

The Way of Truth

Vol. 81

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

No. 2

To What Have We Come?

Message begins on page 15

March 2023

Your Soul Needs Immediate Attention

Inside Front Cover

YOUR SOUL DESERVES IMMEDIATE ATTENTION

MAN, by nature, is a procrastinator. He has the tendency to put things off until later. But there are things in life which demand our immediate attention! If your house is on fire, you certainly would not sit in your easy chair reading the morning paper and ignore it!

Reading from Luke 12:15-21, "And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth. And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided? So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God."

The foregoing narrative emphasizes three important points: It confirms the existence of the eternal soul. Secondly, our soul could be required at any given moment. Finally, it shows the foolishness of leaving God out of one's life.

Though you may not have opened this magazine with any intention of giving your heart to the Lord, here are some reasons your soul deserves immediate attention—

Life is fragile—There is no guarantee how long our life will be. It can end quickly by a number of factors. Not only by sickness, but every day people die by car accidents, falls, and injuries of every variety. We all are but a heartbeat away from eternity! Jesus said in Luke 13:1-5, "There were present at that season some that told him of the Galilaeans, whose blood Pilate had mingled with their sacrifices. And Jesus answering said unto them, Suppose ye that these Galilaeans were sinners above all the Galilaeans, because they suffered such things? I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish. Or, those eighteen, upon whom the tower in Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." Those who died in the 9/11/01 tragedy in New York had no idea that that would be their last day on Earth.

Putting off salvation only will make it harder to be saved in the future—So many procrastinate concerning their soul's salvation do so intending to get saved at some later point in their lives. They do not realize that it will be harder in the future because Satan, like a spider, wraps them tighter and tighter in his web of sin as time passes. Sin will take you farther than you want to go; sin will leave you longer than you

want to stay; sin will cost you far more than you want to pay.

The naked truth is that the easiest it will ever be to break free from sin is today. Tomorrow will be harder to repent, next month will be harder, and next year will be exponentially more difficult than today. The Bible declares in II Corinthians 6:2, "For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation."

You can only be saved when and if God calls you!—You can't be saved any old time you choose. Again, the Master speaks in John 6:44, "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." Conviction is such a blessing! "Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?" (Acts 2:37). If the Spirit of God is dealing with you it confirms that God will save you. But you should answer when He calls.

The apostle Paul witnessed before three kings, each of which responded in different ways. King Felix trembled and responded, "Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee." There is no record of his calling Paul again. The Spirit of God was convicting Felix then and there. But he put it off as so many do. "Not now, a more convenient day." A day which never comes. King Festus cried out with a loud voice, "Paul, thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad." Thus is the response of many who hear the gospel message, not realizing that the Spirit of God is working with the soul.

And King Agrippa was closest of all, for after Paul was finished testifying, he said to Agrippa, "King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest." Then Agrippa said unto Paul, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian." When I think of the multitudes of individuals who were convicted to the point where they were "almost persuaded," the refrain of a song reverberates in my mind—"almost, but lost!"

Genesis 6:3 declares, "And the Lord said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years." It is possible to resist God's convictive Spirit to the point where He is grieved and will no longer work with that soul which, if that be the case, there is no hope of forgiveness. No one knows where the line is drawn.

In Isaiah 55:6, 7, the prophet says, "Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: 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."

Christ is coming again
—Yes, we have heard it many

ABOUT THE COVER

On our front is a picture of Zion National Park in Utah. Its terrain is majestic and inspires the visitor to see God's great power.

The Bible speaks of spiritual Mt. Zion which is symbolic of the church and inspires the comer thereunto with grace and truth. See messages herein.

THE WAY OF TRUTH

(Registered Trademark)

Vol. 81

March 2023

No. 2

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

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

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

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times, but it is still true and is another reason your soul needs immediate attention.

This truth is made clear in II Peter 3:9-14, "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat? Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless."

There is nothing to gain by procrastinating—but everything to lose! "For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Mark 8:36, 37). Your soul is your most valuable possession. To put it in jeopardy is foolish indeed! Therefore, seeking salvation and serving God should be #1 on your "to do" list! It is dangerous to neglect so great salvation. It will be harder to yield to God tomorrow. Satan will bind you tighter and tighter the longer you live in sin. It will be more difficult to break free tomorrow than it is today. To put off salvation until a future date is folly.

There are others to consider who are looking to you—Here is something you may have not thought about. You will not only be responsible for yourself at the judgment, but also for those you have influenced for wrong and those which you could have influenced for right. Lot pitched his tent towards Sodom and, as a result, some of his family were lost forever. Parents, you may not be ready to give your heart to God—but what about your family? By following your example, your children will also be lost.

The only time you can be saved is in the here and now—If you put it off until tomorrow, tomorrow may never come! In II Corinthians 6:1, 2, we find this truth: "We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain. For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." Now is the time to repent while the Spirit of God is calling, and while you still have the right use of your mind. Time passes so quickly. "Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away" (James 4:14).

You have picked up this magazine and have perused this editorial, probably not foreseeing that God would use this to impress upon you the seriousness of this very moment. You must make a decision. Your soul deserves immediate attention. Don't put it off again!

"All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out" (John 6:37). †


IN THIS ISSUE:

Walking With God in Evil Times	Page 2
<i>Radio message by the late Alvin A. Craig</i>	
The Children's Corner	Page 3
<i>"The Long Race," by Rebecca Bland</i>	
The Question Box	Page 4
<i>Our monthly feature</i>	
Grace and Truth	Page 6
<i>Full-length sermon by Harley McClung</i>	
Shadows of Good Things	Page 10
<i>Part XVII of the book by the late R. R. Byrum</i>	
Bible Lesson of the Month	Page 12
<i>"Live No Longer in Sin"</i>	
Young People's Page	Page 14
<i>"Truth Is Like a Sill Plate," by Andrew Richards</i>	
To What Have We Come?	Page 15
<i>Full-length sermon by John Romero</i>	
The Will of God	Page 20
<i>Article by G. E. Tyler</i>	
For Poetry Lovers	Page 21
<i>Truth in rhythmic form</i>	

WALKING WITH GOD IN EVIL TIMES

Radio Message by the late Bro. Alvin A. Craig

(aired 9/27/98)

 OUR SUBJECT for today's broadcast is, "Walking With God in Evil Times." Our text of scripture is found in Micah, chapter 6, verse 8: "He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?"

The late C. W. Naylor wrote, "God can be pleased only with that which is right. He hates iniquity. He hates every evil thing and can find no pleasure whatever in such. If then we would please Him, we must depart from evil, must shut it out of our lives, must allow none of our conduct to be evil. God is pleased with that which is good and all that is good in order to please Him. Therefore, we have only to do that which is good and right."

First of all, I'd like for us to look at the man Enoch. "And Enoch walked with God after he begat Methuselah three hundred years, and begat sons and daughters: And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him" (Genesis 5:22, 24). Enoch obtained this state of religious and spiritual excellence in a time, where comparatively speaking, there were few helps and no written revelations. Enoch was a married man, a father of sons and daughters. He lived among people who did not serve God, but still he walked with God. Yes, Enoch walked with God in evil times, and he maintained his integrity before God, even though he did not have the written Scriptures and a godly environment around him. He did live for God. He walked with God, and he set a godly example before his family.

The second person I want to call your attention to is Noah. Genesis 6:9, "Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God." Genesis 6:22, "Thus did Noah; according to all that God commanded him, so did he." The Scriptures tell us in Genesis 6:5, "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." So Noah lived in the midst of a crooked and a perverse generation. Wickedness and ungodliness were on every hand, yet Noah was a just man and perfect in his generation, and he walked with God. How did Noah walk with God? By doing all the will of God. "Thus did Noah; according to all that God commanded him, so did he." The way that anyone can walk with God is by keeping the commandments of God. Noah lived in a time when the whole earth was filled with violence and corruption, yet he did not allow the evil standards of his day to rob him of his fellowship with God. He stood out as the only one who walked with God.

Beloved, God's grace, which was sufficient for Noah in the corrupt and wicked age in which he lived, is sufficient for us today. How many times religious organizations and individuals have made shipwreck by allowing the world to influence them and to set their standard!

Surely, we're living in evil times, but if we're going to walk with God in evil times, we must not allow the world to set our standard. We must not allow the world to guide us or to influence us. We must not bow to peer pressure. We must love God with all our hearts and be determined to follow Him, even as Noah did, for he did all that the Lord commanded him to do.

The third person I'd like for us to look at is the man Abraham, born in Ur of the Chaldees. The people of Babylon worshiped many gods, but the moon god Sin was supreme in Ur during the time Abraham lived there. It is a miracle of God's providence that Abraham resisted Ur's polluted atmosphere and set out on a journey of faith to Canaan that would bless all mankind. We are told in Hebrews 11:8, "By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went."

In my teaching and preaching in regard to Abraham, I have said different times that I would have liked if the Bible would have gone into more detail as to just how Abraham knew God, and how was it that he had such a marvelous experience with God, even though he lived in Ur, later known as Ur of the Chaldees. Of course, Abraham lived there before the Chaldeans ever took over that area, but Ur was a wicked place. The people worshiped many gods, but as the *Nelson's Bible Dictionary* tells us "the moon god Sin was the supreme one during that time." Yet, in the midst of that, Abraham feared God. He had faith in God, and when God called him out, he went not knowing where he was going. But knowing God had called him, his faith in God was so strong that he obeyed God, regardless of where He led him. "He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God" (Romans 4:20).

The next person that I would like to mention was a young person. He was sold by his brothers into slavery when he was seventeen years of age. I speak of the young man Joseph. Joseph was sold by his brothers and taken by the Midianites down into Egypt, where he was sold into bondage to Potiphar's house. Potiphar trusted him. He saw that God was with him, and he turned over his personal affairs to Joseph. His personal affairs prospered as Joseph went about doing the king's business. But Potiphar's wife set her eyes upon him and endeavored to get Joseph to do a very sinful and wicked thing. She even took hold of him one time, begging him, as would be expressed today, to lie with her or to sleep with her. Joseph said, "How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" (Genesis 39:9). There in Potiphar's house, with the temptation of Potiphar's wife, Joseph walked with God in evil times. Joseph was thrown into jail because of it, but the Bible says that even there the Lord was with him. Why? Because he walked with God. Just like our text says: "He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" Joseph walked with God, and God was with him. God brought him out and made him a ruler in the land of Egypt.

The next individual that I would like to refer to was also a young person when he was carried away from

Jerusalem to Babylon as a war prisoner. I speak of the young man Daniel. Daniel was a teenager when he was taken from Jerusalem into captivity by the Babylonians in the year 605 B.C. He was in his eighties when he was given the vision of the prophecy of the seventy weeks. During all those years in Babylonian captivity, Daniel maintained his integrity before God.

In more than sixty years of his life in Babylon, Daniel faced many challenges, but in all those years he grew stronger in his commitment to God, and he was faithful. God was with him. Daniel walked with God in evil times and in evil environments, but he maintained his integrity. Those men who were trying to find something against Daniel could not find anything against him. They said that the only way they were going to find anything against him would be between him and his God, but they couldn't find anything. "From his youth Daniel was determined to live by God's law. In moments of crisis, Daniel turned first to God in prayer before turning to the affairs of state." That quote was taken from *Nelson's Bible Dictionary*. Daniel was one who walked with God in evil times.

We read now of the man Lot who was the nephew of Abraham. What about him? He journeyed with Abraham into the Land of Promise, but he separated from Abraham and pitched his tent towards Sodom. It wasn't long until he moved his family into that wicked city. I'm sure if you are familiar with the Scriptures, you are familiar with what happened to Lot. He pitched his tent towards Sodom, but the influence of Sodom was so strong that soon he was in Sodom. As a result of that, he lost all that he had. Only he and his two virgin daughters were spared in the destruction of the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah. Even his wife turned and looked back, and she became a pillar of salt.

Beloved, it does not pay to follow this evil world in which we live. We need to be determined to go against the tide. We need to walk with God even though the times are evil. A holy walk will not come by doing what comes naturally. You must go against the tide, and you must be determined to follow God, regardless of the evil influences that are all around you.

Again, I say, how many religious organizations and how many individuals made shipwreck because they have allowed the world to set their standard rather than following the standard that God has set in His Word! It takes effort. Crucify self, put Christ first, love Him with all your heart, then you will want to walk Him even though the times be evil. The apostle Paul said, "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." Yes, it takes effort to live for God. It takes effort to keep yourself unspotted from the world. It takes effort to live for God in evil times, but God's grace is sufficient. Jesus said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you. I will not let you be tempted above that ye are able to bear; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape." †

"He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?"—Micah 6:8.

THE CHILDREN'S CORNER



THE LONG RACE

A Bible Lesson by Sis. Rebecca Bland

"Did you write this?" the physical education teacher at our school asked me. It was early in the day, and my students were not due to arrive for another half hour. I poked my head outside the classroom door to see what the teacher was looking at. Hanging on the wall next to my doorway was a handwritten notice explaining certain classroom procedures.

"Yes," I said with a smile. "I wrote that and hung it up there yesterday."

"You have beautiful handwriting," she said. "It looks very distinguished."

"Thank you," I said with a smile. "I appreciate the compliment."

The physical education teacher walked on down the hallway, and I went back into my room. I was still smiling, and I felt as though that smile might remain on my face for a good while. I was smiling because I realized I had won a very long race. It was not a foot race or a car race. It was not a race against a competitor. It was a race against myself, and it was a race I had sometimes thought of giving up. For years, I had wondered if it was a race I could ever win.

I sat down and looked out across the empty desks in my classroom. In my mind, I traveled to a different classroom—a long ago classroom where I was a little eight-year-old student.

Recess had just ended, and all of us third graders had taken our seats. The teacher walked up and down the rows of students, giving each of us a clean sheet of lined paper. The lines were close together, because this was "penmanship paper" especially made for practicing our handwriting. As I looked at the paper, a little flicker of hope stirred in my heart. Maybe this would be the day my handwriting would shine. Maybe this would be the day my teacher would place a sticker on my paper and say, "Nice handwriting, Rebecca!"

I began copying the sentence the teacher had written on the chalkboard in her flawless penmanship. Slowly and carefully I formed the letters, gripping my pencil tightly in my hand. By the time I had finished the sentence, my fingers ached.

"When you have finished writing the sentence, write it again," the teacher instructed. "Make sure the second time is even neater than the first time."

I began copying the sentence for the second time. As I wrote, I could hear the tap-tap of the teacher's shoes as she walked slowly up the row of desks. She paused at each desk. "Very nice work," I heard her say to a student. There was a short pause, and then I heard her say, "Here is a sticker for you." I wondered what

the sticker looked like. The teacher had several different packs of stickers. Some were pictures of cute animals, some were pictures of birds, and some were pictures of flowers.

I had often gotten stickers on reading papers, and sometimes I even got a sticker on a math assignment. But I had never, ever gotten a sticker on a penmanship paper. I understood why. My handwriting was terrible. Try as I might, I could not seem to make my letters a uniform size, nor slant them all in the same direction.

My younger sister, Twila, was frequently complimented on her handwriting. “Your handwriting is so neat!” I would hear people tell her. “It looks just like your grandmother’s handwriting. It is beautiful!”

Those words cut deeply into my heart. I admired my grandmother and tried very hard to be just like her. But my handwriting fell far short of her round, neat script.

“I will get a sticker today!” I promised myself. I gripped my pencil even more tightly and pressed it hard against the paper, willing it to write neatly.”

The tap-tap of the teacher’s shoes drew nearer until I could see the toes of them as she stopped next to my desk. She stood there for what seemed like a very long time, and then her shoes tap-tapped away. There would be no sticker on my penmanship paper. Not today. My throat ached and I swallowed hard, determined not to shed the tears that lurked behind my eyes.

For the rest of the year, I tried to improve my handwriting, but third grade passed without a single sticker on a penmanship paper of mine.

Fourth grade came and went, and then I was in the fifth grade. I earned good grades in science and social studies and reading. I learned many things. But my handwriting was no better.

Teachers tried to help me. “Don’t grip your pencil so hard!” one of them advised. I tried loosening up on the pencil, but that made me lose all sense of control over my writing. “Try making rows of loops and circles,” another teacher suggested. My rows of loops and circles leaned and flopped on the lined paper like weary soldiers who had given up the fight.

By the time I reached high school age, my handwriting had gotten a little better. But I was far from winning the race against my poor penmanship.

I went to college, and I became a teacher. When I wrote words on the chalkboard for my students, I took my time. I erased words that weren’t neat and rewrote them. I wanted to set an example of good penmanship before my students.

At last I won the race against my poor handwriting. It did not happen on a certain day. In fact, I didn’t realize the race was won until I received a compliment on my penmanship. The glow in my heart and the smile on my face reflected years of trying and never giving up. All the hard struggles with paper and pencil had been worthwhile.

This month’s wise saying comes from Proverbs 31:13, which says, “She seeketh wool, and flax, and worketh willingly with her hands.” The thirty-first chapter of Proverbs is about a “virtuous” woman—a woman who

lives a righteous life and is a good example. One thing that this woman does is to work willingly with her hands.

There are many things our hands may find to do. Some of these things may be easy for us, and some of them may be difficult. The most important thing is for us to put our best effort into every worthwhile thing we are asked to do. Colossians 3:23 tells us, “And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men.”

Each of us faces challenges. Overcoming these challenges is like running a race. The race may be long and hard to win. But if we ask the Lord to help us, we will always be successful.

Activity

The Bible speaks of running life’s race. Try to fill in the missing words to complete this very familiar scripture, and then see if you can find its location.

“Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a _____ of witnesses, let us lay aside every _____, and the _____ which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with _____ the _____ that is set before us.”

Answer to Last Month’s Activity

The Word of God is profitable for **reproof, doctrine, correction, and instruction in righteousness.** †



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



QUESTION: In Matthew 3:11, John speaks of baptism of the Holy Spirit and fire. What is fire baptism?

ANSWER: We are not to think of the fire as being a separate baptism. When a converted person is filled with the Holy Spirit (and this has nothing to do with speaking in a supposed unknown tongue), he is baptized with the Spirit. At the same time, he is cleansed from the depraved nature. This is symbolized by the “fire.”

QUESTION: Would you please explain II Thessalonians 2:3, “Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition”?

ANSWER: Reading the verse before, we see Paul was referring to “the day” of Christ’s coming. Some thought His coming would be in their lifetime, but Paul informs them it would not happen, for a lot of things

The Way of Truth

must happen before Christ's second coming. There would be a falling away from the truth, false religion would arise, this system of false religion would be headed by a man that would set himself up as God, as it were. This has no reference to a supposed political, military dictator known as "the anti-christ" that people expect yet out in the future. These verses have already been fulfilled.

QUESTION: In the fourth and fifth chapters of Revelation, the Bible mentions the "seven spirits of God." Is there any place in the Bible that names the seven spirits? I've been told that it represents the seven churches. That is not the answer I want.

ANSWER: The apostle Paul tells us there is only ONE Spirit. There are many false spirits, or demons, but there is only one Holy Spirit—Ephesians 4:4.

As you doubtless know, the book of Revelation is a book of symbols and to understand its message you must understand the meaning of the symbols.

Revelation 5:6 tells us of a "Lamb." This is speaking of Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God. This Lamb had seven horns. Horns at times symbolize rule and authority, and it had "seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent forth into all the earth." Seven is a perfect number. So the Holy Spirit is perfect, pure, holy, complete. Now notice, the Spirit was sent forth by the Lamb "into all the earth." Christ is the head of the His church. The Holy Spirit has been sent to work in and through the church to enable it to carry the gospel to the ends of the earth.

F. G. Smith, in his book, *Revelation Explained*, wrote on this point:

"The Lamb was said to have seven horns and seven eyes. A horn is a symbol of power, and seven, being a sacred or perfect number, denotes the fulness of power possessed by Christ; while the seven eyes signify the seven spirits of God, or the Holy Spirit, which, being under the direct control of Christ, is sent forth into the world to effect the regeneration of men."

Some who teach "seven church ages" have applied the "seven spirits" to each of the supposed seven ages, but the Bible doesn't teach it that way.

QUESTION: What is the meaning of the scripture, "It is not meat to take the children's bread, and to cast it unto the dogs"?

ANSWER: As we know, the plan of God originally embraced the Hebrew nation only. The Gentiles, as a rule, were not a part of the covenant people. Hence, the Hebrews considered themselves the chosen people of God, and they often referred to the Gentiles as "dogs." The Hebrews disdained dogs so much that even the price of a dog could not be put into the Lord's treasury. When the Syrophenician woman came to Jesus, imploring Him to cast the devil out of her daughter, Jesus made this statement, knowing that He was sent to "minister to the lost sheep of Israel" and not to the Gentiles. Thus it did not seem advisable to grant healing, which was intended for the Hebrews (the "children's bread") to the Gentiles; however, the meekness and

faith of this woman caused Jesus to grant her request. Note her humility when she exclaimed, "Yes, Lord: yet the dogs under the table eat of the children's crumbs."

Of course, with the death of Jesus on the cross, the "middle wall of partition" was broken down (Ephesians 2:14), and today, in the sight of God, Hebrews and Gentiles stand on the same footing. The divine admonition is, "WHOSOEVER WILL, let him take the water of life freely" (Revelation 22:17).

QUESTION: How can an ordinary man with the ordinary human mind be holy when we know that any normal mind is vulnerable to all kinds of thoughts and desires?

ANSWER: Your question is all about MAN! You do not seem to consider Christ or His work of salvation.

Christianity is not a theory! It is an experience, an experience that can only be had in and through Jesus Christ. "The carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be" (Romans 8:7). Through Christ we can have the "mind of Christ," a spiritual mind.

Now, I am not saying that a true Christian never has an evil thought enter his mind; he does. Otherwise, how could Satan tempt a Christian? But an evil thought is not sin unless we consent to it. With a true experience of full salvation, i.e., being justified and sanctified, we have the Holy Spirit abiding in us, and through Him we have power to overcome the temptations Satan brings against us. (See Acts 1:8.)

QUESTION: Would you please explain the causes of disunity in the church at Corinth and the solution offered by Paul?

ANSWER: There were different "party" spirits at work in the congregation. Some were saying they were of Paul, some of Apollos, some of Cephas, and some of Christ. This, of course, was wrong; for ALL were to be of Christ. Paul asked them, "Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you?" (I Corinthians 1:13a).

Some were "carnal," for there was envy and strife and divisions among them (3:3). Paul pointed out to them that he, Apollos, and the others were ministers of Christ. They were working together, and the people needed to get their eyes off the various ministers and get them on the Lord, heed the message, and let there be no divisions among them (1:10). True ministers are not seeking to draw away disciples after them—see Acts 20:28-30. †

POSTAGE RATES RISE AGAIN!

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. May our Lord bless you abundantly as you do so.

GRACE AND TRUTH

2022 Hagerstown Convention Message by Bro. Harley McClung



I HAVE SOME verses that I feel God has laid on my heart. These are very familiar verses found in John 1:14-17: “And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth. John bare witness of him, and cried, saying, This was he of whom I spake, He that cometh after me is preferred before me: for he was before me. And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace. For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.” I would like to simply entitle my thoughts, “Grace and Truth.”

Jesus came to seek and to save the lost. When we think of salvation, a lot of people have different thoughts on what salvation is.

There was a lady who worked for me, and she and I were talking one day about a scripture and about salvation. I asked her, “What is salvation?”

She said, “Well, salvation means that I don’t have to go to hell.”

I said, “Is that all?”

“Yes,” she said.

There’s a whole lot more to salvation. There’s a whole lot more that we need to understand about the mercy of God and what He has given to us by His grace and truth.

Jesus came to set the suffering and the captives free—here, now, today! Yes, while Jesus was traveling around the Sea of Galilee, through the Judean hills, and through the streets of Jerusalem, He set the captives free. But He’s always the same. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever. What Jesus came to do in seeking and saving the lost was to set the captives free from the life of bondage. He came to bless us with this freedom. He came to bless us with His great salvation.

In Acts 3:26, we read, “God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.” Let me repeat that. I really want you to get this: “God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you [How?], in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.” When a person is turned away from his iniquities, he’s been set free from those iniquities. He’s been set free from the life of sin. So Jesus came to bless us.

Are you blessed this morning? Have you been blessed this week?

How does the song go?

I am blessed, I am blessed,

Every day that I live I am blessed.

When I wake up in the morning,

Till I lay my head to rest,

I am blessed, I am blessed.

How are we blessed? How did it come about this week? Do we know beyond a doubt that we are a blessed

people because of God’s grace? Now, what does that really mean? It means that God has given to mankind unmerited favor. That means that we really didn’t deserve this. We weren’t worthy of this, but God loved us so much that He was willing to give us His grace and favor.

Our thoughts are grace and truth. What is truth? That was a question that Pontius Pilate asked Jesus. He asked Jesus, “Art thou a king?”

Jesus answered Pilate, “To this end was I born. I came into the world to be the king and to deliver to the people the truth.”

Then Pilate asked Jesus, “What is truth?”

A lot of people don’t have any idea or a clue what truth is. *Truth* is “fact; certainty; the actual and reality that cannot be changed.” So Jesus came to give us the truth. He came to give us the facts. He came to give us light or instructions. He came to give us divine inspiration that cannot be altered. It cannot be changed. Now, people’s minds or opinions about truth can alter or be changed, but you really can’t change God’s Word. It’s forever settled in heaven.

Jesus came as the truth. “And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.” He was full of grace, but He was also full of truth. So Jesus came as the truth. He came as the proof of God’s amazing grace.

We see Jesus’ amazing grace by the beautiful verse that we know so well: John 3:16, “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son [Listen to me, that’s grace. He has given that grace to the whole world. All have that grace available to them. Everyone, in effect, Jesus came to bless. Everyone has access to this grace. Everyone has an opportunity to obtain this grace and be blessed by it. But that’s not all of John 3:16,] that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” It takes faith.

Here is another familiar passage of scripture we all know: Paul said in Ephesians, chapter 2, verse 8, “For by grace are ye saved [A lot of people stop right there. They don’t go any further. ‘Well, I’m saved by grace.’ Thank God, I am saved by grace.] through faith.” The men’s quartet sang, “I Was There When It Happened.” It’s not something that we guess. It’s not something that we hope for. No, we were there! Even though we were there, there is evidence, because the life we used to live, we live it no more. The life that we were bound by, we are now free from that life. We’ve been saved. We’ve been saved by the grace of God through the faith in what Jesus has given to us in the way of His grace. So Jesus came to lead mankind in truth.

Do you know that's why Jesus came? This is what the herald angel proclaimed in the Judean hills above Bethlehem: "Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." He's someone who will set us free. Wow! What glorious news that is! Listen to me this morning, He has the power to set us free.

This is something Paul understood. He knew it happened, too, because he lived as a Pharisee. He had such hatred, such malice in his heart. He had such turmoil in his heart. He said, "I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it." As a matter of fact, I believe with all my heart that when he saw those people stoning Stephen that he actually hated Stephen, because he was consenting to Stephen's death. But the God who was so true to Paul wanted him to see something. God does show us some things. He showed Paul a great light on the road to Damascus. What was that great light? It was the truth. "Paul, you're kicking against the pricks. You're having a hard time fighting against this conviction. I'm trying to persuade you to come over here where you can be free from all those terrible feelings."

Paul came to his senses like the prodigal son did. If you have read the account of Paul in the Bible, it seemed so easy, because all Paul said was, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? What do you want me to be?" Was the Lord faithful to him? Was He true to him? Yes, from that point in time, the Lord started showing grace to Paul. To that Paul said, "I'm saved by grace through faith. It is not of myself. It is not anything I can do. I can't get myself up out of that horrible pit. I can't get myself out of those feelings that I have for my fellow man. I can't stop that. It's not of me." It was a work that Christ and the grace of God and the truth and the Spirit wrought in Paul's life that changed him and made him into the man that he was. It was Paul who said, "God is no respecter of persons." If God was willing to do that for Paul, He's willing to do that for anyone here this morning.

Paul said, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation." If we'd really get a taste of this salvation and feel what it does for us, and have that euphoria (confidence), it will bring happiness. It doesn't mean we won't have some trials and tests to go through. We will. But Paul was so full of grace that he was able to say, "I rejoice in tribulation." Have you ever tried to rejoice while going through a really, really severe trial? Well, Paul said that he rejoiced. Why was he able to rejoice in tribulation? Because he knew God's grace was sufficient. He knew that he had everything right there at his disposal to do whatever God wanted him to do or to suffer whatever God allowed him to suffer. Sometimes God does allow us to go through situations. They're not always pleasant, but if we can rejoice while going through a trial, God is there to help us.

Bro. Goble spoke about the horses and chariots. That was a good illustration, because it shows that God is backing us up. He's taking care of us. He's setting things in order so that we can have that absolute assurance. We're going to face many things in this world, and we are facing many things. We're living in perilous

times. If you go out into the world and advocate for the things of God, the truth, you're going to face some things.

We've heard about the three Hebrew children, as we call them. They were Hebrews. I don't know if they were children. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego had a trial. Let me tell you something, this old world wants you and me to bow down to it. Submit to it. King Nebuchadnezzar had a big golden image built. What he was actually wanting them to do was to bow down and worship him, not the image. A lot of people that build some things want you to notice what they've done. "Why, I built this. Now you reverence this right here." Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego said, "We're not going to bow down to your image."

Listen to me, there was grace in the Old Covenant, too. There was some truth in the Old Covenant, too. I know Jesus came full of grace and truth, but God was taking care of His own back there. Well, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were told, "If you don't bow down, we're going to throw you into the fiery furnace. We're going to throw you in a place of severe punishment. You're going to be burned up. You're going to die." They had something that blessed them. They had some kind of confidence. When Nebuchadnezzar saw that they weren't going to bow to that image, he said, "Okay, I'm going to give you another chance."

Sin in the world will always give you another opportunity, another opportunity, and then another. Satan is sly and crafty. If he doesn't get you the first time, he'll come again and again. He's persistent. But remember now, God has given us grace and truth. So Nebuchadnezzar threatened Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. Do you know what they said? "O King, you might throw us into the fiery furnace, and you might cause some suffering to come upon us, but this one thing you need to know. If you throw us in there, and we perish, we're going to be free from you, because our God will save us, whether we go into the fiery furnace or whether we don't." What they were saying was what a popular song says, "We're winners either way."

Grace and truth will give us a winning formula, where we can win, no matter what, as long as we stay in God's grace and in His truth, and as long as we have that faith in full operation. We'll have that faith in full operation if we know that we're staying free from an evil world and a sinful life. We know whenever we're disobeying God. We know that, because God has given us an instrument that is within us. He's given us a conscience. He's given us an awareness that whenever we do the things we shouldn't do, He tells us. Of course, I know that there are some people that can sear their conscience to where it won't bother them. But I thank God for my conscience. I want to be aware. If I do anything against my heavenly Father, I want to be aware of it.

There was victory for Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. They were thrown into the fiery furnace. When King Nebuchadnezzar looked in there, he said, "Did not we cast three men bound into the midst of the fire? Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God."

Jesus came to seek and to save the lost. He came to give us His truth. He came to give us His grace by His truth. "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ [truth]: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth" (Romans 1:16). It is the power of God unto our freedom. Again, if you're free, you're aware of it. You know it. You don't have to doubt. It's there, and it's a blessing. It's such a blessing, but this freedom allows you then to move on—move on, go to better ways. Bro. Terry mentioned last night that God's ways are higher than our human ways. God's ways are way up here, and He has given us the opportunity to be elevated. We've been sitting together in heavenly places with Christ Jesus all week long. That's why we've been blessed. The elevated place is where the real blessings are.

Jesus began His ministry by telling the people, "You can be blessed." What does that mean? *Blessed* means "to be free of a curse; to be happy." Have you been happy this week? *Blessed* also means "to be prosperous." Have we prospered this week? I want to tell you, I have prospered this week, spiritually. Have we been favored this week? I believe that we've been elevated this week.

So Jesus began His ministry with what we know as "The Beatitudes"—the blessings. There is no one that can adhere to these means of blessings until they're saved, until they're freed. In verse 3 of Matthew 5, Jesus said, "Blessed are the poor in spirit ..." What He's actually talking about here is coming to the place where we are humble enough to receive everything that God really has for us. Bro. Mick told us this morning about the fallen nature. Many, many times, the fallen nature prevents people from being poor in spirit, but Jesus said that we can be blessed by being poor in spirit. All of these blessings amount to a cause and an effect. With everything that the first part holds, there's a followup. There's something that comes after. Jesus continued to say "... for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Verses 4 and 5: "Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek [modest and gentle]: for they shall inherit the earth." I skipped verse 6 for a reason. Do you know Jesus came to give us grace so that we could exercise grace and have it to extend to other people? That's very important for us, because here in verse 7, He is saying, "Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy."

Do you want mercy? Do you need mercy? We do. We're a people that really need God's mercy. Luke 6:36, 37, says, "Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful. Judge not, and ye shall not be judged: condemn not, and ye shall not be condemned: forgive, and ye shall be forgiven." Now that's a commandment that comes from the law of grace. Do you know there is a law of grace, and we're all under this law of grace when we're Christians? We have to do unto others the way we would have them to do to us. This is not a suggestion. This is a commandment. We're able to come to the place where we can bless people when they revile and persecute us. The promise is that great will be our reward in heaven.

I'll now go back to verse 6 of Matthew 5. There is something here that all of us really need to take to heart, and that is, "Blessed are they which do hunger

[have an appetite] and thirst after righteousness [for what's right and good]: for they shall be filled." Now the effect of that is that we're going to be filled with righteousness. If we're filled with righteousness, then we're filled with blessings. This is why Jesus came. He came to help us to comprehend and to help us all to see that we can really buy into what He is telling us here. This was the first part of His ministry. This is where He came right out and started telling the people how they could be blessed and benefitted by just listening to Him. It was just like it is in our day. It's hard to get people to accept this. He tried to tell the people all of this.

Jesus came to His own people. Not only did He tell them, but He showed them His goodness. He put it on demonstration. He showed them His righteousness. He came to His own people, and they wouldn't receive Him. They wouldn't receive His words. If we want God's amazing grace, we have to come to the place where we have faith in something. "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). So if we want this grace, we need to listen to what Jesus told the people. He said, "If ye continue in my word ..." In other words, He was saying, "If you'll just obey me. If you'll just do what I tell you to do, then you're going to be blessed, you're going to have grace and light from on high that's going to change you. It's going to bring you to the blessed state of being righteous or what true Christianity is." If you will continue in His word, "then are ye [His] disciples indeed." It's then, right there that you're going to know the truth. That truth will set you free. Not only will it set you free, but if you'll continue to be a doer of the Word, and not just a hearer, then that Word is going to keep you free.

A lot of people today start making excuses and start leaning unto their own understanding, just like those people who said, "We've never been in bondage." If you talk to people who are in sin, they're not going to tell you that they're in bondage. They're going to tell you they're free. They were saying to Jesus, "We're not in bondage. Abraham is our father." Right at that moment, they were in bondage to sin, and they were in bondage to the Romans. We need to be careful about arguing with God Almighty.

Jesus continues in Matthew 5:8, "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God." There are people who believe that's not obtainable. Again, they will refute what the Bible teaches. If it wasn't possible to obtain a pure heart, Jesus would have been foolish to even mention this. But He didn't mention things in vain. He meant that it is possible to have a pure heart, and by grace we can have a pure heart. Do you want a pure heart this morning? A pure heart will bless you beyond anything this feeble preacher can put into description. I just cannot express it to you. This is something you have to experience. You have to experience a pure heart, and it is possible, because the blood of Jesus Christ that was shed on Calvary has made it possible for you to have a pure heart. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us

from all unrighteousness" (I John 1:9). Not some of our sins, but all of them.

There is a blessing that comes from having a pure heart. You'll get to see God. If you thought about this and really delved into this, you'd say, "Wow! I will be able to see God!" Wasn't that what Philip said? He said to Jesus, "Lord, if you'll just show us the Father, it will suffice us. It'll be enough for us. We won't have to wander anymore, just show us the Father." Jesus said to him, "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip?" Let me tell you something, whenever we see Jesus Christ and fully understand Him, we're going to see a likeness of His Father, because they're one and the same.

Now, everything came into being when God spoke words. Think about it. When I was in the Philippines, I was out in a remote area where there were no street lights, and there in that open sky, I could see the stars. It is unbelievable how many stars are up there. They are all up there because almighty God just merely spoke words. That's all He did. He just spoke words, and there they were. This God that I'm trying to describe, He's the one that can give you a pure heart. He sent His only begotten Son into this sin-sick, sin-cursed world so that He could redeem you. His shed His life's blood on the cross, and that blood is powerful. There's power in the blood of Christ. There's power!

The Hebrew writer said, "The blood of bulls and goats could not make the comer unto perfect." Anything other than the blood of Jesus shed on Calvary will not do the job. But it was shed, and it is available to every single one that is willing to apply it. Do you know the blood works when it's applied to the heart? Whenever God created Adam and Eve, He created them with a pure heart. This God that created that pure heart can now restore it. Bring it back to its purification. And whenever we have a pure heart, then we'll be able to see things. When we have a pure heart, we'll be able to see things that we couldn't see otherwise.

Do you why a lot of people can't comprehend what the truth of God says? It's because they don't have a heart or a way of thinking to comprehend it. But God has made it possible for us to see the glories of Himself. He's made a way for us to see and to comprehend what the value of His grace is that was brought to us by the Word of God, Jesus Christ Himself.

What is a pure heart? It's one thing to just read a scripture, but we really need to delve into figuring out what a pure heart is, or what does a pure heart enable us to do besides just seeing God and seeing His glory and truth. Well, whenever we see the truth, it's going to enable us to be single hearted and single minded.

In Luke, chapter 11, verses 34-36, we read, "The light of the body is the eye: therefore when thine eye is single, thy whole body also is full of light; but when thine eye is evil, thy body also is full of darkness. Take heed therefore that the light which is in thee be not darkness. If thy whole body therefore be full of light, having no part dark, the whole shall be full of light, as when the bright shining of a candle doth give thee light." So whenever we're single in heart, we're going to see the light. We're going to see the truth. We're going to have a better understanding of it.

Paul said that we need to be very careful not to be pulled away with every wind of doctrine. We need to be settled and rooted and grounded in the truth, in the faith that was once delivered unto the saints. That's what Jesus Christ came to give us. This faith that was once delivered unto the saints will be revealed to us by the Spirit of truth. Jesus said that whenever He comes He will lead us and guide us and direct us into all truth. When we have all of this truth, we're going to have a lot more grace.

We will also have a holy heart. That means we're going to live every day holy, because our heart is where our life issues from. Out of the heart are the issues of life, so if we have a holy heart, then our life is going to be holy. That's vitally important, because the Hebrew writer said, "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord." You're not going to live at peace with your neighbors, with yourself, and with God unless you have God's grace. You need to have the light of His gospel. You need to have a pure heart, then you can follow peace and holiness. If you don't have those, no man can see the Lord. What I take that to mean is that without a holy heart, you really can't fully and completely comprehend the truth, because Jesus Christ is the truth. It says in Revelation, chapter 1, verse 7, "Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him." Listen to me, a holy life is vital to us.

A holy life gives us the opportunity to have an unfeigned heart. "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned [true] love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever" (I Peter 1:22, 23). Brethren, I love you. I'm not pretending. I love you. God can look into my heart, and what He'll see there is my love for you. It's love.

What I have spoken of this morning comes down to us for a decision. If you want to be blessed or if you want to be cursed, it's your decision. It's your choice. This is what Jesus told Moses to tell the children of Israel: "I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing." But then He said, "Therefore choose life." Don't choose the curse. Choose the blessing. Choose the good life. That's what He wants for you. He wants you to choose the good thing, because it's not God's will that any should perish. God doesn't want you to perish. Jesus didn't come to condemn anybody. All He wants and expects from you is by His grace and His truth to repent, and then take on the new life, the life of blessing. But it's your choice. It's your decision. He's not going to force it on anyone.

Let me read this to you: II Peter, chapter 2, beginning with verse 1: "But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction." *That doesn't sound like a blessing. That's a curse.*

"And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of." *That sounds to me like a curse. That's not a blessing.*

“And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not.” *That sounds like a curse.*

“For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment; And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly; And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly.” *Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.*

“And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked: (For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds;) The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished: But chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government. Presumptuous are they, selfwilled, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities. Whereas angels, which are greater in power and might, bring not railing accusation against them before the Lord. But these, as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things that they understand not; and shall utterly perish in their own corruption.” *That sounds like a curse to me.*

“And shall receive the reward of unrighteousness, as they that count it pleasure to riot in the day time. Spots they are and blemishes, sporting themselves with their own deceivings while they feast with you; Having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin; beguiling unstable souls: an heart they have exercised with covetous practices; cursed children.” *Cursed children.* Now again, you can choose this or you can choose to be blessed.

God has offered everyone of us a choice. He has made us free moral agents. He gives us the opportunity to choose what we want the outcome to be. What do you want to be the outcome of your life?

Let me tell you something, the outcome of this convention has been blessed. This has been heavenly. All week we have been blessed and blessed and blessed. We have come down to the conclusion that this is the outcome. When we come down to the end of our lives and we find then that we're blessed to hear “Well done, thou good and faithful servant: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord,” let me tell you something, there's the blessing! But if you want to hear something in the way of being cursed by not accepting the blessings of God, you will hear, “Depart from me, I never knew you: ye workers of iniquity.” What do you want this morning? God has been faithful us.

I'm going to leave you with this thought: “Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward; How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to

be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him.” How will you escape? Since Christ came to offer you grace that would free you, He will save you to the uttermost. Who else can you go to, to find grace and truth? “There is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved” (Acts 4:12).

Dear Ones, God has been true to every heart. He really has. What decision are you going to make? †

SHADOWS OF GOOD THINGS

By the late Russell R. Byrum

Part XVII

THE SACRED SEASONS

The Passover and Unleavened Bread

(Exodus 12; Leviticus 23:4-14)

THE PASSOVER was the first of the great annual feasts both in significance and time. It was held in the first month, Abib, or Nisan, (March-April), 14-21. It was originally instituted in Egypt on the eve of the exodus. The Egyptian or first Passover is to be distinguished from that of subsequent years because of the difference in the manner of observance.

Imagine ourselves in a Hebrew home in ancient Goshen at the time of that awful crisis in Israelitish history when the great contest between Jehovah and the gods of Egypt was approaching its climax. The father of the family comes toward the little hut he calls home leading a yearling lamb, which has been kept apart for the last four days. The man's coarse, rough hands bear signs of hard toil and his body the marks of a cruel slave-driver's lash. But despite his weariness from the day's toil and the droop of his shoulders from a lifetime of slavery, hope gleams from his eyes this evening. He knows that Jehovah has heard and is answering his prayer for deliverance. As the sun sinks low over the western desert the lamb, probably a pet of the family, is killed, and with a sprig of hyssop its blood is spattered on the door-frame at either side and above.

Later, when darkness has settled over the land and the early hours of the night have passed, we see the family all astir. They are dressed for a journey. Their sandals, not usually worn in the house, are on their feet. They hold walking-staves in their hands. But their immediate purpose is not a journey. They gather about the table and the roasted lamb is brought. Also thin loaves of unleavened bread are distributed among them and a dish of endive, or wild lettuce, is placed in the center of the table. As they eat their feelings are mingled of hope and fear. The father describes to his children the bitter bondage they have endured these many years. He refers to the promises of Jehovah to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and speaks of the mighty miracles lately worked for their salvation, and of the awful blow about to fall upon their hard-hearted oppressors. As he ceases speaking, the children look about with fearful eyes and draw a little closer to their parents. The anxious mother steps to the door once more to see if the blood of the

slain lamb is plainly evident there, lest her own beloved first-born child should perish at the near-at-hand hour of midnight.

Not long after the last of the lamb has been eaten a distant wail of grief is heard, which soon grows into a mighty cry throughout all the land. They wait, and midnight passes. Their own first-born is yet alive. God's angel, sent forth to destroy the first-born of Egypt, has seen the sprinkled blood and has passed over their home. Their bondage is passed and their deliverance has come. Such was the first Passover.

Though the first Passover had greater typical significance than the subsequent ones, yet it is well to know the ceremonial as it was commonly observed. The Passover might be a lamb, a kid, or a bullock. After the first Passover the animal was no longer killed at their own homes, but at Jehovah's sanctuary (Deuteronomy 16:6). Its blood was not put upon the door-posts any more, but poured out at the side of God's altar. It was a sin-offering in reality, though not the common one. Its observance was no longer obligatory except upon the men, although the women and children were not excluded. The Passover was followed by the seven-day feast of unleavened bread, when leaven must not be found in their houses. This feast was to be a continual reminder to them of their deliverance from Egypt. The slain lamb was to remind them of the sparing of their first-born in Egypt on that dreadful night of their deliverance, and that the first-born as representatives of all the Israelites therefore belonged peculiarly to God. The unleavened bread, called the "bread of affliction" in Deuteronomy 16:3, would remind them of the affliction they endured and the bitter herbs of that bitter bondage.

Typical Significance of the Passover—The typical significance of the Passover is very clear in the New Testament writings. Probably no Mosaic institution is a more perfect type than this. Of the Passover lamb it was said that "a bone of him shall not be broken" (Numbers 9:12), which the apostle John quotes of Christ Himself (John 19:36). He plainly implies that Christ is the antitypical Passover. The apostle Paul states this plainly as follows: "Christ our passover is sacrificed for us: therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth" (I Corinthians 5:7, 8).

Christ died on the cross during the Feast of the Passover. He was the Lamb of God which the ancient Passover lamb typified. He died to save us from God's judgments as that lamb died instead of the firstborn. As those ancient first-born redeemed by the blood of that lamb therefore belonged peculiarly to God, so we redeemed through Christ belong to God in a special sense. We are saved by His death, not merely by His life. A live lamb tied at the door of one of those Hebrew homes in Goshen would not have been sufficient to shield the first-born from wrath. It must die. Those who deny the vicarious death of Christ and teach salvation through His beautiful life alone, disregard the lesson of the Passover. Nor should the equally important truth be overlooked that the blood must be applied as well as shed. The blood was to be applied to the doorposts

and lintels. The blood thus applied was the means of salvation then. So now the mere fact that Christ died for sinners does not save them. The blood must be applied to them individually for their salvation from sin's guilt and penalty. Reader, has the blood of Christ been applied to your heart? As they ate as food of the flesh of that lamb by whose blood they were saved, so we have our spiritual life only by partaking of the flesh of the Son of God (John 6:53).

But as the Passover lamb was eaten with bitter herbs, so we can partake of the benefits of Christ our Passover only with the bitter herbs of repentance of sin. And as they must eat only unleavened bread, so we must reject malice, wickedness, and all other forms of sin and live a holy life. So Paul interprets the unleavened bread. And it is well to note that the bitter herbs were eaten only at the Passover meal, but they ate unleavened bread for seven days or a complete period of time following, thus signifying that our repentance is to accompany our first partaking of Christ, but the holy life must continue on throughout life. Those who teach we must sin more or less every day have utterly failed to grasp the significant truth of the Feast of Unleavened Bread.

Feasts of First-Fruits and Pentecost

(Leviticus 23:9-21)

These two feasts may properly be considered together because they were similar in their nature, and also because they are connected in the Bible. The time of the second was determined by measuring from the first. A close study of their description in Leviticus 23 shows that God regarded them as being closely connected. Though the Feast of First-fruits was observed during the Feast of Unleavened Bread, being a feast within a feast, yet it is introduced in Leviticus 3:9 with the words, "And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying," which is commonly used to introduce a new institution. Therefore it should not be regarded as a part of the Passover or of the Feast of Unleavened Bread. But it is worthy of notice that when the inspired writer introduces the Feast of Pentecost the usual formula is omitted. This, as the Bible Commentary observes, is because of its close connection with the Feast of First-fruits.

The Feast of First-fruits was observed on the sixteenth day of Nisan, which was the second day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, "the morrow after the Sabbath," which "morrow" was the special sabbath of holy convocation. It was kept by the waving of a sheaf of barley before the Lord as a special sort of meat-offering, and the sacrificing of a lamb for a burnt offering with a common meat-offering of flour. This sheaf of the first-fruits of the harvest was to be offered before any of the new grain was eaten.

Pentecost, usually called in the Old Testament the Feast of Weeks or of Harvest, was kept fifty days after the waving of the barley sheaf. Therefore after the translation of the Old Testament into the Greek language, it was called "Pentecost," from the Greek word for fifty. It was kept about the last of May or first of June. It was observed by the bringing of two loaves of leavened bread made of the new wheat of the harvest, which was then supposed to be all gathered. These were

waved before the Lord as was the sheaf of the first-fruits, and with it they represented the consecration of the entire harvest to God. This was also a special kind of meat-offering and was accompanied with seven lambs, one bullock, and two rams for a burnt offering with their accompanying meat-offerings and a sin-offering.

Pentecost was one of the three great feasts when all male Israelites were to appear before the Lord. It was originally a one-day feast, but among the later Jews it came to be an eight-day feast. It was to this feast that every Israelite was commanded to bring with him “a tribute of a free-will offering of thine hand, which thou shalt give unto the Lord thy God, according as the Lord thy God hath blessed thee” (Deuteronomy 16:10). Some of the Jews regarded the Feast of Pentecost as being commemorative of the giving of the law, but such a view has no ground in Scripture nor reason.

Antitype of the Feasts of First-fruits and Pentecost—

A variety of opinions have been set forth concerning the meaning of the Feasts of First-fruits and Pentecost. Some interpreters see nothing in them but thanksgiving and an acknowledgment of God’s providence. We believe these ideas were comprehended in them, but also that they had much deeper significance.

They combined the idea of feast and offering. The various feasts set forth practically the same great truths of religion as were contained in the offerings. These two feasts with their wave-sheaf and wave-loaves typified the same thing—the consecration or dedication by the believer of himself to God. The two feasts with the intervening seven weeks were necessary to include the entire harvest—the beginning and the end. It has already been pointed out that these were a special class of meat-offerings. Also in our consideration of the meat-offering we found it was typical of this dedication of ourselves to God.

But more direct evidence that this is the typical meaning of these feasts is evident from the nature of them. The offering of the first-fruits of the harvest in the sheaf and in the loaves was representative of the entire harvest being given to God. This harvest was their food, which in turn was a fitting symbol of themselves. In eating their food it became themselves, so in offering it to God in its entirety as they did it was an entire giving of themselves to God. This food was analogous to themselves. The Passover typified salvation through the blood of Christ, the unleavened bread holiness of life, and these feasts consecration. These truths are almost parallel with those typified by the general class of offerings.

God certainly considers this self-dedication important or He would not have repeated it so often in these types and made it as prominent as salvation itself. Doubtless it should serve as an admonition to us that we, in stressing our being saved from the penalty of sin by Christ, do not forget that it is equally important that we give ourselves to Him. God wants us to be so devoted to His service that we will be willing to work or to wait, to go where He wants us to go or to stay where He wants us to stay, to fight in the front of the battle or to “stay by the stuff.” Perfect submission to the divine will is the secret of soul-satisfaction and the peace that passeth understanding.

“Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were a present far too small;
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all.”

Observe also that as Christ, the true Passover, died on the same date that the Passover lamb was eaten, so on the “morrow after the Sabbath,” the first day of the week, when the sheaf of the first-fruits was waved, He arose from the dead, “the first-fruits of them that slept” (I Corinthians 15:20). And as the wave-loaves, the completion of the harvest, were offered at the Feast of Pentecost fifty days after the waving of the first-fruits, so on that great day of Pentecost which was fifty days after Jesus arose from the dead, the Holy Ghost came, and a new order of things began. †

BIBLE LESSON OF THE MONTH

GEMS FROM THE BOOK OF ROMANS

LIVE NO LONGER IN SIN

Scriptures: Romans 6:1, 2, 6, 12-23.

Romans 6:1 What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?

2 God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?

6 Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.

12 Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.

13 Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.

14 For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.

15 What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid.

16 Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?

17 But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you.

18 Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness.

19 I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness.

20 For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness.

21 What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death.

22 But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.

23 For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Memory Verse: But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.—Romans 6:22.

Aim: To show that a true Christian does not sin after conversion.

INTRODUCTION

“As a moral and spiritual being in God’s likeness, man originally was of necessity in a state of holiness and purity. According to the Word, he was placed under moral law. To this day men [but not all] everywhere are firm in the conviction that they are the subjects of moral government, directly responsible to God. And this is also the uniform teaching of the Scriptures. But the original state of holiness was forfeited by sin; hence in this respect and to this extent the image of God was lost.”—F. G. Smith, *What The Bible Teaches*.

It was sin that caused Adam and Eve to lose the divine image that they were created with, so let us understand what we are talking about. Some people think just because an evil thought comes to mind they have sinned. Some seem to have the impression that a temptation is sin. Jesus Christ was tempted but He did no sin! Many think a mistake is sin. Let us understand that we speak of imputed sin, which is a willful act that a person commits, knowing that he is doing wrong. Sin involves a person’s will, Eve told Satan that God had said they should not eat of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, so there is no question about her knowing that what she did was wrong. It was sin, and it brought death to her soul. The same can be said of Adam, for both died spiritually.

Not only did Adam and Eve sin, but according to the Scriptures, death passed upon all men, and all were affected by Adam’s sin. When a child comes into the world he has spiritual life, but he also has a nature that is depraved. When he comes to the knowledge of right and wrong on one point and willingly disobeys, he has sinned and died. Does he have to remain in that state? If he becomes a Christian does he have to continue sinning? This lesson answers that question.

MEDITATIONS

WHAT SHALL WE SAY THEN?—Romans 6:1, 2—Paul asked a question—In Romans 5:19-21, we read, “For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous. Moreover the law entered that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.” This being true, “Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?” The reason so many church members continue to live in sin is because they have not died to sin! You have to die to sin to be made alive to Christ.

KNOWING—Romans 6:6—The old man is dead—Paul further speaks of our dying to sin, and he speaks of us as being crucified, which was among the cruelest ways a criminal could be put to death in that day. In Galatians 2:20, Paul said, “I am crucified with Christ.” How could a person who had died such a death continue

a life of sin? In this verse, Paul says such a death destroys the body of sin, “that henceforth we should not serve sin.”

LET NOT—Romans 6:12—Sin does not reign—In the religious world, it is a common expression, “This old body just has to sin.” But it is not the body that sins! We read in I Corinthians 6:18, “Flee fornication, Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body.” There are various ways a person can sin against his body, but sin originates in the heart, or spirit. So do not allow sin to reign in your body.

PROPER USE OF THE BODY—Romans 6:13, 14—Our bodies are not given to us to use in sinful ways. God’s plan is for the body to be the temple of the Holy Spirit; “What? Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost ... and ye are not your own?” The Bible informs us that if any defile this temple, him will God destroy. So we are not to yield our bodies to unrighteousness, but we are to yield them to God, as those that are alive from the dead. **Verse 14—**“For sin shall not have dominion over you.” Why? How? “If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed” (John 8:36).

NOT UNDER THE LAW—Romans 6:15—Under grace—It is by grace, unmerited favor, that one is able to live a righteous and holy life. Notice this is the second time in this chapter that God forbids us to live in sin, and God does not require the impossible.

KNOW YE NOT—Romans 6:16—Your choice—We are the ones that must choose who we will serve. The choice involves life and death. If we yield ourselves to God, and become His servants, it means life; if we choose to serve sin, it means death. There are only two ways: the narrow way that leads to eternal life, or the broad way that leads to eternal death—to destruction.

GOD BE THANKED—Romans 6:17—Obeyed from the heart—This the real secret to living the Christian life. So many have a form of godliness but deny the power thereof. To say that God cannot give you power to live a sinless life is to say that Satan is more powerful than God. How could Paul make it any clearer than he does in these verses? “You have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you.” What kind of doctrine had Paul delivered? Sin-you-must, or “God forbids you to live in sin”?

FREE FROM SIN—Romans 6:18—Freedom in Christ—Jesus taught that no man could serve two masters. Such is impossible! How can it be said that a person who has been made free from sin is still a servant of sin? As Paul said in verse 17: “God be thanked” that He gave His only begotten Son to come into this sin-cursed world, die on that cruel cross to open the prison house and give us a pardon! Free, yes, free indeed. A servant of righteousness.

SERVANTS OF UNCLEANNESS—Romans 6:19—You have yielded—Sin in the sight of God is uncleanness. It may be dressed up in a nice suit of clothes or a beautiful dress, but sin is still uncleanness.

In our present age, there is more filth and ungodliness than ever before. The television and the movies are getting more and more ungodly as the days go by. Near nakedness is seen on our streets and public places as never before. Go back far enough and people would have been arrested for such immodest dressing. Radio stations would have had their license revoked if they had aired songs like played today. What a blessing to yield our members to righteousness unto holiness!

FREE FROM RIGHTEOUSNESS—Romans 6:20, 21—For when—Here again Paul clearly shows that you cannot be a Christian and live in sin. When you were free from righteousness, you were the servant of sin. Your fruit were the works of the flesh. Some are listed by Paul in Galatians 5:19-21. When you are freed from sin and become a disciple of Christ, you are indeed ashamed of many things you did in the past.

FREEDOM IN CHRIST—Romans 6:22—But now—The gospel of Christ is a gospel of freedom! That is why the gospel is called “good news.” Isaiah prophesied concerning the coming Redeemer: “The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound” (Isaiah 61:1). Jesus told the people in Nazareth, “This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears” (Luke 4:21).

“But now being made free from sin, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.”

TWO WAYS—Romans 6:23—Wages—Whether you live for the Lord or for Satan, there are wages you receive: for the Lord, it is eternal life; for Satan, it is eternal death. Which is your choice?

CONCLUSION

This entire chapter shows that through the grace of God in giving His only begotten Son to redeem us, we can be set free from the prison house of sin and live a righteous life in this time world.

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

1. What is imputed sin?
2. Can a person commit such a sin and be a Christian?
3. How can one be made free from sin?
4. What is the fruit of an unsaved person?
5. What is the fruit of a Christian? †

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.



Dear Young People,

Buy the truth and sell it not is so important in our time. The truth is under attack from so many directions and with all the power of modern communication and technology. It is indeed the pearl of great price that we must be willing to sell all to purchase.

It is good for us to take time to meditate on the influences that are being brought to bear against us. Often there are subtle, slow-moving forces that we need to be aware of. Realization of the importance of truth, the determination to protect it, and to stand for it, is absolutely necessary for us as individuals and for the church.

Blessings,
Bro. Doug

TRUTH IS LIKE A SILL PLATE

By Bro. Andrew Richards

RECENTLY, I have been employed as a custom home builder, and I have learned very much in my time with the company. Using what I have learned, I would like to make an analogy between a sill plate and truth.

A sill plate is a pressure-treated board that lays on top of the foundation. A sill plate seal is then placed between the concrete and the board. The board is fastened with steel anchor bolts not less than seven inches in the concrete, and nuts and washers clamp the sill plate to the concrete.



The function of the sill plate is to create a place for the joist to sit on and nail to. It is necessary for the board to be pressure treated to prevent water from rotting the wood. In addition, a sill plate seal is necessary as a barrier from moisture in the concrete from getting trapped against the sill plate.

Truth is the sill plate in my analogy. Water is the corrupt things in the world, and we are the sill plate seal. It is very, very, very important to protect the truth as the Bible teaches. Water, or corruption, finds a way to creep into places it is not wanted and will rot it out until it's destroyed. Rotting does not occur overnight and often begins without the owner's knowledge. The corrupt things in the world are very similar. Often they creep so slowly that we are unaware of their affects, much like a man fishing in a slow river. While he thinks he is anchored to the bottom, he is slowly drifting toward a waterfall. Acting as the sill plate seal, it is our duty to protect the truth.

Many important things hinge on truth, just like a house hinges on a sill plate. Truth is fundamental to a Christian, and we should do our best to protect it. †

To What Have We Come?

2022 Hagerstown Convention Message by Bro. John Romero



LET US TURN to Hebrews, chapter 12, verses 18-22: “For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest, And the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; which voice they that heard intreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more: (For they could not endure that which was commanded, And if so much as a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned, or thrust through with a dart: And so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake:) 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.”

The first part of verse 22 in our text says, “But ye are come unto ...” So I want to ask a question tonight: “To What Have We Come?” The Word of God says here that there’s a place we haven’t come to. It says in verse 18, “For ye are not come unto ...” Verse 22 says, “But ye are come unto” So there’s a place that we haven’t come to, a place where God hasn’t brought His people to, but there’s a place that God has brought His people unto. So that place we haven’t come to is Mount Sinai. That’s the place He’s talking about. It’s the place where God gave Moses the commandments, and He came on the mountain, and it was on fire. God told the people not to touch the mountain. So God manifested Himself there in a mighty way. I’m sure that meant something to the Hebrew people. This book was written to the Hebrews. The Hebrew writer told the people, “You haven’t come to Mount Sinai. You haven’t come to the old law. You haven’t come to the Old Covenant. The place you have come unto is Mount Zion.” One is a literal mountain, and the other is a spiritual experience.

If you go through the book of Hebrews, it teaches us that there is a literal high priest, and there is a spiritual High Priest. It teaches us that there is a literal land of rest, and there is a spiritual land of rest for us to enter into. It teaches us that there is an Old Covenant and a New Covenant. There is a literal mountain, and there is a spiritual one. Now, there is a literal Mount Zion, and that literal Mount Zion is a part of the literal city of Jerusalem. God is not interested in bringing His people to a place but to an experience. It’s the spiritual experience that matters, not the place. It’s not the literal but the spiritual.

When God is talking about Mount Zion in the spiritual, He’s talking about full salvation. He’s talking about this full salvation that makes us the New Testament church. In verse 22 of our text, He says, “But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem.” He’s not taking about literal things or literal places. He’s talking about spiritual things and spiritual experiences. That’s a hard concept for a lot of people to get.

When Nicodemus came to Christ that night and said, “We know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him,” and Jesus said unto him, “Ye must be born again,” he didn’t know what Jesus was talking about.

Nicodemus asked, “How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother’s womb, and be born?”

Jesus said to him, “That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. I’m not talking about literal things. I’m talking about spiritual things.”

We’re talking about the things of the Spirit tonight. God is not interested in literal things. He’s interested in spiritual things. So the Hebrew writer is talking about the fact that when God had His way in our lives, when He directed us and brought us out of sin, He told us, “We haven’t come to a literal place. We’ve come to a spiritual place. We’ve come to Mount Zion, the heavenly Jerusalem.” So we want to make sure that we know what it takes, according to the Word of God, to get from where we were or where we are, to Mount Zion, because we were not always in Mount Zion. Believe me, a lot of us were far from Mount Zion. We were far from having this experience that we have tonight and have enjoyed through the years and through this week. We were a long way from there, and it took something on God’s part to get us from where we were to where we are today.

To what have we come? Have we come to Mount Zion? Let us look in the Word of God. Isaiah 35, beginning with verse 1: “The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose.” That might sound like a nice poetic verse in talking about the desert, but Isaiah isn’t really talking about the desert and the rose. He’s talking in metaphoric language, in spiritual language. If we’re going to understand the Word of God, we’re going to have to understand the spiritual aspect, the metaphoric symbols that are put in the Word of God to help us to understand the things of God.

Verse 2: “It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing: the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon, they shall see the glory of the Lord, and the excellency of our God.” Isaiah was a prophet. Here he is prophesying of things to come. He’s prophesying of the future. He’s talking about this thing that will happen in the desert. “It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing.”

Verses 3-6: “Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees. Say to them that are of a fearful heart, Be strong, fear not: behold, your God will

come with vengeance, even God with a recompence; he will come and save you. Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert." Isaiah is not talking about literal things. He's talking about those that are weak and feeble. He said to them, "Be strong, God will come with a vengeance. Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped." He's not talking literally. He's talking spiritually—spiritually blind, spiritually lame, spiritually dead like a desert in our souls. He said, "In the wilderness shall waters break out." He's talking about the work of the Holy Spirit. He's talking about us when we were in sin. We were like the desert—no life—a dead place for the most part.

Verses 7, 8: "And the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water: in the habitation of dragons, where each lay, shall be grass with reeds and rushes. And an highway shall be there [God put a highway in the middle of the desert. He saw the dead condition in a place where there was no life and no water.], and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein." Thank God during the time in our lives when we were blind, deaf, lost, and dead spiritually, and we called out to God, He brought the highway right to our lives. He brought it just where we were living. God will take this salvation any place and anywhere when people will meet the conditions and pay the price for salvation. When people decide that they want to get saved and get out of that dead, lifeless condition, God said, "An highway shall be there, and it shall be called The way of holiness."

Verse 9: "No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk there." So thank God when we came out of that desert condition, God made things to start blossoming and growing again, and He put us on the highway of holiness. That's the only highway that God has for people to walk on. Every person that gets saved, truly saved, and God regenerates them, He puts them on the highway of holiness.

Verse 10: "And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away." Thank God, He saved us, put new life into us, and has put us on the highway of holiness. When we walked on that highway of holiness, guess where it led us to? Mount Zion. It brought us to Zion. That's the plan of God. He built a highway in the middle of the desert. The highway of holiness is what brings us back to Zion. God took these deserts and brought life into this lifeless soul that was lost in sin.

John 7:37, 38: "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink." The only way that people can ever get saved is that they have to see the deadness of their sinful lives, and they have to hunger and thirst for something better, something that will

satisfy that part of their lives that they have been neglecting, and that is their souls. Thank God, Jesus has something for you to drink. He has something to quench your thirsty soul. "He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." Verse 39: "But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified." Listen, if you follow Christ, do as He says, submit to Him, and let Him give you what He has for you, your life will be like a fountain of living water flowing out of your soul. Thank God that there is this full experience called Mount Zion.

God has to do a work in our lives to bring us to Zion. Anybody can join church, but that doesn't mean he has come to Zion. The churches are filled with people, coming just as they are, and how they live, but if they want to come to Zion, they have to let God do a work in their lives. God has to do a work to bring us and to make us what we need to be.

Let's go back to the prophet. Isaiah 4:2, "In that day shall the branch of the Lord be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the earth shall be excellent and comely for them that are escaped of Israel." He uses the phrase *in that day*. That's a prophetic phrase. He's talking about the day of the gospel. The law and the prophets were until John, and since that time the gospel is preached. The kingdom of heaven is here. He's talking about the day of the gospel, so he's prophesying here. He said, "The branch of the Lord be beautiful and glorious, and the fruit of the earth shall be excellent and comely for them that are escaped of Israel." Isaiah's talking about the new way of God. He's talking about the reformation of God—not the old way, not the Old Covenant, not the old Jerusalem—but the new way.

Isaiah 4:3, "And it shall come to pass, that he that is left in Zion, and he that remaineth in Jerusalem, shall be called holy, even every one that is written among the living in Jerusalem." The Old Covenant was insufficient, so God said, "I'm going to reform it. I'm going to bring a new Jerusalem, a new Zion. When I'm finished with these people that are staying in Jerusalem and in Zion, I'm going to have the kind of people that I want." He said, "They shall be called holy, even the living in Jerusalem."

Isaiah 4:4-6: "When the Lord shall have washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion, and shall have purged the blood of Jerusalem from the midst thereof by the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning. And the Lord will create upon every dwelling place of mount Zion, and upon her assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night: for upon all the glory shall be a defence. And there shall be a tabernacle for a shadow in the day time from the heat, and for a place of refuge, and for a covert from storm and from rain." So God said, "I'm going to do a work in these lives. I'm going to get a people that are holy." How is He going to do that? By washing and purging.

Listen, we were all sinners. None of us were raised, even in the church, well enough to just walk right into

salvation. We had to be washed, and we had to be purged. Sounds like two works of grace to me. God had to wash us and purge us. Thank God that we let Him do that work in us. He had to wash us from our sins. He had to purge us from the old nature. God had to do that work in our lives “by the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning.” This is the work of God. There’s no way around it. There’s no other way to become Mount Zion. We can become “churchy” and just bring people in and pat them on the back and say, “You’re pretty good.” But I want to tell you something, God saves people by *washing* them and *purging* them. That has always been the work of God. Those are two different methods of achieving the desired work of God.

I’m going to show you the washing and the purging somewhere else in the Word of God. Ephesians 5:25, 26: “Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify [purge] and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word.” Why do we have to let God do that to us? Well, because one day He’s going to “present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish” (verse 27). So there’s the work of God. Wash us with the water by the Word, wash us from all our sins, and sanctify us.

Also, Titus 3:4, 5: “But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us [How? By what method?], by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.” So Paul is saying the same thing. He used some different terms for sanctification: *sanctified* in Hebrews, Isaiah says *purged*, and here in the book of Titus, Paul says *renewing*, but in all three examples in the Word of God, it means “the manner by which God brings people into Zion.” We need to be forgiven of our sins, and we need God to sanctify us holy so that we can have the experience that He wants for us. “... by the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning” (Isaiah 4:4).

Isaiah 1:27, “Zion shall be redeemed with judgment, and her converts with righteousness.” Thank God for the judgments of God’s Word! God has put men and women in the pulpit of the Church of God to preach the judgments of God’s Word—not their own judgments, but the judgments of God’s Word. Did you know that the Word of God is judgments? The Word of God is God’s judgments, His justice, His laws, and His ways. We’re not talking about critical pouring out of personal things upon people. We’re talking about the judgments of God’s Word. That’s how God saved us. That’s how He helped us to get justified and sanctified. There is some purging going on in Zion.

Isaiah 31:9, “And he shall pass over to his strong hold for fear, and his princes shall be afraid of the ensign, saith the Lord, whose fire is in Zion, and his furnace in Jerusalem.” There needs to be a furnace in Zion, because there are things that God has to purge out of our lives. There are some things that can be only taken care of and only removed by purging. There were some things in our lives that God helped us to get rid of. We couldn’t just walk away from them. We couldn’t

just stop doing them. We needed God to take them out of our hearts. We needed Him to purge some things out of our being and out of our character. The way some of us were, the way we acted, our attitude, they were so ingrained in us. We were raised that way. It seemed like there was no way we could ever change, but thank God, there’s still a furnace in Zion, a furnace for everything of the flesh, and everything that can’t be used for the glory of God.

Did you know that there is a furnace in Zion, and we need to bring some things from our lives and cast them into the furnace? Let’s look here in I Corinthians 3:11-13: “For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; Every man’s work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man’s work of what sort it is.” So Paul says, in effect, “You can take all kinds of materials to build the temple with, but they all need to be put on the fire.” You can see there are some things in this list—wood, hay, and stubble—that are not going to do very well in the fire. They are going to burn up. Paul says in verses 14 and 15, “If any man’s work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man’s work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.” We’re saved because we brought our lives to God, and we let Him bring His Word to us, and He showed us that there was something in our lives that we needed to put on the altar, on the furnace. We need to let God burn it up.

What are we talking about? In the beginning of this chapter, Paul says, “And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?” He goes to say from there, “Listen, God made me a wise master builder. One man laid the foundation. I’m going to build on this Foundation, but some of you are not good building material. You are yet carnal, and you need to take that wood, that hay, that stubble, that envy, that strife, or whatever other aspect of carnality that’s in your life and put it on the altar and let it get burned up. There are some things we need to lose. There are some things that need to be put on the altar, because they’re just wood, hay, and stubble.

Gold can’t be burned up. Silver can’t be burned up. They can be purged, but not burned up. So when God saves us and tries us and gives us a good experience, we’re supposed to have a faith like gold. We’re supposed to have a pure heart. You can’t burn that up. The true Word of God will show us envy, strife, factions, wood, hay, and stubble. The fire doesn’t hurt gold. It doesn’t hurt silver. It doesn’t hurt precious stones. Paul says in verse 15 of I Corinthians 3, “If any man’s work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire.” So there’s no aspect of our lives that we’re not willing to put on the altar. Everything about our lives must be put on the altar. We’re not to hold back anything. “Lord, if I have any pride, I’m going to put it on the altar. If I’m carnally impatient, if I’m

too worldly, if there's something in my heart that's not of you, I'm going to put it on the altar, and I want you to burn it out of my life. All I want left in my life is silver, gold, and precious stones."

God wants us to burn up some things—pride, self. Do you remember reading the book, *Pilgrim's Progress*? When Little Christian got his armor, he was ready to go to the Celestial City. He said, "I'm on my way." He went around the first bend. Do you know who he met? The giant called *Self*, and they had a horrible battle. Little Christian almost died right there. When you get saved, you need to put everything about carnal self on the altar. Pride, self, worldliness, and self-pity. How about the carnal independent spirit? There are things about us that are ingrained in us that we need to put on the altar so we can be saved, sanctified, and unified. Let us look at Proverbs 17:3, "The fining pot is for silver, and the furnace for gold: but the Lord trieth the hearts." Listen, God is going to put us in the furnace a little bit. He's going to try us. Sometimes God uses trials to help us to see things in ourselves. That's why He does that. "Do you see how you acted? Christians shouldn't act that way. See how you responded? There's a little something in there that you need to get some help with." You might say, "I don't like this judgment preaching. I'm going to go down to the X-Y-Z place." Well, go ahead. I'm going to tell you something, the only place that there's a furnace is in Zion.

Malachi 3:2, "But who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap." There's the fire, and there's the washing of the water. This time the Lord added a little bit of soap to it. Verse 3: "And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness." Purifying them, purging them as gold and silver. Listen, what we give to God is not as important as who we are for God. Thank God people can preach and sing. They can do a lot of things and have a lot of talents. Those things are necessary, but God is not interested so much in what we can do as He is in what we are.

Have we come to Zion? Isaiah 2:2, 3: "And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." So again, that mountain that Isaiah prophesied about is Mount Zion, the same mountain the Hebrew writer talked about.

Now, what happens here? "And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains." Mount Zion is the prophetic fulfillment of the New Testament church. It is the symbol of the highest spiritual experience that man can receive in this life. That's what he's talking about. He's talking about a spiritual experience, and the highest one that man can come to in the New

Covenant is called Mount Zion. Saved and sanctified and serving God with a pure heart, having allowed God to work His work in every life. It is established in the top of the mountains. It is a stand alone place. There's only one Mount Zion. We're talking about the experience.

There are plenty of people in the Church of God that say, "Well, we're it. You have to come to our place. You have to come to our meetings." No, God purposely took salvation and said, "Listen, it's not about a place. It's about an experience." Keep the experience, and God will help us with the rest. It is established as one spiritual place. There's only one Mount Zion. It is exalted by God. God exalts it. We don't exalt it. We don't make it something beyond, above, or below. We just come into it. The Lord said, "And all nations shall flow unto it." I like the word *flow*. Thank God we've had a good week. We've been flowing in and flowing out. No elbowing, and "get out of my way. I'm first, and I'm better." No, we're just flowing in and enjoying the things of God. So Mount Zion is exalted by God. He said, "And it shall be exalted above the hills."

Mount Zion shall be exalted above all the little hills of religion. There are a lot of them. Listen, we're talking about an experience. We're talking about real salvation that saves people from sin, purifies their hearts, and gives them victory to live holy lives without committing sin every day by the grace of God. We're not talking about these little hills. "Well, you know I'm a sinner, and I'll always be a sinner. I just can't help myself. That's what our church teaches. Once I'm saved, I'm always saved." God is calling people to a higher experience. People need to get off their little hill of religion and get to Mount Zion. They need to get off their little hill of human morality, their little hill of self-righteousness, their little hill of church affiliation, their little hill of denominational devotion, and their little hill of family tradition. "Well, I can never leave." No, no, you need to get off your little hill and come to Mount Zion. You need to get truly saved. We're not talking about joining church. We're talking about getting truly saved and getting filled with the Holy Ghost and living this life in the power of God. That's what God has established. We need to come to what God has established. "He will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord."

Isaiah 2:4, "And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more." Where does this happen? Mount Zion. The Lord says here that He'll put some judgment on the people. He'll rebuke the people. Listen, the preacher preaches, but he doesn't know the lives of the people. But when it comes to our lives, God gives us a little judgment. He gives us a little rebuking. A lot of times as the message goes forth, the preacher doesn't know how it's affecting people, but the Spirit of God does. So thank God, when people get judged and rebuked and He changes them, He said, "They shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks. They shall put away their

weapons of war.” People will put away all their fighting and fussing. A lot of times people don’t even know what they’re fussing and fighting about. God can take away all that dissatisfaction. God can cure that. He can sanctify that. He’ll help them to beat their swords into plowshares. Instead of fighting, they can labor and work and do good things in the kingdom of God. Their spears can be beaten into pruning hooks—something positive and good. That’s what salvation does for people. The old carnal wars and fighting will be over. Only true salvation can do that. “Out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord.” God will help us to put down our swords and spears.

How do we know that we’re in Zion? Revelation 21:9-11: “And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb’s wife. And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, Having the glory of God: and her light was like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal.” Mount Zion is not heaven. It just came from heaven. Isn’t that what it said right there? John was on the isle of Patmos, and he was in the Spirit on the Lord’s day. The Lord began to show John this and that. Finally, it came a time when one of the angels said, “Come hither, I will shew thee something.”

God can’t show people anything if they’re not in the Spirit to begin with. This is not an intellectual thing. This is a spiritual thing. One of the seven angels said to John, “Come hither, I will show thee the bride, the Lamb’s wife. I want to show you the church.” That’s what the bride is. She’s the New Testament church, the Lamb’s wife. “And he carried me [John] away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God.” God has to be able to carry us away a little bit. It’s okay to get carried away as long as you’re carried away by the Spirit of God. Don’t be afraid if the Spirit of God is in it. Don’t bind the Spirit. Don’t defeat what God is trying to do in our lives. “And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem [the new Jerusalem, the spiritual Jerusalem], descending out of heaven from God.” He showed John Mount Zion. He showed him the heavenly Jerusalem. When we get this experience, we’ll live in harmony and in the love of God. It’s heavenly; it’s like heaven.

Ephesians 2:1, 2: “And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience.” People just can’t help themselves with anger and fighting and all the other things that are going on. God knew we couldn’t help ourselves. That’s why when we were without strength, in due time Christ died for us. We walked according to the course (the current) of this world. We couldn’t help ourselves. We just went right along with it. There was a spirit behind it. Verse 3: “Among whom also we all had our conversation in times

past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.” It wasn’t only our committed sins, but by nature we were the children of wrath.

Ephesians 2:4-6: “But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus.” Heaven-like places. This is as close to heaven as we’re getting. We’re gathering together in the love of God as saved and sanctified people of God. So don’t you spoil it. Keep it heavenly. Where did it come from? The angel took John on the mountains and said, “Let me show you the church.” Do you know where all other religions come from? They come from the land. The beast came from the land. Real and true religion comes from heaven, and it gives you a heavenly experience.

James 3:13-16: “Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom. But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work.” That’s the fruit from a man’s heart of something that did not come from above. It came from below.

James 3:17, “But the wisdom that is from above [There are things for us that come from above.] is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.”

Here’s a little spiritual inventory for us to take:
“first *pure*,
then *peaceable*,
gentle,
easy to be *intreated*,
full of *mercy* and *good fruits*,
without partiality [treat everybody the same], and
without hypocrisy.”

Verse 18: “And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.” What are you talking about? A Mount Zion experience.

A lot of people have been programmed to think of their salvation only in terms of belonging to a church, or to a certain congregation. To a degree, there’s nothing wrong with that, because we like to belong to the local congregation. We love to work with the local body, but the writer of Hebrews is just wanting to talk to us about the Mount Zion experience, because one day you may not be in a congregation the way things are going. I’m not trying to be a doomsday prophet, but what I’m telling you is, the experience is what keeps us. Everything else is a bonus and a blessing. God shows us that we’re part of something that exists beyond a geographical location. This is a spiritual experience called Mount Zion.

Have you come to Mount Zion? Having the experience in your heart is what matters. †

THE WILL OF GOD

By Bro. Greg Tyler

TEXT: "Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven."
—Matthew 6:10.

"Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is."—Ephesians 5:17.

"Teach me to do thy will; for thou art my God: thy spirit is good; lead me into the land of uprightness."—Psalm 143:10.

THE SUBJECT at hand is one of great depth, one which could not be properly expounded were we to devote an entire issue of *The Way of Truth* to it, or an entire volume for that matter. Yea, I doubt very much if all the volumes ever written on the subject could be considered to have exhausted all that could be said about the will of God. Nevertheless, we would like to briefly outline some thoughts on this beautiful truth. For a beginning, let us consider:

WHO IS GOD, AND DOES HE HAVE A WILL?

I realize we are living in an age in which some people are professed atheists, and no wonder! We are now harvesting a generation which have been taught the evolution theory as fact. The Bible has been removed from public schools, standards have disappeared, and religious principles have been compromised. Atheism and godlessness are the result. However, all the infidels in the world cannot change the fact that there is a God in heaven, that He is omnipotent, omnipresent, and omniscient (all-knowing, having infinite knowledge). "In the beginning was God ..." that is what the Bible says, and I believe it. God always was, is now, and ever shall be. He is eternal. He is the mighty Creator. Much more could be said about Him. When Moses was sent of this God to deliver His people from Egyptian bondage, Moses asked Him, "Who shall I tell them has sent me?" God answered, "I am that I am. Tell them I AM has sent you." Let it suffice us here to simply say HE IS!

Now, when the Lord created this earth, He in no wise abandoned His creation. He had a definite plan for everything. Nature has certain laws and principles and everything in nature obeys those laws and principles. So it is with man, His crowning creation. God does have a definite law, definite principles that mankind must operate within. (I'm speaking from the physical standpoint at the moment.) If man doesn't obey these laws, he must suffer the consequences. For instance, if a person puts his hand on a red-hot stove, he is going to be burned.

However, God made man with a soul. He is different from any other creation. Man has the ability to reason, to think, to choose. And God has not left us in the dark as to how He desires us to live. He does have a definite moral law, some definite moral principles by which we are to be governed. **GOD HAS A DEFINITE WILL FOR MANKIND.** And although the consequences for breaking this moral law may not appear to be as immediate as those connected with the physical law—be not deceived, dear ones—there are definite consequences.

God's moral law is given to be obeyed. His will is to be carried out. And God's will is not grievous. One thing we must keep in mind, dear ones, is that God loves mankind. He desires fellowship with us, and He is definitely interested in our welfare. He wants to keep us from that which is harmful or detrimental to us. It should be our delight to do the will of God.

He has a will for His church. It is not God's will that His saved children be divided and separated into sects and creeds. Jesus prayed in the seventeenth chapter of St. John that we all be one, as He and the Father are one, "that the world may believe." What a wonderful thing it would be if we would all speak the same thing and see Bible unity prevail! This is the will of God.

God has a will concerning the conduct of husbands, wives, and children in the home. The home has deteriorated into oblivion in this nation and worldwide. If men and women would obey the will of God as given in Ephesians, chapter five, and elsewhere, there would be no divorces, and happiness, cooperation, contentment, and love would result. Impossible? Not if the will of God were obeyed.

God has a definite will in various areas of life—in the business world, in the ministry, in secular matters, etc. However, the area I would like to center our attention on is that God has a definite will concerning every human being as an **INDIVIDUAL**.

GOD'S WILL FOR INDIVIDUALS IS:

1. **TO BE SAVED**—We are told in II Peter 3:9 that God is "not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." This is the will of God. God calls every soul to repentance. You are not out of God's will to pray that men be saved. That's His will. And the Lord is faithful to call every man through His Holy Spirit. Through conviction of sin, God would have every person repent with godly sorrow. He that cometh to God, He will in no wise cast out. He will forgive you of your sins and make you His child.

2. **TO BE SANCTIFIED**—"This is the will of God, even your sanctification."—I Thessalonians 4:3. Can there be any doubt that God would have the believer sanctified? This is a second work subsequent to justification, or forgiveness of sins. There are definitely two works of grace, and the work of God is not complete in the soul of man without this infilling of the Holy Ghost and eradication of the carnal nature.

3. **TO LIVE HOLY**—"... Be ye holy; for I am holy."—I Peter 1:16. "For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness."—I Thessalonians 4:7. Every individual on the face of the earth is called to holiness. This is the will of God. To live holy is simply to obey all the commands of our Lord that you have knowledge of. Holiness is living in obedience to all the known will of God. And His will is revealed to us in the Bible. Holiness itself is a vast subject which can but be briefly mentioned here.

4. **TO PRAY**—"Pray without ceasing."—I Thessalonians 5:17. Many other scriptures could be used here as proofs that it is God's will that "men ought always to pray, and not to faint."—Luke 18:1. A consistent

prayer life is essential in the life of one who desires to know and do God's will.

5. TO STUDY GOD'S WORD—"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."—II Timothy 2:15. God speaks to us today through His inspired Word. The Bible in most homes is a dust-collector, but in the home of the man or woman who is striving to do God's will, it should be read and studied every day.

6. TO LOVE GOD AND HIS FELLOWMEN—"Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."—Matthew 22:37-40. All the will of God is founded on this basic truth. God loves mankind, and He wills that mankind love Him and one another. Isn't that beautiful? God wills this: "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven."—Matthew 5:44, 45.

7. TO BE AN EXAMPLE FOR OTHERS—"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."—Romans 12:1, 2. Our lives should exemplify the will of God. People should be able to point to us and say that we are showing what is the will of God. We should prove to the world by our words and deeds what the perfect will of God is. A challenge for us all.

Many, many other things could be mentioned concerning the will of God. These are just a few. I would exhort our readers to seek out and do God's will.

In closing, I would like to point out that by doing the will of God, we will reap two outstanding benefits:

(1) *Happiness and contentment in this time world.* There is a satisfaction in doing God's will that cannot be matched by anything else. Peace, joy, and everything desirable result from listening to God. This is not true to the sinner. "The way of the transgressor is hard."

(2) *Eternal bliss forever.* "And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever."—I John 2:17. The world would be a wonderful place if men would simply do the will of God. In heaven, the angels do His will, and so do the saints of old who have gone on before. That, in part, is what makes heaven wonderful. Jesus prayed, "Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." To transgress God's will is to have portion with Satan and his demons in hell. The choice is ours to make. Shall we do the will of God or not? I trust that each of us shall determine in our hearts to do His will for, "he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever." †

—Reprinted from January 1981 issue

For Poetry Lovers

OUT IN THE FIELDS WITH GOD

Elizabeth Barrett Browning

The little cares that fretted me,
I lost them yesterday,
Among the fields, above the sea,
Among the winds at play;
Among the lowing of the herds,
The rustling of the trees;
Among the singing of the birds,
The humming of the bees.

The foolish fears of what may happen,
I cast them all away
Among the clover-scented grass,
Among the new-mown hay;
Among the rustling of the corn,
Where drowsy poppies nod,
Where ill thoughts die and good are born—
Out in the fields with God.

IF YOU WERE BUSY

Author Unknown

If you were busy being kind,
Before you knew it you would find
You'd soon forget 'twas true
That someone was unkind to you.

If you were busy being glad
And cheering people who are sad,
Although your heart might ache a bit
You'd soon forget to notice it.

If you were busy being good
And doing just the best you could,
You'd not have time to blame some man
Who's doing just the best he can.

If you were busy being true
To what you know you ought to do,
You'd be so busy you'd forget
The blunders of the folks you've met.

If you were busy being right
You'd find yourself too busy, quite,
To criticize your neighbor, long,
Because you think he's doing wrong. †

God bless our readers!

Church of God (Universal), Inc.
The Way of Truth
P. O. Box 88
Hagerstown, MD 21741-0088 U.S.A.

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RADIO LOG

The Way of Truth Broadcast

Alvin A. Craig, Radio Minister

(Aired on Sundays unless otherwise noted.)

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

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

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

Kentucky, Prestonsburg, WDOC 1310, 7:30 A.M.

North Carolina, Mooresville, WHIP 1350, 6:00 A.M.

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Tennessee, Chattanooga, WLMR 1450, 3:00 P.M.

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Virginia, Blacksburg, WKEX 1430, 8:00 A.M.

Virginia, Christiansburg, WKEX-FM 105.9, 8:00 A.M.

Virginia, Roanoke, WKBA 1550

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Grand Cayman

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COMING MEETINGS

2023 INTERNATIONAL CHURCH OF GOD CONVENTION

Hagerstown, Maryland U.S.A.

July 4-9, 2023, Lord willing

Bro. Gregory E. Tyler, Host Pastor

Revival Services

Essex, Maryland

March 29-April 2, 2023, Lord willing

Bro. John Romero, Evangelist

Bro. Doug Koerner, Pastor

Hagerstown, Maryland

April 19-23, 2023, Lord willing

Bro. Doug Koerner, Evangelist

Bro. Gregory E. Tyler, Pastor

JAMAICA

Grants Mountain, St. Ann

August 13-20, 2023, Lord willing

Sis. Linette Jutan, Pastor