare. He who poses as a friend yet supports false religion must be exposed. If possible win him to the truth, but never consent to his error. Always stand for the truth.

TRUE FRIENDSHIP—Proverbs 17:17—Loveth at all times—He who loveth only when the weather is fair is a poor friend, indeed. A true friend is one who comforts when the skies are dark and helps even when the burdens get heavy. Such a friendship is nurtured by our sincere acts of friendship in return. He who would have friends must show himself friendly.

CANNOT BE A FRIEND OF THE WORLD—I John 2:15—Love not the world—This does not mean that we cannot love the soul of the sinner nor be interested in his welfare. It means that under no circumstances can we love or partake of his ways. We are true friends to the people of the world when we, in love, take a stand against their worldly and sinful ways. So among the world we must let our light shine.

EVIDENCE OF FAITHFULNESS—Genesis 31:38—Have I been with thee—Jacob was able to point to his record and convince his father-in-law of his faithfulness and true fellowship. **Verse 39—I bare the loss**—Jacob had been true to his contract. We cannot lose in the end by being faithful. **Verse 40—Drought consumed me**—Weather conditions, though adverse, had not marred his faithfulness. **Verse 41—Changed my wages**—This had been unfair, but it had not spoiled the integrity of Jacob. **Verse 42—God of my father**—We may rest assured that God is faithful to him who is faithful in his business affairs. **Verse 43—Are my children**—In that day the hold a father had on a son or daughter was much stronger than today. However, legally, Laban had sold the daughters and sheep to Jacob, and Jacob had paid the price agreed upon. **Verse 44—Make a covenant**—Jacob won out by keeping a cool head and contending for the right. God was his Helper. **Verses 48, 49—Lord watch**—Friendship was re-established on a solid basis. This was brought about by the integrity of Jacob.

CONCLUSION

A man without friends is to be pitied. Being friendless shows the neglect of his moral training. Every man has within him great possibilities; and if he grows to manhood without their being properly developed, it is a tragedy. The first thing that should be taught is moral values, with all other education built around that. A person taught in this manner is certain to have, cultivate, and value friends. Around us on every side and of every age are human beings who hardly know why

they are alive, having received almost no moral training. It is our responsibility to put forth the greatest effort possible to right this condition.

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

1. What constitutes a true friend?
2. Why is it some people do not have friends?
3. What does God say our manner of conduct shall be one to another?
4. Give an Old Testament example of true friendship.
5. What are the gods of the people today?
6. Why are Christians forbidden to love the world?
7. What do you think of Jacob's faithfulness to his father-in-law? †

THE SECRET TO CHRISTIAN UNITY

By Bro. Darrell Sanford

THE SECRET TO CHRISTIAN UNITY IS THIS: GET TRULY SAVED—REDEEMED, A NEW CREATURE IN CHRIST; THEN, OBEY THE WORD OF GOD, AND WALK IN THE SPIRIT OF GOD. ONENESS IN CHRIST, MEANING, THE GENUINE UNITY OF GOD'S PEOPLE IS A DIVINE APPOINTMENT, NOT A HUMAN AGREEMENT.

COLOSSIANS 3:8-17, "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; AND HAVE PUT ON THE NEW MAN, WHICH IS RENEWED IN KNOWLEDGE AFTER THE IMAGE OF HIM THAT CREATED HIM: WHERE THERE IS NEITHER GREEK NOR JEW, CIRCUMCISION NOR UNCIRCUMCISION, BARBARIAN, SCYTHIAN, BOND NOR FREE: BUT CHRIST IS ALL, AND IN ALL. 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. LET THE WORD OF CHRIST DWELL IN YOU RICHLY IN ALL WISDOM; TEACHING AND ADMONISHING ONE ANOTHER IN PSALMS AND HYMNS AND SPIRITUAL SONGS, SINGING WITH GRACE IN YOUR HEARTS TO THE LORD. AND WHATSOEVER YE DO IN WORD OR DEED, DO ALL IN THE NAME OF THE LORD JESUS, GIVING THANKS TO GOD AND THE FATHER BY HIM."

GALATIANS 3:26-28, "FOR YE ARE ALL THE CHILDREN OF GOD BY FAITH IN CHRIST JESUS. FOR AS MANY OF YOU AS HAVE BEEN BAPTIZED INTO CHRIST HAVE PUT ON CHRIST. 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."

GALATIANS 5:13-16, "FOR, BRETHREN, YE HAVE BEEN CALLED UNTO LIBERTY; ONLY USE NOT LIBERTY FOR AN OCCASION TO THE FLESH, BUT BY LOVE SERVE ONE ANOTHER. FOR ALL THE LAW IS FULFILLED IN ONE WORD, EVEN IN THIS; THOU SHALT LOVE THY NEIGHBOUR AS THYSELF. BUT IF YE BITE AND DEVOUR ONE ANOTHER, TAKE HEED THAT YE BE NOT CONSUMED ONE OF ANOTHER. THIS I SAY THEN, WALK IN THE SPIRIT, AND YE SHALL NOT FULFIL THE LUST OF THE FLESH." †

IN OUR LIFETIME

Revival message by Bro. Terry Deville, delivered 04/30/05



PLEASE TURN with me in your Bibles to the third chapter of Ecclesiastes, verses 1-8: "To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven: A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted; A time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up; A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance; A time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing; A time to get, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away; A time to rend, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak; A time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace." The title of the message tonight is, "In Our Lifetime."

I want you to pay attention to these opening remarks. During our lifetime, there will be conditions that will exist that would call for certain actions, very important actions. It's on these particular occasions that we all want to be sure to do the right thing. There is a season and a time to every purpose under heaven. Dear Ones, in my mind, it's very important to be in time, on time, and ready for this particular purpose that God would have us to fulfill. Think about this: usually, there is only a small window of opportunity for us to be ready and to do what God would have us to do at this particular time. So it behooves us all to be ready to take advantage of every window of opportunity. Everyone of us must not put off what we should do now. Many people have put off things that they should have done. "I wish I would have done that," but it was put off to their regret, thus caused the window of opportunity to close.

I believe there comes a time when we all must just stop and be honest about certain things. Sometimes things get out of order, and if we don't get them back in order, these things will continue to deteriorate. This covers such a broad array of things, but if we do not get things back in order, these things have a way of getting away from us and deteriorate. There is a season and a time to every purpose under heaven.

Think with me in what I am about to say. Dear Ones, the truth of the matter is: there are things this very night that need our attention. I don't know your lives, I don't know a lot of situations, but there are things that have come between families, husbands and wives, parents and children, brothers and sisters that should not be. There are things between loved ones that ought not to be. There are things between parents and children that ought not to be. There are things, Dear Ones, between brothers and sisters that ought not to be. But even greater than those are the things that are between God and people that ought not to be. Many times those things are never rectified or resolved. If things are not rectified or resolved among families, brothers and sisters, congregations, etc., they have a

way of just taking on a life of their own and sitting there, festering and eating away.

Dear Ones, God has a beautiful plan and a way with us dealing with situations and problems that come into our families and our homes. If we will take God's course, we can always come out victorious. We can always come out on top, defeat the devil, and have perfect unity, but if Satan can have his way, he will keep problems and situations going on and on. Human nature likes to "sweep it under the rug." Human nature doesn't like to deal with things. I'm a human being. There are a lot of things I don't want to deal with, but there are some things we all must deal with. They're not going to be resolved until we deal with them. Let's take advantage of who God is to us tonight. He can help us to deal with our situations, no matter what they be. When God has His way, we can expect wonderful results.

Satan is a real enemy. Dear Ones, we be brethren. We're not enemies. I thank God for the fellowship we have. I'm not saying that there are a lot of problems here, but I know the devil and I know how he tries to work. One of our sisters in our congregation back home that I have the most confidence in, misunderstood something I said. The devil took advantage of that; but do you know what she did? She did what the Bible said to do. She didn't go and talk to this one and that one. She came and talked to me. It was just a misunderstanding, but thank God the devil was defeated, and now our fellowship is even sweeter. God has a way. If Satan can have his way, he can keep problems festering and deteriorating. The Bible says, "There is a time to heal." There are many situations in the world that need healing. In dealing with a situation, if we allow the Lord to come in, we will see in time that there was a sore spot. When Jesus' precious balm comes upon a situation, there's sweet healing.

Dear Ones, the greatest healing of all is what Jesus came for. He came to heal the brokenhearted. Sin has broken your heart, but Jesus came to heal your broken heart. It is time for healing tonight. Jesus said, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised." I say tonight with all authority, Jesus Christ was not a failure. He did exactly what He had set out to do. Thank God, I have experienced deliverance. I've been set free and healed. "The Sun of righteousness [shall] arise with healing in his wings." Thank God for spiritual and physical healing. There is a time to heal.

Our text (Ecclesiastes 3) states that there's a time for every purpose under the heaven. Verse 3 says, "...

a time to break down.” Saints, if there ever was a time we need to break down, we need to break down whatever is holding us back. Do you want more of God? Then it is time to break down whatever is holding you back. God has more for us, but we have to break down some barriers. I tell you, Dear Ones, I know that as I break down things that hinder me, and I come more into a greater fellowship and awareness of God, where Jesus is, it will be heaven to me. We need more of that, don’t we? So there is a time to break down whatever is holding us back from more of God. “Sometimes I don’t know when it’s the Lord doing certain things or not.” Listen, don’t let the devil timid us down. God wants us to be bold in coming to the throne of grace. We have to see Christ as He is in certain situations.

We need to see ourselves as bold soldiers in the army of the Lord. God has given us some birthrights. We have some rights as the people of God, because we have been born of God. When we are born of God, He gives us some special rights. Let’s claim them! Let’s use them, Dear Ones. Thank God we have some birthrights. There are so many of them. They are amazing, but may God help us to claim them and use them.

There’s “a time to build up.” This is one of my favorite scriptures in the Bible: Isaiah 41:6, “They helped every one his neighbour; and every one said to his brother, Be of good courage.” Everyone helped his neighbor, and then everyone said to his brother, “Be of good courage!” Don’t talk about me and run me down. Come and tell me, “Be of good courage.” Dear Ones, we can help each other to be of good courage more than just saying it. I’ll tell you what encourages me. It is people that are devoted to God and you can count on them and depend on them. They’re going to be here and put their hearts into it. So there is a time to build up. Saints, we need to build each other up, don’t we? Think about it. When we think of what’s going on out in the world today, we’re not going to get a lot of building up out there. We need to build each other up. Don’t forget who the enemy is. There are spirits out there in the world. Let’s build each other up. Sometimes David had to encourage himself in the Lord.

I have preached to you throughout this week of how good it is to be able to think of how much the Lord loves us. I’m going to keep saying it and keep saying it until we do it. The Lord wants us to actually spend some time thinking, “He loves me.” We don’t usually do that. We know it, but Dear Ones, it’s affirming it to ourselves and realizing the reality that the Lord loves us. We all know it, but it’s the reality of it. That’s how we can encourage ourselves and build ourselves up in the Lord.

Paul said, “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.” I believe Paul was thinking correctly, don’t you? “For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” It seems to me he was thinking about that and encouraging himself, not only the saints in Rome. I tell you, Dear

Ones, we can encourage ourselves many times by just simply lifting up our faith. “God is my strength; God is my help; God will be with me”—just simple things as those. Will you make this promise to yourself? Try it, and you’ll be surprised at the results. It’s going to bless and encourage you. The more I’ve been doing that lately, the more joy I’ve had, I think, in all of my Christian experience. It works because it’s real.

There’s “a time to embrace.” Sometimes we need to just wipe the slate clean, forget a lot of things, and sort of begin again in many situations. I feel tonight that we need to have a deeper appreciation for what we have, don’t you? I know every day is not an easy day, every day is not a bed of roses, but I still think we need to appreciate more of what we really have. Don’t let it become old to you. Let it stay fresh. Count your blessings, Saints! Embrace what we have. Embrace one another. See each other in the light of who we really are—children of God—saints of God. I believe the deeper appreciation that we have of these things, the greater we will cling to them. So we do know that things, from time to time, do get out of order, but let us all be ready and willing to take advantage of that window of opportunity when it is available to do what we need to do.

In our lifetime, there will always be seed time and harvest—“a time to plant, a time to sew, and a time to pluck up that which is planted.” Saints, do you know you sowed some seeds today by your behavior, your conduct, your words, your actions, your expressions, and your devotion? Any time you went around and thanked the Lord for a good day, you were sowing good seeds to those that were around you. I believe with all my heart that since the Lord saved us, He gave us some wonderful seeds to sow. Let’s go about it. Let’s sow some good seeds. Sow seeds of love and compassion. There’s a scripture in the book of Jude, which says, “And of some have compassion, making a difference” (Jude 1:22).

Who doesn’t want more compassion? Who doesn’t want to feel more compassion for people? It may surprise us, Dear Ones, how much our compassion can make a difference on people that are around us. People are lonely and stressed out. They are caught up and driven. Instead of our attitude of just looking at them, they need our compassion and understanding. Remember, that’s where we were one time. We were just as blind to what was going on. Thank God He had compassion on me one day. All through the Scriptures you will see that Jesus was moved with compassion.

Let us sow some seeds of love. Let’s turn to First Corinthians, chapter 13. We’ll start at verse 4: “Charity [love] suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil.” A lot of times I don’t know if we really comprehend exactly what the scriptures in this chapter are talking about. In a wedding ceremony I had, this statement was made: “Love is more of an action than a feeling.” I couldn’t quite grasp that for a long time, because I thought, *well, you’re supposed to have a feeling of love*. But if you’ll look in that thirteenth chapter of First Corinthians, it doesn’t say anything about feeling love, does it? The scriptures list all the things that we do. Love does what? Suffers

long. "Oh, but Bro. Terry, you don't know what I've been having to put up with. I've about to come to the end of my rope." All I know is, love still suffers long and is kind. "Yes, but they've been unkind to me. They've said this and said that. They've hurt my feelings." Dear Ones, I can't help it, love is still kind.

When we get outside of what love is, we may feel love, but if we're not showing it, how do we come across? Love is an action. It is more than a feeling. I can love my wife and my brothers and sisters, but if I go around treating them in a negative way, that's not showing love. Dear Ones, love is an action. Sure, we can feel love, but people need to *see* love. "Charity [love] suffereth long, and is kind." Love is powerful. It is one of the most powerful seeds the Church of God can sow; and by the grace of God, we can sow these seeds. "...seeketh not her own"; not always concerned about her own, but considers other people's feelings. When we get outside of any of these things, we're not showing love. Just saying "I love you" is not enough. I'm sure you've heard the expression, "Actions speak louder than words." The Bible says, "My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth" (I John 3:18).

Love "thinketh no evil." In other words, love likes to assume the very best in people. It's not always suspicious. "Oh, this is what is wrong with them." Dear Ones, that's not love. I learned a valuable lesson. I was dealing with a problem. When I started assuming the best, I started to feel better about the situation. It helped me to deal with the situation correctly. Are you following me? "Love thinketh no evil." It isn't always questioning. We be brethren. We're in this together. The devil is trying to get us to think this and to think that, but let's think thoughts of love. When you do that, you can plant seeds of love. I hope you're following me tonight, because in our lifetime these are very important things.

Verse 7 of First Corinthians 13: "[Love] beareth all things [Do we want to show love? Do we want to have love? God will give us the grace, and it is a powerful, powerful seed.], believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things." Verse 13: "And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity." Which is the greatest of these? Charity (love). Thank God for faith and hope, but the greatest is love. Thank God we have the love of God in our hearts. I want to share it with the world. I want to sow seeds of love. Then when we invite people to a revival, we can show them we care and love them, and how much we want them to be saved. I believe our words will then carry more weight, but we have to sow seeds of compassion and love. Psalm 126:5, "They that sow in tears shall reap in joy." May God help us tonight.

The Bible tell us, "Blessed are ye that sow beside all waters." Sow seeds of love, mercy, concern, compassion—"beside all waters." Do you know what came to my mind today? Sow by the still waters, the smooth waters, the raging waters, the turbulent waters. Do you remember the raging storm on the Sea of Galilee? It doesn't matter the atmosphere, or the type of waters, we can still sow good seeds. Oh, it's easy by the still waters, but when the waters are turbulent, that's when

we really need to plant these seeds. "He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing [Doing what?], bringing his sheaves with him" (Psalm 126:6). Help us, Lord. "The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few" (Matthew 9:37). Some water, some plant, but God giveth the increase. There is a season and a time for every purpose under heaven. As I said earlier, many times there is only a small window of opportunity to sow these precious seeds.

To the unsaved tonight, many times there is only a small window of opportunity to be saved or to get right with the Lord. That's why the prophet said, "Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near." I hadn't been saved very long at the time when my grandpa was preaching in a service. There was a young man there who was under deep conviction, but he didn't yield. That was his window of opportunity. I remember Grandpa telling me this. He said, "Conviction like that might not come back for years." I'll be honest with you, that's been over twenty plus years and I haven't seen that kind of conviction since then. I'm not trying to frighten you, but Dear Ones, there is only a small window of opportunity. That's why I said to seek the Lord while He may be found, and call upon Him while He's near. "Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy; break up your fallow ground: for it is time to seek the Lord, till he come and rain righteousness upon you" (Hosea 10:12).

Dear Ones, listen: I don't know your standing tonight, but if you're unsaved, it's high time to be saved. What are you waiting for? This world isn't getting any better. It's time to call on the Lord. You need the Lord. It's time, it's high time that we all awake from sleep and realize that we need God and take advantage when the Lord is near. It's time! God wants good ground where He can sow His seeds of love and they can take root in our hearts.

What time is it? Ecclesiastes 3:6 says, "A time to get, and a time to lose ..." Dear Ones, if there are things that we know we need to get tonight, it's time to get down to business and get them. Do we need more wisdom, more power, more patience? Do you know what Jesus said? "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." Do you remember how strongly we did that when we first got saved? There was such a passion for God. "I just want more and more," but it seems like we all sort of tail off (fade away). There is much more for us to get, but we have to have a passion for God. We have to ask and we shall receive. We have to seek and find; knock, and it will be opened unto us. There is "a time to get, and a time to lose," but many times "to get" we have "to lose" some things, don't we?

Unsaved, it's time to lose yourself and find it in the Lord. It's time to humble yourself and lose yourself and call on God. Lose your old lifestyle. Lose whatever is hindering you. It's time to get what God would have you to have tonight.

Saints, I thank God I've lost my old burden of sin, don't you? I thank God I've lost that bondage and blindness that I was under one time. Sin had its dominion on me, but God broke the chains one day! I'm not under sin

anymore, and I praise God for it every day. Thank God I've lost that old lifestyle. I don't want any part of it.

Ecclesiastes 3:6. "... a time to keep, and a time to cast away." Let's keep what we need to keep and not hold on to anything that's not worthy to keep. Let's cast it away. Saints, sometimes in our spiritual house, we need to clean house. Clean it up! Cast out all the garbage. Let's get rid of the garbage. A lot of things are holding us back. Let's make a clean sweep, Dear Ones, for it's time to get rid of the things that are holding us back. Cast away the old weights, the old junk, the old excuses.

There is a song that says it well—

*Just as the stream finds a bed that is lowly,
So Jesus walks with the pure and the holy;
Cast out thy pride, and in heart-felt contrition
Humble thyself to walk with God.*

God will come now if you'll meet the conditions.

Amos said, "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" If you're unsaved, you're out of agreement with God. There is something between you and God. You can't walk with God if there's something between you and Him. If you're not in agreement with God tonight, who are you in agreement with? You're walking with someone, Dear Ones, but you have the privilege and the blessed honor of walking with God. He's not going to walk with the proud or the scornful. You have to humble yourself to walk with God.

Saints, are you glad you're walking with God tonight? We're walking with God. What a beautiful walk! We're walking in the light. Thank God we are on the highway of holiness. No unclean thing is there. Sorrowing and sighing have fled away. There are songs of joy because we're walking with God.

Ecclesiastes 3:1, 8a: "To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven: A time to love, and a time to hate." We need to hate what Satan is doing. We need to quit putting up with Satan. We need to hate him and get angry with him. We take too much from him. I believe Jesus when He said, "I give unto you power over all the power of the enemy." But it is time, Saints, to hate what Satan is doing. It's time to hate what he's doing to our children and grandchildren and other loved ones. Let's hate him for it. This should stir us up, Dear Ones. This should make us call on God until we can see the old chains of sin broken.

I think we sometimes think Satan is sort of stupid; but listen, he's very wise and subtle. There are other things that have people in bondage more than alcohol, tobacco, and drugs. Some of it seems like it doesn't matter that much, but it matters! "Oh, they have a good job and everything is going fine." Well, thank God for it, but if they're without God, there is something that's keeping them back. We need to hate that as well. I appreciate people living good moral lives, but they are still bound. They need to hate what's binding them, and we need to hate what's binding them as well.

The reason things are out of order is simply because people's love is misplaced. When people's love is misplaced, things become unsettled and unstable. Church, we need to be careful here, too. We need to make sure

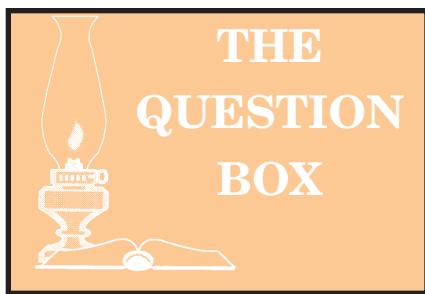
our love is set on the right things and in the right direction. Jesus said to a church in Revelation 2, "You are doing some wonderful things; nevertheless, I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love." God said to the Psalmist, "Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him: When he calls upon me, I will answer him."

Dear Ones, if we find ourselves not having our love completely set on God, let's get ahold of ourselves and get our love back on God. Let me tell you, people's love can wax cold. When it waxes cold, the love of God does not constrain us as it once did. The love of God doesn't motivate us as it once did. Why? Because our love has been misplaced. We're letting other little things to come in. Let's take the advice of Paul: "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God." If you feel like your love isn't what it used to be, by the help of God, set it back on Him. Then He will deliver you, honor you, and set you on high. Our relationship with God is the most precious and valuable thing that we have. It ought not to be that we ever let our love wax cold. Let us have fervent love for one another and fervent love for God. We need to hate whatever is quenching our love. Declare war on it, Saints. The love that we have for God is the most precious thing that we have.

There is a season for every purpose under heaven—a time to hate pride and a time to love humility—a time to hate sin and to love God in His pure, holy, and blessed way. It's time to hate this old world for what it is doing to people and set our heart and mind upon the eternal world. Again, it's time to hate the devil and all his works. It's time to come to ourselves and love and worship God with all our heart, soul, and mind. Dear Ones, it's high time!

Lost loved ones, it's time to make a break away and come to yourself and realize you need to come back to God, your heavenly Father. Your Father is watching and waiting your coming. If you'll come, you'll hear these words: "All is forgiven, come home." Remember the beautiful parable in Luke 15? The father was watching and waiting for his son to come home. Sin had destroyed him. But this young man came to himself. Thank God that he did. What did the father do when he saw his son coming home? He ran to him and embraced him. The son said, "Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of thy hired servants."

All will be forgiven, if you'll just come home. Your Father is patiently watching and waiting your coming. It's time to embrace God and then God will embrace you. What a beautiful picture that is! Who are we that God would embrace us? I believe it just like it is in the Bible. I believe this father was representing our heavenly Father. God wants you to come home. There is a season and a time for all things. It's time now to come home and let God embrace you and you embrace God. Now is the time and here's an altar. Please don't go home tonight unsaved. It's high time. Break free, run, make your escape just like the angel said to Lot when Sodom and Gomorrah was about to be destroyed, "Make haste; don't linger. This place is about to be destroyed. Get out of it." Come home tonight! †



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



QUESTION: What is the name of the man recorded in the book of Joshua, chapter 5:13?

ANSWER: First of all, we understand this to be a vision that Joshua had. Secondly, there is reason to believe that it was the one we know as Jesus Christ. I will quote from the Commentary of Matthew Henry: "We have reason to think that this man was the Son of God, the eternal Word, ... Joshua gave him divine honours, and he received them, which a created angel would not have done, and he is called *Jehovah*, ch. Vi.2."

You will also note from chapter five, verse 15, that He is called "the captain of the Lord's host," and that He said to Joshua, "Loose thy shoes from off thy foot; for the place whereon thou standest is holy." The same instructions given Moses at the burning bush.

QUESTION: How many times was the city of Jerusalem destroyed, and by whom?

ANSWER: According to Phillip Schaff's *Dictionary of the Bible*, "In the fifteen centuries from Joshua to Titus, the city was besieged not less than seventeen times; twice it was razed to the ground, and twice its walls were destroyed.

"The Jerusalem of our Lord and of His apostles is buried from twenty to eighty feet beneath the ruins and rubbish of centuries; ..."

After the Romans destroyed the city a new city was founded by Hadrian, and was called "Aelia Capitolina," and a temple of Jupiter was erected. Constantine restored the name Jerusalem to the city.

The present walls and gates received their present form when Sultan Sulciman, the Magnificent, restored and rebuilt them toward the middle of the 16th century. Of course, most of modern day Jerusalem is outside the wall. The "Temple Mount" area has a wall around it, so, in part, you have a wall inside of a wall.

QUESTION: John 8 tells of a woman being brought to Jesus. Did what Jesus wrote in the sand have anything to do with her sin?

ANSWER: Since the Bible does not say what He wrote, no one can say for sure. After Jesus wrote in the sand and said, "You that are without sin, cast the first stone," all the men who brought her went out; so I would think that what He wrote had something to do with **THEIR** sins, not hers.

QUESTION: Why are the books of Esther and the Song of Solomon not mentioning God throughout the

book? Why do such books come about in the book of God?

ANSWER: Although the word *God* is not found in the book of Esther, the hand of God is seen throughout the book. It clearly shows God working in behalf of His people.

As for the Song of Solomon, there is wide disagreement over its meaning. It is a "love poem"; there is no question about that. But early in the Christian centuries some of the "church Fathers" developed the theory that it is speaking of Christ and the church, and this is where the disagreement comes.

If it be only a "love poem," speaking possibly of Solomon and his favorite wife, there are Bible scholars who feel it is worthy of a place in the Bible to show the tender relationship between husband and wife.

QUESTION: Why do you think Philip had trouble visioning Jesus as the concrete representation of God the Father?

ANSWER: In reading John 1:43-46, we see Philip had no trouble in believing that Jesus was the Christ. However, in John 14:8, we would assume that Philip was asking for some special manifestation that they could use as proof that He was authorized to bring in a new covenant. Peter, James and John had seen such on the "Mount," but they were told not to speak of it until after the resurrection. Here, Jesus tells Philip, the "works" that I have done were done in full harmony with the Father; let them be proof enough.

QUESTION: Would you please explain Ephesians 4:14, "That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive"?

ANSWER: In reading the verses before verse 14, we see that God had placed in the church members with various gifts: apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers, for the purpose of "perfecting the saints," to bring all into the "unity of the faith," and that we arrive at the place where we would not be "tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine" because there was, and still is, much false doctrine in the land being preached by false prophets. Paul tells us how some of them are going about and doing their work. One of the meanings of the word *sleight*, "a clever trick." Men who will work all manner of evil to deceive souls. *Cunning* means, "clever in deceiving; sly; slyness in getting what one wants." Therefore, watch and pray. Be on your guard, love the truth with all your heart and walk in its light as fast as it comes on your pathway.

QUESTION: Jesus only saves, but can't the church save? Then why must we go to church?

ANSWER: If I understand correctly, you are asking if Jesus alone can save, and the church cannot, then why go to church?

First, let me point out that the saved people **ARE** the church, so you don't really go to church. The "church" comes together for service, and it is this that makes it

necessary for the saints to assemble. The Bible teaches we should assemble together. To have true saints you could meet with, and you refuse, is disobedience to the Word. So saints are to meet together for what they get out of it for their soul—they have the fellowship of other Christians; they get their souls fed by the preaching of the Word; they mix their voices with others in singing and praising God; they worship “in spirit and in truth,” for that is the only kind of worship God accepts. Then there is the effort put forth to get the unsaved to come to the services, so that you might help them to be saved. Doubtless, there are other reasons to assemble, but I trust this will suffice. †

WINNING A CROWN

By the late C. W. Naylor



Part XXXII

Remaking Ourselves

BY INHERITANCE, by the influence of environment, and by the effect of our own habits, we are weak, undeveloped, or abnormal in many of the human traits and faculties which grace either leaves untouched or only partly affects and which we need to set ourselves about correcting, improving, or developing. In many things we are the product of our own efforts. Grace does much, but grace can never take the place of our own efforts in self-development. Sin often weakens the will until it loses its original power of control over desire. When we let desire become master, we destroy the balance of our forces. The will must rule over desire if we are to be righteous; so if the will is weak, we need to set about the task of strengthening it. To do this we must lay out for ourselves a definite course of action, and then, knowing what we ought to do, not let ourselves be turned away from that, no matter what natural desire may suggest. Form the habit of carrying out what you start to do in spite of obstacles, in spite of fluctuation of desire and the inclination to stop instead of going forward. Carry out your purposes. Never be hasty in deciding to do a thing; but when you have once decided, carry out that decision fully unless you discover some good reason why you should not do so. If you begin things and do not finish them, but grow weary and let them go or let yourself be turned aside to something else, you weaken your will each time. It is better to complete a few things than to begin many and finish none. One thing carried resolutely through strengthens you and makes success easier next time. By this means a weak will can often be greatly strengthened in a short time. When you say no, stick to it unless you see you are wrong. Do not let your refusal become a yielding later. If you ought to say no at the first, it ought to be no to the end. If one no to temptation is not enough, say it again and again. Either you or temptation must lose. You have the power to make your first no a final no if you hold your ground.

We may have cultivated self-will until submission to any other will is hard. We love our own way. We find

it hard to submit to God, to our brethren, or to circumstances. To be successful Christians we must conquer this self-will. We must compel ourselves to yield against our natural inclinations until we form the habit of submission to the extent that we should submit. Some never conquer themselves sufficiently to yield gracefully, nor to yield at all until circumstances force them to do so. They lose many of the sweetest things of life because of this self-will. They often feel that their rights are being trespassed on; in fact, whenever you find a person who is always standing up for his rights, you find one of those self-willed individuals. Such persons never progress very deeply into the grace of God, since they are never willing to make the surrender necessary to give God the chance to make them spiritual. Conquer your self-will; cultivate submissiveness. It is the only way to true happiness.

Another thing that we need to cultivate is courage. The world hates a coward, and the devil too, I think, has little respect for him. The man who would be a successful Christian needs courage. Life is a battle, and it takes courage to win it. You can be brave just as well as anyone else. Start in to face your foes just as if you were brave, no matter how little courage you have nor how much you tremble. If you act as if you were brave, it will produce the same results upon your foe as if you were brave; and if you act bravely, you will soon come to feel brave. If for a time you act more bravely than you feel, that action will win, and the victory won will produce confidence, which is the foundation of courage. You will either cultivate courage by meeting your foes and obstacles and overcoming them, or you will increase your fears by yielding to them. Remember this: you may be courageous if you will. You may become fearless if you will, no matter how timid you are now. Set yourself the task of being a bold soldier for Christ. You may be such if you will.

Some have cultivated gloominess and despondency in their sinful days by looking on the dark side of things until they are discouraged most of the time. If you have formed this habit, set about breaking yourself of it. There is just as much sunshine in the world for you as for anyone else if you will come out of your cavern of gloom. Cultivate hope. God is on your side. Read His promises and believe they are for you and begin to act in conformity with your faith. So many people are always looking at their trials and their failures, and consequently they see but little else in their lives. This is always discouraging. If you want to see something worth while, look at “the pit from whence you were digged.” Look at the things in which you are different from what you used to be. “Behold what God hath wrought.” Make yourself look away from the dark picture. There is something better than this to look at. Form the habit of right thinking, overcome your morbidness. God wills that you be happy, and there are enough good things around you to make you happy if you will give them your attention.

Wherever you find yourself weak or undeveloped, set yourself the task of making yourself what you ought to be. God will help you, but He cannot accomplish the desired result alone. You must do your part. Grace has its part, but only a part. Train your own

faculties, develop your own powers. Do not be content to be a weakling. Be a real man for God. Do not be satisfied to be less than your best. Do not fold your arms and lament because you are what you are. This will not make things better. Get into the harness and go to work. Many people never develop their resources. Their lives might count twenty-fold more if they would have it so. You can make of yourself more than you have ever hoped to be if you will set resolutely about the task in an intelligent way. Be your very best if it does cost earnest effort. You will not regret the effort when you see the results. †

THE CHILDREN'S CORNER



HUMBLE

A Bible Lesson by Sis. Rebecca Bland

"Why don't you girls go outside and play?" my mother said. "It's a little chilly, so make sure you wear your jackets and scarves."

Once again we were visiting our Pennsylvania grandmother, and we had grown restless sitting in the living room listening to her and my mother as they caught up on news about people and places we didn't know.

"You'ns can take a walk in the woods," said Grandma as we pulled on our jackets. You might find some tea berries. It's the right time of year for them."

A crisp autumn breeze greeted us as we opened Grandma's kitchen door. We ran down the sidewalk, excited to explore the woods that lay beyond the pig pen and chicken house.

"I didn't know there were berries growing in these woods," said my younger sister, Twila, as our feet crunched through the fallen leaves on the forest floor.

"Neither did I," I answered. "I've never seen any."

"What color are tea berries?" asked our sister, Wilma. She was only five years old and thought that Twila and I knew the answer to every question.

"I don't know," I said. "I've never seen a tea berry."

We looked on both sides of the winding path that ran through the woods, but there was nothing that even looked like a berry bush.

"The berries must all be gone," said Twila at last. She gave a disappointed sigh. "I thought we might find enough for Grandma to make a pie."

"We might as well go back to the house," I said at last. "We've been through the whole woods and haven't seen one single berry. Maybe something ate them all."

Quietly, we filed back into the house and took off our scarves and jackets.

"Did you find any tea berries?" Grandma called from the living room.

"No," Wilma answered. "Something must have eaten them all up."

"We didn't even see one berry bush," I added as we hung our jackets up in Grandma's closet.

"Bush!" Grandma exclaimed. "Tea berries don't grow on bushes!"

"Where do they grow?" I asked in surprise.

Grandma began to laugh. "Don't you have tea berries in your woods at home?" she asked. She looked at my mother.

My mother shook her head. "I've never seen any down where we live," she said.

"Well!" said Grandma. "I'll tell you about tea berries. They're small and red, and they grow on little stems about this high." She held up her thumb and forefinger about three inches apart. You have to search under the fallen tree leaves, and you may have to look for a good while before you find any.

"Do you think we'll find enough for a pie?" Twila asked.

Grandma laughed even harder. "No," she said. "You'll never find that many, and even if you did, nobody would make a pie out of tea berries."

"Why?" I asked.

"They're not good for pies," said Grandma.

"Will it hurt us to eat them?" asked Twila.

"No," said Grandma. "They're just not fit for pies." She paused. "You'll see," she said. "They're pithy."

We didn't know what "pithy" meant, but we thought we had asked enough questions. We put on our jackets again and headed back outside. This time we walked slowly through the woods, sweeping the fallen leaves aside with our hands and peering underneath to search for the berries.

Suddenly, Twila gave a cry. "I found one!" she said. Wilma and I ran to look where she was pointing. Sure enough, hanging just below a couple of shiny leaves on a tiny stem was a small, red berry. We pulled the berry carefully from its stem and looked at it in wonder. How easily we might have stepped on that little berry and never have known it was there!

"Should we eat it?" Twila asked me.

"We could try it," I answered slowly. "Grandma said it wouldn't hurt us."

"But it's 'pithy,'" Twila reminded me. "Maybe that means it's not very good."

"I'm going to see what it looks like inside," I said, pinching the berry in half. The tea berry had a spongy white center. It was not juicy at all. I smelled the berry. "Mmmm!" I exclaimed. "It smells spicy and minty!" Cautiously, I put half of the tea berry on my tongue. "It tastes the way it smells," I announced to my sisters. "It's good!"

We began digging for more tea berries, the fallen leaves flying up in great clouds as we searched for the little red morsels. It was like a treasure hunt, and we squealed with delight each time we found another berry.

At last we returned to the house. We had eaten the few berries we had found, and the spicy taste of the

The Way of Truth

tiny fruits lingered on our tongues for a long while. Just before I stepped inside Grandma's kitchen door, I looked back at the woods. I wondered how many tea berries still lay undiscovered beneath the thick blanket of fallen leaves that covered the forest floor.

In time I learned that "wintergreen" is another name for "tea berry" and that the tiny berries have provided a lovely spicy flavor for gum and candy for many years. Today when I pop a wintergreen lifesaver into my mouth, I think about the tiny berries that I found hiding in Grandma's woods so long ago.

The tea berry is small. It grows on a hidden stem. But it has a beautiful color and an amazing flavor. We can learn a lesson from the humble tea berry. We may feel small and unimportant. We may think that no one notices how hard we try to be a good example and a good witness for the Lord. But God always notices what we do for Him. He will honor our efforts and make us a blessing to others, just as the spicy flavor of the humble little tea berry brings pleasure to so many.

Our wise saying this month comes from Proverbs 18:12, which says, "Before destruction the heart of man is haughty, and before honour is humility." To show "humility" means to be "humble." God does not honor the proud and haughty in heart, but He will always bless the humble and find ways to use them in His service.

Activity

"Humble" is the opposite of "proud." For each scripture below, fill in either "humble" or "proud" to show you understand that God honors a humble spirit.

1. Psalm 34:2, "My soul shall make her boast in the Lord: the _____ shall hear thereof, and be glad."

2. I Peter 5:5c, "God resisteth the _____, and giveth grace to the _____."

3. Isaiah 57:15a, "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 _____ spirit."

4. Proverbs 15:25, "The Lord will destroy the house of the _____: but he will establish the border of the widow."

5. Proverbs 16:5, "Every one that is _____ in heart is an abomination to the Lord: though hand join in hand, he shall not be unpunished."

Answer to Last Month's Activity

1. Daniel
2. Queen Esther
3. Gideon
4. Stephen ✠

Children, if you enjoy the Children's Corner, you are invited to write Sis. Rebecca and let her know. Just put **Attention: Sis. Rebecca** on the address.

RADIO LOG

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Alvin A. Craig, Radio Minister

(Aired on Sundays unless otherwise noted.)

Alabama, Mobile, WIJD 1270, AM & 97.9 FM 6:00 A.M.

Georgia, Augusta, WFAM 1050, 8:00 P.M. Wednesday & 11:30 A.M. Sun.

Illinois, Carmi, WROY 1460, 9:00 A.M.

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THE CHURCH OF GOD STANDS FOR

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

YOU SHOULD KNOW MORE ABOUT THE CHURCH OF GOD

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

COMING MEETINGS

REVIVAL SERVICES

Craigsville, West Virginia
May 12-16, 2021, Lord willing
Bro. Doug Shenberger, Evangelist
Bro. Harley McClung, Pastor



2021 INTERNATIONAL CHURCH OF GOD CONVENTION

12819 Point Salem Rd.
Hagerstown, Maryland U.S.A.
June 29-July 4, 2021, Lord willing
Bro. Gregory E. Tyler, Host Pastor

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