

The Way of Truth

Vol. 82

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

No. 2

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MOLDED

Message begins on page 6

CAN THE WORLD SEE JESUS IN YOU?

YOU WILL find a curious thought in Acts 4:13—“Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled; and they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus.” Modern religion presents a gospel that is powerless. It offers its recipients no change, no power, no evidence of conversion. But we have the promise in II Corinthians 5:17, “Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.” The true gospel provides for a glorious experience where a soul is not only forgiven of his trespasses, but also has access to an experience where the life is transformed into the image of Christ. Peter and John exemplified Jesus to such a degree that the people could not deny the fact that, though they were uneducated, they had been with Jesus. We can—we must—allow the world to see Jesus Christ shining out from our lives.

Christianity causes the convert to desire to walk in the steps of Jesus.

“To be like Christ. That is our goal, plain and simple. It sounds like a peaceful, relaxing, easy objective. But stop and think. He learned obedience by the things he suffered. So must we. It is neither easy nor quick nor natural. It is impossible in the flesh, slow in coming, and supernatural in scope. Only Christ can accomplish it within us.”—Selected.

Christ is the highest example to pattern our lives after. “To become like Christ is the only thing in the world worth caring for, the thing before which every ambition of man is folly and all lower achievement vain. Those only who make this quest the supreme desire and passion of their lives can even begin to hope to reach it.”—John Drummond.

It is a slow life-long process, one step at a time. The Bible tells us that we are to aim high and God will give us the power to attain. “Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ” (Ephesians 4:13).

Through salvation and sanctification our heart becomes like His—innocent in the sight of God. But our tongue, our mind, our hands, our feet, our eyes, our ears, gradually are formed in the image of God’s Son, as we submit and allow Him to work within us.

As William J. Henry proclaimed through song,
“Holy Spirit from above fill my longing soul with love,

Till the Master’s image all in me may see;

Make me gentle, true and kind, meek of heart and humble mind,

Let the holy fire from heaven fall on me.”

Another song says,

“Have Thine own way, Lord! Have thine own way!

Hold o’er my being absolute sway!

Fill with thy Spirit till all shall see

Christ only, always, living in me.”

Dear Reader, we must allow ourselves to be conformed to the image of Christ. Romans 8:29 says, “For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.” Souls are not predestinated for heaven or hell, but God’s children are predestinated to be conformed to the image of Christ. Not the image of what we see in the mirror, but the inner man!

Christ is the image of God—Colossians 1:12-15: “Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins: Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature.”

Our heart is to become as Christ’s heart, full of compassion, love, and mercy.

Our mind is to become as the mind of Christ—“For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ” (I Corinthians 2:16).

Our hands are to reach out as His hands did, offering the right hand of fellowship and reaching down to lift someone up. Galatians 6:1 says, “Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.”

Our feet to take us where His took Him—to Jerusalem, the place of worship; to Samaria, out of our way to share God’s love with an ill-famed stranger; to Golgotha, and suffer with the Savior.

Our tongue to speak as His spoke—“For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile” (I Peter 3:10).

Our eyes to see what He saw—“Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest” (John 4:35).

Our ears to hear what He heard—the cries of needful humanity: “He that hath ears to hear, let him hear” (Matthew 11:15).

Call me a fool for Christ’s sake, but I believe we can live so that others will see Christ in us!

The process of being formed into the image of Jesus begins with conversion—being born again. It accelerates through the experience of sanctification—being filled with the Holy Ghost and becoming a partaker of the divine nature.

A study of the Word of God is necessary. In II Timothy 3:16, 17 we find, “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.”

ABOUT THE COVER

The picture on our front shows a potter at work, forming the clay into a vessel. With his fingers, he can mold the clay as he chooses. Even so, God is our Potter, and we are the clay. The message that begins on page 6 describes this principle at work. Let us be submissive to God’s will, and allow His fingers to run through us.

THE WAY OF TRUTH

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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.

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As we begin a new year, I challenge you to make this your quest—let others see Christ in you. He is the Hope of Glory. The results will astound you! You will make a big difference in this world. Allow yourself more and more to be formed in the image of God's Son. Does the world see Jesus in YOU?

As newsman Clarence W. Hall followed American troops through Okinawa in 1945, he and his jeep driver came upon a small town that stood out as a beautiful example of a Christian community. He wrote, "We had seen other Okinawan villages ... down at the heels and despairing; by contrast, this one shone like a diamond in a dung heap. Everywhere we were greeted by smiles and dignified bows. Proudly the old men showed us their spotless homes, their terraced fields ... their store-houses and granaries, their prized sugar mill." Hall said that he saw no jails and no drunkenness, and that divorce was unknown in this village. He was told that an American missionary had come there some 30 years earlier. While he was in the village, he had led two elderly townspeople to Christ and left them with a Japanese Bible. These new believers studied the Scriptures and started leading their fellow villagers to Jesus. Hall's jeep driver said he was amazed at the difference between this village and the others around it. He remarked, "So this is what comes out of only a Bible and a couple of old guys who wanted to live like Jesus."—Selected †

Another way we are formed in the image of His Son is by correction or chastisement. Hebrews 12:5-11 is challenging reading: "And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness. Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby."

Be sensitive to the check of the Spirit!

Also, we must develop a close relationship with God through prayer. Jesus spent time with His Father: "And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed."

Another important principle if we want others to see Jesus in us is the necessity of spending time with others who are also striving to be Christlike. The writer of Hebrews said as much: "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching" (Hebrews 10:25).

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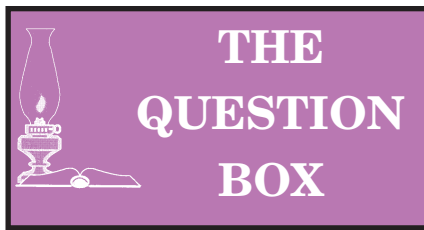
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These questions and answers are taken from *The Way of Truth Question and Answer Book*, 1946-2001.

QUESTION: I've heard different times that when a person is truly saved and backslides, the person is still saved. I don't think the person is still saved. What do you think?

ANSWER: There are some people who teach "once saved, always saved." I would assume these are who you refer to.

Of course, what counts is not what you or I think, but what the Bible says, and this is what it says: "When I shall say to the righteous, that he shall surely live; if he trusts to his own righteousness, and commit iniquity, all his righteousness shall not be remembered; but for his iniquity that he hath committed, he shall die for it. When the righteous turneth from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, he shall even die thereby" (Ezekiel 33:13, 18).

Further, Luke tells us in Acts 1:25 that Judas, one of the twelve disciples, "by transgression fell."

Jesus tells us, "He that endureth to the end shall be saved" (Matthew 10:22). We are saved from our sins when we truly repent of and forsake them. But we will be eternally saved by being faithful to the Lord until death.

When a person backslides, he loses Christ out of his life, and to lose Christ is to lose spiritual life, for John said, "He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life" (I John 5:12).

Peter tells of some who backslid—see II Peter 2:20-22. Paul tells us of Demas who backslid—see II Timothy 4:10. And Jesus said, "Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away" (John 15:2).

When a person returns to a life of sin, he is no longer "saved," for sin is what we are saved from.

QUESTION: Please explain the difference of these three verses found in John 14:2, 3 and I Timothy 3:15. Are they all about the Church of God?

ANSWER: As we have commented on these verses before, let me say again, Jesus makes a statement in the first part of verse two. He does not say the "mansions" are for us, but He does say He is going to prepare a place for us. Clarke says, "Our Lord alludes here to the *temple*, which was called the *house of God*, in the precincts of which there were a great number of chambers."

Paul, in I Timothy 3:15, makes it clear he is speaking of the Church. It is my understanding that Jesus went to the cross to "prepare" a place for us in the Church, and He returned to the Father where an eternal place is being prepared for those who are members of the household of faith. We must be in the house of

God—the Church—to be able to inherit the eternal home.

QUESTION: "And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed her there" (Revelation 12:6). Which is that wilderness? Who are those that are feeding her?

ANSWER: This verse does not speak of a literal wilderness, but a place of obscurity where she could not be seen. We understand the woman symbolizes the Church of God, so she is fed on the Word by those who God calls to preach and teach—see Acts 20:28.

QUESTION: Has the fourth chapter of Malachi already been fulfilled? Will Elijah come with Christ at His appearing on the last day? Or is Christ the type of Elijah the Bible was representing? In other words, will Elijah come back to earth before the coming of Christ?

ANSWER: I shall not comment on the entire chapter but deal with the main points of your question.

Verse 2 is speaking of the coming of Jesus Christ in His first advent. This being true, then, of course, this prophecy has already been fulfilled.

Verses 5 and 6 deal with the coming of "Elijah." This prophecy has already been fulfilled, for this "Elijah" was referring to the one we know as John the Baptist and the work he would do.

Verse 6 says, "... he shall turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers." Now notice Luke 1:1-17. These verses deal with the birth and work of John, and we read in verse 17, "He shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias [Elijah], to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just: to make ready a people prepared for the Lord." You will notice that the one Malachi spoke of that would come, would come in "the spirit and power of [Elijah]." So Elijah himself was not to come, but one in the spirit and power of Elijah.

Jesus speaks clearly on this point in Matthew 17:10-13. The disciples asked Jesus about some things the scribes were saying. It would seem that the scribes were trying to prove that Jesus was not the Messiah by saying that "Elijah" had not yet come. To this Jesus answered, "Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things. But I say unto you, That Elias is come already, and they knew him not. ... Then the disciples understood that he spoke unto them of John the Baptist."

So do not look for the fulfillment of these things yet in the future, as they have already been fulfilled, and no less authority than Jesus Christ Himself said so.

QUESTION: Would you please explain the difference between the law of works and the law of faith (Romans 3:27)?

ANSWER: Paul is pointing out the fact that salvation is NOT of works. They had nothing to boast of, nothing to claim they were justified by works. Please note the question mark after the words "of works." Paul was asking questions, "Where is boasting then? It is excluded"—by what law? Paul answers, "By the law of faith."

The law of works, the Old Covenant, could not save anyone. Jesus Christ is the only Savior, and you receive Him through faith, not works. Works or fruit will follow, but salvation is through Christ. †

STEPS HEAVENWARD

By the late R. L. Berry

Chapter IX

One Is Known by the Company He Keeps

(A Chapter on Association)

THERE IS A law of influence that affects every human creature. From the worst to the best of us we are molded by our contacts, by our associations. Whatever our society is, we like to be in harmony with its general ideals and strive to uphold them. We become like those with whom we associate. Without being conscious of it, we take on the characteristics of those who we are habitually with, at home or in society. Husbands and wives who have traveled down the road of life together grow to be more and more alike.

Solomon said: "He that walketh with wise men shall be wise: but a companion of fools shall be destroyed" (Proverbs 13:20). And in a magnificent passage, Proverbs 1:10-19, Solomon says: "My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not. If they say, Come with us, let us lay wait for blood, ... cast in thy lot among us; ... my son, walk thou not in the way with them; refrain thy foot from their path." And the very first verse of that wonderful collection of songs known as the Psalms begins: "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful" (Psalm 1:1). In these texts we see the general principles of the power and influence of associations.

Our associations of the present are a prophecy of our future character and destiny. Goethe said: "Tell me with whom thou art found, and I will tell thee who thou art; let me know thy chosen employment, and I will cast the horoscope of thy future." The old saying, "A man is known by the company he keeps," is as true as ever. By a man's company you can tell what he is going to be. "We unconsciously fall into the habits of thought and feeling of those with whom we are associated. We grow better or worse, nobler or meaner, by the influence of our companions. Our ideas are molded by our ideals; our conduct by our examples. To choose refining, purifying society, is the greatest step up and on; to keep the company of the vicious and vile, is as sure a step toward ruin. The church is mainly given us to meet this demand of our social nature."—Pierson.

It is impossible to live in this world and not have some association with evil men and women, casual, or occasional, but such association rarely influences one deeply, and the grace of God is sufficient to keep us in all unavoidable contacts with sinners. Now and then a Christian may have a sinner friend whose ideals are noble and whose influence may be mostly for good. Sometimes one's family is unconverted, and some young

convert may ask, "What shall I do if all my family is unsaved?" You should strive with all your power to wield so great an influence over your family that they also will turn to God; if they will not turn, resolutely set yourself to do God's will, to live a sunshiny, happy life, and leave the results with God.

Close by the city of Geneva, Switzerland, is the place where the waters of the River Rhone and the River Arve join in their course to the Mediterranean Sea. The Arve flows into the Rhone. The waters of the Rhone come from the high mountains of the Swiss Alps, the source being a melting glacier ten or eleven thousand feet high, the glacier being kept up by the snows and the cold. From this great height the Rhone rushes down into Lake Geneva and on to the sea. The waters of the Rhone are beautifully clear and sparkling, the waters of the Arve are pale and muddy. As the traveler stands at the juncture of these two rivers he notices a remarkable sight, the waters of the two rivers meet but do not at once coalesce, but remain apart. On one side are the swift-moving and dark clear waters of the Rhone, on the other the slow-moving and pale waters of the Arve. They are together and yet they are not together, one channel holds them, yet they are separate. The reason for this is the Rhone has a much swifter current than the Arve, and this force or momentum prevents the commingling of the waters until further down the stream, where the force is spent, there the waters finally mix.

The Christian has the source of his new life as high up as the throne of God, fed by a ceaseless supply, unadulterated and pure. But the Christian is in the world, by his side are the evil and wicked, and the problem is to prevent unwholesome contact and commingling with the world. Like the waters of the Rhone, as long as the force and power is there to keep the young Christian moving more swiftly and stronger than the other he is safe. If he comes to a standstill, he is swallowed up in the world.

"I am not a rose," says an Eastern proverb, "but I have been with the rose, and therefore I am sweet." Men unconsciously carry signs of their lives around with them; the miller, and the blacksmith, the worker in lime and mortar, and the farmer bear signs of being workmen and of their work. A merry face or a sad one testifies of where its owner has been. Notice how in the minds of people a person with a Bible is quickly associated with religious work. Irreligious people and sinners do not carry Bibles under the arm. When one comes in with fresh fruit in his hands, we say, "You have come from the orchard." If he comes with his hands full of flowers, "You have been to the fields or woodlands." And when one comes from secret prayer, from a season of conversation with God, from divine presence, he will show in act and look and word the sacred tokens of divine intercourse. On the other hand, if one has been with evil companions, then there will be the signs of it; a lack of poise, a frivolousness, a worldliness, or something that betrays the fatal company he has been in.

The evangelist Moody, it is said, frequently told the story of how he carried in his pocket a gold chain. Into the same pocket he carelessly placed a lead bullet. After several days he took out the chain and found it covered

all over with a coating of lead. The contact of the two substances was greatly detrimental to the gold. Bad companions will tarnish the noblest and best character.

There are certain young converts who will find it necessary to break entirely with their old associates and associations, even stay away from their usual meeting places and haunts. There is no safety in any other course. Generally these are they who were “brands plucked out of the fires” of iniquity, debauchery, adultery, card playing, gambling, drinking, and such like. Young convert, if you are a brand plucked out of the fire, remember you will catch fire easily, if you return to your old associates and old haunts of vice. A poor man one time fell into drinking habits, but was converted and reformed. He often spoke of himself as a “brand plucked out of the fire.” “Come, go with us, and have a drink,” one said to him. “Look here,” he answered, “you know there is a difference between a brand and a green stick. If a spark falls on a brand that has been partly burned, the brand will soon catch fire again. Not so with a green stick. I tell you I am that brand plucked out of the fire; and I dare not venture into the way of temptation for fear of being set on fire again.”

There are some young converts young in years who well need to pay careful attention to the matter of associates. The best thing may be to sever intimate association with those most calculated to lead you astray and be on friendly terms with the best of your former friends. No general rule will fit all cases.

One thing must be borne in mind, and that is that there is such a thing as predominance of influence. Either the young convert will influence his evil companions to go God’s way, or the evil companions will influence the young convert to go the devil’s way. This point must be carefully kept in mind, and when, young Christian, you find that your associates are having more influence over you than you are over them, it is time to sever the intimate social contact between you. An old colored saint was fond of going to a certain livery-stable. But every time he left the place and its jolly “hangers-out” he felt lean and unspiritual; not exactly guilty, but somewhat tarnished by the sinful contact. He finally, through prayer, was led to make the wise decision that he would stay away from that place until he grew stronger. “If you always live with those who are lame, you yourself will learn to limp,” says a Latin proverb, and means that our associations have a tremendous influence over us.

Too much cannot be said in favor of the young convert’s association with Christian people. Through conversing with them, he will receive much information that will be of great value throughout life. There was once a young convert who made the usual mistakes and had the usual doubts and conflicts of young Christians, but who made it his business to go two or three times a week to see an old brother long in the way. This young convert would go over, worried and tried and discouraged; but the good conversation and the prayer following would invariably lift him up and send him back home as if on wings. Make some older Christian your companion, for your soul’s sake.

“But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image

from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord” (II Corinthians 3:18). Looking at Jesus changes us. Association with Jesus makes us like Him. Just as we are uplifted by associating with people better than ourselves, so we are uplifted by associating with Jesus. Living in every-day contact with Jesus brightens and ennobles the meanest existence and paints a halo around the head of the humblest. Once there was a man riding in some timberland in one of the Southern States. All at once he came upon a little clearing in the timber, and there was an old tumble-down house and an ancient colored woman standing near.

“Living all alone, Auntie?” he asked.

“Jess me’n Jesus, Massa,” she replied.

That saying transformed the whole scene. Me and Jesus! There was something sacred about that place.

So live, young convert, in association with Jesus that His beauty will be somewhat reflected through you to others. †

BIBLE LESSON OF THE MONTH

THE STEPS OF THE RIGHTEOUS WATER BAPTISM

Scriptures: Matthew 3:5-9, 13-17; 28:19; Mark 16:16.

Matthew 3:5 Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judaea, and all the region round about Jordan,

6 And were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins.

7 But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?

8 Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance:

9 And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.

13 Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him.

14 But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?

15 And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him.

16 And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him:

17 And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

Matthew 28:19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

Mark 16:16 He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.

Memory Verse: Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.—Matthew 28:19.

Aim: To obtain the Bible understanding of the ordinance of baptism.

INTRODUCTION

MAN KEEPS peace and favor with God as he walks in the light of the commands God gives by His written Word or by direct revelation. Among the things God requires of every Christian is baptism. We are unable to give you every detail of the reason why God requires this of His newly born children; nevertheless, we all must say, "Amen," to this command if for no other reason than that the Lord gave it. His wisdom will never allow Him to do anything wrong or detrimental to the welfare of His children.

There is no power in the water to wash away even the smallest sin (Only the blood of Jesus can do that.), but baptism is intended as a testimony to the world that the candidate has forsaken sin and accepted Christ.

"Baptize" in its original Greek meaning is to immerse or bathe (in). Bible examples indicate that immersion was the method used by the early church, and Bible authorities refer to baptism as a burial. Since the same word—baptize—is used in reference to the infilling of the Spirit in the experience of sanctification (and the thought is that one is hidden away in God), the thought of immersion as the proper mode of baptism is further strengthened.

MEDITATIONS

JOHN INAUGURATED THE RITE OF BAPTISM—Matthew 3:5—Then went out ... Jerusalem—Water baptism was not required of the Jews under the law. Perhaps circumcision served in its place. However, a Gentile who decided to accept the Jews' religion had to submit to baptism; he also had to be circumcised. Therefore, it would have taken strong, Spirit-filled preaching to have brought these Jews to the place where they would submit to water baptism. **Verse 6—Confessing their sins—**Baptism without an attendant break from sin would be valueless, for baptism is an outward symbol of an inward work. John had the fire of heaven, and his preaching proved successful, for large numbers of Jews responded, became convicted of their sins and were constrained to confess and forsake them.

BAPTISM WITHHELD—Matthew 3:7—Generation of vipers—This was very strong language, and it was directed toward religious professors who were presenting themselves for baptism simply because it seemed popular to do so at the time, and not because they had a sincere desire to please God. **Verse 8—Fruits meet for repentance—**Here is strong evidence that God requires true repentance and its accompanying works to precede water baptism. John refused to baptize unless the applicant had forsaken sin.

AFFILIATION NOT SALVATION—Matthew 3:9—Abraham to our father—These Pharisees and Sadducees were resting their hope of spiritual security on the fact that they were descendants of Abraham, which was of no avail to them in this circumstance. Repentance was their great need. Reader, are you counting on church membership to get you to heaven without having been born again? Jesus told Nicodemus, "Except a man be born again, he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven."

JESUS OUR EXAMPLE—Matthew 3:13—To be baptized of him—Jesus was of the house of David and a Jew, yet in the presence of a great crowd, He submitted to baptism. **Verse 14—John forbade—**John had the unusual qualification of being filled with the Holy Ghost from before his birth; even so he knew himself to be greatly inferior to Christ and was reluctant to immerse Him. **Need to be baptized of thee—**We have no record that John was ever baptized. **Verse 15—Fulfill all righteousness—**Jesus was not baptized as a symbol of His salvation, for He had done no sin from which to be redeemed. He was baptized to set an example for all who would follow Him.

MODE OF BAPTISM—Matthew 3:16—Went up ... out of the water—Jesus in His example was immersed. He and John would not have walked down into the Jordan River merely for the purpose of John's sprinkling water on Jesus' head or pouring a cupful of water on Him. They went down into the water so that Jesus could be "buried" under the water. He then "went up straightway out of the water." Every Christian should desire to walk in the steps of Jesus. **Verse 17—Well pleased—**Here is a strong declaration of God's approval being upon the practice of baptism. We know that the Father is also well-pleased today when any newborn son of His submits to baptism.

BAPTISM IN THE LAST COMMISSION—Matthew 28:19—Name of the Father ... Son ... Holy Ghost—Even though there are three Personalities in the Godhead, there is only one God. There is never any difference between the three; if one acts it is the same as if the other two had done so. One immersion then (not three) is all that is needed to satisfy God. This was the last commission of our Lord—"Go ye, preach the gospel, baptize," and is the will of God for all men of all ages.

FAITH A NECESSITY—Mark 16:16—Believeth and is baptized—The act of believing must precede the rite of baptism. This eliminates infant baptism, for it is impossible for infants to believe. They have no committed sins from which to be forgiven, no knowledge of right and wrong, and if they die they go to heaven.

CONCLUSION

Even though it does not have power to wash away sin, baptism is not optional; it is essential because God requires it.

One should be baptized as soon as possible after conversion, and if no opportunity be offered him, he should request the administration of this sacred rite. Acts 16:33 tells how Paul took the Philippian jailer out the same night he was saved and baptized him. (Note that the jailer believed before being baptized.) I Peter 3:21 declares baptism to be "the answer of a good conscience toward God." In other words, baptism follows the reception of a good conscience by the cleansing power of the blood of Christ.

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

1. What is the purpose of water baptism?
2. Does it have any power to cleanse from sin?
3. What method of baptism was used by the early church? †

M O L D E D

2023 Hagerstown Convention Message by Bro. Brian Richards



THE TITLE of our message is simply, “Molded.” I’d like for us to look into Isaiah, chapter 64, verse 8, for our initial thoughts: “But now, O Lord, thou art our father; we are the clay, and thou our potter; and we all are the work of thy hand.” Do you see in this verse where the writer is recognizing that God is our Father, that He is the Potter, and we are the clay?

I’d like for us to look at Psalm 100, verse 3, which is a very familiar Psalm to us. This Psalm is one that we often use when we’re thinking about worship or coming into the house of the Lord. Psalm 100:3, “Know ye that the Lord he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.”

ALMIGHTY GOD IS THE POTTER

We’re going to talk a little bit this morning about being molded. We’re going to talk about clay, how it is molded, and how each one of us is the clay. But the foundational thought is that we must first acknowledge who the potter is. The Potter is God Almighty, the Creator, the great I AM, the one who spoke the worlds into existence, and breathed into us the breath of life. He is the Creator. The phrase *know ye* in this Psalm, to me, means: “respect; understand; acknowledge.” Acknowledge “that the Lord he is God: it is he that hath made us.”

There’s a lot of thinking in the world today that is surrounded around humanism and the elevating of mankind. Even in government policies, and with different things that happen, they are surrounded around man solving all of our needs, man being the answer to everything, and man relying on science. Well, I prefer to acknowledge God for who He is, and to acknowledge that He is the Creator. “It is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.” I believe that ties in well with our text in Isaiah 64.

Again, Isaiah 64 says: “But now, O Lord, thou art our father; we are the clay, and thou our potter; and we all are the work of thy hand.” All of us are the work of His hands. There are no multiple Gods. There isn’t a God for the black race, for the white race, for Americans, Jamaicans, and Hondurans, and others. There is only one God, and we all are the work of His hands. So it is important as we go through our thoughts this morning that we acknowledge that we are the work of His hands. God in heaven is the Potter. He’s the one molding and shaping this clay. We’re simply the clay. We’re not telling the Potter how to shape us. We’re not telling Him how to mold us into what we want to be. We’re simply the clay.

I’d like to look at Jeremiah, chapter 18. This also talks about the potter, the potter’s house, and the clay. The Lord was trying to teach Jeremiah a lesson here. He was trying to bring something across to him. Verses 1-4: “The word which came to Jeremiah from the Lord,

saying, Arise, and go down to the potter’s house, and there I will cause thee to hear my words. Then I went down to the potter’s house, and, behold, he wrought a work on the wheels. And the vessel that he made of clay was marred in the hand of the potter: so he made it again another vessel, as seemed good to the potter to make it.”

I don’t know how many of you have tried to make something out of clay, but I remember when I was in art class in high school, I had to put the clay on the potter’s wheel and work it. Well, before clay is ever ready to be shaped into anything, there is quite a bit of work that has to go into it. You have to knead it, to prepare it. You have to get all the air bubbles out of it. If you make an item out of clay and it has air bubbles in it, when you put it in the kiln or the furnace to dry, or to fire it, the air bubbles will expand and explode. So the potter takes the clay and rolls it into a ball. He sometimes slams it down to push the air out of it. He pushes his fingers through it. He kneads it. There is a lot of work that goes into preparing the clay. The potter is looking for impurities in that clay. He’s looking for anything that might be a foreign object. Maybe some clay might have dried up and become hard like a stone. The potter is looking for something that would hinder him from rolling that clay out. Maybe he wants to roll it out into a nice flat sheet to check for any lumps. He’s working that clay to make sure that it’s going to be pliable in his hands.

WE ARE THE CLAY

Again, speaking of us being molded and shaped, we are the clay. Are there impurities in our lives sometimes that the Lord has to work out, that He has to remove? Now, I know that this particular analogy in the Scriptures is a good one, but it’s not one that’s exact throughout our whole lives, because when you work with clay and make it into a vessel, fire it in a kiln or furnace, it’s finished when it’s taken out. Once it’s put in the furnace, you can’t rework that clay. But I believe the Lord is molding each of us throughout our entire lives. I don’t believe that when we get saved we go through a six-month period, if you will, of kneading, being molded and shaped, and then that’s it. But I think we all understand that the Lord works with each and every one of us all through our lives. Sometimes there are things He has to remove. As He’s working with us, maybe He finds something that’s a little hard that needs to be removed. I’m not going to try to cover a lot of those possibilities, but it could be things such as our attitudes and our mindset.

Are we teachable? I’m sure you heard what Bro. Moncrief said last night. I believe he said it twice. He said, “Some people will not be pastored, but they want to be the pastor.” Are we willing to allow God, regard-

less of how long we've been a Christian, to teach us? Are we willing to learn of Him? Are we willing to allow the Lord's fingers to run through us to mold us and to shape us? If He feels something hard in that clay, are we willing to allow Him to remove it? There are a lot of other things that could be foreign objects in the clay. Self gets in the way a lot of times in different forms, doesn't it? But our point here is, working that clay, kneading that clay, has a purpose. Sometimes it's not very comfortable. I'm sure we can all say we've experienced that. As the Lord molds and shapes us into the vessel He wants to make us, it may not be comfortable at times. There might be some tests that we go through that will try our faith. There might be some doubtful accusations and things that the enemy throws at us to try to test us to see if we'll stand our ground. There will be some things that come our way that are not going to be the most comfortable, but it's good for us. It's preparing us for what the Lord wants us to be, the vessel He wants to make us into. It's preparing us to be molded and shaped.

CLAY IS PLIABLE

As I considered the clay being molded and shaped, I thought, what does pliable clay look like, spiritually speaking? I think we all understand what the word *pliable* means. It is something that is not brittle or hard. It's something soft and smooth that can be worked and shaped. What is pliable clay? If we're clay, and are pliable, what does that look like to God? The verse that came to me is found in Isaiah, chapter 6, verse 5, where Isaiah was in the presence of the Lord. He said, "Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips." There was a coal from off the altar that was brought to him. It touched his lips and purified him. Isaiah recognized his need. He recognized that there was something that was hard and not right in his soul. He needed to be cleansed. He needed to be purified. And then, in verse 8, Isaiah said, "Here am I; send me." Is that your attitude this morning? Is that your will? "Here am I; send me. You can shape me, Lord. You can mold me. You can make me into the vessel you want me to be. Have your way, Lord; here am I." I didn't see any hesitation in Isaiah. I didn't see in the Word of God where Isaiah said, *Lord, I'll be ready in a few years. In a few years, you can have me. I just need a little time.* He just said, "Lord, here am I." Isaiah was pliable. The Lord could work with him. The Lord could use him. May that be our desire that the Lord will help us to be pliable and moldable in His hands so He can shape us and use us as He chooses.

Now, I'd like to talk little bit about the vessels. I mentioned that clay is kneaded and is prepared. Then when it's ready with the right consistency, it can be rolled out and hold its form. It has enough strength. It's ready to be molded. It's ready to be shaped. Again, the Lord is the one who is the Potter. He is the one who molds us and makes us into what He wants us to be. As children of God we can't sit back and say, *Now, Lord, I would like to be a vessel that's tall and have a nice handle. I would like to have a spout to pour out water. I would like to have a nice base on my vessel. I would like have some ornate decorations carved into the side of my vessel.* We can't say that, can we? Isaiah just said,

"Here am I, Lord; send me. Mold me, make me, shape me into what you would have me to be."

THERE ARE DIFFERENT VESSELS

But there are different types of vessels that the Lord makes. Let us look at Romans, chapter 9, verse 21: "Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?" There are different vessels. There are various needs. Some vessels need to hold water. Some need to carry a bouquet of flowers. Some are needed just to hold my cereal. There are different vessels, and the Lord is responsible for making *you* into what He wants you to be. He is responsible for making *me* into what He wants me to be. We just need to be that pliable clay that He can mold and shape into that vessel. If the Lord makes you into an ornate vessel that has the lovely spout, handle, and base, and He just makes me into a bowl, so be it. I want to be that vessel that the Lord wants me to be.

Each one of us needs to be responsible for our own talents, our own abilities. I don't want to be one that buries my talent in the ground. We want to allow the Lord to use us. We want to allow the Lord to shape us as He sees best. This can be rather challenging or daunting for a young person. I remember being a young person. I was first saved when I was thirteen years old. Bro. Greg was our youth minister. He had a great influence on me. Bro. Greg pushed us to do things, but I was shy and backward. I didn't want anything to do with getting up in front of people or giving a testimony that was recorded to be aired on the radio. I have said this multiple times in our local congregation: Bro. Greg encouraged us. It's not about us. When we come to the Lord and give Him our hearts, and yield to Him our all, we're yielding to Him our will. We're yielding to Him our talents and our abilities. What the Lord has given us, it's to be used to His honor and glory.

We don't know when we first get saved (and it's probably a good thing we don't know), what the Lord would have us to do. I'm sure you could ask many of these ministers here and they would probably say, "I never expected to be behind the pulpit. I never expected to bring a message." But we need to be that pliable clay, and let God do the deciding. Let Him decide what He wants us to be. Peter had some concerns about that one time. There was a time where the Lord was trying to bring a lesson to Peter. He said to Peter, "Feed my sheep." Peter was troubled. The Lord said those words to him three times. Peter asked, "Lord, what about this man? What is he going to do?" The Lord had some pretty straight words for him, didn't he? He said, "What is that to thee, Peter, if he should tarry till I come?" In other words, "Peter, it's none of your concern. If John should just wait until I return, that's my business. I'll call him to what I want him to do. But you, Peter, have a responsibility. I've called you to feed my sheep. I've called you to a work, Peter, and you need to be concerned about that work, and not what your brother here has been called to." That still applies to us today. Each one of us needs to be faithful to receive the call that the Lord has for us and to be pliable in His hands. As I thought about that, I thought, it is so important that our Potter be God Almighty.

Who or what might be molding you? There are a lot of things in our world today that try to mold us. Did you know that? There are a lot of things that come our way. In this digital age that we're living in, things come to us. We don't even have to go look for them. They just come to us. They're in many places. Things are out there that are trying to mold and shape us, and trying to get us to buy this or buy that, or vote this way or vote that way. Influencing us. Things are trying to mold and shape us. There's the media, pop culture, music, politics, and modern thinking of all kinds. There are our peers, those whom we work with, and our family.

I was talking to a man one time. He wasn't a church of God man. He was telling me about his routine of how he starts the day and what he does. One of the things he said was, "I go to a certain news channel and scroll on down through the headlines. I read the headlines, and I move on. I don't need that in my life." The thing that caught my attention was when he said, "I just read the headlines. I don't spend a lot of time on getting into things, because I don't need that in my life." I'm not saying it's wrong to read a news article or anything like that. It struck me when he said, "I just read the headlines." He wanted to make sure that there wasn't a major event that he was missing, but he didn't spend a lot of time reading the news. He said, "There's so much negativity out there. There's so much that would bring us down. There's so much that would discourage us. I don't need that in my life." I thought about that. I see that as a filter. He was filtering. He was allowing certain things to come in, but he wasn't meditating and spending a lot of time on things to discourage him.

As saints of God, we need to have some filters. There are a lot of things out there that would try to mold us and influence us. There are a lot of influences that would try to impact our young people who go to school or college. Dear Ones, we need to be sure that God Almighty is the Potter in our lives. We need to make sure He's the one molding us and shaping us into what He wants us to be. Yes, there maybe some times when we need to have a filter, when we need to filter some things out and not allow them into our lives.

OUR PERSONALITY IS MOLDABLE

What parts of us can be molded? We might be able to exercise or go on a diet to shape our physique a little bit. That might be possible to some degree, but outside of those, are there things that are moldable? Are there things about our makeup, our personality that are moldable? Sure there are. I mentioned our attitude a little earlier. What about our language? Can that be shaped by the Lord, by His Word? What about our behavior and our thinking? There is a beautiful verse in Philippians, chapter 4, verse 8, that I would like for us to turn to. Many of you, I'm sure, know it by heart. Philippians 4:8 gives us some instruction about our thinking and what we should actively do to help the Lord to mold us and to shape us into what He wants us to be: "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things."

Why do we have those instructions in Philippians 4:8? Because in doing so, they will mold us. They will help our attitude, our mindset. They will help us to look on the positive side of life and to think about things that are good and pure and right and not get discouraged by all the negativity that we see in our world today. Again, I'm not running down the news outlets, but I want us to think about some things. News outlets are businesses. They're not out there just producing reports because we need to know what's going on down the street. They're trying to shape us, in a sense many times, unfortunately. They're going to do things that generate clicks, generate viewing time. It's a business. We need to be mindful of that. We need to be careful. This verse says to think on "things that are lovely, things that are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things." I think that's one reason why a good season of prayer with the Lord just does something for our soul, our mind, and outlook. It just prepares us because we've been with the Lord. We've been thinking about the things of God. We've been thinking about His goodness, His blessings, and how He has provided for us in the past. Our faith is inspired that He will provide for us yet again. There are things we can do to be molded into God's image.

I would like for us to be encouraged as we think about being molded. Again, each one of us is molded. We should be molded all throughout our lives. I don't believe we will ever get to a place in our lives where we can say we've learned it all. We can always be growing. We can always be learning. We can learn about ourselves and others. We can learn how to work with others. There is so much learning to be had, and all of that comes by us being molded and shaped to be the vessel that God wants us to be.

CONCLUSION

As we leave our convention this year and go back to our places of worship, where we labor and work for the Lord, I would like to encourage us to stand on sound doctrine, and to be molded and shaped by the Spirit of God. Consider it from time to time. Look on our lives and think about our lives and consider how we've been shaped. What has influenced me today? Have I been molded by the Word? Has my mind been prepared to reach others by having time in His Word and time in prayer? Have I thought about the souls of others and the needs of others? These things will help mold us and shape us into the vessel God wants us to be. Ultimately, we need to keep our eyes on the Lord and make sure that we're not allowing the things of this world to shape our thinking, to shape our actions, to shape our language, to shape our lives.

May the Lord help us to allow the Spirit of God to mold and shape us into what He would have us to be. If the Lord wants me to be a bowl, I'll be happy being a bowl. Whatever He wants us to be, may God help us.

The Lord bless you. †

"Lord, Thou art the Potter; I am the clay."

THE POETRY PAGE

LOVE IS FREEDOM'S LAW

Daniel S. Warner

O love divine, unfathomed!
O shoreless sea of bliss!
Thy throne the highest heaven,
Yet flowing down to this
Dark world of guilt and sorrow,
Redeems the fettered soul:
Thy paths of peace I follow;
O love, our hearts extol!

Enshrined within the bosom
Of Father's tender love,
We seem in deep mid-ocean
Of heaven's bliss above.
Oh, wonders of redemption!
We gaze in silent awe
Upon the new creation,
Where love is freedom's law.

Worlds of ecstatic glory,
Love opens to our view,
Where saints and angels truly
Find joys forever new.
Sweet element of heaven!
He is supremely blest
Who in thy sea overwhelmed
Has found eternal rest.

Love holds a royal scepter,
And Mercy looketh down,
Both calling to the sinner,
"Come, wear a starry crown."
Oh, sweet divine compassion!
Poor sinner, taste and see;
If grace thy heart may fashion,
Then love shall reign in thee.

THE LOVE OF GOD

W. J. Henry

Deeper than the depths of ocean,
Wider than the boundless sea,
Higher than the lofty mountains,
Is the love of God to me.
Filled with all His glorious fulness,
Sitting at His blessed feet,
Doing only as He bids me—
This is all my drink and meat.

You may have these earthly pleasures,
You may have earth's fame and store;
I have found a richer treasure,
One that satisfies me more.
In God's love I find completeness
And an everlasting rest,

Joy that passeth understanding,
Where my soul is ever blest.

Trials, yes, they come quite often;
Friends forsake me, that is true;
Heavy burdens press upon me,
Disappointments not a few;
But the love of Jesus ever
Makes these burdens light to bear,
And the one who never leaves me
Bids me cast on Him my care.

So I ask for nothing better
Than to ever simply know
That my life is pleasing Jesus,
While I linger here below;
And when all the toil is over,
And when all the trials are past,
Seated by His throne in glory
I shall be with Him at last.

CHARITY

James Montgomery

Could I command, with voice or pen,
The tongues of angels and of men,
A tinkling cymbal, sounding brass,
My speech and preaching would surpass;
Vain were such eloquence to me
Without the grace of charity.

Could I the martyr's flame endure,
Give all my goods to feed the poor;
Had I the faith from Alpine steep
To hurl the mountain to the deep—
What were such zeal, such power, to me,
Without the grace of charity?

Could I behold with prescient eye
Things future, as the things gone by;
Could I all earthly knowledge scan,
And mete out heaven with a span—
Poor were the chief of gifts to me
Without the chiefest—charity.

Charity suffers long, is kind;
Charity bears a humble mind,
Rejoices not when ills befall,
But glories in the weal of all;
She hopes, believes, and envies not,
Nor vaunts, nor murmurs o'er her lot.

The tongues of teachers shall be dumb;
Prophets discern not things to come;
Knowledge shall vanish out of thought,
And miracles no more be wrought;
But charity shall never fail—
Her anchor is within the veil. †

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Let 2024 be full of charity!

BUILDING TO WITHSTAND THE STORMS OF LIFE

Radio Message
by the late
Bro. Alvin A. Craig



which may take away much or all we own, as was in Job's case. Job had many cattle. He had precious children. He had other things, and they were taken from him. So this life we're talking about involves literal storms which may take away much or all that we own in a material way. How we respond to such tragedies will reveal the quality of our building. Will we be emotionally devastated, or will we be able to stand? Will we be willing to continue without despair? That was Job's state. He said, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." Later, he said, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him." Job was building upon a sure foundation. So how we respond to such tragedies will reveal the quality of our building. Will we be emotionally devastated, or will we be able to stand? Will we be willing to continue without despair?

It may also involve figurative storms, such as illness, the loss of loved ones, etc. Job also suffered this in regard to losing his cattle and children, but he also suffered in a physical way. It was after he suffered in a physical way that he said, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him." Even in building our lives today, it may involve storms, such as illness, the loss of loved ones, etc. Again, how we respond to such tragedies will reveal the quality of our building.

Then there is the final storm of life. Yes, there will come a final storm of life, and that is death; not just to a loved one, but to us. That death and the judgment are coming to all of us. We are told in Hebrews 9:27, "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." So there is that final storm that everyone of us must face as we build our lives.

Jesus will describe the kind of a builder we have been. We read in Matthew 25:21, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant." We also read in Matthew 25:26, "Thou wicked and slothful [lazy] servant." So here we have in Matthew 25 the two builders described under different terms, of course, but they are described here: "Well done, thou good and faithful servant," and "Thou wicked and slothful servant." Jesus Christ will describe what kind of a builder we were.

Obedying Jesus is the key to withstanding the storms of life. Being a hearer only is not sufficient. Such is foolishness. The foolish man built his house on the sand, but notice in the scripture that I read, that both the wise and the foolish heard. Both of them heard, but being a hearer only is not sufficient. James wrote that being a hearer and not a doer is to deceive ourselves. We deceive ourselves if we are only hearers and not doers, for James exhorts us, "Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves" (James 1:22). If we are only hearers, and not doers, then we deceive ourselves.

The storms will reveal the quality of one's character. Moses wrote in Numbers, chapter 32, verse 23: "Be sure your sin will find you out." So the storms will reveal the quality of one's character.

The storms will also reveal the foundation on which we are building. We must do what Jesus says: "Who-soever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock:" I do want to emphasize the fact that if

UR SUBJECT for today's broadcast is, "Building to Withstand the Storms of Life." Our text of scripture is found in Matthew, chapter 7, reading verses 24 through 27: "Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it."

Our nation has suffered many disasters through the years: forest fires, hurricanes, and tornadoes. Some storms have revealed that some contractors have been unscrupulous by not building according to the building code.

Jesus made a parallel between storms and buildings at the end of His sermon on the mount. He sought to encourage people to act upon His teachings, contrasting the difference between those who were doers and those who just heard but did not do. Every one of us is building a house. The houses represent our lives. Each of us is building a life, a life that will respond to the many ups and downs that come our way. There will be ups and downs. There will be storms of life, so each of us is building a life, a life that will respond to the many ups and downs that come our way.

We are building these lives upon a foundation. The foundation is whatever teaching, doctrine, or philosophy to which we subscribe. Anyone who knows anything about building knows that the foundation is a very important part of any structure. So we are building lives, and these lives are being built upon a foundation. The foundation is not bricks or mortar or cement or anything like those. The foundation is whatever teaching, doctrine, or philosophy to which we subscribe. We cannot escape the fact that we are building. Yes, every one of us is building. When we are born into this world and begin to live, we are building a life. We cannot escape the fact that we are building. The question is whether we will be wise or foolish builders. Remember, Jesus told us about two builders—one wise, one foolish. So we cannot escape the fact that we are building. The question is whether we will be wise builders or foolish builders.

The tests that will determine whether we are wise or foolish are called storms. The storms are things which threaten our well-being. This may involve literal storms

we're going to build a house that will stand, we must be doers of the Word and not just hearers only. Those who do what Jesus said will be those who will withstand the storms of life.

I'm not going to deny the fact that the storms are going to come. As we read in Matthew, chapter 7, the latter part of what we call *The Sermon on the Mount*, we see that the winds and the rain beat upon both houses. So the storms of life are going to come to all of us, but those who do what Jesus says will be those who will withstand the storms, because their house is built upon the rock, a sure foundation. Jesus Christ is that solid Rock. He is the Rock, and we must build our lives upon Him. What does that mean? Build according to the teachings of His Word.

How do the sayings of Jesus help us to withstand the storms? First of all, we read in Matthew 6, verses 19-21: "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." As we think about what Jesus taught, and the sayings that He taught, they will help us to withstand the storms of life; but remember, *where your treasure is, there will your heart be also*. Therefore, lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven. Not on this earth, but treasures in heaven, where moth doth not corrupt, nor where thieves break through and steal.

We also read in Matthew 6:33, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." Jesus didn't say seek the material things first. He didn't say seek a house first, a car first, or even a husband or a wife first. He said, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." We're talking about a house that will stand the storms of life. The way we are to build a house that will stand the storms of life is to build according to the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ and His Word.

We have Jesus' sayings in regard to avoiding false prophets. Reading again from *The Sermon on the Mount*, chapter 7, beginning with verse 15: "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them." So we are to be careful and avoid false prophets and not allow them to lead us astray. The Bible teaches us that we should let no man deceive us by any means—by vain words or by any other way. "If the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch" (Matthew 15:14).

Build on acts of righteousness that are well-pleasing to God. We read this in the first part of Matthew, chapter 6. I'll not take time to read all of those verses. Acts of righteousness are another way we are to build a house that will stand the storms of life. Storms come

to all, but there is a house that we can build that will withstand the storms. When the storms are past, the house is still standing. "Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: [Why?] for it was founded upon a rock." So storms come to all, but there is a house that we can build that will withstand the storms. When the storms are past, then the house will still be standing, because it was founded upon the Rock.

Build your house upon the Rock that will stand the storms of life. Sin-you-must religion will not enable you to build that kind of a house. Righteousness exalts a nation. Righteousness exalts an individual. Righteousness enables a person to build his house upon the Rock that will stand, but sin is a reproach to any people. It makes no difference if it's the preacher in the pulpit or the hearer in the pew. Sin is a reproach to any people. Jesus Christ left the glories of heaven, came into this world, took upon Himself a robe of flesh, suffered and bled and died upon the cross of Calvary so that we could be a child of God and build our house upon that solid Rock, the Lord Jesus Christ and His teachings. It is the foolish one who builds his house upon the sand and upon a sin-you-must religion. Thank God, Christ has for us a better way. That way is the way of holiness.

I would encourage you today to make sure that you are building your house upon the Rock that will enable you to withstand the storms of life. †

THE CHILDREN'S CORNER



AIR HOLES

A Bible Lesson by Sis. Rebecca Bland

"What would you like for breakfast?" I asked my husband not long ago.

"Some peanut butter and jelly toast would taste good," he said with a smile.

I smiled, too. Peanut butter and jelly toast is one of his favorite things to eat. I opened a bag of fresh Italian bread that I had bought at a bakery the day before, and laid it on a cutting board. With a sharp bread knife, I cut four generous slices. Then I stopped and shook my head.

"This has been happening a lot lately," I called out to my husband. I looked down at the slices of bread. The beautiful crusty top of the loaf had been hiding a sorry secret. In the top of each slice was a big air hole. It would be hard to spread peanut butter and jelly on these slices without making a mess.

"I guess I'll have to start making my own Italian bread," I said after a moment. "I know what to do to keep those giant air holes from forming."

My mind went back to the days of my childhood. In my memory, I could see my mother standing at the kitchen table, her hand on a large bowl of bread dough. My two younger sisters, Twila and Wilma, and I stood watching everything she did. We were eager for the chance to help.

Earlier in the day, our mother had begun the bread-making process by proofing yeast and adding flour and other ingredients to it. She had kneaded it, placed it in a large bowl, covered it with a cloth, and then set it in a warm place to rise.

Now she was ready to perform the next step. She uncovered the bowl, and we could see that the yeast had done its work. The dough had doubled in size.

"May we punch it, Mommy, please?" we begged.

"Are your hands clean?" she asked.

We all assured her that we had just washed our hands, and so she moved back to let us punch the puffy dough. The large lump of bread dough soon fell under the assault of our eager fists.

"That's enough," said our mother after a few moments. "I'm going to make the loaves now. Get the loaf pans greased for me."

We grabbed the five loaf pans from their home in the drawer beneath the kitchen stove, greased them with lard, and set them in a neat row on the kitchen table. With a practiced hand, our mother pinched off a lump of dough and formed it into a loaf, tucking the ends under so that the top of it was even and smooth.

Now came the step we anticipated most. "May we spank the bread? Please?" we all clamored. My mother held the smooth ball of dough out toward me.

"Oldest first," she said. With the flat of my hand, I smacked the dough smartly on its top.

"Why do we spank the bread?" my younger sister, Twila, asked.

"It gets the biggest air bubbles out," said my mother. "If you don't get them out now, you're likely going to have a big air hole right in the top of the loaf. You won't notice it until you slice the bread."

As my mother formed each of the other loaves of bread, she held them out to us, letting us take turns at "spanking" the dough. Then she covered the loaves and allowed the dough to rise once more. When it had doubled in size again, she placed the five loaves of bread in a hot oven. Soon, the delicious aroma of baking bread filled the house. We couldn't wait to cut into that warm bread and sample its goodness.

Because of the method my mother used in removing unwanted air when she formed the dough into loaves, her bread never had huge, disappointing air holes like the one I found in the Italian bread I sliced into a few days ago.

As I looked at that big air hole, I thought of how a loaf of bread can be compared to a person's life. Just as a bubble of air grows unseen inside a rising loaf of bread, so weaknesses can grow within a person's life.

All of us have weaknesses, but bravely facing adversity is one way to overcome them.

Do you know what "adversity" means? *Adversity* means "difficulty" or "misfortune." All of us will meet adversity as we go through life. Adversity can make us

feel like we are being pounded and punched—much like my little sisters and I punched the bread dough.

When adversity comes along, we have a choice. We can either hide from it, or we can ask God to help us be brave, face the difficult times, and learn from them. If we do, we will develop an inner strength that others may safely lean upon.

If we hide from adversity, our lives will have big "air holes" in them. Those "air holes" may not be noticeable at first, but people will soon learn that we are not strong inside. Little things will get us down, and we will not be dependable soldiers for the Lord.

Our wise saying this month comes from Proverbs 24:10 which says, *If thou faint in the day of adversity, thy strength is small.*

God is always willing to help us meet difficulties and misfortunes bravely and profit spiritually from the hard times that come along. With God beside us, adversity will not make us faint, and our strength will never be small.

Activity

Unscramble the letters in the words below to find the names of seven Bible characters who faced adversity bravely and became stronger because of it.

1. HOPJES
2. SOMES
3. VIDDA
4. LAPU
5. THUR
6. MARABAH
7. BOJAC

Answer to Last Month's Activity

1. "This is my commandment, that ye **love** one another as I have **loved** you" (John 15:12).
2. "Rejoice with them that do **rejoice**, and weep with them that **weep**" (Romans 12:15).
3. "And be ye **kind** one to another, tenderhearted, **forgiving** one another, even as God for **Christ's** sake hath **forgiven** you" (Ephesians 4:32).
4. "But love ye your **enemies**, and do **good**, and **lend**, hoping for nothing again; and your **reward** shall be great, and ye shall be the **children** of the Highest: for he is kind unto the **unthankful** and to the **evil**" (Luke 6:35).
5. "Let your **light** so shine before men, that they may see your **good** works, and glorify your **father** which is in **heaven**" (Matthew 5:16). †

OUT OF BOX 88

Dear Saints of God,

I am sending a little offering for the wonderful work you are doing. The magazine has been a great help to me in my walk with the Lord.

I have read "Jesus Is Our Peace" by Bro. Harley McClung, more than once. I do love the truth.

I got saved at age 22. I am now 94. I wish the sinners could see what God can do for us.

—J. H., Kentucky

DISAGREEMENTS

2023 Hagerstown Convention Message by Bro. Howard Moncrief



WE INVITE YOU to turn to Colossians, chapter 3, verse 12: “Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering.”

I know the theme of the convention has been about humility, and we could never have enough humility. Oftentimes we need to find ourselves before the altar of God saying, “Lord, humble me that much more. Give me more humility.” Verse 13: “Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye.” We are in an unforgiving age. People are not forgiving. Situations are not forgiven. Life itself is just not forgiving.

Our thought tonight, “Disagreements.” People don’t stay together because they disagree. Saints of God, divorce courts are filled because people, somewhere along the line, disagreed on something. The world disagrees. I have disagreed. You have disagreed with something in your life—with your wife, with your husband. All of us! We faced situations where we had to disagree.

Sometimes the church can be a melting pot of opinions. Did you all hear me? I’m from the South, you’re from the East, some from Jamaica, and other places. Do you know when we meet here for convention, it could be a melting pot of opinions? It could be quite controversial at times. It could be touchy at times.

REASON AND FAITH SOMETIMES COLLIDE

Do you know sometimes reason and faith collide? Follow me closely. Some use reason in certain situations and some use faith. If we’re not careful, we will disagree. But how do we deal with disagreements? How do we face disagreements with one another? If we’re not careful, Saints of God, Church of God of Hagerstown, we will allow our disagreements to separate us. You all know that I preached here a few years ago on the thought of “We Be Brethren.” Guess what? Sometimes brethren disagree, but we don’t want to allow our disagreements to reach a level of separation. We all have our different opinions. My wife and I have different opinions. She may want the kitchen painted red, I may want it white. It’s a disagreement. How do we come to a happy medium? In your home, your wife may like certain things, your husband may like certain things, the children may like certain things, and it ends up being one big disagreement.

Again, how do we handle disagreements, Saints? Do we isolate ourselves from one another when we don’t understand? Do we separate from one another when we don’t agree? The only thing that should separate you and me is sin. God help us, because the enemy is working overtime, Saints of God. He’s not working on the world, for he has the world. But he’s working inside the church to cause certain disagreements.

I’m going to try to preach like I’m at home tonight. Should I wear a mask, or should I not? We can disagree,

but what do we do with the disagreement? Should I separate myself from you? When you come this way, should I go that way? We are one. Listen, what makes salvation so beautiful, what makes us so unique is that we can have different opinions. We can disagree, but one thing we can’t do is hurt one another.

One thing we can’t do is destroy one another. How many times when we disagree, do we take the proper Bible steps to work out our problems? Who isn’t talking to someone tonight because you disagreed with him? You grew up with him, you worked with him, you labored with him, you prayed with him, but a disagreement came up and you’ve never been the same.

We have to be careful as we are the light of the world. We can sing all the church songs we want, we can dress modestly all we want, we can know what the Church of God stands for all we want, but what if the world is looking on us and they’re seeing that we can’t work out our disagreements? Do you know what the world does with their disagreements? They say, “If I can’t have my way, give me my marbles; I’m gone.” Disagreements.

“WE BE BRETHERN”

I brought this illustration when I preached about we being brethren. When Abraham and Lot couldn’t co-exist, there was a disagreement. Look at what Abraham said: “We be brethren. I’m not going to let a disagreement separate us. I’m not going to let it divide us. Let’s work it out.”

Don’t receive an accusation against an elder. Do we even prove things out anymore? Do we even make phone calls anymore? Do we strive together for the faith of the gospel? The scripture says, “Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.” Endeavor with Bro. Moncrief. Endeavor with Bro. McCranie. Don’t cut me off. The scripture says to endeavor to work with me. God help us, because all of us were at one time in disagreement with God. Yes, we were. All of us! God told us to do one thing, and we did contrary. God said, “Live a certain way,” and we were contrary. We were in disagreement with God. In the beginning, Adam and Eve disagreed with God. When you’re not careful and you disagree with God, you’re going to line up with the world. When you’re not satisfied, when you’re not getting what you want from God, and from church, you’re going to line up with the world.

Why do churches break up? Why do we have church problems? Why do we have wives leaving their husbands and husbands leaving their wives? Why do they end up in divorce court? They used to have a good relationship with each other. How did this all happen? There was a disagreement.

Disagreement means “a clash.” Who are you clashing with? *Disagreement* means “to contradict; to differ.”

How that suit looks on you, and how *you* think it looks, and how *I* think it looks might differ. I can live with that. “Bro. Moncrief, you picked up a few pounds.” Well, I can differ with that. We can live and work with that, Saints. But let’s not allow our differences, our disagreements to evolve into division.

Before people fight, they disagree. Did you all know that? Before they fight, guess what they do? They disagree. Before any war happens, guess what? There was a disagreement. We have to be mindful of disagreements and how they can escalate. Before people divide or separate, they disagree. Our convention theme is about humility. I’ve heard great messages. Are you in disagreement with a message? Some people will come to church and do certain things and know they’re in disagreement with the message. They know they’re in disagreement with the man of God. It takes humility to get that right. Do you ever think that maybe you could be wrong? Sometimes with disagreement, you have to look at yourself and say, “Maybe I’m wrong.” Sometimes you might be right, but because of disagreement, and how it can escalate, you take the humble side.

PUTTING ROMANS 14 INTO PRACTICE

Romans 14:1, “Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations.” What about the one that’s weak in faith? Should we talk about him? “We don’t want to hear him preach.” I think sometimes our emotions and feelings have been elevated above the Word of God. How you feel, and what the Word says, somebody needs to put something in check. Something needs to be humbled, because you can feel a certain way about a person, place, or thing, and it will conflict with the Word of God. Now, the Bible says “receive ye.” Your emotions or your feelings or your knowledge of what should have happened, or what someone should have done is irrelevant. The Bible says “receive ye.” Don’t just receive him or her, but guess what else? Don’t receive them being doubtful. The enemy will work with our mind. “Okay, I’ll shake your hand, but I don’t believe you’re saved.” You’re saved based upon your knowledge. Where there is no law, there’s no transgression.

Romans 14:2, “For one believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eateth herbs.” I’m going to bring it to where we are in 2023. Can I do that? One believes he can eat all things, but another who is weak, something else. Nothing wrong with that. But the problem is when I feel that I exalt what I believe over how you believe, then there’s a disagreement. We have to be very careful as saints, because the enemy wants some internal turmoil within the congregation. He wants this half to be blue (I’m just drawing an illustration), and this half to be green. Blue says, “You all need to be blue. I don’t know what you’re waiting on, Bro. Steve, but you need to be blue.” The disagreement would be so strong that you’ll begin to think *they have a lesser gospel and a lesser salvation*. Disagreement. God help us to see it.

Romans 14:15-18: “But if thy brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died. Let not then your good be evil spoken of: For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. For he that in these

things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men.” God said, “Don’t destroy him. I know you feel a certain way about him. I know you think a certain way about him. I know you saw what he was doing at the grocery store, but don’t you destroy him.” That’s not your job. Christ died for him.

I think we don’t commit enough things to prayer, and there are not enough things that we even try to talk out with each other. If we can’t fit with one another down here, how are we going to fit in heaven? I don’t care what our titles are or where we belong or what church we go to. If we can’t fit here, how are we going to fit up there? This is the dressing room for heaven. Let me say it again: *This is the dressing room for heaven*. I’m talking about fitting with the Word. I’m talking about fitting with the Spirit of God. Sometimes people want you to fit with filth. They don’t want you to fit with the gospel or the Word of God. They want you to fit with filth. Disagreement.

COMING TO THE UNITY OF THE FAITH

The Bible says, “Till we all come in the unity of the faith.” God is working on us, Saints. He’s working on the church. I want to tell you how magnificent and incredible God is. We probably have 100 people assembled here today. Do you know God is working on all of us to get to that one place? Each and every one of you are in the Potter’s hand. Everyone of you! God is working on each and every one of us. A lot of times it’s like when you’re working on two separate pieces of clay. This clay may be half finished, and you may be just starting on this one. Naturally, the one that you’re just starting on is not going to look like the one you’ve been working on. There might be some disagreement because he’s not where you are.

Saints, it’s my burden and heart’s desire that we might be one. Isn’t it consistent with what Jesus prayed? But I think a lot of times people don’t see the work that it takes to get to where we might be one. There are some disagreements because you have some strong personalities involved. We have some strong personalities involved in situations. We have some strong characteristics involved in some situations. Because of that, there will be some disagreements.

We have liberty in Jesus Christ. “Only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh” (Galatians 5:13). The ultimate goal is that we might be like Jesus Christ, not like Bro. Moncrief. You might try to walk like me, or dress like me, or whatever the case may be, but our ultimate goal is to be like Jesus Christ. Yes, we model ourselves after different ones. Yes, we see good examples, but Saints of God, let’s not forget we need to be like Jesus Christ. That should be our ultimate goal, and it’s going to take humility to do that. It’s going to take you submitting to God some strong opinions that you might have. Strong opinions will cause disagreements, and then disagreements, if we’re not careful, are going to elevate to division. We don’t want that.

Ephesians 4:3, “Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.” Saints, do we endeavor the way we should? I often say, and you’ve heard it said before: What if Jesus was as patient with you as you are with someone else? What if Jesus was as patient

with you as you are with your children, with your husband, with your wife? What if Jesus was as patient with you as you are with your pastor? It says *endeavoring*. The ministry is here. The scripture says, "He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints." It's not my job to perfect you into Bro. Moncrief. My job is to perfect you into Jesus Christ for the perfecting of the saints. The enemy is not going to perfect you. The Holy Ghost will perfect you into Jesus Christ, if you'll let Him.

VARIATIONS IN PERSONALITY

Do you know everybody is not alike in personality? I've come here to the East Coast, and I have seen a few things. I said, "Wow! I'm sure not in Mississippi." I'm not talking about the saints, but in general, culture. The way you do certain things here, I don't believe they do those certain things in Jamaica. I'm saying these things because the enemy wants to use some of those differences. He wants to make those differences disagreements, and when he makes those things disagreements, he wants to elevate them to separation, to division. The enemy is working hard to divide us more and more and more. Saints, I need you. But do you know what the problem is a lot of times, I believe, with people? They feel like they don't need me. The enemy is working overtime with disagreements to make you feel as though I don't need you.

Without calling names, I want to thank you for sending finances to help our recovery after the tornado hit Rolling Fork. Maybe two or three weeks after that, I had a stroke. Saints called, "Are you doing alright, Bro. Moncrief? Are you okay?" Listen, Saints, we need one another. You need your wife, you need your husband, you need your pastor, you need the saints. We need one another! If Bro. Moncrief needs judgment, give me judgment, but we need one another. I think the scripture says, "So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another." There are many members of the body, so should I tell the hand I don't need it? Should I tell the feet, I don't need them? We might disagree with our feet being too big, but we need our feet. God sets the members in the body as He sees fit.

I love the Church of God, Saints. The world is watching how we handle our disagreements. What makes you think the world wants to be a part of a people who can't even work out their disagreements? The world has their problems already. When they look at you, and you can't work something out with someone else, what do they think? Paul said, "Every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ." When the world looks on us, what are they seeing?

When everything is going well, the wife rubs her husband's head. What about when you disagree? Can you still rub his head? Can you still cook when you disagree? Can you still submit when you disagree? Our challenge is not when things are going well. Our challenge as a people, as a church, is when things are not going well. Our children are watching us. Our relatives are watching us. You want to invite your family and friends to church, but they were watching you during

your disagreements. Can you still humble yourself? Humility is not just submitting when I'm wrong. Do you know what I notice? People find it hard to submit and humble themselves when they think they're right. "I don't care what anybody says, I know I'm right. No one is going to tell me anything."

If we're going to be the church, and I believe we are, there are some things we will have to do that we really don't want to do. I'm not talking about ungodly things. I'm talking about godly things. An apology, a clearing of ourselves.

"BEFORE HONOR IS HUMILITY"

The Bible says, "Before honour is humility." Before you get honored, comes humility. I'm afraid people want honor, but they haven't properly shown humility. It's amazing when people get a top position, and all of a sudden they want this and that done right, but when they weren't in that position, they questioned everything. Disagreement.

Some people disagree with God. "No, God, we dealt with a soul not too long ago. I don't believe you could save him." Let me say this: Some people are disagreeable. They've been that way all their lives—

"Let's go left."

"No, let's go right."

"Let's do it this way."

"No, I don't want to do it that way."

"It's 82 degrees."

"No, it's not."

Some people are just disagreeable. We need to be careful, Saints of God, of being disagreeable. Sometimes we just need to be quiet. Don't say anything. The way humility works is not being quiet on the outside and roaring on the inside. What if you get ready to exhort or teach? Bro. Tyler says, "Brother, I feel impressed to speak this morning. You've been studying all week for this lesson, but I have it this morning." And you get here and say, "I've got it this morning." Some people can sit down on the outside, but they're still standing up on the inside. What have you not fully submitted on the inside? What have you not fully given over to God? "I don't believe he should have done that." If you keep entertaining that, it's going to elevate to something else. That's why the Bible says, "Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." Bring it in! Disagree, but do it in the Spirit of God. The enemy is working hard with disagreements.

How many disagreements end up being spiritual casualties? In other words, because of that one disagreement, they're no longer here. Do you know some disagreements are designed to destroy us? Yes, they are. That's why we have to deal with them the way God will have us to deal with them. If we don't, they will destroy us. May God help us.

I realize tonight that I did not get to where I am by always disagreeing with something. Always having something to say. The Bible says, "Only by pride cometh contention." Pride is the opposite of humility. Do you know what we need to practice, Saints of God? We need to practice humility. There are some things you just

need to do just for the sake of practicing humility. I don't advise everybody to do this: Occasionally, I might do some things that I tell others to do. I might cut the church grass. I might clean the restroom or mop something. Do you know why I might do that? Sometimes it's good for the man of God to practice humility.

I heard someone say, "Some people will not be pastored, but they want to be the pastor." It's not going to work. We're in a time today where a bunch of head-knowledge people think that's spirituality. That's not spirituality. Just because I can tell you what the Church of God stands for and quote scriptures, that's not spirituality. "The husbandman that laboureth must be first partaker of the fruits" (II Timothy 2:6). The scripture says, "Except ye become as little children." Saints, we must become and stay as little children. Humbling ourselves. The Bible says, "If a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself." When we get too high, we're coming down. Humility keeps us low. It keeps us at one another's feet. I can't get ahold of your neck if I'm at your feet. Do we prefer one another?

We can have healthy disagreements, but our point is tonight, we need to have humility so it doesn't escalate to something greater. You can't make a person act right. You might disagree with what he does and says, but you can't make him act right. You can't make her act right. Only God can make them act right.

We have to be able to give some things to God. If God tells you to go to the altar and get it right tonight, would you disagree with that? If God says you need more grace to say something nicer or you could have treated him better, would you disagree? We can be right in the midst of a service and disagree with God. What do you mean disagree with God? God says, "You need help. You're not where you should be." And you might say, "I'm okay." You're disagreeing with God.

TO WALK TOGETHER WE MUST AGREE

Amos 3:3, "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" You have to agree if you want to walk with Christ. The song says, "He will not walk with the proud or the scornful." How can you walk with the gospel, how can you walk with Christ and not agree with Christ? How can we walk with one another except we be agreed, Brother? I just don't want to walk with you, Saints. I want to agree with you. Some people are happy just walking with one another, but they're not agreeing. If we can't agree and be one with Christ, how can we walk with Christ? How can two walk together, except they be agreed? It's not a Mississippi gospel, it's not a Maryland gospel, it's not a Jamaican gospel, it's the gospel of Jesus Christ. We have to walk with Christ and agree. When we come to places in our lives, if we're not careful, we'll disagree. When I got saved, there were some things that were preached and my flesh disagreed with it. How many times has the devil told you, "It doesn't take all of that to be saved"? It's going to take that, plus.

Do you know we have some good moral people out here in the world? They don't smoke or drink. God is not looking for a good moral life. He's not looking for a rich young ruler. He's looking for Christ in you. He's looking for what He gave.

James 4:1, "From whence come wars and fightings among you? [Do you know where they come from? Disagreement.] come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members?" There are some disagreements individuals have had and their relationship has never been the same. We have to show the world Jesus Christ. The only way we'll be able to do that is to have Christ. "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature." Before we got saved, we had ways that we handled disagreements. You all know how we did it. When we disagreed with others, we just didn't talk to them anymore. We got quiet.

Saints, my point tonight is not that we don't disagree, but we have to disagree in such a way that it magnifies Christ. We will have disagreements, but we don't want them to escalate. Do you know another disagreement that we see in the world today? How to raise our children. The world has their way of telling you how to raise your children. This is the time when it's okay to disagree: when you disagree with the world, when you disagree with sin, when you disagree with the enemy. "No, I'm not raising my children like that. No, I'm not treating my husband like that. No, I'm not treating my wife like that. No, I'm going to honor my pastor." Those are some things you can disagree with. Sometimes you can disagree.

I want to see us, Saints of God, have a closer relationship than what we've had in times past. But the enemy is trying to place disagreements among us. He can cause us to have disagreements over little things that are not even relevant to salvation and holiness.

I Peter 5:5, "Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble." Listen, Saints, we can disagree and still submit to one another. Why? Because I'm not always right, and you're not either. "All of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble." Do you know what natural clothing provides? Natural clothes cover you. Do you know what humility does? It covers you. Peter knew what he was saying when he said, "Be clothed with humility." Why? It's going to cover you. God resists the proud. That's a strong word. "God *resisteth* the proud." But guess what He does to the humble? He "giveth grace to the humble."

CONCLUSION

We're closing with this. I Peter 5:6, "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time." There will be things that come up between you and your loved ones. The testing of salvation is not going to be on scriptures that you can throw at them. The testing of salvation is going to be, can you humble yourself? God is not trying to see if you're right or wrong. He's trying to see if you'll humble yourself. I believe, Saints of God, that we all just need to humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God. God, show me anything in me that could cause a disagreement, a problem, a separation.

I want to encourage you tonight. The scripture says, "Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only." We

have to do what we know if we want to deal with disagreements.

God bless you is my prayer. †



Dear Young People,

Serving God may seem counterintuitive to many people at first! Self-sacrifice and surrender don't come naturally to us. We naturally want to hoard, protect, and accumulate for ourselves. The Bible tells us, "For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose

his life for my sake shall find it."

We must have the faith to believe God and take Him at His Word. Once we do that, we find it to be so true! That which we give to God can never be taken away from us, and the rewards of serving God in this world and the next are beyond our ability to value in material things.

May you be challenged and receive a blessing from this article written by Sis. Julie Swain.

Blessings,
Bro. Doug

A LIVING SACRIFICE

By Sis. Julie Swain

Romans 12:1, "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."

PRESENTING ourselves as a living, holy sacrifice to God is our greatest honor. It is our greatest privilege to give back to an infinitely loving, kind, patient, all-wise Creator. We have nothing to give but ourselves. He doesn't want all the things we work so hard to achieve, create, and buy: jobs, houses, cars, clothes, the amazing skyscrapers, palaces, etc. He simply wants our hearts and our lives consecrated to Him, holy, and acceptable. Does God want this to be a burden, something that we do with a feeling of self-sacrifice, with a sense of duty because we have to do this to get to heaven? I believe that God wants this to be a joy, something we do because we are so grateful for His love and so honored that this amazing God actually cares about us and wants something from us. As a point of reference, would we want something from the lowest, poorest, homeless person that we could find? We wouldn't think they had anything of value that we would possibly want. We are like that in comparison to God. Do we really have anything of value to give to Him? No, we don't! Yet, He still loves us and is there for us. He wants to hear from us and He wants to talk with us. He wants to bless us and give us salvation and eternal life. All He wants is for us to consecrate to Him our lowly bodies that were created from dust, which

are as small as grasshoppers in His sight. This is our reasonable service! It's not too much for God to ask! When we see ourselves as we really are, and see God for who He really is, it becomes our greatest joy to present to God this worthless vessel as a living sacrifice, holy, and acceptable.

A sacrifice is something that we destroy, surrender, or suffer to be lost for the sake of obtaining something. What is a living sacrifice? Isn't that an oxymoron? How can we destroy something and it still live? God is so amazing, isn't He? Who would think that when we die to self, we become alive spiritually—alive to Christ? We die, yet we live! What a miracle! Galatians 5:24, "And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts." We are to sacrifice our desires, our bodies, our longings, our money, and our time. All that we are and all that we have is to be given to God. That is the challenge! It's easy to say the words, but much harder to accomplish it. I don't think it's a one time thing where we consecrate everything to God and that's it, we never have to struggle again. I believe that it is a continual decision that we make every day to surrender to God and fight against our own selfish desires and pride. Paul said that he died daily, and he also said, "I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection."

There are so many ways that self rears its ugly head and it's different for each one of us. The key to continually presenting ourselves as a living sacrifice is to carefully look for the areas in our lives that aren't truly consecrated to God. We have to really want to see, we have to really want to give everything to God. We can also ask God to show us. When I was sanctified at the age of 12 or 13, I didn't fully understand what it meant to offer myself as a living sacrifice. In fact, I am still learning. I knew that I wanted to be filled with the Holy Spirit and that I wanted to consecrate my life to God, but at the young age I had so much to learn. One of the wonderful things about God is His patience with us. He sees everything about us, so many areas that need work, so many things we need to change, but He doesn't give up in disgust. He doesn't point out every area at once and tell us we need to change right now or He's done with us. He patiently and lovingly teaches us. As long as we have a heart that wants to do right, that wants to be like Him, He keeps working on us. He allows trials, struggles, tragedies, and heartaches into our lives to mold us and make us more and more into His image.

Galatians 5:19-21: "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God."

Ephesians 4:31, "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice."

II Timothy 2:21, 22a: "If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared

unto every good work. Flee also youthful lusts." We are to purge ourselves from all works of the flesh and run away from youthful lusts and then God will make us into a vessel of honor. I mentioned that a sacrifice is something we destroy or surrender to obtain something. So we surrender our lives to God, crucifying the flesh, and He in return makes us a vessel of honor. He gives beauty for ashes! He gives us forgiveness, peace, joy, and eternal life in exchange for our worthless bodies and lives. That sounds like a pretty good deal!

A living sacrifice is a life that is dead to self, alive to Christ, and is bringing forth good fruit. It's not a life that died and now produces nothing, but one that is alive and producing all kinds of beautiful fruits of the Spirit. Galatians 5:22, 23: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance ..." Each of those words is so full of meaning and a message in themselves.

Ephesians 4:32, "And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another ..." Romans 12:18, "If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men." II Timothy 2:22, "But follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart." These are all fruits of the Spirit, fruits of a living sacrifice, holy, and acceptable to God. These are the fruits that should be evident in the life of every Christian. As Lauren said the other night, we want to have more and more of the Spirit and less and less of self.

It should be a joy, an honor, a privilege, to offer ourselves as a living sacrifice, holy, and acceptable to God. This is truly a beautiful life, the life that God designed us to live. The more love we have for God and the more gratitude for all that He has given and done for us, the easier it is to say no to self and yes to God. The more love we have for God the greater our desire to live a holy life, to have a pure heart, to truly separate ourselves from every evil influence, and to draw closer to God. If we dearly love someone, there is nothing we won't do for that person. We'll give up our sleep, our money, our time, anything to help them. The same is true with God, if we truly love Him and see Him as He is, there is nothing that we will withhold from Him, nothing that we won't do if He asks us to do it. Living a life of sacrifice to God is our highest calling!

I read this recently in one of my devotional books: "God created us in His image. We were chosen by God, breathed on and touched by God. We are the only part of His creation made in His image. We were nothing and God turned us into the most glorious something. We were made to be a reflection of the image of God. We are image bearers making an invisible God's image visible. Remember who you are. You are of God. From God. Made in His image. Loved from the depth of God's unfathomable Father's heart. Treasured beyond imagination."

Let's all seek to love God more, and truly live a holy life of sacrifice that is acceptable in His sight; a life that is an odor of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable and well pleasing to God.

If you remember nothing else, please remember that it is a great joy and privilege to be chosen by God, to offer Him our bodies and lives as a living sacrifice. Don't

let it ever become a drudgery or a burden. God's smile of approval on our lives is a precious gift and worth any sacrifice. †

THE BIBLE STANDARD OF INTERPRETATION

WE ARE now considering I Corinthians 14:27, 28, "If any man speak in an unknown tongue, let it be by two, or at the most by three, and that by course; and let one interpret. But if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the church; and let him speak to himself, and to God."



Revised Standard Version, "If any speak in a tongue, let there be only two or at most three, and each in turn; and let one interpret. But if there is no one to interpret, let each of them keep silent in the Church and speak to himself and to God."

Emphatic Diaglott, "And if any speak in a foreign language, let it be by two, or at the most three sentences, and in succession, and let one interpret. But if there is no interpreter, let him be silent in the congregation, and let him speak to himself and to God." Before us the Word of God clearly sets forth the Bible rule and standard for the speaker in a foreign language in a church service, and the Bible manner in which an interpreter is to exercise his gift. From the Bible we see that if one is going to speak in a language that cannot be understood, he is commanded of God not to speak more than three sentences at one time, and only one speaker at a time, and let one interpret. The Lord knew that it is not hardly possible to remember more than two or three sentences at one time to where we can repeat them word for word. Do not ever be afraid of sinning against the Holy Ghost when demanding people to adhere to this rule. You never sin against the Holy Ghost by obeying the Bible. Any demonstration not according to the rule just given, cannot be of God, for it is contrary to the teaching of God's Word, and the Bible still says, "The Word and the Spirit agree." Anything the Bible states will be the mind and attitude of the Holy Spirit.

As I have told you, wherever God has given the gift of tongues, or languages in the Bible, no interpreter was ever needed. The Holy Ghost always enabled them to speak in a language that was clearly understood by the listeners. God did not place the gift of interpretation in the Church to interpret the Bible gift of tongues, but interpret the native languages spoken by the various nationalities that compose, and will compose His church. This is plainly set forth in I Corinthians, the 14th chapter.

May I call your attention again to the fact that God always has a purpose in everything that He does, and never resorts to double effort to perform one miracle to supply the need of His people. If it becomes necessary

as it did on the day of Pentecost, for God to empower His ministers to speak in a language other than their native tongue, and one that they had not acquired, He will perform the needed miracle direct, and enable them to speak in a language that the listeners can understand. [And no interpreter will be needed.]

It may appear that I am using too much repetition, but I am doing it purposely for the utmost benefit of the readers. The Holy Ghost never resorts to superfluity, by performing two miracles to do the work of one. To supernaturally empower one to speak in an unknown language, and then have to seek another to empower with the gift of interpretation, is certainly needless and superfluous, and completely out of harmony with the whole revealed will of God. In every recorded incident in the Bible where it has become necessary for the Holy Ghost to employ men, and empower them to speak with the Bible gift of languages, He has always enabled them to speak in a language clearly understood by those listening, and never needed an interpreter. May I emphasize, The gift of interpretation was placed in the Body of Christ, which is the Church, to fill an urgent need in congregations where various nationalities meet together, and only able to speak in their native tongues. It is God's will for all people, and all nationalities to be on equal base in His kingdom and Church, therefore, He placed the gift of interpretation that all may be able to function in their rightful God-given place, and have the means to convey the meaning of their words to those unable to understand their mother tongue. But at no time does the Bible permit the speaker in a language that cannot be understood to run on and on in some unknown something. If he speaks more than three sentences at one time, he is out of line with the Bible. If more than one talks at a time, they are all out of line with the teaching of the Word of God. If someone utters something that no one present understands, and no one able to interpret it, they are shamefully disobeying God's Word, and in complete violation to all rules given for speaking with the gift of Bible language, and the proper exercise of the gift of interpretation. Therefore, all we could say, such performance is false, and should be condemned as such. All gifts are for the expressed purpose of edification in the Church.

Now to the thought in a little more detail of the Bible standard of one speaking in a language [their native language] the ones listening cannot understand. It is plainly given in the Word of God. "And if anyone speak in a foreign language (meaning unknown to the listeners) let it be by two, or at the most three sentences, and in succession (meaning one right after another) and let one interpret," and then only one at a time. This is God's rule that must be followed for the purpose of understanding, and that all spoken words might be understood. The Word of God strictly forbids any performance that cannot be understood, or interpreted. Again, let it be acknowledged, that any performance that cannot be understood, or interpreted by someone present is not of God.

The Holy Ghost only acts where there is a necessity, and where all understand and speak the same language. There absolutely is no necessity for either the gift of tongues, or the gift of interpretation to be

manifested. Furthermore, the Holy Ghost will never be found imparting these gifts in such cases.

Someone might say, "Look out, you will blaspheme against the Holy Ghost." I wish to make it clear that one acting and performing according to the Word of God will never blaspheme against the Holy Ghost. The Bible clearly states, "The Spirit and the Word agree." The Holy Spirit will always inspire for demonstration in accordance with the revealed will of God as given in His Word. Any manifestation that does not harmonize with the Scriptures is not of God. Be bold, and fear not to declare it as false. God's plan is fitted for the saving of all people of the world, and to properly care for any need that may arise, hence if adhered to, and obeyed will always serve to understanding and edification. This should be clear enough for even a child to understand.

The latter part of verse 28, "Let him speak to himself and to God." Since the one speaking in his native tongue understands what he is saying, he is able to receive edification, for edification comes through understanding. This is the meaning of this text. May the Lord grant that His given Word will always be adhered to, and practiced, that the world may be saved, and the name of Christ be glorified here on earth. †

—Lawrence J. Chesnut, *True Bible Tongues*, Copyright Renewed June 1975.

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PUTTING ON THE ARMOR

By the late Bro. H. R. Matthews

DAVID, the shepherd boy, had seven brothers, three of whom were serving in King Saul's army, which was involved in confrontation with the army of the Philistines. The champion of the Philistine army was a giant by the name of Goliath. Day by day he was challenging King Saul's army by saying, "Choose you a man for you, and let him come down to me. If he be able to fight with me, and to kill me, then will we be your servants: but if I prevail against him, and kill him, then shall ye be our servants, and serve us" (I Samuel 17:8, 9). This had been going on daily for forty days.

These challenges were very unsettling to Saul's army, and there was an absence of bravery among them.

Jesse, the father of David, and his seven brothers called David from feeding the flock, and sent him to see how his soldier brothers were doing, and with him, he was to take some of Mother's home cooked meal.

David was in the trench talking with his brothers when Goliath made his daily challenge. David's righteous soul was stirred because of Goliath's challenge, and he was taken to King Saul to whom he said, "Let no man's heart fail because of him; thy servant will go and fight with this Philistine" (I Samuel 17:32). King Saul endeavored to discourage David from doing so, but when David told him of passed exploits, the king said, "Go, and the Lord be with thee." King Saul put his own armor on David, but David put it off, saying, "I have not proved it."

David then went to meet the giant with his only weapon being a sling and five smooth stones. Visibly, David had no armor, but invisibly, he was fully clad with the full armor spoken of in the New Testament book of Ephesians, chapter six: His loins were girt about with truth, he had on the breast plate of righteousness, his feet were shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace, he had the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit.

David's battle with Goliath was not only a literal battle. It also had great spiritual significance, for Goliath was defying the army of the living God.

The Christian soldier has many battles to fight that are of spiritual significance. He is told in the Ephesian letter to: "Put on the whole armour of God." So just as the literal soldier must put on the literal armor, so must the spiritual soldier put on the spiritual armor. As the literal armor protects the entire body from the feet to the head, so the spiritual armor protects the Christian soldier who is enlisted in the army of the Lord.

In the holy army we've enlisted, Now the banner of the cross we bear;

All the forces of the wrong resisted causes right to triumph everywhere.

We will follow where our Captain leadeth, We will fight against the sullen foe,

We will stand together, then we'll conquer; Certain victory is ours, we know.

We are marching on to certain victory, In the hottest fight is where we love to be;

Let the battle rage o'er every land and sea—'Tis the army of the Lord.

—Barney E. Warren.

Please give special attention to Ephesians 6:11—"Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil." Only through complacency would the Christian soldier fail to put on the whole armor of God. We must put on our own armor. It cannot be left to another.

How do we put on our armor? We must abide in Christ and His Word must abide in us. We must draw nigh to God daily. We must read our Bible every day. We must not neglect it, and don't forget to pray. Fight the good fight of faith. The absence of any part of the armor would make one vulnerable to failure in the battle with the enemy. So we must put on the whole armor of God that we may be able to stand against the wiles of devil.

In putting on the whole armor of God, we must know what the parts of the armor are and the protection they give. So let's get started. Let's begin with—

The feet being "shod with the preparation of *the gospel of peace*." No peace can be found in the enemy that knows no peace, neither is peace with him negotiable. Our peace comes from the Lord, who said, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" (John 14:27). This armor of peace comes from the Lord, as we apply for it, as we put it on. In peace, there is no strife, there is no quarrelsome spirit. The apostle Peter admonished, "Let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it" (I Peter 3:11). From the book of Hebrews we read, "Follow peace with all men ..." (Hebrews 12:14a). This is a very important part of the Christian armor, for as we try to negotiate or reason with the enemy of all mankind, we have dropped our armor of peace, and the devil will win every time. Let our spiritual feet be shod with the armor of peace, and never ever lay it aside.

As we continue with the whole armor, we find that the whole armor is likened to a jigsaw puzzle. With one part of the puzzle missing, the entire puzzle loses its effectiveness. With that thought in mind, let us consider the girdle or belt around our waist. We will refer to this belt as the *belt of truth*, for it is the truth that binds the entire armor together, so let us learn what we can about this very important part of the Christian armor. Truth is essential in every area of life, but especially so as it becomes a part of the Christian armor. This is so, for Jesus said, "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32). Pilate asked of Jesus, "What is truth?" (John 18:38). In speaking with His disciple, Thomas, Jesus said: "I am the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6). We are talking here about the Word, for the apostle John informs us that "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:1, 2, 14). This is the truth that makes

us free. From what does the Word set us free? The angel of the Lord said unto Joseph, "And she [Mary] shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21). This part of the armor is very costly, for Jesus gave His very life to pay the cost.

That part of the armor that covers the heart (soul) is called *the breastplate of righteousness*. Without this part of the armor, the heart (soul) is exposed to all the unrighteous deeds of the enemy which renders the remainder of the armor useless.

If we were to declare that there is one part of the armor that is of greater importance than the others, it would be *the shield of faith*, for the instruction Manual says, "Above all, taking the shield of faith."

Probably the most successful weapon of the enemy is the world. More soldiers of the cross fall captive to the enemy through the use of this weapon than any other. Let us be quick to grasp the words of the apostle John: "For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith" (I John 5:4). This same John had this to say about the world: "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world" (I John 2:15, 16). It is from the world that cometh Satan's fiery darts, and it is the shield of faith that will quench them all.

We began with the feet being shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace. We have now reached the head with *the helmet of salvation*. It is within the head where conclusions are arrived at, decisions are made, meditations are carried on. This is where the helmet of salvation is necessary, for without salvation, wrong decisions are made that may affect one's eternal destiny. King David said, "Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength, and my redeemer" (Psalm 19:14). This would only be possible where the helmet of salvation is in place. Also, let it be known that the mind, which is cradled within the head, is where the battles of life take place. This is where the enemy initiates his attacks. Is our helmet of salvation securely in place?

Attached to the girdle of truth and suspended from the side of every enlistee in the army of the Lord is *the sword of the Spirit*, which is the Word of God. Truth and the Word are inseparable and invariably is a winning combination. "For the word of God is quick [alive], and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Hebrews 4:12).

At this point the enemy will begin to whisper in your ear, "You are now clothed with the whole armor, you have it made, just sit back now, the battle is over. You may recline in that rocking chair of ease and rock your way to heaven." This is complacency, and complacency is not the road to heaven. If you accept this lie, your armor will be gone, and the battle will be lost. Satan is the same liar he was when he told Eve that she would not surely die as God had said, if she were

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to eat of the fruit from the tree in the midst of the Garden of Eden. She believed the father of lies. She ate. She gave to her husband and he did eat. They instantly lost the image of their Creator. They died spiritually, just as God said they would. Yes, they still had physical life, but they were now dead in trespasses and sins.

If the battle were over, why are we admonished to put on the whole armor of God? "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places" (Ephesians 6:12).

What was the apostle Paul's departing testimony? "For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith" (II Timothy 4:6, 7).

"Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand" (Ephesians 6:13). †

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**THE CHURCH OF GOD
STANDS FOR**

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

**YOU SHOULD KNOW MORE
ABOUT THE CHURCH OF GOD**

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

COMING MEETINGS

2024 HONDURAS CONVENTION
Coxen Hole, Roatan
April 2-7, 2024, Lord willing
Sis. Ethlyn Soto, Host Pastor

**2024 INTERNATIONAL
CHURCH OF GOD CONVENTION**
Hagerstown, Maryland U.S.A.
July 2-7, 2024, Lord willing
Bro. Gregory E. Tyler, Host Pastor

**Please pray for the success of
these meetings!**

Revival Services
Hagerstown, Maryland
April 24-28, 2024
Bro. Harley McClung, Evangelist
Bro. Greg Tyler, Pastor