

The Way of Truth



Vol. 81

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

No. 6

Why I Believe in God

See page 6

August 2023

TWO WORKS OF GRACE

“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.”—Romans 5:1, 2.

VERY CLEARLY declared in the above portion of scripture is the existence of two works of grace in the soul of man. First, we can be justified by faith, by which we are given access to enter into a second grace wherein we receive power to stand. In this editorial, I want to comment on the first work. Next month, Lord willing, I want to deal with the second blessing offered to humanity. It is sad that multitudes of people don't know the simplest truths of the Bible—even how to be saved and find peace with God. It is through our Lord Jesus Christ alone that man can be restored to a place of reconciliation with his maker. Faith in the Lord justifies an individual. This first work of grace declared by Paul is referred to as justification, which means “the action of making righteous or innocent in the sight of God.”

There is no denial that the sin of Adam altered the relation in which our race stood to God. After Adam's sin, he was separated from God, and the entire human race inherited the nature of sin. This depraved nature (also referred to as the carnal nature or native depravity) is responsible for the fact that sin is universal. Romans 5:12 declares, “Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.”

God created man upright, intelligent, and in His own image. Therefore man, though his nature is depraved by Adam's fall, is responsible for his decisions and his transgressions. Man is a free moral agent.

We cannot justify ourselves in sin. Luke 16:15, “And he said unto them, Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God.” No human can justify us either.

But God has a remedy for the sin problem! Isaiah 53:11, “He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities.”

In the New Testament, Romans 5:16-18 says, “And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift: for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification. For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ. Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.”

There was a price paid for our justification! Romans 4:25 proclaims that Jesus “was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.”

There are several things that happen in the first work of grace (justification). When an individual by faith repents with godly sorrow, he experiences forgiveness, becoming innocent. His sins are all washed away by the blood of the Lamb! By that I mean that Jesus' death on the cross paid the price for our redemption, enabling God to forgive us.

Something else happens—the soul is regenerated, or born again, imparting spiritual life to the soul that was dead in trespasses and sins.

Also, the justified soul has his name written in heaven, according to Psalm 87:5, 6, “And of Zion it shall be said, This and that man was born in her: and the highest himself shall establish her. The Lord shall count, when he writeth up the people, that this man was born there.”

The justified man becomes a son of God! “Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.” —I John 3:1.

So, how does one become justified? What do you have to do? One must make a decision and respond to conviction. Conviction is when your heart is drawn to God by the visitation of the Holy Spirit. John 6:44 says, “No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day.” I believe everyone is convicted at some point in his life. John 12:32, “And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me.” Until you respond and yield yourself to God, you will not be saved! The apostle Paul resisted conviction for a long time. The Bible refers to him as “kicking against the pricks.” Finally, on the road to Damascus, Paul yielded to the call of God and was justified!

One must acknowledge his sins. He must make confession to Christ and not man. I John 1:9 says plainly, “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” Romans 10:9 supports this by saying, “That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.”

To be justified, a man must repent, which means “showing remorse or contrition for past conduct.” In II Corinthians 7:10 the Bible declares, “For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death.” Without genuine sorrow for the sins committed, one cannot be justified.

Along with repentance, one must turn his back on the old life of sin. Isaiah 55:7, “Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.” There must be a real change in the life of the justified

ABOUT THE COVER

On our front is a gripping shot of Kilauea Volcano, a shield volcano located on the eastern slope of Mauna Loa Volcano on the Island of Hawaii. The volcano is considered to be in the shield-building stage of Hawaiian volcanism. It displays the natural power of our God!

THE WAY OF TRUTH

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

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person. Without this transformation, the profession is empty. II Corinthians 5:17, "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." This is a realm much of professed religion has failed to emphasize. The Bible is very clear on this point. "Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil" (Isaiah 1:16).

Believing on the Lord Jesus Christ is necessary. Acts 4:12 states plainly, "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." Galatians 3:22 explains it deeper, "But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe." This point is borne out in the account we find in Acts 16 when the jailer cried out, "What must I do to be saved?" And they responded, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house." Also, when the eunuch in Acts 8 said, "See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?" And Philip said, "If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest." And he answered and said, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." And Philip baptized him!

Jesus taught us that to be justified we must forgive others. Matthew 6:14, 15, "For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." If we hold malice in our hearts and refuse to forgive others we cannot be justified. It is not optional! Stephen's example of forgiveness toward the crowd that stoned him led to Saul's conversion!

Finally, let me point out some benefits to being justified. As our text says, it offers us access to grace wherein we stand—I'll have more to say about that next month.

It provides us with peace with God—"And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:7).

We receive joy unspeakable—"Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory" (I Peter 1:8).

We experience abundant life—"The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly" (John 10:10).

We have power to live holy—"He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name" (John 1:11, 12).

Finally, we receive the promise of heaven—"Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (John 14:1-3). †

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THE CHILDREN'S CORNER



A GUIDE IN THE DARK

A Bible Lesson by Sis. Rebecca Bland

“Watch this!” said my father.

I sat up straight and held onto the back of the front seat of the car. My two younger sisters, Twila and Wilma, grabbed my arms and pulled themselves up so they could see better. We peeked around my mother’s head, wondering what was about to happen. Although I was only eight years old, experience had already taught me that my father’s idea of “fun” could involve some hair-raising excitement.

My sisters and I stared ahead through the windshield, waiting to see what our father would do. It was nighttime, and ours was the only car on the little country road. On both sides of it were thick trees. I shivered as I looked out at the woods. The trees looked mysterious and a little frightening now that the sun had gone down.

“Watch this!” said my father again.

As he spoke, the road ahead disappeared. The trees on both sides of the road disappeared. My sisters and I screamed, and my mother called out in alarm. It took us a few moments to realize what had happened—my father had switched off the headlights of the car.

My father laughed. “This is how things would look if we had no headlights,” he said. He drove slowly along in the pitch dark. It was a moonless night, making it almost impossible to see more than a few feet ahead. I pictured the murky woods closing in on all sides. I missed the comforting beams of our car’s headlights, brightening the way ahead.

“All right, now,” said my mother. “I think we have experienced the dark long enough.”

My father chuckled and switched on the headlights again. I breathed a sigh of relief.

“Did I ever tell you about the time we lost our headlights?” asked my father.

“No!” I said to him, “We never heard that story!”

“Did it happen when you were little like us?” asked Twila.

“Yes,” said my father. “It happened when I was a young boy.”

“Tell us,” said Wilma. “Please?”

“Well,” said Dad, “it was a night that was as dark as this one. We had just dropped off my grandma and grandpa at their house. They didn’t own a car, and so we took them home from church after nearly every service.”

“Did this happen out in Illinois where you grew up?” I asked.

“Yes, this happened in Illinois,” said my father. He paused to find his place in the story. “We had just dropped them off,” he repeated, “when suddenly the headlights of our car went dark. My mother, who was driving, turned the headlight switch on and off, on and off, hoping to persuade the lights to come back on. But they didn’t.

“My grandparents hadn’t let themselves into their house yet, and so my grandpa came back to our car to see what was the matter.

“‘How are you going to make it to your house in the dark?’” he asked after he had become acquainted with our problem. “You have a good mile and a half to drive!”

“‘I’m not sure,’ said my mother. ‘Maybe we should leave the car here overnight and walk home. We can get the headlights fixed in the morning.’”

“‘But it’s so far for you all to walk,’ said Grandpa. ‘And it’s getting late.’ He stopped to think. ‘Tell you what,’ he said after a moment. He looked down at the church suit he was wearing. It was a light beige color—almost white. ‘If I were to walk in front of you, this light-colored suit would help you see me well enough to stay on the road and get home safely.’”

“‘I’d hate to have you walk all that way!’” said my mother. “‘And how would you get back home? I couldn’t drive you.’”

“‘I’ll walk back home,’ said Grandpa. ‘It will do me good.’”

“Did it work?” I asked. “Could you see your grandpa on the dark road?”

“Sure, it worked!” said my father. He smiled at the memory. “You know,” he said, “when we first started off down the street, following Grandpa, we weren’t sure if it was even necessary for him to walk in front of us. ‘I can see just fine to drive,’ said my mother. ‘Maybe we should tell Grandpa he can turn around and go back home.’”

“‘Wait until we get through town and out on the prairie road,’ my father answered her. ‘You’ll see how dark it really is.’”

“My father was right. The farther we got from town, the darker the night seemed to be. Soon, the only thing we could see was my grandfather’s form walking ahead of us in his white suit. We followed him all the way to our house. Without his guidance, we couldn’t have made it home.”

“That was nice of your grandpa to do,” said my sister, Twila.

“Yes,” agreed my father. “Grandpa was a dear old man.” He paused, remembering. “He was always as good as could be to Grandma ... and to us.”

I looked out the window of the car at the dark woods that no longer seemed menacing, now that the headlights of our car had been switched on again. I thought about my father’s grandfather and how willing he was to walk such a long way in order to guide his family safely through the dark night.

Even today, when I drive along a dark country road, I sometimes imagine my great-grandfather walking up ahead, his white suit lighting the way. And I think about how I should make sure I am always lighting the way for others who follow me. I don’t mean by walking an

actual road in front of an actual car. What I mean is that I want my life to be a guide for others. I want to live a shining life that reflects the love of Jesus.

Our wise saying this month comes from Proverbs 4:18 which says, "But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." Even a child can be a "just" or righteous person, walking a pathway that shines with faith, love, and obedience—a pathway that leads others to Jesus.

Activity

Below are some phrases about light that come from the Bible. Each phrase begins with one of the 5 letters in the word LIGHT. See if you can think of the missing words as well as the location of each scripture verse.

L____ your light so ____ before men.

(Location: _____)

I am the light of the ____.

(Location: _____)

G____ is light, and in Him is no ____ at all. (Location: _____)

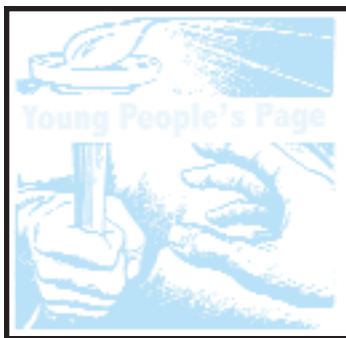
H____ (Jesus) is in the light. (Location: _____)

Truly the light is ____.

(Location: _____)

Answers to Last Month's Activity

1. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of **knowledge**" (Proverbs 1:7).
2. "The fear of the Lord is to hate **evil**" (Proverbs 8:13).
3. "The fear of the Lord prolongeth **days**" (Proverbs 10:27).
4. "The fear of the Lord is strong **confidence**" (Proverbs 14:26).
5. "The fear of the Lord is a fountain of **life**" (Proverbs 14:27). †



Greetings!

When someone speaks a promise, we tend to have trust and confidence in what was said will be true. However, people may have the best intentions and greatest desire to follow through and still let us down. But there is One who never fails. We can always count on God's promises

to prove true. Down through the ages of time, we can see His faithfulness and know even into eternity we can hold onto His unchanging promises. In II Peter 1:4 we read, "Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust."

May we each be encouraged to study God's Word to find His promises and then claim them in our lives.

Blessings,

Bro. Doug Shenberger

THE PROMISES OF GOD

By Bro. Andrew Richards

THE PROMISES of God are very important to a Christian. They offer assurance in hard times, strength during battles, and grace to the unsaved. Whether I use them to their greatest extent or not, it is up to me, and you!

What are some of the promises of God? Matthew 6:31-34 says that we shouldn't worry about what to eat or drink, but to seek first the kingdom of God, and all those things would be taken care of. I believe we still need to work and prepare for life, and not just rely on God to give us all our material needs, but He will still provide all we need to still serve Him. Just like Paul and Silas in the jail, He did not give them all the luxuries they may have wanted, but He still sustained them.



Another promise is that He would make a way for us to escape temptation (I Corinthians 10:13). The moment that we tell the devil to leave, he must. This is a promise so true and real to each Christian.

The last promise of God I'll mention is, He offers to save anyone who repents with an honest heart (Romans 10:13). No matter what someone has done, He will still save them if they will only come to Him.

Why did God promise these things, and to whom? He wanted so much for His little children to love Him, so He gave them absolute promises to stand on. We can feel the truth of His promises in our hearts; therefore, it affirms that the Bible is true. All His children can claim His promises, but He gives special promises to those who have accepted His way in their lives. The unsaved have the promise that they will be saved if they will call on Him.

How can we claim such wonderful promises? First, each person needs to be saved, that claims their first promise. Then they must trust He will keep His promises, but they also must keep their promise to serve Him. Whenever someone leaves God, they lose their privilege of His promises. He does not force them to love Him, but it is His greatest desire.

To conclude, God promised to give us what we need to serve Him. He promised to fight for us if we ask Him, and He promised to save all who would call on Him. Each person has a chance to claim His promises because He loves us. †

Young People, this is your page! Send your article or testimony to: The Way of Truth, Attention: Doug Shenberger, P. O. Box 88, Hagerstown, MD 21741-0088.

GROWING OLD GRACEFULLY

Message by the late Alvin A. Craig , delivered 03/11/12



THE TITLE of our message is, "Growing Old Gracefully." Psalm 37:25, "I have been young, and now am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread."

Many do not live to be old. Years ago I read that taking the world's population, as a whole, over 50% of the deaths in a year were of those who were seventeen or younger. Of course, doubtless, one reason why the percentage is that high is because in many countries they have a lot of deaths among children. Nevertheless, we all have an appointment with death. Many do not live to be old, but some do. The Bible tells us that the outward man perishes, but for the Christian, the inward man is renewed day by day.

We read in the Scriptures of how God instructed Moses to choose twelve men to go into the land of Canaan and spy out the land before they invaded it. Among those who went was a man by the name of Caleb. Caleb was forty years old when he went with the eleven to spy out the land. Caleb and Joshua were the only two who brought back a good report, but the multitudes of people believed the ten. As a result of doubting God, they had to wander in the wilderness for forty years until those twenty and older died off. Of course, Joshua and Caleb were permitted to live because they believed God.

Forty years later, under Joshua's leadership, they did enter the land of Canaan. They fought approximately for five years to conquer the land, and Caleb went to Joshua and said, "I want the inheritance that Moses promised me." He was then eighty-five years old. Listen to what Caleb said: "Behold, the Lord hath kept me alive, as he said, these forty and five years [As I said earlier, he was forty years old when he went into Canaan as a spy.], even since the Lord spake this word unto Moses, while the children of Israel wandered in the wilderness: and now, lo, I am this day fourscore and five years old [85]. As yet I am as strong this day as I was in the day that Moses sent me: as my strength was then, even so is my strength now, for war, both to go out, and to come in." That's something, isn't it? At eighty-five, he said that he was just as strong as he was when he was forty. I don't think very many people can say that.

What did Moses promise Caleb? He promised him that he could have the land where he spied out, and the land was some of the most difficult to take in Canaan. It was in the area of Hebron where there were hills and rough country, but that's what Caleb asked for, and that's what Joshua gave him. Caleb took it. He and his seed lived there.

The apostle Paul had a good testimony when he said, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not

to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." So whether we live to see forty or eighty years, the important thing is that we fight the good fight of faith and be ready to meet the Lord in peace when our time comes. I prayed years ago, "Lord, take my life, even now while I'm ready to meet you, rather than to live on any number of years and be lost in the end." I never withdrew that request from the Lord. I don't intend to now, because I do want to be ready when the Lord calls for me. I want to hear Him say, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant: enter thou into the joy of the Lord."

The apostle James said, "What is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away." I don't think some of you younger people know anything about an old black kettle on a stove with its steam coming out of its spout. I do. I remember seeing that. It would come just a little ways up, and then it vanished from the eyes. I remember as a boy working in the sandy bottom lands in North Carolina. We didn't have tractors in those days. We had to get in there barefooted and take our hoes and dig out the weeds between the stalks. It would be so hot we could see the heat rise above the corn stalks just a little ways and vanish away. It disappeared from our sight. James said that's the way our life is. I had my eighty-fourth birthday this past January. Where did the years go? Well, it's like a vapor that appeareth for a little while.

Young People, I want you to understand what I'm saying, because you're not going to be young all your life. Every day I become older, and you do, too. So take this to heart. Your life is even as a vapor that appeareth for a little while, and then it vanishes away. We're all going into eternity some day.

The reality of aging: "The days of our years are threescore years and ten [that's 70]; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off [Notice that: 80 years old], and we fly away" (Psalm 90:10). "O God, thou hast taught me from my youth: and hitherto have I declared thy wondrous works. Now also when I am old and greyheaded, O God, forsake me not; until I have shewed thy strength unto this generation, and thy power to every one that is to come" (Psalm 71:17, 18). Psalm 90:12 says, "Teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom." You're not always going to be young. You're not always going to be strong and vigorous. There comes a change in our lives.

We read in Ecclesiastes, chapter 12, verses 1-7: "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them; While

the sun, or the light, or the moon, or the stars, be not darkened, nor the clouds return after the rain: In the day when the keepers of the house shall tremble, and the strong men shall bow themselves, and the grinders cease because they are few, and those that look out of the windows be darkened, And the doors shall be shut in the streets, when the sound of the grinding is low, and he shall rise up at the voice of the bird, and all the daughters of musick shall be brought low; Also when they shall be afraid of that which is high, and fears shall be in the way, and the almond tree shall flourish, and the grasshopper shall be a burden, and desire shall fail: because man goeth to his long home, and the mourners go about the streets: Or ever the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken, or the pitcher be broken at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the cistern. Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it."

I want to read from *Clarke's Commentary on the Bible* in regard to the passage of scripture I just read. He compares the sun, the moon, and the stars to the prime of life and the prosperity of life, and the clouds and the infirmities of old age:

"The keepers shall tremble—the hands become paralytic [shaky], as is constantly the case, less or more, in old age. The grinders cease because they are few—the teeth decayed and mostly lost." Whenever the grinders become few, you can't eat some things like you used to. You don't have what it takes to chew and get the food to where you can swallow it. Young People, don't get discouraged, but this is what happens as you get old. You'll experience these things.

"Those that look out of the windows—the eyes don't see clearly as they once did." You're blessed if your eyesight stays strong, but in many instances, they begin to get dim, and you do not see as you once did.

"Be shut in the streets—The doors or lips are shut to hinder the food in chewing from dropping out; as the teeth, which prevented that before, are now lost.

"He shall rise up at the voice of the bird—Sleep is not sound as it used to be; you slumber rather than sleep." It doesn't take as much to wake you up. You wake up two or three times during the night, and you lay there for awhile before you go back to sleep, if you do at all. "The chirping of the sparrow is sufficient to awake you." Sometimes it takes a good bit to wake young people because they sleep so soundly. You'd better enjoy it while you have it.

"All the daughters of music shall be brought low—The voice, that wonderful instrument, almost endless in the strength and variety of its tones, becomes feeble." So the voice is strong when you're young. You usually speak clearly, but when you get old, it isn't necessarily that way. Sometimes the voice fades.

"They shall be afraid of that which is high—Being so feeble, they are afraid to trust themselves to ascend steps, stairs, etc., without help. And when they look upwards, their heads turn giddy, and they are ready to fall." When you get old, you don't really care to get up too high of places. That's the way it is.

"Fears shall be in the way—They dare not walk out, lest they should meet some danger, which they have not strength to repel, nor agility to escape. A second

childishness has taken place—apprehensions, fears, terrors, and weakness." When you get older and are becoming more feeble, you're more apt to stay in the house and not go out, especially at night when there might be danger out there. "The almond tree shall flourish—The hair begins to change, first gray, then white, it having no longer that supply of nutritive juices which it once had."

I received an email from a person in Africa who wanted to know about a woman coloring her hair. This woman had some years on her. Maybe she was in her 50s. She was getting ready to apply for a job, and she felt like if she'd just color her hair, she'd look about ten years younger. He wanted to know what I thought about it. I don't know if you'll agree with me or not, but I didn't think it was proper for a Christian to try to deceive people. That's what she would have been doing. I advised him that she should trust the Lord, and He could help her get the job, because if she dyed her hair and the people found out later on that she was old as what she was, they might not have appreciated the deception she pulled on them. I know some people's hair stays dark even when they get old, but that isn't usually the way it is.

I read in the Scriptures, "The hoary head is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness." It's a blessing, according to that scripture. A lot of people don't get old enough for it to turn gray. What kind of message is this? Well, it's a message to our young people on growing old gracefully.

Clarke continues: "The grasshopper shall be a burden—Even such an inconsiderable thing as a locust, or a very small insect, shall be deemed burdensome, their strength is so exceedingly diminished." Caleb said that at eighty-five he was just as strong as he was at forty. Now, I'm not questioning what Caleb said, but that's not the rule. Whenever you get old, you're not able to lift weights as you did when you were young, and it doesn't take as long for the load to get heavy as it did when you were young. So a grasshopper becomes a burden—In other words, those things which are light, when you get old become a burden for their weight.

"Desire shall fail—Both relish and appetite for food, even the most delicate, that to which they were formerly so much attached, now fails." Your desire for food might not be as strong as it was when you were young, and your desire for other things begin to fade.

Again, Ecclesiastes 12:1 says, "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them." You don't have the strength, the vigor, and the interest to do some things when you get old as you did when you were young.

Clarke says this about verses 6 and 7: "Or ever the silver cord be loosed—We have already had all the external evidences of old age, with all its attendant infirmities; next follow what takes place in the body, in order to produce what is called death, or the separation of body and soul. Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God."

Peter says in I Peter 3:10-12, "For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile: Let him

eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it. For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil." He that would love life, let him give his life and heart to the Lord and live for Him. There will be many rewards and many blessings that you'll experience as you journey through life.

I realize that some people get so old and feeble that they feel like they're not worth anything, and they would like to go on to heaven, but before they get to that age, or that state, there are some things that the older people are to do. Look with me for a moment at Titus, chapter 2, beginning with verse 1: "But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine: That the aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience. The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things; That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed. Young men likewise exhort to be sober minded. In all things shewing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine shewing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, Sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you." That is a very serious charge to us older people. That's one reason why we're having as much difficulty in the world today. It's because of a failure of the older women to teach the young women these things that Paul has enumerated here. In each one of those, it uses the word *sober*. That doesn't mean abstaining from alcohol or drink. It means for us to be serious and face the realities of life as they are.

Young People, you need to do what I've said tonight. You need to face reality. You're not always going to be young. You're not always going to be vigorous and be able to go about and do the things you're doing. Therefore, serve God in your youth, and enjoy the blessings of God from your youth on through until the time the body does indeed return to the dust of the earth. You'll be blessed for doing so.

Reassurance for the aged: If we die in the faith, there's an eternal home in heaven where we shall never grow old. Life is precious. It is a gift from God. Not all live to be old, so it is necessary to be able to meet the Lord in peace, regardless of what your age is. So remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth. It will be a blessing to others. †

SUNDAY SCHOOL LITERATURE

For many years, The Way of Truth publishing work has provided Church of God Sunday school literature for many congregations. If you would like a sample of Bible-based literature and a price list, please request it. We have a six-year series of lessons. Each quarter we print quarterlies for Adults and Young People, Intermediates and Juniors. Write or call and order your sample today.

WHY I BELIEVE IN GOD

**Radio Message
by Bro. Greg Tyler
(aired 5/5/91)**



AT THIS point in our broadcast, I'd like to entitle my thoughts, "Why I Believe in God." In Genesis, chapter 1, verses 1 and 2, we read: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters."

I look up into the starry heavens, and a voice speaks to me and tells me that somewhere out there in that great beyond there is a mighty power, there is a mighty Creator, there is a mighty God. In Psalm 19 we read, "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."

I believe in God because the heavens declare it. The earth is just a little pin dot in the whole scheme of things, as far as the universe is concerned. The sun is one of billions of stars, and the planets that rotate around the sun are few indeed, and yet, on the third planet that rotates around what we know as the sun, we find the center of God's creation. That is Earth. Why God chose things to be as they are, I'm not sure, but I know there is a God because the heavens declare it unto me.

I know there is a God because I've walked through the woods and seen the beauties of nature—the birds, the flowers, the stream. Listen, Beloved, some men may try to convince you that all of this is here by accident, by chance, but I'm telling you that there is a God. I'm telling you that things in nature, things on Earth are what they are because there is a great mind. There is a great Being. There is a great Spirit who is the Mastermind of it all. In its place, the things of the earth are beautiful—the sunset and the sunrise, the clouds and the blue sky. How can man live in this world and not believe in God?

I believe in God because I am His creation. I believe that in every man, there is a void that only God can fill. As an ignorant boy, I searched and searched, trying to fill that void in my life with the material things of this world, but they did not satisfy it. Beloved, there are people who live to be a hundred and are never able to fill that void within them that only God can fill.

I believe in God because this life is so short. Our life, James says, is like a vapor. It appears for a short time,

and then it vanishes away. Surely, there is more to life than the few days we spend here on this earth. Surely, there is a great beyond that we pass into as we leave this time world. I ask myself the question, Why? Why are we here? What is life all about? Dear Ones, I always come back to God. We're here because God willed it, and we're here for a purpose, and that is to prepare for our eternal abode in the great beyond.

I believe in God because of the Bible. You see, the Bible is more than just a book. The Bible is more than just a conglomeration of men's ideas. The Bible is special. Its words are deep and its greatness is beyond finding out. The Bible tells me about God, and so I believe in God. When the Bible tells me that God created the heavens and the earth, I believe it, Beloved. All scripture is given by inspiration of God. I believe that, too. I believe the Spirit of God moved on men of old, and I believe that the words that are given to us within the cover of the Bible are words from heaven. I believe that we shall meet them. Every single one of us is going to meet the words of the Bible in the judgment because they are the words of God.

I believe in God because there was a man named Jesus. Even if you don't believe in God, you have to admit that there was once a man named Jesus. You might not believe in His divinity, but have to agree that there was such a person on Earth. If you know that, you know that the one called Jesus suffered a cruel death at the hands of ungodly men. If you believe that there was a Jesus, then you must, because it's a part of history. Get out your history books. Read of Pontius Pilate. Read of the Roman Kingdom. Read of Palestine in the olden days, and you'll find Jesus. But in finding about the historical character, Jesus, you don't necessarily find the truth of why He was here. For the reason why there was one called Jesus, we must believe in the Word of God, and we must believe in John 3:16, which says, "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."

I believe in God because Jesus conquered death. I believe in God because the stone was rolled way, and Jesus ascended into heaven, and right now He is seated at the right-hand of the Father.

I believe in God because of the cloud of witnesses that followed Jesus: the apostle Peter, the apostle James, the apostle Stephen, and the apostle Paul.

I believe in God because the realities of the gospel and the truth of the Word of God have been passed down to our present generation.

I believe God is real because I met this same Jesus. One day I knelt at a wooden rail and there the God of heaven forgave me of all my iniquities and made me a brand new creature. Yes, Dear Ones, I believe in God. *I believe in the transforming power of God.* I believe that there is a power working in the earth today that is good. We're surrounded by evil powers, and sin is on every hand, but let me assure you that there is another power in the earth, and that power is good. That power is the power of God. That same transforming power that saved my life will save your life as well.

I believe in God because I've proven Him to be God. I have taken His Word. I have endeavored to live it, and I have found God to be real.

I believe in God because I seek Him in prayer every day. I have found that He hears my humble prayers. I have found that God still answers prayer. I have seen miracles. I have seen situations changed because of God. There are scoffers. There are unbelievers, but that doesn't change the fact, Dear Listener, that there is a God. Whether you believe in God or not, it doesn't change the fact, but I'm endeavoring to point out to you a few of the reasons why I believe in God.

I believe in God because I have found His Holy Spirit to be an abiding Comforter. I have found peace, I have found joy, I have found comfort and happiness when all around me a storm is raging. This is not emotionalism. This is not deception. This is reality. This is salvation. This is the gospel. This is what all mankind needs to experience and to know. I'm telling you, everyone needs to believe in God, not just in word, not just a head knowledge, but in reality everyone needs to let God take control of their lives. What a different world we would have!

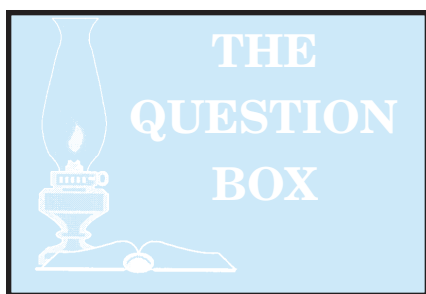
Dear Ones, God is real. He wants to have His way in your life. I would not want to live in this time world without God. Oh, I need God! not as a crutch, not necessarily someone to lean on, but I need Him to know the satisfaction that can be found in life. I need God to help me through my dark places. We all have them. We all have disappointments. We all have heartaches. We all have sadness to face. But most people try to go through life without God.

I believe in God because I know that after this world is gone, somewhere there is another life. I believe with all of my heart that there is a heaven and a hell. After we do all that we have done, after we have lived our life, after we come to the end of the way, each one of us shall stand on the life we have lived. Look around you and you'll see God.

If you want to know more about God and His plan for you, then look into His Word, the holy Bible. There you'll find His plan for your life. You'll find the settled peace if you believe it. If you carry out its precepts, I assure you, you will never be the same. Every one of you is important in the sight of God. Every one of you is special in His sight. If you'll yield your life to the living God, He will forgive you. He will save you and translate you into His kingdom. You need to yield yourself to Him just as you are, and ask Him to forgive you. Determine in your heart to forsake all sin. Take up the cross and follow Him, and you'll find everlasting life.

Do you believe in God? I trust that you do. If you don't, please listen to the words that I have spoken to you. Let the God of heaven speak to you. †

We are sure that our readers know that the cost of publishing this magazine continues to rise. Postage rates have been increasing at an alarming rate. We do not charge for the magazine. We depend on the generosity of our readers to help us in our endeavor to send this gospel messenger to all the world. Please remember this ministry in your giving.



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



QUESTION: What kind of water should be used for immersion in baptism, and what is the reason for baptism?

ANSWER: The Bible does not say what *kind* of water is to be used. Jesus was baptized in the Jordan River, which may have been muddy. I would assume some were baptized in the sea, while others in Jerusalem; and the Eunuch of Ethiopia, for instance, may have been baptized in a pool.

The important thing is to be baptized! Why? Because Jesus Christ commanded it. He set the example and said it was to “fulfill all righteousness.” It is the answer of a good conscience toward God; and it is a testimony to the world that you have died to sin, been made alive in Christ, and you now intend to walk in newness of life.

QUESTION: Is the witness of the Spirit and the seal of the Spirit the same? If not, please explain the difference. What about the baptism of the Spirit and being sealed by the Spirit? Are they the same or different?

ANSWER: The witness of the Spirit can occur at various times, for various reasons. The Spirit bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God. The Spirit bears witness to the truth. The Spirit could bear witness that you are healed, that you have prayed through on something you are seeking God for. So the witness of the Spirit and the sealing of the Spirit are not the same.

As to the baptism of the Spirit: you are baptized by the Spirit when you are sanctified. So being sealed by the Spirit and baptism of the Spirit would be the same, as explained above.

QUESTION: Is there any connection between the serpent that beguiled Eve in the Garden of Eden and the serpent that drew the third part of the stars of heaven with his tail?

ANSWER: The serpent that encountered Eve in the Garden of Eden was an actual, literal serpent and was declared to be the most subtle, or wise, beast of the field. However, the actions of the serpent in this situation was engineered by Satan, the archenemy of God and the hater of God's creation. In Revelation 12 the great red dragon drew a third part of the stars of heaven, and he is also termed in the ninth verse the serpent *called* the devil. This language is symbolical and has no reference to a literal serpent. The dragon

is a symbol of Paganism, which we know to be the religion of the devil. According to Jesus, in chapter one, stars symbolize ministers. The only connection between the serpent in the Garden and the serpent in Revelation 12 is that they were both tools of the devil.

QUESTION: Would you please explain Revelation 21:2, “And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband”?

ANSWER: This has no reference to a literal city coming down, as some literal kingdom teachers teach. The holy city that John saw was the Church of God. There is only ONE true bride. The angel said to John, in verse nine, “Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife.” What he showed him was the “holy Jerusalem” which was, and is, the bride of Christ, the Church. This same city is spoken of in Hebrews 12:22, 23, “But ye are come unto Mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven.” Her coming from heaven simply means that she is of God, being built by God, owned by God, controlled by God, empowered by God, and doing the work of God. This is in contrast to the great “city of Babylon” pictured elsewhere in Revelation as being a “habitation of devils.”

QUESTION: What did Jesus mean when He said: “Before Abraham was, I am”? Is this not an error in grammar, rather than an expression of Jesus' divinity?

ANSWER: It is not an error of any kind. It is a statement of fact! Before Jesus made this statement, He said, “Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad.” The Jews responded, “Thou art yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham?” To this Jesus replied, “Before Abraham was, I am.” It was no “slip of the tongue,” it was not a mistake in grammar. “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him: and without him was not any thing made that was made. ... And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us” (John 1:1-14).

QUESTION: Why was Moses not allowed by God to reach the Promised Land which was reached by many of the very people he led all the way from Egypt up to the place where he died?

ANSWER: First, all the adults that Moses led out of Egypt died in the wilderness, because they disbelieved God and rebelled against Moses, except for Joshua and Caleb. We read of this in Deuteronomy one. In verse 35 of this chapter we read, “Surely there shall not one of these men of this evil generation see that good land, which I swore to give unto your fathers.”

Moses was a great leader, and the Lord blessed him in a very marked way. However, Moses disobeyed the Lord in an action of his, and because of this, he was not permitted to enter the Promised Land. On one occa-

sion, God told Moses to strike a rock when they needed water, and water came out. On another occasion, God said to “speak” to the rock (Numbers 20:8). However, Moses, provoked at the people (verse 10), struck the rock twice. As a result the Lord said to Moses and Aaron, “Because ye believed me not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them” (verse 12).

QUESTION: As it had been written for a long time that one would betray Jesus, why then did He say “woe” unto the one?

ANSWER: Even though it had been foretold, still the one who did it, did it by his own choice, and thus is responsible for his deed, and woe unto him for making that choice! †

REPORT OF THE CONVENTION IN JAMAICA

February 21-26, 2023

Submitted by: Sis. Grace Ramsay

Theme: “Have You Been to the Potter’s House?”

Scriptures chosen for the theme: “Arise, and go down to the potter’s house, and there I will cause thee to hear my words” (Jeremiah: 18:2). “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28).

It is worth mentioning that this year marked seventy-three (73) years of the work of the Church of God (Universal) in Cornwall Mountain, Westmoreland. This year’s Revival Services/Convention was hosted by Bro. Peter Ramsay, Host Pastor.

Due to the impact of Covid-19 restrictions, we had various changes to our convention routine. As a result, we took the decision to host two full days: Wednesday, February 22nd and Sunday, February 26th. A series of prayer meetings and fasting preceded this meeting. There were many challenges, but God worked mightily in our behalf.

Some High Points—

Bro. Rupert Shippy and other members of the ministry from various congregations supported us during the meeting;

Visiting of the sick;

The Saturday night’s street meeting;

Sick in the hospital were prayed for and recovered and attended the services regularly;

The enthusiasm of the young people;

Souls were at the altar for various needs;

The sacrifice of the saints to be in the meetings (some traveled daily).

Tuesday: 7:00 P.M. Evangelistic Service. Speaker: Bro. Peter Ramsay. Topic: “Have You Been to the Potter’s House?” Excerpts: *I am very humbled to be in this position. I have enjoyed the singing. We have an honorable man in the house of God with us. I invited him to*

sit with the ministers. Bro. Enroy Clarke has been worshipping with us for approximately two and a half years.

God is asking us to allow Him to mold us. We must be the clay in His hands. Do not fear what man can do, but what God can do. Don’t allow the entreaties of the world to bring you down. Present your body a living sacrifice to God. If we are too hasty, we will lose the battle. Christians get into trouble because of their language. Give good encouragement. What we say carries weight. Exercise patience, love, and understanding. Dig deep!

Wednesday: 10:00 A.M. Speaker: Bro. Hezekiah Lamey. Excerpts: *When I think of what God has done, when I think of the sickness that I went through, what a mighty God we serve! Thanks, thanks, for the goodness of God. Thank God for that day when I went to the Potter’s house. Some of us fight against God. We have to prepare well to meet God. Sudden death can take us at any time, so we cannot play around. We must have faith in God. We belittle God too much. Wait upon God. If you are obedient, you will get good things from God. A life without Christ is vain.*

2:30 P.M. Speaker: Bro. Enroy Clarke. Text: Isaiah 6:1-8. Excerpts: *In the year King Uzziah died, Isaiah saw the Lord high and lifted up. When the Lord drew the curtain and Isaiah looked to God, he saw the state he was in. He cried out to God. We must not lift up our leaders above our God. Consecrate your life. Can God count on you? Stephen stood up for the right. We need the spirit of discernment. Revive me! Revive Thy work!*

7:00 P.M. Evangelistic Service. Speaker: Bro. David Shaw. Text: Jeremiah 18:2. Excerpts: *I know God watches over me. He is keeping me. He has been good to me. I can’t express my joy. I know on whom I have believed. God is still warning us not to get mixed up. Man’s life is twisted in pieces. God’s mercy is still extended. Bro. Peter Ramsay brought a very good message on the theme. If you are not serving God, you are useless. If you are in need of adjustment, God will do it for you. The Potter is still turning the wheel. There is still mercy with the Lord.*

Thursday: 7:00 P.M. Evangelistic Service. Speaker: Bro. Franklin Bascoe. Excerpts: *We are called to glorify God. I have had physical challenges, but I will do what I can for the Lord. I don’t want to complain. We visited some brethren, and we were glad it was well with their souls. If we work for God, our reward will follow. Have you been to the Potter’s house? is a personal question. He is still working on me. I am glad He didn’t throw the clay away. We need to be comfortable with the way God fashioned us. The Bible tells us that we are fearfully and wonderfully made. In order to be what God wants us to be, we need to be molded by Him. When God fashions us, He makes us in His likeness.*

Friday: 7:00 P.M. Evangelistic Service. Speaker: Bro. David Shaw. Text: Isaiah 53:6. Excerpts: *Isaiah is asking us to examine ourselves and to be honest with ourselves. Mankind is getting farther and farther away from God. God’s eyes are watching you. He is watching us. He is giving us time. If you continue to ignore God’s*

mercy, then you will be in trouble. Where will you spend your long eternity? It's time to have a relationship with God. It's time to have Him as your personal Savior. Make Him your choice. Try to send your sins before. Don't allow them to follow you to the judgment. Make sure your sins are forgiven. Life is so uncertain. Now is the acceptable time. You can be a sheep in the Shepherd's fold.

Saturday: 7:00 P.M. Evangelistic Street Meeting. Speaker: Bro. Frankly Bascoe. Excerpts: *I am grateful to be a part of the family of God. We are not selfish. We are here to call others to be a child of God. There is nothing in this world that is more valuable than a soul. You can try to gain the whole world, but your soul is more valuable. We are accountable to God. He gives us His Word to live by, to direct us, and to draw us closer to Him. If you are not walking in the light, then you are walking in darkness. The devil is successful in drawing man's affection from God. Jesus said, "I am come to give life, to seek and to save that which was lost."*

Sinner, there is hope in Jesus. The world has things to offer (only for a time), but Jesus offers eternal life. Look into your life and see how you are living. Life without Christ is a great risk. Come to Jesus tonight. He went to the cross for you.

Sunday: Divine Worship Service. At approximately 9:00 A.M., nine brethren started arriving from various places. With joy and gladness in our hearts, we gathered to begin our Sunday morning's worship. The service began with Sunday school. The classes were very interactive, and the children from various congregations performed much to the delight of the congregation.

Speaker: Young Bro. Orville Bascoe. Excerpts: *When you are not connected to the Source, you cannot witness. "In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths" (Proverbs 3:6). Shun the very appearance of evil. Sometimes we fail to use the power of God. We have something to do. God has everything that I need. Sin has a short season. The prodigal son was feeding swine. Sin brought him to the lowest state. I wish, my sinner friends, that you will give your heart to God. Sinner Friends, God is looking out for you. With arms wide open, God will pardon you. God has been so good to me. How can I give up? We have so much to thank Him for. Let us serve Him from a true heart. Saints, stay with God. Keep your eyes on God. Great is His faithfulness. We have to have that faith. "Faith without works is dead" (James 2:20). We serve a great, wonderful God. Be very sure your anchor holds and grips the Solid Rock. Use up the tool called prayer.*

7:00 P.M. Evangelistic Service. Speaker: Sis. Dorrette Clarke. Text: Jeremiah 18:3, 4. Excerpts: *Christ is not a disappointment. You can't tell the Potter how to mold you. He will decide. You can't be the same when you have entered the Potter's house. It's because of God's mercy why we are here tonight. There is somebody here whose vessel is marred, and the Potter wants to make you a vessel of honor. God loves you and wants to make you a brand new person. I was deserving of death. I was marred. God molded and made me over. The only way to escape hell is to repent and forsake your sins. Turn to God, and He will have mercy. What a mighty God! Think of the power of God. With His blood, He washes*

white as snow. God wants to put someone on the spindle. God wants to give someone new life. When you have Christ, you have peace in the midst of the storm. The blood is still flowing for you. Is it well with your soul? The decision we make now will determine our destiny.

Thanks to Sis. Marva Greene and Sis. Paulette Ramsay for their contribution in making this report possible. Thanks for the general support which was felt in various forms, materially and spiritually. Thanks to our community members for their loyal support, and we encourage everyone to visit the Potter's house. You will never be the same.

God bless you all. †

BIBLE LESSON OF THE MONTH

GEMS FROM THE BOOK OF ROMANS

THE GOODNESS AND SEVERITY OF GOD

Scriptures: Romans 11:22; Ephesians 5:5-7; Romans 2:3-11.

Romans 11:22 Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off.

Ephesians 5:5 For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.

6 Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience.

7 Be not ye therefore partakers with them.

Romans 2:3 And thinkest thou this, O man, that judgest them which do such things, and doest the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God?

4 Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?

5 But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God;

6 Who will render to every man according to his deeds:

7 To them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour and immortality, eternal life:

8 But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath,

9 Tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile;

10 But glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile:

11 For there is no respect of persons with God.

Memory Verse: Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off.—Romans 11:22.

Aim: To remind the student of God's wrath as well as His goodness.

INTRODUCTION

GOD HAS given mankind laws to guide them through this life. If those laws are obeyed, they will bring good rewards. If they are disobeyed, they will bring the opposite. God would not be God if

He allowed His creation to disregard His laws and there be no punishment for their evil acts. For example: the flood, the destruction of Sodom, and the punishment of the literal nation of Israel. Because of David's sin, his house was to have trouble the rest of his days. Various other things show God rewards the good and punishes the evil.

If you will take time to read Deuteronomy 28, you will see the first 14 verses record the blessings God promised the Hebrews. The first verse reads like this: "And it shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe and to do all his commandments which I command thee this day, that the Lord thy God will set thee on high above all nations of the earth." Starting with verse 15 on through verse 68, you will read what God said He would do to them, and what they would suffer if they did not obey Him.

MEDITATIONS

GOD'S FAIRNESS—Romans 11:22—Behold therefore—Paul speaks of the Jews who were cut off because of their rejecting the true Messiah, and the Gentiles who had been grafted in. He informs them that they must continue in the truth of the gospel, or they, too, would be cut off. God did not show respect of persons.

SIN CAN NEVER ENTER THERE—Ephesians 5:5—For this ye know—This is something that a lot of people do not know today! People think they can commit adultery, lie, cheat, and do a lot of other things, including committing suicide, and still when they die, they will go to heaven. But Jesus said that if you die in your sins, where He is you cannot come. He also said, "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it" (Matthew 7:13, 14). **Verse 6—**There are many deceivers in the world today, and in the religious world many of them are teaching that you must commit sin more or less every day, but still when you die, you are going to be with the Lord. **Verse 7—**Do not believe them! Believe what the Bible teaches: "Without holiness, no man shall see the Lord."

CONSIDER—Romans 2:3—O man—If you will read from verse 18 through verse 32 of chapter one, you will see what Paul is talking about. Those in verse three are judging and condemning others while doing some of the same things themselves; and yet, they thought they would escape the judgment of God. Why?

GOD IS MERCIFUL—Romans 2:4—Riches of His goodness—On this verse, Clarke comments: "Wilt thou render of none effect that marked benevolence of God towards thee which has given so many superior advantages, and that forbearance which has tolerated thy many miscarriages, and that longsuffering which, after repeated provocations, still continues to bear with thee?" None can come to God and say, "I deserve to be forgiven because I did not do some of the things that others did." All have sinned and come short of the glory

of God. It was His goodness that led us to repentance!

SIN HARDENS HEARTS—Romans 2:5—After thy hardness—It seems that some have hardened their hearts so hard that nothing moves them! They can be told of God's love, of Christ's suffering and dying on the cross for their sins, and it means nothing to them. They are indeed treasuring up unto themselves the wrath of God. **Verse 6—**They will be judged along with everyone. Even the infidel, who says that there is no God, will be at the judgment and will answer for his deeds.

BOTH WILL BE THERE—Romans 2:7—To them—Yes, there are some in this sinful world who have accepted Christ as Lord and Savior and are seeking to so live that they will have eternal life. **Verse 8—**But there are billions that "do not the truth" and are living unrighteous lives who will suffer the wrath of God. **Verse 9—**The Hebrews who were God's covenant people under the Old Testament will face the same Judge the Gentiles will face.

A GLORIOUS REWARD—Romans 2:10, 11—Glory, honour, and peace—The mind cannot grasp the reward that awaits those who live a righteous life and die in the faith, for Jesus tasted death for everyone. Whosoever will may come and drink of the water of life freely, for there is no respect of persons with God.

CONCLUSION

"Though Christians appreciate the value of rational evidences of immortality, yet they are not dependent upon them as grounds for their faith in this truth, but find the surest and fullest proof of the doctrine in the Scriptures. Immortality, like many other truths, is more clearly revealed in the New Testament, but it is by no means absent from the Old, as has been sometimes erroneously affirmed. ... When the Sadducees, who denied the resurrection, came to Jesus with a question relating thereto, Jesus answered them with an argument based on the words of God to Moses at the burning bush, 'I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. God is not the God of the dead, but of the living' (Matthew 22:32). ... The Scriptures represent the future punishment of the wicked as being in a place which is called hell in the common English Bible."—R. R. Byrum, *Christian Theology*. It is just as eternal as heaven is.

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

1. God has given us a law to live by. What is the reward for obeying?
2. What is the reward for disobeying?
3. Are there rewards in this life for obeying or disobeying?
4. Is God just in regard to the reward for disobeying?
5. Which reward are you living for? †

STUDY YOUR BIBLE!

They Say, “The Lord Seeth Not”

Message by Bro. Doug Shenberger, delivered 06/25/23

I WOULD LIKE to draw your attention to Ezekiel, chapter 9, and read the last part of verse 9: “For they say, The Lord hath forsaken the earth, and the Lord seeth not.” If you’d take time to read through the other passages of scripture in that chapter, you’ll find what was going on. But I thought the portion of scripture that I read captures the very real reality that reoccurs throughout history and throughout the different generations.

We believe and teach and understand from God’s Word that He does not change. He’s unchangeable. But there comes a time when people say things about God that are not true.

I’d like to examine this thought a little bit this morning, because I believe that we can truly say that we live in a day and age where the people of the world are saying, “The Lord has forsaken the earth. The Lord doesn’t see.”

Now, when you think of the thought of *forsaking the earth*, to me that gives an idea that God is no longer concerned in the affairs of mankind. He’s no longer concerned with His creation and His relationship with mankind. There’s a thought there of a disconnected God, one that’s not involved. The God who *seeth not* is a God who no longer has the power or the interest to see. He’s not aware and not involved. If you’re thinking along that line, you have a God who isn’t looking, you have a God who isn’t involved with mankind, and you have a God who can’t judge because He doesn’t know. He’s disconnected. Some of the results of that is that there’s no longer any truth. There’s no law that can be changed by the whims of the generation of the day. People who don’t believe that God is involved and relevant and seeing, seem to lose their moral compass. Anything that’s of popular opinion decides what is right and wrong. You see this evidenced somewhat in the growth of Paganism, Satanism, Atheism, and Humanism, all of which are growing rapidly in our world today.

If we accept this line of thinking, or are influenced by it, there are some tendencies that develop in mankind. There’s a general hardness of heart towards God and the things of God, because He’s not involved, and He doesn’t care. *God has forsaken the earth, and He doesn’t see* is the general hardness of heart towards God.

Righteousness becomes an old-fashioned idea. Yes, there are people who used to believe those things. They just didn’t understand. The old paths and the old ways are rejected. In particular, human pride flourishes and grows and multiplies in diverse and powerful ways. The Bible tells us that God hates a proud look. So in the absence of God, human pride flourishes and grows. That’s a powerful force. We see all around us today the idea that humanity is able to control the weather, control the future, and do any and all things that they set their minds to.

Another thing that happens is a spirit of ingratitude—not being grateful for the things that we have. Taking so much for granted, so much is just expected. We have a right to all the blessings of life. Selfishness becomes a badge of honor. You’re one of the enlightened ones if you realize that

you have to focus on self and making sure you get what you want, and it’s a better way to live. Human thinking overall becomes superior to all other forms of teaching of right and wrong. Now, that doesn’t all happen at once. There are progressions that come along with that, but I want us to try to get a glimpse of this realization that when this happens, this type of thinking tends to reoccur. We can see the evidence of this reoccurring around us in our generation, “For they say, The Lord hath forsaken the earth, and the Lord seeth not.”

We see the evidence of this around us in our society today: the thinking that God doesn’t exist, and even if He does exist, He’s not really in control. He’s not really doing anything. He’s not something that needs to be considered. This is a serious direction because it tends to go the extreme. It’s like a pendulum of a clock. Once it gets in motion, and you get some momentum, it tends to go out to the extreme. That happens because, of course, the crowd tends to follow the popular things of the day. It happens because the devil is seeking to devour and destroy, to divide people, and to cause suffering and loss. He is seeking to increase that idea. The devil rejoices in the idea that God isn’t in control, that He doesn’t know what’s going on, and that He is a powerless God. That’s the devil’s desire and plan. His plan is to plant those thoughts in the hearts of mankind. So it tends to go to the extreme. We are seeing some of those extremes today.

But truth becomes more hidden and precious. It is not as readily available to mankind because it is held up to public ridicule, and it’s portrayed as something that’s inferior. So the result of that is, it becomes more hidden. That’s just the reality. It’s not necessarily the fault of someone who isn’t doing his job to espouse truth. It’s just the result. If you’ll look back through the Old Testament, you’ll see that whenever the people turned their hearts away from God, the truth became hidden and lost. The truth came upon times where they rediscovered the Word of God that had been forgotten. It was hidden away in mothballs because the people had come to believe that God had forsaken the earth. He didn’t see and know, and so the truth became hidden. It was no longer valued or special. Teaching becomes devalued and forbidden. There is no need to teach and train your children about what the Bible teaches, what’s true and right. You need to let the world teach them. The thoughts of the day need to be the education. That’s the gold standard, the popular world view.



It's interesting that the changing opinions of the day come to be regarded as truth. There is something inherently wrong about that. Something that's changing all the time is what's true, but that which is unchangeable and fixed and eternal is regarded as false. How can you have true confidence in the truth that changes from day to day or week to week? That's not truth.

As the world loses its moral compass and ceases to believe that God exists or cares or is in control, we tend to have a loss of true freedom to worship God. That's a frightening thing for us in some ways because we've enjoyed so much freedom for so long, but we can see the beginning of the attack on that. Now, it's hard to live in this world without the world having some impact on us. The world that we live in, the things we are immersed in all the time, it's very hard for those not to have some subtle impacts on us.

I'd like to take a few minutes this morning to look at some specific areas where, if we start to look at this type of thinking, this type of idea that the Lord has forsaken the earth, and He doesn't see, what does that actually impact? In thinking about some things, if we say that God doesn't care, if He's forsaken the earth, what doesn't He care about? What doesn't He care about anymore? Well, one of the first things is, *God no longer cares about righteousness*. This is what you're saying, to some extent, when you start espousing this type of thinking and idea: "God doesn't care about righteousness. He doesn't care about what's going on. There's no better or specific right way. There is no moral standard. There is no law. There's no requirement to obey the law. There is no righteousness that you can stand on or know."

The world today is saying that God doesn't care about righteousness. I just want you to think about that for a minute. You live in a world that's telling you that in so many different and varied and subtle ways, and I'd like for you to think about how that might impact you and me to live in such a world. Do you think you're immune to any impact from that? Am I immune to any influence that might have on me?

Another thing that could be said is that *God doesn't care about holiness*. "Just do the best you can according to your understanding. God doesn't care about holiness in any specific way." The problem with this whole line of thinking is that it comes up against the Word of God. We read in the Bible where it says, "Be ye holy; for I am holy." So how can you say that God doesn't care or see? We read, "Without holiness, no man shall see the Lord." A God who has forsaken the earth, or doesn't care or see, doesn't care about holiness. Holiness isn't important any longer. It doesn't matter what you choose to do. Do you know what that thinking requires you to do? It starts to require you to see God as unholy. You need to think about that. It starts to require you to see God as unholy, because you can't bring those two things into agreement that (a) God doesn't see, and He doesn't care, and (b) He is a holy God. So if you're going to believe that God is a holy God, you have to believe His Word. If you're not going to believe His Word, you're going to see Him as unholy because He's not doing justice. He's not right. He's also unholy because you're identifying Him according to your standard. That's a dangerous thing.

A lot of times people want to go a certain way, they want to do a certain thing, they want to look at things a certain way, and think a certain way. We don't think through what that means, and what we're really saying when we choose to do that, or think that way. Most people wouldn't say that they look at God as an unholy God who has secret vices that we don't know about. He's inconsistent. We have to be careful about the way we look at things. I know this is something we could talk about in depth, but I'm quickly going through it.

One of the other things that the world is looking at and saying that God doesn't care about is, *God doesn't care about His Word—the Bible*. "God doesn't care. His Word doesn't really mean what it says. There are some good thoughts here and there, but in the overall sense, that's a part of being old-fashioned. God doesn't see the words that He wrote. He doesn't care about those. He's forsaken the earth. No need to read or study His Word. No need to understand it. It's not really relevant to my life on a day-to-day basis. God has forgotten about His relationship with mankind. John 3:16 is unimportant. God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son to do something. God who has forsaken the earth doesn't love me. He's not really the God that the Bible tells us about. He doesn't want to talk to me. He doesn't care whether I talk to Him today or not. He doesn't care whether I come to church, whether I serve Him or work for Him. He's forsaken the earth. He doesn't see." All things become acceptable. If God's forsaken the earth, then our eternal destiny is in question. He's not focused on life after death or what's going to happen to me eternally or where I'm going to be eternally.

"The Lord seeth not." What doesn't He see? *The Lord doesn't see our hearts*. "I can have secrets that the Lord will never know about." How many people have said that, I wonder? A lot of people are living that way. "The Lord doesn't see my heart. He doesn't know what's there. I can appear a certain way, but He doesn't know what's in my heart." The Bible tells us that "the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit [What does it do?], and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." He not only knows what we're thinking, but He knows what the intentions are. He knows when a thought goes through our minds and it's not our intention or desire. He knows the desires and intentions of our hearts, what we thought we could do and get away with, and what we are in secret.

This is a critical point: If the Lord can't see our hearts, He can't judge us. How can He judge us if He can't see our hearts, if He doesn't know what's in our hearts? I want us to think about that. "The Lord seeth not. He doesn't see what's in my heart." What I'm saying there is, we lose our concern about what's in our hearts. We're not responsible for what's in our hearts. We don't have to guard our hearts with all diligence because out of it are the issues of life, because the Lord can't see. "The Lord can't see my thoughts and my attitudes. It doesn't matter how I act. The Lord can't see."

I don't want this message to sound like it's not relevant to us this morning. It just sounds like "Well, that's not me. I don't have anything to worry about here. I know the Lord can see me." It's easy to say that with

our words. It's easy to feel that way or have intentions that way to some degree, but I think this is relevant to us. I really do, because this is the world we're living in. I feel like this world that I'm living in has an impact and an influence on me. I need to be aware of this. I need to be reminded of this because I need to realize and know for myself that the Lord sees me, He cares about me, and He knows me. There's nothing hidden from Him. My thoughts and attitudes matter to God. I'm responsible to Him for this. If I can say, "Well, I can behave like I want, it doesn't matter. The Lord doesn't see so long as I don't get into too much trouble with the people that I'm around and care about. I can do what I want. He can't see if I'm angry or bitter at my child. He can't see if I'm angry or bitter at my parents. He can't see if I'm holding something in my heart against someone. I have a problem with my neighbor. The Lord can't see those." Yes, He can.

What else doesn't the Lord see? *The Lord doesn't see where we go and what we do.* "The atmosphere that I have in my home and in my life, the Lord doesn't see that. He doesn't know that. As long as I come to church, that's all He'll see. He doesn't see whether I have a wholesome, godly desire around which I form my habits. I don't need to be concerned about my testimony, the things I'm doing, and the way I talk about people and treat them. The Lord can't see how I look. He just sees into the heart. He doesn't see how I look on the outside."

Is there a standard and a law that God cares about? Are there expectations God has? Is there anything that God doesn't see? I believe that we need to be aware of these things. "He doesn't see how I spend my time. He doesn't know the desires of my heart for pleasure and entertainment. God can't see the voids, the areas of my heart that He wants to fill with Himself that I'm filling with something else." Do you think God sees and knows all of that? It's so easy to fill our hearts with something else. We have voids in our hearts and lives for some reason or another, and they're so many things we can stick in there to fill up that space that doesn't seem so empty. This is the world we live in, to a great extent. I believe it's the reality that's around us, and it's pushing in on us. Everything the world does is designed along this line. So what do we do about that? How do we respond?

I think, first of all, we really need to recognize the power of that influence, the pervasiveness of it, and to recognize that it's the whole underlying focus of most of the modern entertainments of the world today to further this type of thinking. We need to realize that when we are engaged in that, we're being subtly influenced. There's an influence and a spirit there that would seek to cause us, on some level, to start thinking that there's this wall or this feeling between us and God that we can't see, and He's not relevant to this part of our lives. We need to recognize that that power can influence us. We're not immune. We're not some superior being that has known God from our youths, so we can't be influenced by that. We need to recognize it's there.

I believe we need to fight complacency. That's what comes along with that. We've done what's right, and

we're fine. We can just rest on our laurels. We need to fight complacency in our lives, like we've obtained something. We have the hope of salvation. We have the hope of eternal life. As long as we're in this world, there's still a battle to fight. There's an overcoming to do. We fight complacency with God's Word. Through godliness and holiness, we fight complacency that way. "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee" (Psalm 119:11). That I might not come to see You as someone who doesn't see and doesn't care.

Take the time to hide the Word of God in our hearts. It is good for our souls. It is good for our spirit, good for our relationship, good for our family. It's a good testimony. It fights complacency because we know what God says we must do. God needs to be a part of our lives. We need to emphasize our experience and our testimony. We believe in a personal relationship with God. It's not enough to be a part of a group of people who believe in God. That might feel good on a certain level, but that's not enough. We individually have to have that relationship with God. Your friend's relationship, your overall environment with a group of people who care about the things of God is not good enough. God sees you. God knows you. God has not forsaken you. God wants to be a part of your life. I have to know God as my own personal Savior and Lord.

I don't really believe that God intends to have secret Christians. "I'm serving the Lord back here in the corner." We need to have a clear testimony of salvation. "I'm a child of God. I love God. I love the things of God. I'm serving God. I'm working for God." Don't try to serve God as a form. You can't be a partial Christian. The rich young ruler came to Jesus and said, "I want to make it to heaven. What do I lack?" Jesus said, "You just have to give everything." We can't hold anything back. We have to know God for ourselves.

We need to be aware of hypocrisy—the idea that God can't see. Hypocrisy flourishes in that type of environment or that type of thinking, because if God can't see you, you can get away with it. We need to be aware of hypocrisy—thinking that on some level that God can't see or won't know. That He won't be able to judge you in that scenario is not realistic. It's a miserable way to live. It's a relationship with God or no relationship with God. We need to put our hearts into it. Love God, serve Him. Trying to live a life of hypocrisy is destructive to the human soul.

We need to have a vision of a God who does see, who sees clearly, and sees all. We need to have a vision that tells us where we're going, how we're going to get there, and who we're going to take with us. A vision of God that wants to stand up and teach and train and pray and protect our families and loved ones, and anyone we can help against the idea of a God that doesn't care and can't see. A vision of a testimony and a witness.

We need to cultivate faith. True faith and belief in God will cast that thinking and that influence far from us. We'll know that He sees us because He's real to us, and we know that He's there. So we need to cultivate the faith in God that comes from the Word of God, and that comes from that true experience with God.

We need to take time to be holy. Separate ourselves from the things of this world. Talk and walk with God.

We can fill our lives with all kinds of other things, but what about taking time to be holy before God?

In conclusion, our text says, “For they say, The Lord hath forsaken the earth, and the Lord seeth not.” Do you believe God cares? Do you believe He cares about you personally and individually? Do you believe He cared so very much that He sent His only Son to die on your specific behalf? Because of your sin, your failure, Jesus Christ died for you. Do you believe He’s still involved with His creation? He’s interested. He’s seeking. His Holy Spirit goes and seeks the hearts of mankind. Do you see Him as having expectations? Do you see Him as having laws and requirements and guidelines that He wants to share with you? He wants to reach out to you. Do you believe God sees? Do you believe He sees right into your heart and knows exactly what’s there? We can’t hide anything from Him. We’ll never be able to hide anything from Him.

God sees into your heart. He knows your needs. He knows your hurts. He knows your loneliness. He knows everything about you. He wants to walk and talk with you. So in your vision of God overall, is He near or far away? If He’s far away, that’s tending towards a direction where He won’t be able to see or know you. We want to keep God near. We want to be near to Him. He’s focused with love and compassion for your soul. Do you see God that way? He’s concerned about your soul. He’s concerned about your welfare. Do the choices that you’re making on a daily basis bear out your answer? Do they tell the same story that you would tell if you answered in words?

The Bible tells us that not even a sparrow falls to the ground without God’s knowledge. That’s the God who sees. The Bible tells us that we’re more valuable to Him than many sparrows. That’s how much He cares. He’s not disconnected. He’s not far away. He hasn’t forgotten you. We need to make sure that we see Him that way. †

STEPS HEAVENWARD

By the late R. L. Berry

Ed. note: We begin reprinting another book from one of the pioneers of the past. We trust it will be a blessing to our readers.

Chapter I

The New Experience

Young convert, through the medium of the printed page we are to have a heart-to-heart talk about the very things that you will most likely desire to know. You have only recently been converted and have started out on the highway that Jesus lifted up for pilgrims to glory to walk upon. You have believed on the Lord Jesus Christ unto salvation. The burden of sin is gone, and you are free. There is peace in your soul, joy in your heart, and you are tasting that which Paul wrote of when he said, “Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Romans 5:1).

Conversion is a wonderful experience; it is a new birth, and that means a new creature. New creatures have a new life, and the new life that you have came from God, and if it is fed and cared for it will grow.

When I say that conversion is a wonderful experience, do not misunderstand me. It is wonderful, really, the change from sin to grace; and yet to you it may have seemed very common, ordinary, and as if there were not much to it. It does not matter. Some people have what are called “powerful” conversions, which usually means that the demonstrations of joy are great, while others are classed as “quiet,” and some even as “stillborn.” Pay no attention to what others may say as to which class you belong, for these manifestations follow the natural dispositions of people. An enthusiastic person will be converted enthusiastically, a quiet person quietly, and a very quiet person very quietly. Some shed tears of joy, some shout aloud, some sing, some laugh, and some simply believe on Jesus. Inner emotions and outward demonstrations may vary with each individual conversion; the essential things are repentance and faith in Jesus Christ. Tears of observation have proved that one kind of conversion holds out just as well as another.

Cowper, the poet, says of his conversion: “The happy period which was to shake off my fetters, and afford me a dear opening of the free mercy of God in Christ Jesus, was now arrived. I flung myself into a chair near the window, and, seeing a Bible there, ventured once more to apply to it for comfort and instruction. The first verse I saw was the 25th of the third of Romans: ‘Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God.’ Immediately I received strength to believe, and the full beams of the sun of righteousness shone upon me. I saw the sufficiency of the atonement He had made, my pardon sealed in His blood, and all the fullness and completeness of His justification. In a moment I believed and received the gospel.” Charles Wesley, just before he was converted, threw himself on his bed with groanings and earnest prayer. A poor woman heard him groaning and praying and she ventured to put her head into his door and say, “In the name of Jesus of Nazareth, arise and believe, and thou shalt be healed of all thine infirmities.” Wesley cried, “Oh, that Christ would but thus speak to me!” Then he uttered the cry, “I believe! I believe!” and was saved by believing.

Bunyan, in his *Pilgrim’s Progress*, tells of Christian’s starting along the highway to the Celestial City. After a while he came to the Interpreter’s House, a place where Christian was given instructions and warnings that would be of value to him along the way. This book is a sort of Interpreter’s House. We want to stand upon an eminence, as it were, and point out the dangers and pitfalls along the Christian’s way. Out of the experiences of those who have been a long time on the way we shall glean things that will encourage and bless the young convert. The race is not to the swift nor the battle to the strong. The hedgehog beat the hare.

“So trudge along though none may know
Your worth or give you glory;
To start out brisk doesn’t win the race;
The end will tell the story.”—Austin.

Chapter II

What To Do First

Do not expect to do something great the first thing. Act naturally. A young man was converted on the road home one night. He had very little acquaintance with the Bible and was not used to religious or theological modes of thought or of statement, but he had heard a kind of religious expression spoken on occasions, viz., "God, for Christ's sake, has forgiven my sins." So when he entered the house that night and his old father asked, "What has happened to you?" the boy replied, "God, for Christ's sake, has forgiven my sins." Such a reply was so unexpected that the old father found no words that he thought would meet the situation, so he said nothing further then. But the thing was so overwhelming that later in the night he put his head into the door of the boy's room and asked, "How are you getting along?" "All right," replied the boy; "How are you getting along?" The old father replied, "Well, Otis, stick to it; do not do as I have done." These awkward, though natural utterances of young converts are much more refreshing to hear than the stale, oft-repeated expressions that one hears.

An old drunkard was converted one time, and when he reached home he declared that from then on there would be family worship in his house. But he did not know anything about prayer, so he knelt down, waved his hat over his head, and said, "Hurrah for Jesus!" An old woman who had lived all her long life in sin was converted, and her first words were, "I feel just as though I were somebody else." She was renewed, made new.

Generally speaking, some expression of or testimony to one's faith in Christ is given at the time of or soon after conversion. This should be done, because it is like signing up as a soldier in the army, or signing a business contract. This testimony puts you publicly on God's side, confirms your faith, and strengthens your decision. Once publicly enlisted in God's army, you will find it easier to resist temptations to back out.

It is best to let your family know of your conversion soon. There may be circumstances under which it would be best not to tell the immediate family of your new experience, but to let them find it out. No definite or arbitrary rule can be laid down accepting this: There is no such thing as a secret Christian, and any attempt to conceal the experience will result in disaster. Better is it to be bold and suffer than silent and secretive and be taken for a sinner.

A great variety of thoughts and feelings surge through the minds of converts on the day of their conversion. To some the joy of conversion is so great that practically all other thoughts and emotions are held in check. Others look forward and, like Paul, ask, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" Timid persons and the very young or very old may really wonder whether they should try to hold out faithful, or quit before going any farther. With some the joy of conversion may not last long, indeed it may not yet have begun. It was two weeks after the writer's conversion before any great joy came to his heart, yet there was never a doubt as to the time or place of his conversion.

The best way to gain courage and strength just after conversion is to do as the old father exhorted his son, "Well, Otis, stick to it." Do not be moved by any kind of feeling, by any want of feeling, or by any suggestion.

Say to yourself: I am a child of God; Christ has given me eternal life. That life has great power, whether I feel that it has or not; the Lord will carry me through. Say also: I am through with sin, the world, and the devil; I will never return to them; I have put my hand to the plow, never to look back; the time past of my life suffices for sin, but now it is Jesus and His way for me. Be thankful; if possible get upon your knees and thank God with all your heart for His mercy in bringing you to repentance and then forgiving your sins. If you will reflect upon what a calamity salvation has averted in your case, saving you from sin and making escape from hell possible, you will not feel as though you want to go back into sin.

Follow the example of the best and most saintly Christians you know. You are a babe in Christ, and since you do not know for yourself just how to walk and how to please God, take the best Christian you can find for your example. Perhaps the best ones you can find will have some faults or weaknesses; do not imitate their faults but their virtues.

Since you have made the start, it is important that you succeed in the Christian life. Decide, then, that you will succeed. Determine to be brave. "If there be one thing upon earth that mankind love and admire better than another, it is a brave man—a man who dares look the devil in the face and tell him he is the devil."—James A. Garfield. Decision is half the battle. A discouraged man is half whipped already.

Decide to make use of the means of grace. Greatness never comes at once, but comes through the doing of many little things that build one up to noble character. And these means of grace are simple things, very simple things. Indeed, young convert, their very simplicity will cause you to overlook them unless you are very careful. Naaman was told to go dip himself seven times in the Jordan in order to be healed of the leprosy. He turned away in a rage at such a simple remedy; he expected some great and grand performance, but no, it was simply dip seven times in Jordan.

The usual means of grace to a young convert are prayer, song, testimony, teaching in the Sunday-school, reading of the Bible, and listening to sermons. It is as natural for young Christians to want to pray as it is for infants to cry. This does not mean that it will be as easy for you to pray in public as it is for a baby to cry. We mean secret, or home praying. Every morning should find you on your knees in prayer, and so should every night. Take God's grand old Book, the Bible, and read from it every day. Attend regularly every service of the local church. Be cheerful and sing a song every day. Visit the sick of your neighborhood, and speak to sinners about turning to God. The devil always finds a job for idle hands to do, hence from the very beginning you must make yourself useful in the kind of Christian service a young convert can do.

Determine never to be a parasite, one who gets, but never gives; one who lives to enjoy all of God's good

The Way of Truth

favours, but never does one act to bring those favours to others; one who sits down, while the others work to make the church a power and the services a blessing. Did you ever notice how bored you felt at public workings, quilting bees, and similar gatherings, when some members of the company habitually slighted their work, pretending to be very busy but really doing little? You know that by and by such persons come to be known, and secretly if not openly are regarded as a sort of nuisance. There are so-called Christians of that kind; but, young convert, make up your mind before you finish reading this chapter that that is not the kind you are going to be.

Just as soon as possible, go to the pastor of the local church of God in your neighborhood and offer yourself for service. It will do him much good and you also. Too few, entirely too few, young converts offer themselves in any definite way to Christian work. You may feel that you have no qualifications to do religious work. Perhaps you have not, and this fact may hold you back as it has thousands of others. But here is the danger; so many never do offer their services and never qualify for any Christian work. He who offers himself will most likely qualify.

The little beginnings of your Christian life will point out pretty certainly what kind of a Christian you will be in the future. Great is the force of habit. The child is said to be father to the man, so is a young convert to the Christian to be. It is important to observe the simple duties of the Christian life, and thus form correct habits of Christian living. Most of us are just bundles of habits. We do things a certain way and at certain times because we are used to it. The young convert who fails to pray regularly, to read the Bible daily, to go to public church services regularly, who never testifies for Christ, nor works for Him, will soon be on the background and is near to falling. He is leaving undone the very things that would build him up in God.

Therefore, on this birthday of your soul, summon up all the courage you can command, and solemnly vow that from this day till the day of your death you will be on God's side. †

OUT OF BOX 88

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Thank you for your continuing support in my Christian life. I have been watching [the internet services] and learning and loving the church in Hagerstown for so long. I could never explain how grateful I am for you all. I pray for you. I love you. I am blessed to have this congregation in my life. I pray constantly for a church in my area that believes and acts in faith through our Word of God. My prayers and love continue for all the dear Christians in Hagerstown. ... I thank you all.

—S. M., Indiana

Thank you for *The Way of Truth*. It is sincerely appreciated. May God continue to bless you—your contribution to the “Christian” world.

—M. M., Ohio

THE WORLDS OF THE BIBLE

By the late
Bro. H. R. Matthews



IN THE WRITINGS of the apostle John found written in John 3:16 are, “For God so loved the world.” This same John instructed in I John 2:15, “Love not the world.” In Mark 16:15, Jesus instructed His followers, “Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.” Paul, in his epistle to the Romans, instructed the Roman brethren to “be not conformed to this world.” Do we have paradoxes concerning these verses? Let's look into these verses and endeavor to harmonize them.

“In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth” (Genesis 1:1). God took great pleasure in His creation that we call the world. The earth was filled with wonder and beauty: the streams and the great bodies of water, the lush valleys and the lofty mountain peaks, the fertile plains and the desert sands brought great pleasure to the heart of God. But God did not create this vast earth for His pleasure alone. It was also for the joy and pleasure of mankind that He would, in due time, create and place here on this globe and through which He would populate it.

It was true that even before the foundation of the earth God knew that the people with which He populated the earth would transgress His law and would need a Redeemer. So it was not the world or the globe that God created that John 3:16 is speaking of; rather, it was mankind with whom God populated this globe that would be in need of the Savior, Jesus Christ. It was He who instructed His followers to go into all the world (this globe) and preach the gospel to every creature.

I John 2:15 and Romans 12:2 dwell much on the same thought, so we will deal primarily on I John 2:15. This will be the main thrust of this article with the foregoing being an introduction to the article.

We have come to a firm conclusion that the world God loves are the souls of those He placed on this globe, but what about the world John said not to love?

John, in I John 2, verse 16, gives quite a broad scope of what is comprehended in the love of the world: “For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.”

We will choose two parts from the world that John said not to love. These are entertainment and how we wish to conform to the world in our personal appearance.

There is something in our created makeup that must be entertained or kept active, for without this the mind becomes a target for the attacks of the enemy and his undesirable thoughts. Also, in this created being, God has placed a desire to worship Him. When this desire is properly carried out, we find peace and happiness to the soul. This is the most fulfilling of any

entertainment. There are other forms of entertainment which are sanctioned by God. Even our daily chores, when we consider keeping the mind active, would be a form of entertainment.

Our children and young people must be entertained. This entertainment must always have the approval of God. Both adult and Christian young people must guard carefully their choice of entertainment, lest the world John said we must not love tarnishes our choices.

Any entertainment that would involve our attending a worldly environment that would tend to influence us toward worldly living should be shunned. We should not become involved in any entertainment that would do harm to our Christian testimony. If there is a worldly function that it seems best for us to attend, such as a wedding of a friend or loved one, let us take with us a good Christian example. More harm might be done by not attending. We must show ourselves friendly to those of the world, else how can we win them to Christ?

It is becoming more and more common for churchgoers to attend movies. This is a case of professed Christians seeking entertainment outside the realms of righteousness. I would not encourage anyone to have the parlor movies in your home. There are some things on television that would not be wrong to watch, but for the most part, the programming is extremely unclean. One of the greatest interruptions to functional family living has been the television. Father may watch professional sports for hours, hours that should be spent in building family relationships.

Those whose hearts are void of an active relationship with almighty God will endeavor to fill that void by attending the bars and clubs, the sports arenas and game rooms, and other places where you will not find the presence of God.

Let us who profess Christ never go anywhere, attend any function where Christ would not go with us, or engage in any type of entertainment that would not be to the glory of God.

James 1:27 says, "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world."

Let us consider now the personal appearance aspect of the world John said we should not love. This would involve the pride of life. King Solomon listed this pride as one of the things that God hates. Not all pride is evil. It is the pride that conforms to this world that God hates.

Let us examine these two prides by making a comparison. When attending church of God services, one will not wish to bring reproach upon Christian living by dressing in an unkempt or slothful way. It is not necessary to wear creaseless trousers or lapelless coats to achieve humility. A Christian must possess a pride in his appearance that will not bring reproach to the cause of Christ. He may wish to appear in a neat, clean suit with matching shirt and modest tie with no desire to draw attention to himself.

Another man may dress identically to the man just described with a desire to draw attention to himself. This is the pride of life John spoke of. This is the pride God hates.

The adorning of the body in such a way to draw attention to one's self is of the world that John said we should not love. The apostle Paul deals with this in I Timothy 2:9, 10, as also does the apostle Peter in I Peter 3:3, 4. In all these verses, the women are specifically addressed, but modesty is just as binding on the man as it is on the woman.

Paul approached the subject in this manner: "In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with braided hair, or gold, or pearls or costly array; "But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works."

Peter's statement concerning adornment is very similar to that of Paul's: "Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair; and of wearing of gold, or putting on of apparel; But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and a quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price."

God understood human nature, and in view of this, He saw that the fig leaves that Adam and Eve sewed together were not sufficient. You may ask, "What difference would it have made since Adam and Eve were the only two people that had been created up to that time?" There was, in God's great plan for all creation, which was formulated before the foundation of the world, an underlying principle of modesty. In keeping of this principle, God took the skins of animals and clothed Adam and Eve. This principle, being a part of God's Word, though heaven and earth may pass away, shall stand forever. This principle was in effect in Adam and Eve's time. It was in effect in Paul and Peter's time. It is just as valid in our time as when God formulated it before the foundation of the earth.

Sensuality is a part of the world that John said not to love. Why? There is a moral issue involved. For a woman to dress in a sensual fashion will create sensual thoughts on the part of the male gender. This the Word of God forbids. Both Paul and Peter dwelt on this subject because they understood well the principle of modesty.

There is another principle welded to the principle of modesty—one man, one woman. The beauty of the woman is for one man and one man only—her husband. When a woman exposes her body to public view, she is, in principle, becoming public property. But this principle of adornment does not stop at scanty clothing. Conforming to the world has a strong attraction to those folks who do not wish to be different from people of the world, and too, many enjoy the attention that comes from adorning themselves in a way that the Bible forbids.

Wishing to be presentable in public is commendable, but to go beyond that is venturing into the world we are to shun. †

James 1:27 says, "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world."

THE POETRY PAGE

STILL WITH ME

Horatius Bonar

Still with Thee, O my God,
I would desire to be;
By day, by night, at home, abroad,
I would be still with Thee.

With Thee when dawn comes in
And calls me back to care,
Each day returning to begin
With Thee, my God, in prayer.

With Thee amid the crowd
That throngs the busy mart,
To hear Thy voice, mid clamor loud,
Speak softly to my heart.

With Thee when day is done
And evening calms the mind;
The setting as the rising sun
With Thee my heart would find.

With Thee, in Thee, by faith
Abiding I would be;
By day, by night, in life, in death,
I would be still with Thee.

One tiny thought in tiny word
May give a great one birth,
And, if that thought was caused by me,
I lived a life of worth.

THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

Samuel Longfellow

I look to Thee in ev'ry need,
And never look in vain;
I feel Thy strong and tender love,
And all is well again;
The thought of Thee is mightier far
Than sin and pain and sorrow are.

Discouraged in the work of life,
Disheartened by its load,
Shamed by its failures or its fears,
I sink beside the road;
But let me only think of Thee,
And then new heart springs up in me.

LEAVE IT TO GOD

Grenville Kleiser

Does the path seem rough and steep?
Leave it to God.

Do you sow, but fail to reap?
Leave it to God.

Yield to Him your human will,
Listen childlike and be still,
Know that Love your mind can fill,
Leave it to God.

Is your life an uphill fight?
Leave it to God.

Do you struggle for the right?
Leave it to God.

Though the way be drear and long,
Sorrow will give place to song,
Good must triumph over wrong,
Leave it to God.

If in doubt just what to do,
Leave it to God.

He will make it plain to you,
Leave it to God.

Serve Him faithfully today,
He will guide you all the way,
Simply trust Him, watch and pray,
Leave it to God.

WORTH

Richard F. Wolfe

It is not what the world gives me
In honor, praise or gold;
It is what I do give the world,
So others do unfold.

If by my work through life I can
Another soul unfold,
Then I have done what cannot be
Made good, by praise or gold.

THINE

Annie S. Hawks

Thine, most gracious Lord,
O make me wholly Thine—
Thine in thought, in word, and deed,
For Thou, O Christ, art mine.

Thine, Lord, wholly Thine,
Forever one with Thee—
Rooted, grounded in Thy love,
Abiding, sure and free. †

IS THE RAPTURE BIBLICAL?

By Bro. Paul Fausnight

To believe in the rapture, you have to leave the Bible behind. I Thessalonians 4:16, 17 speaks of the resurrection at the last day, not Jesus coming to kidnap His fiancé for a honeymoon before the wedding feast. In John 6, Jesus says clearly three times that He will raise the dead on the “last day”—and Jesus also said in Matthew 13 that both the wicked and the righteous will dwell on Earth together until the world ends, and then at that time (when time is crashed into eternity) the angels will remove first the wicked from among the righteous—not the other way around as nonsensical rapture fiction pretends.

The kingdom of God is right here and now as a spiritual kingdom, just as Jesus said. It came in the power of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. Christ’s kingdom will never be a literal, earthly kingdom, never! Jesus went on to say, “I tell you the truth, some standing here right now will not die before they see the kingdom of God arrive in great power” (Mark 9:1).

Everything that is said in the gospels and epistles about the second coming of Christ has to be considered in its totality, and the pieces fit together perfectly like a puzzle.

Jesus will return suddenly on the last day, the “day” of resurrection and final judgment. With Him, He will bring the souls of all those who have been in paradise. The time of His coming is not known; we will not have a thousand and seven years of advance notice. It could be today. Of course, since the world is round, that would be at all hours of the clock, including nighttime, depending on where one lives. But everyone on Earth will see Him, including all mankind from all previous centuries and ages. In a twinkling of an eye all humanity who have ever lived are exposed before Him as the entire material, physical, and molecular universe in this dimension of time, space, and matter, which we now inhabit will be dissolved instantaneously in fiery conflagration, passing away with a mighty roar. The earth and starry heavens will exist no more.

The overwhelming power and glory of the Son of God will be on display as He reveals the final salvation of His people. The angels remove the wicked first from among the righteous and then all mankind are judged, whether good or evil. The wicked are taken to their eternal punishment, and the righteous in Christ are taken with Him as Jesus Christ delivers up His kingdom to the Father, in which we shall reign together with Him forever.

There will be degrees of eternal shame, disgrace, and bitterness of regretful sorrow and punishment in hell, and there will be degrees of glory and reward in heaven.

God will do all things justly. There will be provision made for those who are classified as innocents, such as infants or those who, although possessing souls, did not possess ability to make moral decisions resulting

in spiritual death from sin, but the Bible does not give us any details about this; it is to be inferred.

Heaven will be not at all what people imagine but far more wonderful. We will have spiritual bodies and will not appear as we do in this life but will bear the image of the glorious Son of God as He is now, not as He appeared in human form as He ascended from the Mount of Olives.

As Jesus said, “The one who endures to the end will be saved. ... Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of Life.” †

ABOUT THE ANOINTED CLOTH

(taken from our files)

In this age of skepticism and spiritual confusion, it is not at all surprising that religious professors would frown upon the idea of an anointed cloth being used in the healing of the sick.

As a Scriptural foundation for the using of a cloth, we turn to Acts 19:12, “So that from his [Paul’s] body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them [the sick], and the evil spirits went out of them.” As the Apostle was busy here and there in the gospel work, it was impossible for him personally to minister to all who needed physical healing and deliverance from evil spirits. So interested friends who could go to the sick when Paul could not, took from the hands of Paul handkerchiefs or aprons (articles of clothing) and carried them to be placed upon the bodies of the sick and possessed. Perhaps faith was inspired in the followers of Paul for such a practice because of the story of the woman who pressed through a crowd to touch the hem of Jesus’ robe, and who, when she touched was made every whit whole of an issue of blood which had plagued her for 12 years.

James 5:14, 15, gives us the encouraging promise that if any are sick and will call for the elders of God’s true church, the prayer of faith, which will be offered by those elders, will be honored, the sick will be healed, and if there is sin in their lives, even this can be forgiven at the same time if forgiveness is sought.

Since the world is wide and God’s church is small and His prophets few and far between, it is impossible for all those who desire to trust God for their healing to reach the elders of the church, or for the elders to reach them to anoint with oil and pray for them as James 5:14, 15 instructs.

God is honoring the practice of cloths or handkerchiefs going from the apostles, elders or ministers to the sick. Oftentimes a request need only be made for prayer. The body of believers among whom the request comes, gathers for prayer, and the petition is presented before the Lord earnestly. Generally, this is all that is needed. (However, sometimes there are cases of sickness that seem more “stubborn,” and fasting on the part of those making the request as well as on the part of those praying can be included with the prayers.) Also in these more difficult cases (or in ones not difficult, for that matter), the elders will anoint a small square of cloth which has been presented for the purpose (An ordinary

handkerchief is all right,) and, laying their hands upon the cloth (as they would anoint and lay hands upon the sick person were he present), they agree in prayer for the healing of the sick.

Upon receipt of the cloth, the patient should prayerfully place it on his afflicted body, looking unto the Lord to honor the prayers the distant elders have prayed for him. If it will strengthen his faith, he may pin the cloth to some part of his clothing and wear it for a time as a sort of constant “rebuke” against the disease.

We have had many testimonies of people who have been healed through this medium. Of course, faith in God, on the part of the elders and/or the part of the one who is sick, is the real source of healing; but the cloth serves to join the afflicted person with others of like mind.

*If I could just touch, the hem of His garment,
If I could just touch, some part of His clothes,
I know I'd be healed, my sins all forgiven,
If I could just touch Him, I know I'd be whole.*

—Glen A. Rice.

“For I am the Lord that healeth thee.”

—Exodus 15:26b.†

WHAT WE CAN LEARN FROM PIGEONS

Three lessons taken from *The Bible Illustrator*

THE DOVE MAN

It is said that a certain guide lived in the deserts of Arabia who never lost his way. He carried with him a homing pigeon with a very fine cord attached to one of its legs. When in doubt as to which path to take, he threw the bird into the air. The pigeon quickly strained at the cord to fly in the direction of home, and thus led the guide accurately to his goal. Because of this unique practice he was known as “the dove man.” So, too, the Holy Spirit, the heavenly Dove, is willing and able to direct us in the narrow way that leads to the more abundant life if in humble self-denial we submit to His unerring supervision.

STOP—AND REFOCUS

Have you ever wondered why a pigeon walks so funny? According to an interesting article in the Detroit Free Press, a pigeon walks the way it does so it can see where it's going. Because it can't adjust its focus as it moves, the pigeon actually has to bring its head to a complete stop between steps in order to refocus. This is the way it walks: head forward, stop; head back, stop. Don't laugh—that's how it goes!

In our spiritual walk with the Lord, we have the same problem as the pigeon. We have a hard time seeing while we're moving. We also need to stop between steps—to refocus on where we are in relation to the world and the will of God. That's not to say we have to stop and pray and meditate about every little decision in life. But certainly our walk with the Lord needs to have built into it a pattern of “stops,” which enable us to see more clearly before moving on.

RELAX THE BOW

According to tradition, when the apostle John was bishop in Ephesus, his hobby was raising pigeons. On one occasion, an Ephesian elder passed his house as he returned from hunting. When he saw John playing with one of his birds, he gently chided the old bishop for spending his time so frivolously. John looked at his critic's bow and remarked that the string was loosened. “Yes,” said the huntsman, “I also loosen the string of my bow when it's not in use. If it always stayed tight, it would lose its rebounding quality and fail me in the hunt.” “And I,” said John, “am now relaxing the bow of my mind so that I may be better able to shoot the arrows of divine truth.”

LESSONS TO LEARN FROM GEESE

We will never become a church that effectively reaches out to those who are missing out if we shoot our wounded. Instead of being fishers of men, as Christ has called us, we will be keepers of an ever-shrinking aquarium. Next fall when you see geese heading south for the winter, flying along in V formation, you might be interested in knowing what science has discovered about why they fly that way. It has been learned that as each bird flaps its wings, it creates an uplift for the bird immediately following. By flying in a V formation, the whole flock adds at least 71 percent greater flying range than if each bird flew on its own. (Christians who share a common direction and a sense of community can get where they are going quicker and easier, because they are traveling on the thrust of one another.)

Whenever a goose falls out of formation, it suddenly feels the drag and resistance of trying to go it alone, and quickly gets back into formation to take advantage of the lifting power of the bird immediately in front. (If we have as much sense as a goose, we will stay in formation with those who are headed the same way we are going.) When the lead goose gets tired, he rotates back in the wing and another goose flies point. (It pays to take turns doing hard jobs—with people at church or with geese flying south.) The geese honk from behind to encourage those up front to keep up their speed. (What do we say when we honk from behind?) Finally, when a goose gets sick, or is wounded by a shot and falls out, two geese fall out of formation and follow him down to help and protect him. They stay with him until he is either able to fly, or until he is dead, and then they launch out on their own or with another formation to catch up with their original group. (If people knew we would stand by them like that in church, they would push down these walls to get in.) You see, all we have to do in order to attract those who are missing back to church is to demonstrate to the world that we have as much sense as geese here at church. That seems little enough price to pay to win the lost and minister to one another. Even geese have sense enough to know it works every time. †

—*The Bible Illustrator*

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Bro. Rey Fabian, Host Pastor

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Bro. David Goble, Pastor

HATTIESBURG, MISSISSIPPI
September 1-4, 2023, Lord willing
Bro. Darrell Sanford, Pastor

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September 19-24, 2023, Lord willing
Bro. Aldrin McLaughlin, Pastor