

The Way of Truth

Vol. 80

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

No. 8



REPAIRING STRAINED RELATIONSHIPS

WE RECENTLY experienced a glorious week of fellowship and worship during the 2022 Church of God convention in Hagerstown, Maryland. We had 181 visitors from various states and countries which blended perfectly with the host congregation, providing an environment in which the Lord could work. There was no bickering, complaining, accusing, or anything of the sort, rather I believe our hearts burned within us from service to service, resulting in our hearts being knit together more tightly in the love of God. This is how it ought to be!

Someone has said, "Christianity is not a religion, it is a relationship." During the course of life, relationships can become strained or broken. When Christ is in control these relationships can be repaired.

Relationship means, "a state of affairs existing between those having relations, dealings or associations."

"Right relationships are the soil in which the reward of righteousness can grow. And the only people who can sow these seeds, and who will reap the reward, are those whose life work it has been to produce such right relationships."—Selected.

It all begins in family life. "Home is where life makes up its mind. It is there—with fellow family members—we hammer out our convictions on the anvil of relationships. It is there we cultivate the valuable things in life, like attitudes, memories, beliefs, and most of all, character."—Selected.

Scripture deals with the husband-wife relationship.

"Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it."—Ephesians 5:24, 25.

"Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them."—Colossians 3:18, 19.

"Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered."—I Peter 3:7.

Peter Marshall is credited for the following:

We are souls living in bodies. Therefore when we really fall in love, it isn't just physical attraction. If it is just that, it won't last. Ideally, it's also spiritual attraction. God has opened our eyes and let us see into someone's soul. We have fallen in love with the inner person, the person who is going to live forever. That's why God is the greatest asset to romance. He thought it up in the first place. Include him in every part of your marriage, and he will lift it above the level of the mundane to something rare and beautiful and lasting.

When our marriage relationship becomes strained, there must be a renewed commitment to make it work.

If there is missing a resolve to repair the relationship, it very likely will end up a permanent separation!

The parent-child relationship also needs attention. Fathers must pay attention to Ephesians 6:4, "And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." If this relationship is strained because the children are provoked, the result is discouragement which if not repaired, can result in life-long estrangement. "Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged."—Colossians 3:21.

The children have a part to play in this parent-child relationship as well. Ephesians 6:1-3 says, "Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honour thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise; That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth."

The story is told in Spain of a father and his teenage son who had a relationship that had become strained. So the son ran away from home. His father, however, began a journey in search of his rebellious son. Finally, in Madrid, in a last desperate effort to find him, the father put an ad in the newspaper. The ad read: "Dear Paco, meet me in front of the newspaper office at noon. All is forgiven. I love you. Your father."

The next day at noon in front of the newspaper office 800 "Pacos" showed up. They were all seeking forgiveness and love from their fathers.

The story of Joseph and his brothers details the results of damaged relationships between siblings. This brings me to the burden of this editorial. Much more could be said about strained relationships between family members and other relationships in life. But I now turn to the family of God and strained relationships among church brethren.

There exists petty things that have been allowed to separate God's flock which have been the result of a lack of communication and a lack of commitment and a lack of humility. The church of God ought to be able to repair strained relationships! All we have to do is obey Bible teaching and take the humble route.

Matthew 5:23, 24 reads like this: "Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift."

Reconciliation is not weakness or cowardice. It demands courage, nobility, generosity, sometimes heroism, an overcoming of oneself rather than of one's adversary.

Quarrels will arrive. Colossians 3:12-15 says so! "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

ABOUT THE COVER

The 2022 Church of God convention in Hagerstown, MD, proved to be an outstanding meeting of saints of God from various states and countries. On our front is a collage of pictures taken by Bro. Dave Marquiss from Louisiana. You may receive a blessing by going to www.wayoftruth.org and click on archives. Then click on any of the services for dates 06/28/22 through 07/03/22.

THE WAY OF TRUTH

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No. 8

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

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—Gregory E. Tyler, Editor

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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."

Quarrels come through the course of life. Satan will see to that! Even the apostle Paul and Barnabas had a disagreement about John Mark and the contention was sharp, but they came up with a solution and did not allow the situation to cause a permanent break in their confidence in one another. Effort should be made to avoid quarrels, but if they surface they should not be allowed to divide and splinter the church of God!

Remember the words of our Savior in Matthew 5:9, "Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God."

"Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another." —Romans 14:19. Are we committed to follow the Bible or are we more concerned with being right and winning an argument? *General Robert E. Lee was asked what he thought of a fellow officer in the Confederate Army who had made some derogatory remarks about him. Lee rated him as being very satisfactory. The person who asked the question seemed perplexed.*

"General," he said, "I guess you don't know what he's been saying about you."

"I know," answered Lee. "But I was asked my opinion of him, not his opinion of me!"

The Apostle had it right in Ephesians 4:1-3, "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering,

forbearing one another in love; Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." *Forbearing one another in love.* This is a formula for harmony,

In closing, let me remind my readers that because of sin, man's relationship with God has been strained and broken. But Jesus Christ came to earth to repair that relationship! "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." God has made that supreme sacrifice so that your relationship with your Creator be one of closeness. He wants to flood your life with love, joy, and peace.

Man cannot find true essential joy anywhere but in his relationship to God.—Oswald Chambers.

"Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God."—II Corinthians 5:20.

This is our mission on Earth, to reconcile people to God and to reconcile people whose relationships have been strained or broken with each other. ✝

PRAYER CHANGES THINGS!

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HAGERSTOWN CONVENTION

June 28-July 3, 2022

Theme:

“The Amazing Grace of Our Amazing God”

We are very thankful to God for meeting with us for another convention. Saints from various congregations throughout the U.S.A. and foreign countries were able to be with us. There were 181 visitors from 18 different states and three different countries.

Each day began with a prayer meeting at 7:00 A.M. General services were at 10:30 A.M. and 2:30 P.M. Evangelistic services were at 6:00 P.M.

The prayer meetings started each day on our knees seeking God and were led by inspiring thoughts. The prayer meeting leaders were: Bro. Matt Deville from Deville, Louisiana (June 28), Bro. Gary Alwell from Deville, Louisiana (June 29), Bro. Oliver Fisher from Roatan, Honduras (June 30), Sis. Dorrett Clarke from Salem, Jamaica (July 1), Bro. Hezekiah Lamey from Catadupa, Jamaica (July 2), and Sis. Andrea Williams from Craigsville, West Virginia (July 3).

The songs of Zion were sung in the Spirit and souls were blessed. Often the Holy Spirit swept through the sanctuary thrilling the congregation.

Lord willing, we plan to print each message in upcoming issues of *The Way of Truth* paper.

Bro. Greg Tyler, Host Pastor, brought the first message. This is printed in this issue beginning on page 3.

The second message was preached by Bro. Tim Crooks (Jonesville, Louisiana). This is also printed in this issue beginning on page 13.

Other ministers who spoke throughout our six day convention were:

Brothers Harley McClung (Craigsville, West Virginia), David Goble (Carmichael, California), Doug Koerner (Essex, Maryland), John Romero (Escondido, California), Franklyn Bascoe (Jack's River, Jamaica), Doug Shenberger (Hagerstown, Maryland), David Shaw (Medina, Jamaica), Mick Akers (Patton, Pennsylvania), Paul Wilson (Hagerstown, Maryland), and Terry Deville (Denville, Louisiana).

The Young People were responsible for two afternoon services. In one of those services, the theme was, “What Is Consecration?” Those who spoke were: Sis. Desiree Harris, Bro. Cameron Deville, Bro. Andrew Richards, Sis. Joley Williams, and Sis. Jillian Gossard.

We appreciated all of our young people who took part, not only for those services, but they worked so diligently in helping in the secular part of the convention.

A baptism was held on Saturday afternoon. Four young people were baptized: Vahnyah Kelley, Jessica Swain, Matt Deville, Jr., and Ramzey Mullins.

We take this opportunity to thank each one who helped in any way to make the convention a success. Much preparation was done before and after the convention as well.

We look forward, Lord willing, for our 2023 convention. †

2022 HAGERSTOWN CONVENTION CD'S

We are making available CD's of the wonderful services of the 2022 Convention. These may be purchased for \$3.00 each. The complete set of all services plus five musical CD's are only \$50.00.

Please include number and title of those you would like. Send check or postal money order to: **The Way of Truth, CD Ministry, P. O. Box 88, Hagerstown, MD 21741 U.S.A.**

- #1363 Let Brotherly Love Continue—G. E. Tyler
- #1364 The Heart Established by Grace—Tim Crooks
- #1365 Does God's Grace Inconvenience You?—Harley McClung
- #1366 The Ram in the Thicket—David Goble
- #1367 What Is Consecration?—Various Young Speakers
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- #1369 The Doctrine of the Blood—John Romero
- #1370 The Amazing Grace of Our Amazing God—Franklyn Bascoe
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CONVENTION ECHOES

BRO. GREG,

AS I WATCHED THE HEALING SERVICE, I WAS IN TEARS FEELING GOD'S PRESENCE WITH ME. BY THE TIME THE PEOPLE STARTING COMING UP FOR PRAYER, I WAS SOBBING, WISHING I WAS THERE, AND FEELING SO UNWORTHY OF HEALING. I KNOW IN MY HEART THAT IF I'M OBEDIENT AND FAITHFUL TO GOD'S WORD, IN HIS TIME AND IN HIS WAY, I'M GOING TO BE HEALED. THE ENTIRE CONVENTION HAS BEEN A REAL BLESSING TO ME.

PLEASE KEEP ME IN YOUR PRAYERS, AS WELL AS MY FAMILY, INCLUDING BROTHERS AND SISTERS, NIECES AND NEPHEWS, AND GREAT NIECES AND NEPHEWS. SOME ARE LIVING UNDER A GREAT DARKNESS.

THANK YOU FOR BEING SO FAITHFUL AND BEING A GREAT EXAMPLE OF WHAT A TRULY, GODLY LIFE IS ABOUT.

—D. M., MICHIGAN

DEAR PASTOR TYLER & SAINTS,

THANK YOU FOR ALL YOUR KINDNESS AND HOSPITALITY AT THIS YEAR'S CONVENTION. WE WERE TRULY BLESSED AND ENCOURAGED BY THE SERVICES, THE SONGS, AND THE FELLOWSHIP! MAY GOD CONTINUE TO BLESS THE LIGHT YOU SHINE IN YOUR COMMUNITY AND BEYOND.

—A. & A. C., CALIFORNIA

LET BROTHERLY LOVE CONTINUE

2022 Hagerstown Convention Message by Bro. Greg Tyler



WHAT A wonderful service! What a wonderful people, from the four corners of the earth, as it were! Each one with the same Spirit; each one with the love of God. We can have fellowship together.

I appreciate those of you who have traveled many miles to be here. I trust you've felt a welcome and will continue to feel welcomed from the local congregation.

The theme that we have for this year's convention is a special one. I've been praying about a theme. The song that the duet sang, they have sung it a couple times earlier this year. It's our theme song. It seemed like every time they sang it, the windows of heaven were opened.

When I came up with a theme, I studied for a message along that line. I'm sure we're going to hear a lot this week about "The Amazing Grace of Our Amazing God." But as I was studying, the Lord pointed me in another direction, and I want to be true to my Lord. I would appreciate your prayers this morning. It's a difficult thing to even speak. It takes so much effort, but I have something to say. God has something to say.

I have had a burden in the last few years of seeing walls being broken down between saints. For years saints of God have been scattered, each little group not having anything to do with one another. Recently, a few of us brethren decided to step out in faith and see John, chapter 17, fulfilled. "That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one." God started moving. I see many here this morning as a result of that. You have the liberty to come here, and we have the liberty to go there and enjoy the fellowship with each other. But we're just beginning, we're just starting. We have to press on.

The Lord impressed me with a scripture that only has four words in it: Hebrews 13:1 simply says, "Let brotherly love continue." We've felt some brotherly love here this morning, haven't we? It doesn't matter what color your skin is. It doesn't matter where you're from or what your background is. If we're redeemed, we have fellowship in Christ, and when we sing the song, "We reach our hands in fellowship to every blood-washed one," it's more than just a song. It's a reality.

Brotherly love is a unique thing. It's a special kind of love. I love my children and my grandchildren. I love all men, but there's something special about the family of God, because we have experienced salvation, and we know what we have and what you have. Therefore, we have that sweet fellowship and brotherly love as a result of it. We've all been saved by the self-same One. We're all saved through Christ. We have so much in common. Only those who experience salvation can know this special bond.

Jude 1:3, "Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for

me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints." Did you notice that Jude referred to "the common salvation"? He's not talking about something that is of little value. He's talking about something we have in common. The salvation that I received in 1971 is the same as you received whenever you were saved. It's the very same salvation, and it resulted in brotherly love.

Paul was writing to the Corinthian church in I Corinthians, chapter 1, verse 2. He was writing unto the church of God: "Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours." *Both theirs and ours!* No one has a corner on God. No one can say God is with us, and He's not with anybody else. No one can truthfully say that. Our Lord Jesus Christ who saved us is the Lord and Savior of many other people as well as ours, and we should not be jealous of that or feel bad about that. We should rejoice in that. He is the Lord, both ours and theirs.

Our hearts are knit together in love. Colossians 2:2, "That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ." Our hearts are knit together in love, Saints. The love of God which is shed abroad in our hearts is like something woven. When you pull on it, it gets tighter. When you try to separate it, it gets tighter. The more our love is attached, the more our fellowship is attached, the closer we draw to one another, because our hearts are comforted and knit together in love.

Brotherly love is very important. St. John 13:34, 35: "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." This is the proof that we're saved. This is the proof that we have love one to another. This is proof that we're His disciples. I John 3:14, "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death." How can you argue with that? Some might sit back there and say, "Well, there's Bro. Tyler preaching on love. He's making a hobby out of love." The congregation here knows that I don't make a hobby out of preaching love, but I do make a hobby out of loving people. I believe that love is the basis for everything in the Bible. Without love, we have nothing. It is proof that we are children of God if we have love one toward another.

It amazes me the depth of love we have for each other. I was talking to Bro. Shaw when he arrived. He

mentioned to me something to the effect that he met someone who saw the love that flowed from heart to heart. He said he'd never seen anything like that anywhere. You're not going to find it everywhere. It comes from God, and all true children of God have love. But we need to let brotherly love continue. The amazing grace of our amazing God will enable us to love one another, no matter who that person may be. We're to even love our enemies, but our love for the saints, I believe, is greater. There are different degrees of love. There's nothing so sweet as the love that flows from heart to heart by children of God.

In order to continue in brotherly love, we have to first have it established. There is only one way to establish it. Ephesians 3:14-19: "For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God." It is something more than gold. The love of God shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost is something more than gold. It happens when we're redeemed.

Once we receive the brotherly love of the saints, we have to build on it. We have to expand it. We have to continue in it because we have an adversary, the devil, who is all the time trying to bring a wedge between brethren. He loves tearing people apart, tearing marriages apart, tearing families apart, and tearing the church apart. He can only do that if we let him do it. So one of the things we want to resolve during this convention is, we want to resolve to let brotherly love continue. Give the devil no place, no thoughts.

I've written down 10 evidences that brotherly love is continuing in your life. The first evidence that I have is *self is not in control*. Selfishness and brotherly love do not go together. Selfishness will choke out brotherly love. Carnality will choke it out. One reason why God made the plan of sanctification is so that we could be free from the carnal nature. The carnal nature makes a person selfish, self-centered. Everything has to go his way. But that needs to be eradicated from that person if he's going to continue in brotherly love. Do you have that carnal nature? If you do, you need to be prayed for. You need hands laid on you. You need to surrender yourself to the Lord and be filled with the Holy Spirit so that brotherly love may continue. God will see to it that it will continue if you make the right choices. You can love anybody, no matter how they treated you or what they said about you.

I remember my father-in-law, Bro. Ollen Craig, preaching a message many years ago. The title of it was, "Do You Act or Do You React?" Do you react to what people do to you and do the same to them? Or in spite of whatever they do to you or against you, do you act like Christ would have you to act? We need to act and not react.

One of our scriptures for this convention is Romans 5:1, 2: "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God." Are you standing in the love of God? Do you have brotherly love in your heart? Can you say to everyone here this morning that I love you? Does everyone love everyone? I don't know why the whole world doesn't want what we have. Being justified by faith, we have peace with God through salvation, or being born again, and receiving brotherly love, and then being able to continue in brotherly love by having access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

Oswald Chambers once wrote: "There is only one Being who loves perfectly, and that is God. The New Testament distinctly states that we are to love as God loves. So the first step is obvious. If ever we're going to have perfect love in our hearts, we must have the very nature of God in us."

When you're sanctified, the carnal nature is eradicated, but you also receive the divine nature. The divine nature takes a place in your heart instead of the carnal nature. Sanctification is real. If we want to continue in brotherly love, we need to be sanctified.

Number 2: *brotherly love respects those with whom you disagree*. Some people can only love those who agree with them. If they disagree, they don't want anything to do with them. Not so with brotherly love. We might disagree on some things, but it doesn't affect our love for one another. I believe if we strive together in the love of God, eventually, we will see eye to eye. As we gain confidence in one another, and as we watch one another's lives and feel the Spirit of one another, we will have an impact on each other, and God will lead us into all truth. But as long as we're apart, we have no hope of seeing eye to eye. Let brotherly love continue.

Colossians 3:12, 13: "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." Look at that. Forbearing and forgiving one another. This is not only for the laity. This is for the ministry as well.

Number 3: *brotherly love is courteous*. I Peter 3:8 says, "Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous." One thing I cannot stand, if I can use that terminology, is people who profess holiness and are rude and puffed up. True Christians are humble. True Christians are courteous. They'll open the door for women. They'll say "yes sir" and "no ma'am." How can our children learn to be courteous if we're not courteous ourselves? The Bible tells me that brotherly love is courteous. "... love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous." This is disastrous if disobeyed.

Galatians 5:13-15: "For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. But if ye bite and devour

one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another." What a picture! If we bite and devour one another, take heed that we be not consumed one of another. There are actually people who profess godliness who bite and devour one another. They destroy one another. Not in the church of God! Not in the church of God that I know! We dare not bite and devour one another. We hold each other up.

Number 4: *brotherly love refuses to belittle others.* You might not think of this as a Church of God message, but I believe it is. I have no right to look down my nose at other people. I have no right to be using sarcasm towards them. *Sarcasm* is "the use of irony to mock and to convey contempt." We are to build each other up, not tear each other down.

Ephesians 4:31, 32: "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you." Again, this is not just for the laity, not just for children. This is for adults, too, to be kind to one another; for the ministry, to be kind to one another. We must forgive one another. If men would be so humble as to forgive, there wouldn't be any schisms or divisions. Forgiveness would overcome that. But there are some who carry a chip on their shoulders. Things that happened 20, 30, 40, 50 years ago, they can't get rid of. Church of God, let brotherly love continue. "Love suffereth long, and is kind," I Corinthians 13 says. It's always kind.

What does it mean to be *kind*? It means "to be kind." Everyone knows what it means to be kind. I've been told that I'm a kind person, but I believe all Christians should be kind, even to little children. If a child runs in the aisle, or does something a little out of order, you don't need to beat that child right there. Be kind to that little child. Instruct the child not to do that, but be kind to that child. Children will remember how the church treats them. As some children grow up, they develop an understanding that Christians look down at their noses at them and demand, "You ought to behave yourself," but they don't feel any love. Our families should feel loved. Our neighbors should feel loved. It's our mission to love people and be kind to them.

Number 5: *brotherly love never crushes or beats down another.* Galatians 6:1, "Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted." I'm still in the Bible. That's what the Bible says. "I'm so spiritual, Bro. Tim, that when a person falls, I kick him. That wasn't me that made that mistake." That's not being spiritual. "...ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted." We're all tempted. We all could fail.

We are members one of another. I Corinthians 12:20-25: "But now are they many members, yet but one body. And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary: And those members of the body, which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour; and

our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness. For our comely parts have no need: but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to that part which lacked. That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another." The Bible is beautiful, isn't it? It is when you live it out. If you just read it, and let go in one ear and out the other, it is not performing anything. But if you obey it from the heart, it changes you. We're all part of the same body. That's one thing that I thought about as I mulled over the idea of reaching out to others who have not had any fellowship with us in the past. We're of the same body, and if we don't work together, our body is not going to be very successful. If we cut off our hand, we'll still live, but we won't have a hand to do anything with. When you strike out at a fellow Christian, whether it's in your congregation or in another congregation, you're hitting yourself. You're punching yourself. We're of the same body.

Number 6: *brotherly love is genuine.* Romans 12:9, "Let love be without dissimulation." That's hypocrisy. Let brotherly love continue, Saints. Don't love me just with words, but show it with actions. You can say one thing and do something else. You cannot be a hypocrite when it comes to love. I can't say to Bro. Harley when I'm with him, "You're a fine man. I respect and love you," and then when I go to Louisiana I say to Bro. Tim, "Bro. Harley has gone to the dogs." What you are in my presence, be that way when my back is turned. Let brotherly love continue. No hypocrisy. Genuine love.

Number 7: *brotherly love bears the burdens of the brethren.* We're not alone in this thing. We're part of the family of God. Galatians 6:2, "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ." Of course, we all know I Corinthians 12 says, "And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it." Again, we're tied together. We're all part of one another. When brethren in the church are hurting, we should feel their pain. It's a beautiful thing to bear one another's burdens.

Included in this is praying for one another. I know we don't see one another all that often, but we know each other, and we should pray one for another. God doesn't expect us to pray for everyone in the entire world every time we pray, or even everyone in the entire church, but we should pray for one another. We should mention each other's name in prayer. We should share in their burden if they're going through something. It helps. It helps me to know that saints are sharing my burden. It helps me when they tell me they're praying for me and holding me up in prayer. That's brotherly love. Let it continue. Don't let anything separate us from the love of Christ.

Number 8: *brotherly love refuses to put a stumbling block in the way of another.* I Corinthians 8:9, "But take heed lest by any means this liberty of yours become a stumblingblock to them that are weak." There are those who are weak in the congregation. We need to be careful that we don't put a stumbling block in their way. Remember that they're young in the faith, at least they should be young in the faith if they're weak. I wouldn't

want to think you've been in the way for 40 years and you're still weak. It happens sometimes. But we're not to judge others. Jesus said, "Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again." We don't have to judge people. God's the righteous Judge. It's not my job to judge people. It's my job to love people, to love them into the kingdom of God.

Romans 14:1-4: "Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations. For one believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eateth herbs. Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth: for God hath received him. Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand." God is able to make him stand. Be careful not to put a stumbling block in someone's way. We need to win people to the truth, and we need to share truth with them, but we need to be careful not to use truth as a club to beat people over the head or beat them in submission. It won't work.

You might find this one a little strange. Number 9: *an evidence that brotherly love is continuing is obeying your pastor.* What? Your pastor is your brother. You're to love your brother. Hebrews 13:17, "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you." Your pastor is your brother. He's not reverend. The Bible says, "Holy and reverend is [God's] name." Your pastor is not above you in that sense. We're all equal in God's sight when we obey His Word. But the Holy Ghost has made him an overseer to feed the church of God. By the office alone, he or she is worthy of honor. I Timothy 5:17, "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine."

It's a special relationship between a pastor and his flock. There should be a special warmth there, a special love there. It's two-sided. It's not just one-sided. A pastor has no right to use the pulpit as a bully pulpit. Preach the Word, the whole Word, and nothing but the Word. Ephesians 4 tells us to speak the truth in love. People can tell whether a pastor is preaching in love or not. They can tell if it's coming out of the heart or not. Every pastor should treat his congregation with love and respect. Let brotherly love continue.

Ezekiel 34:4—Listen to this: "The diseased have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was sick, neither have ye bound up that which was broken, neither have ye brought again that which was driven away, neither have ye sought that which was lost; but with force and with cruelty have ye ruled them." What was that last part? "... but with force and with cruelty have ye ruled them." There are people under that spirit today who are beaten down week after week by men who use the Bible as a club and through cruelty try to drive people. A pastor can't drive saints. Saints are not goats. You drive goats. Saints are sheep. Sheep need to be led. So when we speak of letting

brotherly love continue, it's far-reaching. It goes to the ministry. It goes to all of us.

Be not puffed up, wanting the preeminence. Jesus said that we should not be lords over God's heritage, but as examples to the flock. John wrote about someone wanting the preeminence. III John 1:9, 10: "I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them [Look at that.], receiveth us not. Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them out of the church." What kind of attitude is it to feel like you have the power to cast people out of the church? Man can't bring you in, and man can't put you out. God puts you in through salvation, and sin is the only thing that can cast you out. But there are people who claim to have the power to cast out Christians because they don't do something as they should. Diotrephes loved to have the preeminence. *God, keep us humble.* "... prating against us with malicious words." I hate that. I hate people who use the pulpit to prate against others with malicious words. There should be no malicious words in a message. Let brotherly love continue.

Number 10: *brotherly love works and does for others.* Hebrew 6:10, "For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister." I could mention names here this morning of those who often and regularly minister to the saints. They give of themselves to help the saints. That's brotherly love in action; that's brotherly love continuing.

What does love look like? It has hands to help others, feet to hasten to the poor and needy, eyes to see misery and want, ears to hear sighs and sorrows of men. That is what love looks like.—Selected.

How do we measure up? Are our lives full of the love of Christ? Do we have brotherly love? Is brotherly love continuing in your life? Is it a priority? Brotherly love makes the difference. Hebrews 12:15, "Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled." Brotherly love has compassion and expels bitterness. Don't let any bitterness come into your heart, because brotherly love cannot continue with bitterness there. You must get rid of it. Jude said, "Keep yourselves in the love of God, and of some have compassion, making a difference."

I want to make a difference in this world. I want to make a difference in Hagerstown. I want to make a difference in the church of God. I want to make a difference in life, even in my shell of the person that I used to be. I can still make a difference because God is the One who sets up whom He will and puts down whom He will. All things come through God.

Our amazing God is able to perfect us. I John 4:11, 12: "Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us." If we love one another, God is in us. His love is perfected in us if we love one another.

Brotherly love is the glue that binds us all together. In Romans 8:38, 39, the apostle Paul said, “For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present [like Covid-19], nor things to come [name what you will], 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.” Let brotherly love continue.

As you go home at the end of this convention, let the news come from Hattiesburg, from New York, California, and from Hagerstown that the saints are still having brotherly love one for another. Let brotherly love continue. †

THE MANNER OF MEMBERSHIP IN THE CHURCH OF GOD

By the late H. M. Riggle

THE MANNER of membership in the New Testament church is one of vital importance. The nature of the church helps us to determine the manner of its membership.

It is a heavenly and divine institution. Christ built it, and He is declared to be its head, foundation, and door of entrance. A moment's reflection on this point should convince all reasonable minds that God alone can take members into His church.

The door into God's church is also declared to be a spiritual door. It is beyond the power of any man to admit us into a spiritual structure. The Lord alone can do this. Men can add and admit to a literal, earthly organization, but not to one that is spiritual.

In its universal phase, the church of God and the family of God are identical. We are born into earthly families, and the same is true of God's spiritual family and church. In the work of salvation through the instrumentality of the Holy Spirit, we are born into and become members of God's family and are thus made members of His church. “As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: which were born ... of God” (John 1:12, 13).

The new birth is the only means of entering into the kingdom of God (John 3:5). In Colossians 1:13 it is positively declared that the Lord alone can deliver people from the power of darkness and translate them into the kingdom of His dear Son. This is identical with becoming members of His church.

Jesus positively declares, “I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved” (John 10:9). Several denominational bodies make water baptism the door into their particular institutions. Baptism is a very important and sacred Christian rite, but at best it is but a ceremonial ordinance which one person can perform upon another. It was instituted for church members, those who already have been born of the Spirit of

God. As John Wesley clearly expressed it, baptism is “but an outward testimony to an inward work.”

No, Christ Himself is the door of entrance into the New Testament church, and all who obtain access through Him are saved. This is a door that no man can open, and no man can shut (Revelation 3:7). The conditions of entering through this strait gate and narrow door are a deep, thorough repentance and a living faith in Christ our Savior.

On this question of church membership the united testimony of the New Testament scriptures is decisive and beyond all controversy. “But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him” (I Corinthians 12:18). This body is the church.

And how do we become members of this institution? Here is the answer: “But now hath God *set the members* every one of them in the body”—the church. You see He didn't leave a single one to be taken in by a preacher. The modern process of ministers taking members into the church is absolutely without scriptural authority.

But how does God do this? The answer is found in I Corinthians 12:13: “For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.” “That which is born of the Spirit is spirit” (John 3:6).

In the work of regeneration, God through the Holy Spirit baptizes or inducts us into His divine church. It follows, then, that all who are converted, regenerated by the Spirit of the Lord, are members of the New Testament church.

In the second chapter of Acts we read that following the mighty outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the original 120 gathered in that upper room, “there were added unto them about three thousand souls,” and all who thus received the Word “were baptized.” From this language some have inferred that the apostles, through the rite of baptism, added these people to the church. But this is wrong. In verse 47 of this same chapter it is positively stated how they were added. “And the Lord added *to the church* daily such as should be saved.” This last clause is rendered in the *Revised Version*, “Those who were being saved.” This is so definite and clear that there is no appeal from it.

These clear texts, facts, and truths establish two definite points:

1. Since people become members of the New Testament church through the work of conversion or regeneration, then any church that salvation does not constitute one a member of, cannot be identical with the New Testament church. Any institution on Earth that salvation does not constitute you a member of is not the true church of God.

2. Now it follows that since salvation constitutes us members of the church, *all* who are saved are its members. Being the body of Christ, it must include all the members of that body. Being the bride of Christ, it must include every blood-washed one. This being true, any church that does not include in its membership all the saved people on Earth, every true Christian, cannot be the true New Testament church of God.

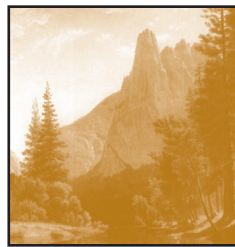
The Lord Himself writes the names, keeps a list of the membership, because “the Lord knoweth them that are his.” Only those who live a victorious life above sin can hold their membership and retain their names in this book (Revelation 3:5).

There are thousands of people who call themselves church members who have no record on high. They base their hopes of heaven on the fact that some fallible preacher wrote their names with pen and ink in a little book here on Earth. In the last great conflagration, when the earth shall be burned up, all the earthly records kept by man will be consumed in judgment fires. Dear Reader, having your name on a church record here on Earth will then profit you nothing. But membership in the true church of God, having your name in the Lamb’s Book of Life, will give you an entrance into the [land of eternal day].

—Reprinted from the November 1989 issue

THE GLORY AND THE MAJESTY OF GOD

Radio Message by
Bro. Doug Shenberger



I WILL BE speaking to you this evening about “The Glory and the Majesty of God.”

I’d like to read Psalm 19. I will be bringing a few thoughts about the author of this psalm—King David. There are beautiful thoughts in this psalm: “The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard. Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun, which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race. His going forth is from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it: and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof. The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. Moreover by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward. Who can understand his errors? cleanse thou me from secret faults. Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression. Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength, and my redeemer.”

As I thought about the messages that are contained in those verses, I thought about David. We’re familiar

with David and his life. He was a young shepherd boy who was out on the hillside watching and tending the sheep. The first verse which says, “The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork,” caused me to realize that David was speaking from his experience out on the fields with the sheep. Maybe it was in the evening, and it was time for them to rest for the evening. Maybe he was preparing his supper as the night was falling. As he looked at the sunset, he was made aware of the glory and the majesty of God and His creation. David was able to see the beauties of nature that God created. David must have enjoyed the beauty of God’s handiwork and marveled at it. The heavens do declare the glory of God, and the firmament shows His handiwork. I believe David had opportunity there to learn something special about God. I think it is important for us that we endeavor to grasp that truth also.

God is almighty, and He has created this world that we have to live in and enjoy. Sometimes we get so busy and rushed to do the many things that we have to do that we don’t take the time to stop and consider God’s creation. How beautiful it is! How mighty God is to have been able to create this world that we live in!

In verse 2 of the text, Psalm 19, it says, “Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge.” That’s the way it is. From day-to-day, God’s creation shows people, if they’ll see it, that He is the great Creator. Verse 3: “There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard.” All people can see and know the greatness and majesty of God, if they’ll just behold His creation and desire to learn about Him. I’m so thankful that we have that opportunity. We have the privilege to be able to learn about God, the beauties of creation, and all that He has done. If you learn to love God and appreciate who He is, and you see what He has done, and your heart becomes aware of how mighty He is, then I think you’ll be able to see in some of the latter verses as to why you would want to fear the Lord. You would have confidence in His statutes and in His law.

Verse 7: “The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple.” God does have a law that He has placed in effect in this world. He has created the world, He has created man, and He has created laws for man to live by. That’s for every person in the world. He wants them to abide by His laws and His rules. He didn’t just create this world, put the animals and people on it, and then say, “Run wild and do whatever you want.” He created laws in nature. He created moral laws to live by. There is no error in the law of the Lord. It is perfect. It is the ideal way to live in this world. The law of the Lord will convert the soul. If you follow the law of the Lord, you will be converted to His way, His plan of salvation, and His plan for your life. The law of the Lord will convert you to those things if you will follow His law.

Verse 8: “The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes.” How true that is! If you will follow the statutes of the Lord, they are so right. They will clear your conscience. They’ll bring joy and peace

to your heart. You will be able to rejoice in your heart. The commandment of the Lord is pure. It will enlighten your eyes. You'll be able to see the beauty of life as God has planned it. You'll be able to see that life is designed to be a wonderful thing.

Verse 9: "The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether." His judgments are true and fair and right. He doesn't make a mistake in judgment of what is right or wrong.

In speaking of the Lord's judgments, verse 10 says: "More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb." I wonder how many people really believe that God's judgments, His laws, and His plans are more precious than gold? They should be more desirable than gold. God's commandments and laws aren't bitter or bad for people. They are sweet and special. Verse 11: "... and in keeping of them there is great reward."

I'll skip down to the last verse. Verse 14: "Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength, and my redeemer." If you have accepted and believe that God is a God of power, might, and glory, how ideal it is to be able to feel and realize that the words of our mouth and the meditation of our heart would be acceptable in His sight. We're not worthy or deserving, but what a precious thing to think that He loves us so much! He's made a plan whereby, if we will give Him control of our lives, the words of our mouth and the very meditation of our heart would be acceptable in His sight. He will be pleased with us. Truly, that's the highest goal in life to be able to achieve. I encourage each one to strive for that goal in your life. †

SHADOWS OF GOOD THINGS

By the late Russell R. Byrum

Part XI

THE AARONIC PRIESTHOOD

The Antitype of the Priesthood

THAT OUR blessed Lord is the antitypical high priest is abundantly shown in the New Testament, "Consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus" (Hebrews 3:1). "We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens" (Hebrews 8:1). As Aaron entered into God's presence with the blood of vicarious atonement, so Jesus intercedes for us by His own atoning blood. As Israel's high priest bore into God's presence the names of his people inscribed in the precious stones upon his breast and shoulders, so Jesus our "advocate with the Father" represents us every one before God's throne in heaven now. That ancient high priest resembled Christ in several particulars and yet was much inferior to Him. He was divinely appointed, and so was Jesus (Hebrews 5:5). He was ceremonially pure in that he was consecrated; must not defile himself by touching any dead thing; and must marry a wife in her virginity,

not a divorced woman, a harlot, or a widow (Leviticus 21:14); so Christ was intrinsically holy (Hebrews 7:26). The ancient high priest was to be physically perfect (Leviticus 21:16-24); but Christ is morally perfect.

The common priests as assistants of Aaron in offering sacrifices were also typical of Christ, who offers the true sacrifice for sin. But in another sense they are represented as being typical of God's people. "Ye are ... a royal priesthood, a holy nation" (I Peter 2:9). "And hast made us unto our God kings and priests" (Revelation 5:10). Believers are represented as priests by various New Testament writers, and it is not unreasonable to regard them as antitypical of those ancient common priests. Believers are holy as those priests were regarded by God as being more holy than others. Also as those priests entered that ancient house of God, so we have been admitted into the "house of God which is the church." Again we are analogous to them in that as they offered the sweet incense in worship to God, so we "offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name" (Hebrews 13:15). These offerings to God are acceptable to Him because we are chosen of God as priests; we do not become priests by means of such offerings. As those Levitical priests had to wash at the laver before entering the sacred precincts of God's house, so we have become truly holy by the regenerating power of the Holy Ghost. Every Christian is a priest of God, and needs no priestly order such as exists in the Greek and Roman Churches to stand between him and God today; for he is made holy by the offering of our great High Priest.

The "Golden Garments" of Aaron

The clothing commonly worn by Aaron in his priestly ministrations was made by a divinely given pattern, and was called by Jewish writers the "golden garments" because of the much gold used in them and to distinguish them from the plain white linen garments which he wore in token of humiliation during the solemn services of the great day of atonement. These golden garments are described as "holy" and "for glory and for beauty." And they were indeed beautiful. Probably the dress of no potentate of earth has surpassed them for beauty and richness. The vestments of the pope of Rome on great occasions, though patterned somewhat after these and those of the pontifex maximus of pagan Rome, doubtless would dwindle into insignificance if compared with this imposing attire of the high priest of Israel. Probably no grander sight ever greeted the eyes of an Israelite than that of Aaron with hands uplifted to bless his people, while fourteen large jewels on his breast and shoulders glittered in the bright light of the desert sun and the gold of his garments gleamed and blazed in its glory. It was such as became the dignity of the representative of him whose "face shone as the sun" and whose "raiment was white and glistening."

These holy vestments of Aaron are regarded by God as very important doubtless because of their typical significance. They are minutely described; almost two entire chapters of Exodus, twenty-eight and thirty-nine, being devoted to them. They consisted of seven pieces. In the order in which they were put upon him when he

was consecrated they were: the linen breeches, the brodered coat, the robe of the ephod, the ephod, the curious girdle, the breastplate, and the miter.

The White Linen Garments—The linen breeches or drawers for Aaron are not listed in the Bible with the other articles of the high priest's garments, but with those of his sons, because they were similar to those of the common priests. The brodered coat was of fine white linen, having sleeves, and reaching probably nearly to his feet. It was embroidered with needlework, but this was likely also in white. It seems to have had a linen girdle other than the curious girdle or belt of the ephod (Leviticus 8:7; 16:4). These white garments were similar to if not the same as those worn by the common priests. Also the white linen miter of Aaron was of the same material if not of the same shape as the bonnets made for his sons. These pure-white linen robes, which were worn next to the flesh, were symbolic to them of purity, and probably typify the fine linen which is the righteousness of saints—God's spiritual priests of the present. They are called the "holy garments" (Leviticus 16:4).

The Robe—Of the robe it is not mentioned what kind of material was used, but its color was to be blue, and it was to be woven in one piece with a hole for the head and doubtless holes for the arms. It reached probably somewhat below the knees, and it had hanging from its border pomegranates of blue, purple, and scarlet. Alternating with these were golden bells, the sound of which was heard as Aaron entered or came out of the sanctuary. The sound of these bells indicating the mediation of the high priest typified the proclamation of the gospel tidings, that Christ is now making intercession for our salvation before the Father. These are the antitypical gospel bells.

"The gospel bells in music tell
The story that we love so well,
Of 'Peace on earth good will to men,'
Ring out, sweet bells, ring out again."

The Ephod—The ephod was of special importance. It was made of the kingly colors of blue, purple, and scarlet, because though the Israelitish high priest was not a king, yet he typified Him who is Prophet, Priest, and King. Threads or wire of pure gold were woven into the ephod. It consisted of two pieces of such cloth, one of which covered the back and the other the front, being fastened together by the gold settings of the onyx stones on either shoulder. It was fastened together below by the belt or "curious girdle," which was made of the same material. But the two large gems, one on either shoulder, which were attached to it (or rather to which it was attached, because it existed for them, not they for it), were the important part of it. These were held in place by settings of gold, and on them were engraved in raised letters the names of the twelve sons of Israel, six on the stone of the right shoulder and six on the left. These are said to have been for a memorial that Aaron might bear the names of the children of Israel before the Lord for a memorial. Aaron was their representative in intercession for them. These stones with the names on them remarkably typify Christ's bearing His people before the Lord as their advocate with the Father today.

On His mighty shoulders they rest. They trust in His unfailing power to save them, and they need not fear.

"Before the throne my Surety stands,
My name is written on His hands."

The Breastplate—The breastplate was attached to the ephod and seems sometimes to be reckoned as a part of it. It was made of cloth similar to that of the ephod, and was a span, or about nine inches, square when doubled. On this were fastened by ouches, or settings, of gold twelve costly gems of as many different kinds arranged in four rows, one above another, with three in a row. On these were inscribed in raised letters the names of the twelve tribes of Israel. The names differed from those of the stones of the ephod only in naming the twelve tribes instead of the twelve sons of Israel. The names of Levi and Joseph, which appeared on the stones of the ephod, were omitted from the breastplate and the names of Ephraim and Manassah, Joseph's sons, were substituted. But as Levi, the priestly tribe, belonged to all the tribes it was represented on the breastplate.

It was important that all the Israelites be represented by the priest. And this was done by this double enumeration of them, so none needed to feel he was missed. The names on the breastplate were connected to those on the stones on the shoulders by golden chains, made of twisted threads of gold, which furnished a support for the breastplate, which was also tied to the ephod with blue ribbon below. As Aaron, Israel's representative before God, bore their names on his breastplate and on the stones on his shoulders, so our Representative before God ever bears us on His heart of infinite love and upon His shoulders of almighty power. Our cause is safe in His care. He will not fail as our Advocate because of lack of interest nor because of lack of ability. And all the people of God are represented there. Reuben, "unstable as water," is represented as well as lion-like Judah. Thanks be to God, each of us is there; our High Priest pleads my cause and yours, and all who will may have the benefits of His intercession for them.

The Miter and Crown—The head-covering of Aaron was not a deeply cleft high cap such as has been worn by the Pope or other modern ecclesiastic, but rather a white linen turban, according to Josephus. But the important feature of Aaron's head-covering was the holy crown, the plate of pure gold which was fastened to the miter by a band of blue cloth. On this plate of shining gold was engraved in raised letters, "Holiness to the Lord." Aaron not only represented the sinful people to God, but he also represented their holy God to them. He not only represented them by bearing their names on his breast and shoulders, but he represented God by the golden inscription that was so prominent on his forehead.

Likewise our High Priest is both God and man. He partakes of sinful flesh to identify himself with us; but he retains the holy and divine nature of God, which identifies him with the Godhead. In interceding for the forgiveness of the sinner he does not ask God to disregard his own holiness. He upholds God's holiness and at the same time consistently asks pardon for the guilty. He reconciles justice and mercy. How wonderful! God's

marvelous plan of saving sinful men is worthy of the infinite wisdom and perfection of Him who doth all things well. And the typification of these wonderful Christian truths in those ancient vestments of Aaron likewise bear the same mark of divine wisdom in their remarkable resemblance to these truths.

The Urim and Thummim—What the Urim and Thummim were is not known. Some have supposed they were merely the stones of the breastplate. A more probable theory seems to be that they were objects separate from the breastplate that were deposited in the pouch formed by the doubling of the cloth of the breastplate. They may have been similar to or identical with teraphim, which were images or other objects used in divination. Some ground is furnished for this view by those texts which connect teraphim with ephods (Judges 17:5; 18:14, 17, 20) and also by the statement that Israel's desolation should consist partly in being deprived of the ephod and teraphim (Hosea 3:4). Also if the evil spirits can make things known through such means, there is no reason why we should not allow that God used such a device in connection with His chosen priest. While we may not be certain concerning the nature of the Urim and Thummim, we do know they were for the purpose of revealing the will and mind of God. David and others often applied to them for this purpose. And here again the high priest is like Christ, who reveals to us God's mind and will. †

BIBLE LESSON OF THE MONTH

FAITH AND MIRACLES THE DEATH OF THE FIRSTBORN

Scriptures: Exodus 12:21-36.

Exodus 12:21 Then Moses called for all the elders of Israel, and said unto them, Draw out and take you a lamb according to your families, and kill the passover.

22 And ye shall take a bunch of hyssop, and dip it in the blood that is in the basin, and strike the lintel and the two side posts with the blood that is in the basin; and none of you shall go out at the door of his house until the morning.

23 For the Lord will pass through to smite the Egyptians; and when he seeth the blood upon the lintel, and on the two side posts, the Lord will pass over the door, and will not suffer the destroyer to come in unto your houses to smite you.

24 And ye shall observe this thing for an ordinance to thee and to thy sons for ever.

25 And it shall come to pass, when ye be come to the land which the Lord will give you, according as he hath promised, that ye shall keep this service.

26 And it shall come to pass, when your children shall say unto you, What mean ye by this service?

27 That ye shall say, It is the sacrifice of the Lord's passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when he smote the Egyptians, and delivered our houses. And the people bowed the head and worshipped.

28 And the children of Israel went away, and did as the Lord had commanded Moses and Aaron, so did they.

29 And it came to pass, that at midnight the Lord smote all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh that sat on his throne unto the firstborn of the captive that was in the dungeon; and all the firstborn of cattle.

30 And Pharaoh rose up in the night, he, and all his servants, and all the Egyptians; and there was a great cry in Egypt; for there was not a house where there was not one dead.

31 And he called for Moses and Aaron by night, and said, Rise up, and get you forth from among my people, both ye and the children of Israel; and go, serve the Lord, as ye have said.

32 Also take your flocks and your herds, as ye have said, and be gone; and bless me also.

33 And the Egyptians were urgent upon the people, that they might send them out of the land in haste; for they said, We be all dead men.

34 And the people took their dough before it was leavened, their kneadingtroughs being bound up in their clothes upon their shoulders.

35 And the children of Israel did according to the word of Moses; and they borrowed of the Egyptians jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment:

36 And the Lord gave the people favour in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they lent unto them such things as they required. And they spoiled the Egyptians.

Memory Verse: And the Egyptians were urgent upon the people, that they might send them out of the land in haste; for they said, We be all dead men.

—Exodus 12:33.

Aim: To further reveal the miraculous power of God.

INTRODUCTION

THE LAST plague that was brought upon the land of Egypt was very grievous indeed. A normal father and mother regard their children as the greatest possession that they have and will defend them with all they have. The sorrow created by the loss of the firstborn engulfed the land for but a short period, for after the children of Israel had escaped, Pharaoh's heart again became hard, and he sought by the use of his army to return them to Egypt. But God was still on the throne, and He had an eye of watchfulness upon His children to protect them from anything that the enemy might try to impose upon them. The enemy that opposes the children of God is just as real today.

MEDITATIONS

SAVED BY THE BLOOD—Exodus 12:21—Kill the passover—This lamb that was to be slain was typical of the Lamb without blemish that should be slain for the sins of all the men of the earth. The blood of this lamb upon the doorpost secured the house upon which it was found when God visited the land with the death angel. It will also be so in the day of judgment that the death angel will pass over the soul that has received the atoning blood of Jesus.

THE ONLY ESCAPE—Exodus 12:23—Lord will pass over—When God provides a way of escape, that

is the way we must take. His way is always right and is always best. Could not God have saved the firstborn of the Israelites without doing this? We suppose that He could, but had He done so, He would not have been able to do what His great mind knew was best. This method of escape provided for the children of Israel foreshadows our escape from sin through the blood of Jesus Christ, the Lamb without spot or blemish. He who refuses the blood of Jesus is lost indeed, and that forever. **Verse 24—Forever**—This was a command given to the Jews as a people, or nation, who were the people of God and entrusted with the laws of God. However, they ceased to be a nation, or people, peculiar to God with the death of the Lord Jesus on the cross. From that time on, the people of God were those who accepted Christ as their personal Savior.

REMEMBERING GOD—Exodus 12:27—Delivered our houses—From this the children of Israel from year to year would be made conscious of the love and providence of God and give Him honor and praise. (It is very easy to get busy with the affairs of life and forget the Giver of life. It is a sad day when men forget God. We are told in Psalm 9:17 that the wicked shall be turned into hell and all nations that forget God.)

THE DEATH ANGEL VISITS—Exodus 12:29—The Lord smote—When God strikes, who is it who can resist? In the very dead of night the angel struck, visiting every house that didn't have the blood applied, whether it was of Israel or of Egypt. If an Egyptian had believed, he would have escaped; but, without doubt, every Egyptian was asleep when silently the angel who brought death visited. The catastrophe was very soon discovered, and Pharaoh rose up to weep.

UNIVERSAL VISITATION—Exodus 12:30—A great cry—It would seem that with the visit of the angel there was also a silent spiritual power that aroused the sleepers. Not a home was missed, but in every house there was the death of the firstborn. It does not pay to resist God or disbelieve Him. His Word is truth and will be carried out just as He has spoken.

PHARAOH RELENTS AGAIN—Exodus 12:31—Called ... by night—Without doubt, he did not let a day pass, but called yet that night. The death angel could pass over the whole of Egypt in less time than it would take to tell it; so, very shortly after midnight, the whole of Egypt was in mourning, and it was not necessary to tell Pharaoh the reason why. The source of his trouble, as he saw it, was Moses; and he was the only one who could help him; therefore, he called him at once and instructed him to take the children of Israel and go and worship the Lord.

A GREAT CHANGE OF HEART—Exodus 12:32—Be gone—At this moment Pharaoh did not want anything around that would even suggest the thoughts of Israel. The flocks and herds would have been of value to him, but he didn't desire them. The urgency now was to get rid of them.

Exodus 12:33—We ... dead men—There was now some fear of God and His people in the hearts of the Egyptians. They had no way of knowing what God might

do next if they further detained the people. Therefore, the one needful thing to do now was to get these people out of the land. This was the mind of Pharaoh and also the whole nation.

LEAVING IN HASTE—Exodus 12:34—Took their dough—So great was the haste that no time was to be had in baking the dough that was prepared. The time had arrived to be on the way, and everything was second to this. **Verse 35—Borrowed**—Pharaoh was to the point where he desired Moses to ask a blessing from heaven for him; therefore, the attitude of the Egyptians was somewhat benevolent toward the Israelites. It was a time when it would be easy to get the loan of some of their jewels, even clothing for the journey. **Verse 36—Spoiled the Egyptians**—Since it was God who commanded that the children of Israel receive such things from the Egyptians, the word "borrow" here can be better understood as "asking with no thought of return." The Israelites were entitled to such a small remuneration for the long and hard service they had given to the Egyptians.

CONCLUSION

The heart of a man that is deep in sin is very, very hard indeed, and it takes much to awaken it to the mercies and graces of God. How evident it is that we need to start early in the life of a child to teach it the ways of the truth of God. Error in the soul very soon callouses it against truth and light and, as in the case of Paul, when he was bent upon the destruction of the Christians, only the manifestation of a great power from heaven could change him in his course.

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

1. Why did the loss of the firstborn bring such pressure on the Egyptians?
2. Why did not this miracle convince Pharaoh of the sovereignty of God?
3. Of what was the paschal lamb a symbol?
4. Why do we not observe the feast of the passover today?
5. Why is it so hard to awaken men to the grace of God? †

POSTAGE RATES INCREASE AGAIN

THE UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE IMPLEMENTED A NEW WAVE OF INCREASES WHICH HIT OUR FOREIGN MAILING PARTICULARLY HARD. WE DON'T WANT TO CUT BACK OUR MAILINGS, RATHER WE HAVE A DESIRE TO SEND THE GOSPEL TO THE UTTERMOST PARTS OF THE WORLD. WE APPRECIATE THOSE INDIVIDUALS AND CONGREGATIONS WHO WILLING ASSIST US IN THIS ENDEAVOR. MAY GOD BLESS EACH ONE. PLEASE HELP US PRAY THAT THIS MESSENGER WILL CONTINUE TO BE SENT OUT UNTIL JESUS COMES. YOUR GIFT TO THIS MINISTRY IS TAX-DEDUCTIBLE.

THE HEART ESTABLISHED WITH GRACE

2022 Hagerstown Convention Message by Bro. Tim Crooks



IT IS GOOD to be in the house of the Lord. I'm looking forward to being in the services. We all have a part to do. I want to do my part, however small it may be. It's the highlight of our year to be here. What we're endeavoring to do and working for is the most important thing in the world.

This evening I want to call your attention to one of our verses in our theme. II Peter 3:18, but I'll read verse 17 also: "Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness. But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen." We'll go to Hebrews, chapter 13, verse 9: "Be not carried about with [adverse] and strange doctrines. For it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace; not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein." The title of the message is, "The Heart Established with Grace."

The scripture says "not with meats" which fadeth away, but as we look around in our world today, we see that people are establishing their lives with the things of the world. They're establishing their lives with things that fade away. Everything they have, they put into the things of the world. They have everything tied up in it. They establish their whole lives in it, then whenever something happens, like the recession we seem to be going into now, they panic. People start to pull their hair out, as it were. It won't be long before some will commit suicide. Why? Because they have their whole lives wrapped up in things that perish, things that are tangible, and things that fade away. But the writer of Hebrews says that it's good to have the heart established with grace. The scripture says, "But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

We have to grow in grace to establish our hearts. In the Bible, it speaks about some people who turned back because they received not a love for the truth. They didn't allow their hearts to be established with grace.

What is *grace*? It is "the free, unmerited favor of God." But I'll tell you, it's grace embodied with Jesus Christ. I believe a scripture says in John that Jesus spoke with grace and truth. "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth" (John 1:14). So if we have our hearts established with grace, we have our hearts established in Christ. In order to have our hearts established with grace, we have to be established in Christ. It takes some things to be established.

Jodie had a theme for our young people on a Wednesday night. It was, "The Wrong Reasons to Serve God."

There are a lot of people in the world serving Christ for the wrong reasons. Different young people stood up and gave their thoughts on the wrong reasons to serve Christ. One said, "I serve Christ because I want the blessings, so I don't focus on the struggles I have to go through." There are struggles and battles to go through, but when our hearts are established with Christ and with grace, we can go through those battles. We can be victorious because our hearts are established with grace. When people only serve God for the blessings, do you know what happens? When they come to the first battle, they don't get on their knees and pour out their hearts to God. They throw their hands up, and say, "I didn't sign up for this." They had a shallow experience. They received not a love for the truth, and their hearts were not established with grace. There are many blessings that come with serving God, but there are some battles. We will never win a victory if our hearts are not established. We have to have our hearts established with grace.

Paul said in I Corinthians, chapter 15, verse 10, "But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me." Paul had his heart established with grace. He said, "I am what I am by the grace of God." He said that the grace of God was not bestowed upon him in vain. It's because of salvation that he was who he was. It was not in vain. Paul labored—proving what was right—showing Christ that others would be established with grace and win the race. That's why we're here this afternoon so you can be victorious. But you have to have your heart established. You have to be established in the Word. Whenever we talk about being established with grace, that's what we're talking about. We have to be established in the Bible and in the truth. We have to be established in the Word so we're not shaken. At one time, Paul told them that they must not be tossed about with every wind of doctrine, but to be steadfast, established, and firm.

There are people who say, "Well, I am what I am," but they need to finish that scripture. A lot of sectarians say, "Well, I am what I am by the grace of God." They need to finish the scripture. Paul said, "His grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain." In other words, he applied it in his life. He didn't just use it as a saying or something he could just skirt over sin or over something else. Paul embodied that grace in his life. You can see it in the way he taught the people and wrote his letters. He showed love and grace to others. His heart was full of it. Our hearts have to be established with grace if we're going to be victorious. There's no way around it.

The writer of Proverbs said, “Keep thy heart with all diligence; [Why?] for out of it are the issues of life.” There’s another scripture that says, “Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.” It’s important to have our hearts established with grace so that we can watch our tongue and our attitude and be on fire for God. We can be a witness for Him. If we have our hearts established with grace, we can keep our hearts with all diligence. Why? Because we’ve put our hearts in the hands of God. We’re talking about having our hearts established with grace. This is very important.

Sanctification is a very important part of having a heart established with grace. If you haven’t been sanctified, you need to consider the benefits of sanctification. You need to consider the power, the strength that comes with sanctification by giving your all to God. God didn’t say it would always be easy, but it’s worth it all. When you have your heart established with grace, you’ll follow wherever He leads you. You’ll go wherever He says to go. You’ll do it because you want to please God. So we have to keep our hearts with all diligence.

You know that there are so many things going on in the world around us. We can get caught up in them. There are some things that are really good in the world, but I’m telling you, there are some things Christians have no business getting caught up in. It might be a good cause, but if you let your heart go after it, it won’t be long you’ll be slipping. Why? Because when you get in with the crowd, you want to do what the crowd does. Then you’ll be doing what Bro. Greg said this morning. You’ll start talking about this one and talking about that one. Instead of forgiving people, you’ll be hating them. Instead of forgetting about grudges and asking God to help you, you’ll be holding grudges. Why? Because we get caught up with the things of the world. That’s why we have to have our hearts established. We have to be established in the Word of God. Go deep in the Spirit. Go deep in the things of God. In that way, we won’t be shaken. Like I said, there are some good things in this world, but we can’t get caught up in them. This is not our home. We’re just passing through. I believe it was Abraham who said that they were just pilgrims and strangers on a journey. They looked for a better place. They looked for a better home. We’re on our way to heaven. But if we’re going to get there, we have to have our hearts established with grace. We have to grow in grace.

Why does the scripture say “grow in grace”? I’ll tell you why. Today you might feel like you’re on cloud nine, but tomorrow you might hit a battle. You’ll have to get on your knees and say, “Lord, I need help.” Do you know what? You’ll start to grow in grace. Paul said the Lord told him, “My grace is sufficient for thee.” That means Paul was growing in grace. Even though he was established, he was growing. That’s what we have to do—grow in grace. When we grow in grace, it will keep our hearts. We won’t be shaken about with every wind of doctrine.

I’m going to go to Acts, chapter 20, verse 32: “And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, ...” The only thing we can do is to commend one another to God and His grace. We have brothers and sisters who have trials and troubles. We can com-

mend them to God and to His grace. Why? Because His grace will establish us. Do you know what else it says? “... which is able to build you up.” It will build you up. When we commend one another to God, it will build us up. When we lift one another up to God, when we pray for one another, it builds us up. But there is something else it will do for those who are unsaved. It will give them an inheritance. The grace of God is able to give them an inheritance if they will call upon the Lord for salvation. He will give them an inheritance—an inheritance in the kingdom of God, and an inheritance with those that are sanctified.

Having a heart established with grace. Is your heart established with grace? Do you find things that bother you a lot and you just can’t seem to get over them? Do you tend to hold a grudge? Do you tend to get angry? Do you tend to let things work on you? Maybe you need to go a little deeper in grace. Maybe you need to dig a little deeper. Maybe you need to grow a little deeper in grace. Maybe you need to get a little more of the Word of God in your heart. We need love for one another in our hearts.

There have been some trying times we’re living in. We’ve faced troubles we’ve never faced before. God only knows what we’ll face tomorrow. If our hearts are not established with grace, we’re liable to fall. I’m telling you, it’s a possibility. None of us are exempt from backsliding. That’s why the writer of Hebrews admonished us to have our hearts established with grace. There are things that have happened. Some of us were talking the other day about the people we lost during the pandemic. We weren’t talking about people that died. We were speaking of those who went back on the Lord. I’m sure other congregations have lost some, too. We all have. We’ve lost those. Why? Because they were not established, and whenever the battle came, and the fire became hot, they couldn’t take it. But when we have our hearts established with grace, we can face the battles.

How is your heart this afternoon? I’m going to leave you with that question. Is your heart established? Do you feel like you could go a little deeper in the things of God? You know, we should always take the opportunity to examine ourselves. I examine myself. With every message that is being preached, I’m saying, “Lord, show me what I need.” Sometimes when I get up to preach, the Lord shows me what I need. There are preachers who stand up and say, “Lord, I don’t know if I can preach that because I need it,” but He gives us the grace to do it.

If you feel like you could go deeper in the things of God, go deeper. Don’t say, “Well, I’ll tend to it tomorrow. I’ll tend to it later on. I’ll talk to my pastor when I get home.” No! Now is the time to talk to God.

Brethren, have your heart established with grace. God bless you. †

OUT OF BOX 88

THANKS FOR THE WAY OF TRUTH MAGAZINES. I READ THEM, READ THEM AGAIN, AND SAVE THEM. THEY HAVE MEANT SO MUCH TO ME. I JUST CAN'T SAY ENOUGH ABOUT THEM. I ENJOY READING THEM EVERY DAY. THAT'S HOW I START MY DAY.

—M. C., ALABAMA

THE CHILDREN'S CORNER



HIDING THE LIGHT

A Bible Lesson by Sis. Rebecca Bland

"Time for bed," my mother said. "Your sisters went upstairs half an hour ago. They're probably asleep by now."

I looked at the clock. It was 9:30, but I wasn't sleepy. The book I was reading was so interesting, I felt I could read for another couple of hours. But I knew better than to argue with my mother, or to ask for more time to read. Now that I was eleven years old, I was allowed to stay up a little later than my younger sisters, but when my mother said it was time for bed, that's what she meant.

I closed my book and said good night to my parents. I knew they would stay up a little longer; they always had things to do to get ready for the next day. Slowly, I climbed the stairs to the bedroom I shared with my three younger sisters—Twila, Wilma, and Esther. There was no need to tiptoe. All three of the girls were fast asleep. I undressed and put on my nightgown. I could hear my mother and father still talking downstairs.

I'll just sit here on the edge of the bed and finish the chapter I was reading before I turn out the light, I said to myself. I found the page where I had left off reading, and soon I was engrossed in my book once more. The chapter ended in suspense. I could hardly wait to see what would happen next in the story. *I wish I could stay up just a little longer and keep reading,* I thought.

My parents would soon be coming upstairs. I could shut our bedroom door and keep on reading, but I knew they would see light coming from under the door. Suddenly, I had an idea. *I'll push a rug up against the crack under the door! The rug will block the light, and my parents will never know I haven't gone to bed!*

Excitedly, I jumped up and grabbed the rug from the floor beside my bed. I rolled it up and placed it carefully against the crack under the bedroom door, making sure that the entire length of the crack was covered.

I was coming to the end of the next chapter when I heard my parents' footsteps on the stairs. I held my breath as they reached the top of the steps and entered their room. I exhaled with relief when I heard their door close. *They didn't see my light!* I said to myself with a smile.

But my triumph was short-lived. A moment later, I heard my parents' door open. There was the sound of quick footsteps, and my bedroom door was swept open. My mother stood in the doorway, a look of indignation on her face.

"What in the world is going on?" she demanded.

My stomach twisted, and I could feel my face getting hot. I had been caught.

"And what is this rug doing over here?" my mother continued. She slid the rolled-up rug away from the door with her foot.

"I didn't want you to see the light coming out from under my door," I admitted.

"Well, light is a pretty hard thing to hide," said my mother. She gestured toward my bedroom window that faced out toward the big maple tree in the backyard. "We have a window in our room, too," she reminded me. "Through our window, I could see the light from your room shining on the tree."

I looked down at the book in my hands. The few minutes of stolen pleasure had not been worth the misery I felt in my heart. Not only had I disobeyed my mother, but I had also tried to deceive her.

In sorrow I listened as she reproved me for my actions. I knew I deserved the punishment she gave me—no pleasure reading for a week.

This month's wise saying comes from Proverbs 29:15, which says, "The rod and reproof give wisdom: but a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame." A "reproof" is a statement that lets us know we are at fault. It lets us know that we have done wrong and we need to correct our actions.

When I did wrong, my parents reproved me. They reproved me sternly, but in love. I knew that they corrected me for my own good. My parents' reproofs made me wiser. They helped me become a better person.

The second part of Proverbs 29:15 says that "a child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame." If you have parents who try to teach you the right way to live, be grateful. If you listen to their words of wisdom and obey them, you can avoid mistakes that would bring shame and disappointment—not only to you, but to your family.

II Timothy 3:16 tells us that "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." The Word of God teaches us the way to live. If we do wrong, it will reprove us. When we are reproved, the only wise thing for us to do is to correct our actions so we may live pleasing to God.

Activity

The Bible tells us that "the rod and reproof give wisdom." What other things give wisdom, according to the Bible? Unscramble the words below to find out.

1. Het rafe fo het Odlr (Job 28:28)
2. Het hotmu fo het soghuerit (Psalm 37:30)
3. Chapnergi dna hangcite (Colossians 1:28)
4. Het dorb fo Strich (Colossians 3:16)

Answers to Last Month's Activity

1. **Elijah** prayed fire down from heaven as a witness to the prophets of Baal.
2. **Daniel** was thrown into a den of lions because he prayed to God.
3. **Hannah** prayed that God would give her a son, and promised to give him back to God.
4. **Elisha** prayed that a Shunammite woman's son would be restored to life.
5. **Peter** saw a vision from heaven as he prayed on the housetop. †



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



QUESTION: Can a sanctified person backslide?

ANSWER: Adam and Eve were created in the image of God—pure and holy—and they lost spiritual life, for God told them in the day that they ate of the fruit of the tree in the midst of the garden they would “die.” They ate, they died. If they could lose spiritual life, then a saved and sanctified person can.

The idea that a person can commit *known* sin and still be a Christian is sectarian. It is not taught in the holy Scriptures. “When I shall say to the righteous, that he shall surely live; if he trust to his own righteousness, and commit iniquity, all his righteousnesses shall not be remembered; but for his iniquity that he hath committed, he shall die for it.”

QUESTION: In I John 5:8, it says there are three witnesses: the Spirit, the water and the blood. Can you please explain what is meant by these three witnesses?

ANSWER: We understand from verse nine that the “witness” is in reference to Jesus Christ being the Son of God. This is something John strongly contends for in this Epistle, thus one witness is the Spirit. Water is used at times to represent the Word, but if we take this as baptism it would symbolize the death to sin and being resurrected to life in Christ. The blood, of course, is what makes regeneration and sanctification possible. So, if Jesus Christ is not the Son of God, you have no Savior and no salvation.

Wesley commenting on this verse said, “All these harmoniously agree in the same testimony, that Jesus Christ is the Divine, the complete, the only Saviour of the world.”

QUESTION: The religious world today talks a lot about legalism. What is the true understanding of legalism?

ANSWER: Theologically, it means, “the doctrine of salvation by good works.”—*Webster*.

Legalism is self-centered! We see this in Luke 18:9-14 where Jesus tells about two men who went to the temple to pray. One was boastful about *what he did*.

It emphasizes the external to the neglect of the heart. We see this in Matthew 23:5, 6: “But all their works they do for to be seen of men: they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments. And love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues.”

It makes things other than God absolute. We see this in Mark 7:5-9, where Jesus told the Pharisees and scribes that Isaiah described them: “This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.”

Legalism is insensitive to human need. An example: “And he [Jesus] entered again into the synagogue; and there was a man there which had a withered hand. And they watched him, whether he would heal him on the sabbath day; that they might accuse him” (Mark 3:1, 2).

The book of Galatians makes it very clear that salvation is not of works, it is not by just observing certain laws; the rich young man that came running to Jesus (Luke 18) did that! Salvation is by grace and grace alone.

The mistake that so many who cry “legalism” make when the standard of God’s Word is preached is, they seem to think that the New Covenant has no laws. When Christ sets us free, He sets us free from obeying the Word of God, or that we are free to set our own standard, that no one has a right to tell us how we are to live. The freedom that Christ gives is being set free from sin and Satan so we can obey the Word!

We are not only saved by grace, but grace teaches us some things! “For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world” (Titus 2:11, 12). “Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven” (Matthew 7:21). “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God” (Matthew 4:4). “Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves” (James 1:22).

QUESTION: What is the meaning of worship? What is the act of worship? Is singing only a worship?

ANSWER: In answer to these questions, I would like to quote a short portion of a sermon I preached a few years ago.

“Worship—The performance of devotional acts in honor of God or deity; especially, the act of paying divine honors to the Supreme Being; the reverence and homage paid Him in religious exercise, consisting in adoration, confession, prayer, thanksgiving, and the like.’ Now the word *adoration* means ‘the act of paying honors to a divine being; the worship paid to God. Adoration consists in external homage, accompanied by the highest reverence. It is used for the act of praying, or proffering requests or thanksgiving to the Supreme Being.’ A further definition of *worship* is ‘submissive respect; unbounded admiration; loving or admiring devotion.’ *Admiration* means ‘wonder mingled with pleasing emotions, approval, esteem, love or veneration.’ Further meaning of *worship* is ‘to reverence with supreme respect, unbounded admiration, to honor with extravagant love and extreme submission.’”

Singing can be a part of worship, depending on what kind of singing it is. Singing songs of truth in the Spirit would be the right kind. †

THE POETRY PAGE

LET US PRAISE HIM

F. W. Davis

Let us praise Him for His mercy,
For His love and matchless grace,
For our hope of life eternal,
When we'll see Him face to face.
Let us praise Him for salvation
Every moment of the day,
For the glory of His presence
That He sends across our way.

Give Him glory, give Him honor,
For He is our King of kings!
We can trust Him every moment—
Oh, what joy His presence brings!
Let us praise Him here while living
In this world of sin and strife,
Till the world can see the Master,
In our constant daily life!

GOD'S WAY

Horatius Bonar

Thy way, not mine, O Lord!
However dark it be;
Lead me by Thine own hand,
Choose out the path for me.

Smooth let it be, or rough,
It will be still the best;
Winding or straight, it matters not,
It leads me to Thy rest.

I dare not choose my lot,
I would not, if I might;
Choose Thou for me, O God!
So shall I walk aright.

The kingdom that I seek
Is Thine; so let the way
That leads to it be Thine;
Else I must surely stray.

Take Thou my cup, and it
With joy or sorrow fill,
As best to Thee may seem;
Choose Thou my good or ill.

THROUGH FAITH

E. Margaret Clarkson

Through faith we understand
The things we cannot know—
The hidden pattern God has planned,
And why each thread is so;
We trace life's vast design
And lose His golden strand,
But when our wills with His entwine
Through faith we understand.

Through faith we understand
What to our sight is dim,
And still Love's sweet, all-knowing hand
Leads those who trust in Him.
Ours not to know the way,
But bow to His command;
And when our child-like hearts obey,
Through faith we understand.

IN THE QUIET OF THE MORNING

Alice H. Mortenson

In the quiet of the morning,
Oh, how sweet it is to come
Just to talk a bit with Jesus
Ere the crowding duties come.

Just to kneel there for a moment
With your head upon His breast,
All your problems laid before Him,
Every human need confessed.

Oh, the loving strength that surges
From His heart to yours all day;
Like a bright and shining armor,
Just because you knelt to pray!

THE SHINING PATH

Olivia C. Campbell

The pathway of the just shall gain
New luster day by day
Shall shine more bright with faith and love,
Eternal things that stay,
Not like the trees that shed their leaves
When summer days are past,
But like eternal evergreens,
Their souls shall grow and last. †



Greetings,
This month's article is written by Sis. Ann Davis from the Essex, Maryland, congregation. She has a special burden for young people and has written an ECHO series in the past with encouragement for them. During our convention in July, she shared one of these articles with the young people at a fireside chat. We trust her thoughts will be a blessing to you.
Blessings,
Bro. Doug

CHOOSE TO BE A PEPPER

By Sis. Ann Davis

SOME CHRISTIANS are like *tofu*—they blend so well with the world that they lose their identity as Christians. Recently I heard a vegetarian talking about a recipe in which he used tofu, and he said it tasted just like chicken. Tofu is actually bean curd, but the health conscious love its quality of absorbing the flavor of whatever it is cooked with. Vegans use it to replace a meat in recipes that call for meat. It is a very good source of protein. It can also be used in dessert dishes. It will absorb the flavor of fruit or sugar. It can even substitute as a cheese. So you see, it is a very adaptable recipe ingredient.



Adaptability may be a good quality for a food ingredient, but as a Christian, the Bible teaches us that we are to be different than the world around us. Romans 12:2, "And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."

We should be readily identified as Christians, no matter where we are found. I thought about the little hot pepper. You can drop one of those little babies into a pot of anything you are cooking, and you will know that it is there. You can put it in whole or chop it into nearly invisible pieces, but you cannot mask the flavor. Whatever mixture you add it to, that recipe will feel the effects. It will be changed by the very presence of one little pepper. You can cook it all day long, and if your bowl happens to be the one that gets the pod, and you pick it up and take a bite, you know exactly what was responsible for flavoring the whole pot. You will still get the full spirit of the pepper. You will start reaching for your water glass, and those around you will know that you have come in contact with "the one that just didn't blend in with the crowd."

It is inevitable. We have to live in this wicked world. The "little house on the prairie" days are past. Jesus

Himself prayed for us in John 17:15, "I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil." Jesus saw the plight of His disciples then, and I am sure that His prayer was for us also. Our battles are different. It is a whole new "pot of stew," but the commission is still the same: "Keep them from the world."

"Tofu Christians" are delivering no message of the gospel to the world. If you take on their same attitudes, work habits, and lack of respect for authority, they will not see Jesus in you.

If they can talk any kind of language in your presence, tell you their dirty jokes, make suggestive comments to you without feeling guilty, then you have blended into their world. Don't be afraid to be a "pepper"!

"Ye are the salt of the earth," and for this lesson you are also the pepper. The world is looking for flavor. *Flavor* means, "a characteristic taste." Tofu takes on the flavor of whatever it touches. As Christians, we must have a distinct flavor to our lives that lets the world know that we have been with Christ.

Most kitchens have a shelf or rack of spices. Recipes often have a name that describes the flavor—"herb roast chicken" or "spicy pumpkin pie."

Restaurants mention flavor on their menus. Flavor is important.

And that is the role of the pepper. The world has seen just about everything in the past fifty years. It has seen hippies, Goths, freaks, weirdos of every kind. How many true Christians does your circle of acquaintances see in a week? Not that many when you consider your whole scope of life. I'm not just talking about your close friends, but everyone you come in contact with at school, work, the grocery store, or wherever you go throughout your week.

Now let's drop that little pod of pepper into their pot for flavor and you might just be surprised how they react. I'm not talking about doing it in an obnoxious way. The pepper is just there and the other ingredients are enhanced by its presence. Unlike the tofu, the pepper gives off its flavor but does not absorb the other flavors. The chicken or beef flavor says to the tofu, "Pretend you are chicken or beef," and the tofu takes up their flavor.

They say the same thing to the pepper. The pepper says, "Why would I want to be a chicken or a beef cube? I'm a pepper." The Christian is in the world but not of the world. They enhance the flavor of the world. The world does not flavor the Christian.

Our friends have seen many professed Christians who just blend in with whatever the crowd is doing. It may surprise them to meet someone who is different, someone who has a distinct flavor of Christianity, someone who is Christlike. It may be refreshing to them to be able to say, "Why are you different?" and get a little bit of flavor rather than a bland blending of ways with themselves. Dare to be who you are. Stand for what you believe, and don't be influenced by everything that is going on around you.

The pepper may hear a comment or two. "Look at the tofu. He can be a carrot, an onion, or beef. I don't know why you just have to be a pepper."

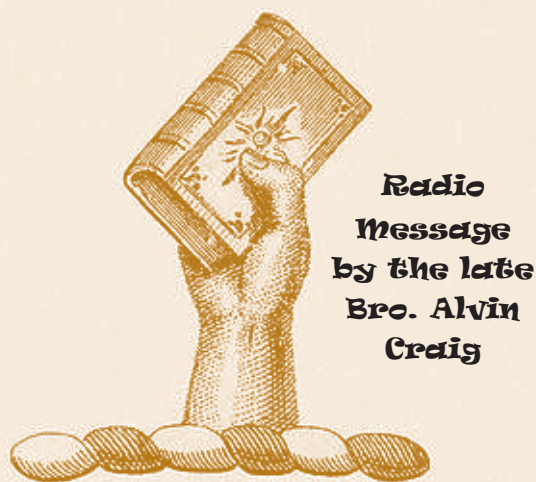
“That’s okay. I like what I am. I’m a pepper. I don’t mind sharing my flavor with whomever will accept it, but I don’t want to be tainted by any of the flavors of your stew.”

You could take the tofu out of the stew and the stew would be smaller, but it would taste no different. If you take the pepper out of the stew, it will still be a big stew, but it would be missing something noticeable.

We have no choice but to go out and be part of the world. We work, shop, go to school, live and conduct business in the world, but we have a choice whether we absorb its flavor or share our zest with them.

Every choice has an outcome. In this case, you are choosing to become a nameless part of a big worldly stew or distinct flavor that God can use. Choose to be a pepper! †

The Latter End Is Worse Than the Beginning



Radio
Message
by the late
Bro. Alvin
Craig

UR SUBJECT for today’s broadcast is, “The Latter End Is Worse Than the Beginning.” Our text of scripture is II Peter, chapter 2, verses 19-22: “While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage. For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.”

Today’s lesson will deal with backsliding. Some admit that people in the Old Testament times backslid

but not in the New Testament, so I will deal primarily with what we find in the New Testament scriptures in regard to this subject. Now this lesson is not just to show that people can backslide, but I trust we can give some warning against doing so and help souls to be determined not to do so.

We’ll begin with Matthew, chapter 24, verses 11 and 12, where Jesus said, “Many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.” And then we read in Revelation, chapter 2, verses 4 and 5, in Christ’s first letter which was addressed to the church at Ephesus, “Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works.”

We notice from those passages of scriptures that I have read, that some at least, had allowed their love to wax cold which means that they simply no longer loved the truth and no longer loved God. They had allowed their love to wax cold. In the second passage of scripture I read, Jesus said to the church at Ephesus that they had left their first love. Now He didn’t say they had lost it. He said they had *left* it. They had it, and they walked off, as it were, and left it. So whenever a person allows his love to wax cold, and he leaves his first love, he no longer is a servant of God. He no longer loves God with his heart, soul, mind, and strength. He has left that and has taken up something else. Something else has filled its place. There’s no void there. If we leave the love of God and let it slip out of our hearts, then our affections will be centered upon something else.

Those people that Jesus spoke of in Matthew 24, and Revelation 2, allowed their love to wax cold, and then they had left their first love. Not only had they left their first love, but Jesus told them that they had fallen. He said to them, “Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works.” You could not fall from grace unless you had grace. You could not fall from an experience of salvation unless you had one.

Jesus said, “No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God” (Luke 9:62). What is Jesus talking about? He’s talking about a person who had become a Christian and had started in the Christian race, lived for the Lord for some time, and then looked back.

Jesus also said, “Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away” (John 15:2). *To be in Christ* is to be a Christian. Paul said, “Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new” (II Corinthians 5:17). Here in John 15, Jesus is teaching He is the Vine and we are the branches. He said if we do not bear fruit, He will take us away. “Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.” In other words, that branch will be broken off from the Vine. The source of life comes from the Vine, and to be broken off from the Vine is to be broken off from the source of life, and the branch is bound to die. Again, Jesus said, “Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh

away.” We not only are to be Christians, but fruit-bearing Christians. Jesus Christ said that if we’re not fruit-bearing Christians, He will take us away. He knew whereof He spoke.

I know people can deny the truth and turn their backs on truth, but that doesn’t change it. Suppose some do not believe? Does that make void the Word of God? Absolutely not! The Bible says, “Let God be true, but every man a liar.” So “No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God” and “Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away.” Someone engaged in the work of the Lord who turns his back on the things of God and returns to the world is certainly not fit for the kingdom of God.

“Remember Lot’s wife,” Jesus said. What’s the story about Lot’s wife? Well, Lot and his wife were living in Sodom, a very wicked place. There were two angels that came to Sodom and started to spend the night with Lot, his wife, and two virgin daughters. They told Lot that he must get out of the city because God was going to destroy it. First of all, Lot went to his married daughter’s home and tried to convince his sons-in-law to join them in leaving the city. They mocked Lot and made fun of him. The two angels took ahold of their hands and led them out. The angels also told Lot, his wife, and daughters, to not look back, but as they got out of the city and started on their way, Mrs. Lot looked back, and the Bible says she turned into a pillar of salt. Why did Jesus tell us to “remember Lot’s wife”? It is possible for us to look back. Yes, it is possible for us to look back and to fail of the grace of God.

The apostle Paul, in his writings to the church in Galatia, said, “I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ” (Galatians 1:6, 7). Beloved, Paul said that these had been in the gospel, embraced the gospel, received Christ, but he said, “I marvel that ye are so soon removed [turned away] from the true gospel to another gospel which is not really another gospel.”

We read later on in Galatians, chapter 4, verse 9, “After that ye have known God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?” Notice what the apostle Paul said. He said they knew God, they were walking with God, and were serving Him, but they had been delivered from the bondage of sin to be able to do that. But Paul said, “After that ye have known God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?” Notice the word *again*. They were in bondage, then they received Christ, and were delivered from bondage, but now having partaken of the things of God, they turned away from it *again* to the weak and beggarly elements, and returned to the bondage they were once delivered from. If Paul was not talking about people having been delivered from sin and becoming a Christian, and turning away from Christ and returning to a life of sin, then I don’t understand what he’s saying. But the Scriptures speak clearly that these people did turn away from the Lord and returned to the bondage of sin.

Paul said, “Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron” (I Timothy 4:1, 2). Now you have to be in the faith before you can depart from it. If you’ve never been in the United States, then you cannot depart from the United States. You have to be in a place before you can depart from it. The Spirit of God was speaking through Paul, saying, “Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith ...” They were in it, but they departed from it. Do you want me to believe that they were still Christians? Of course not. So Paul said that they departed from the faith, “... giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy [Think of that! Religious people speaking lies in hypocrisy after they had departed from the faith.]; having their conscience seared with a hot iron.”

We also read in Revelation the last letter Christ dictated to John: “And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.” If a person is in Christ, and figuratively speaking he is spued out, he is no longer in Christ.

Laodicea was a rather wealthy city and had a good economy. The congregation there was getting along quite well in material things. They said, “Well, we are rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing.” That was their estimation of themselves, but Jesus said to them, “Thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.” What a state they were in! They did not realize it. They had left the love of God and returned to a form of godliness and were denying the power thereof, thinking that their material possessions were indicative of spirituality. Beloved, that’s not true. You can be rich and not be a Christian. Just because you have some material things does not mean that you are spiritual. Some of the most spiritual people you’ll find are some of the poorest in material things.

Again, Christ said to the Laodicean congregation, “Because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.” Christ also said to them, “I counsel thee to buy of me gold [means truth] tried in the fire.” Christ was urging them to buy the truth and get rid of their mere form of godliness. You are not in Christ if you have been spued out. You have lost the grace of God out of your heart. You have turned away from Christ and left your experience of salvation and returned to the world.

Hebrews 2:1, “Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we [drift away from them].” So it is possible to drift away from the truth. You don’t have to do anything to drift, but if you’re going to go with God, you have to get those oars out of the boat and go to work. “Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip.” The apostle James said, “But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves” (James 1:22).

The apostle Paul understood that it was possible for a person to backslide. This is what he said: "But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway" (I Corinthians 9:27). Paul realized that even though he was an apostle preaching the gospel, it was possible to lose out with God. So he said, "I keep my heart and my life subject to Jesus Christ, lest I become a castaway and lose my salvation." We are told in Hebrews 3:12, "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God." So it is possible for people to depart.

Let us return to our text: "For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them" (II Peter 2:20, 21).

How could any state be worse than your sinful state if you cannot backslide? But Paul taught here that it is possible to backslide, and the second state is worse than the first.

Note what Peter also said: "We have been saved from sin through the Lord Jesus, we have come to a knowledge of truth, we are living a righteous life, but if we turn from that and return again to the bondage of sin, our second state is worse than the first." If you cannot backslide, how could any state be worse than a life of sin?

Beloved, the Word of God is clear on this point, and we need to guard against it so that we can make sure that we do not leave our God, but that we be faithful and true to the end, for those that endure to the end, the same shall be saved. ✠

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Bro. David Goble, Host Pastor

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Bro. Darrell Sanford, Host Pastor

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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