

The Way of Truth

Vol. 84

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

No. 1

A God Who Cares
See Page 8

January/February 2026

THE WAY OF TRUTH

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

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—Gregory E. Tyler, Editor

Our telephone number is 301-739-2980

Our e-mail address is truth@fred.net

Visit our website at www.wayoftruth.org

unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." God is not the author of confusion!

9. *False perception: I have to sin, I can't help myself.* Modern religion has convinced the multitudes that there is no power in the Christian experience.

True perception: God's grace gives man power to resist temptation. Romans 6:1, 2 clearly states, "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?"

10. *False perception: God never thinks about me.* I am only one of eight billion people on Earth, and I mean nothing to Him.

True perception: O yes, He does! Jeremiah 29:11 says so: "For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end."

11. *False perception: God doesn't see what I do.* He cannot possibly keep track of everything.

True perception: O yes, He does! II Chronicles 16:9, "For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him."

12. *False perception: God is in some far-off place unconcerned about man.* He cannot be everywhere at once.

True perception: God is very near! Acts 17:27 tells us, "That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us."

13. *False perception: God doesn't know what I'm going through.*

True perception: O yes, He does! Hebrews 4:15, "For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin."

14. *False perception: I could never live the Christian life.* It is too hard and I am too weak.

True perception: O yes, you can! Just look and see what II Corinthians 9:8 says, "And God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work." And the apostle Paul said, "When I am weak, then am I strong."

15. *False perception: God couldn't love me; I have done too many evil things.*

True perception: O yes, He does! God loves everyone, even me! John 3:16, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

MAKE SURE THAT YOUR PERCEPTION OF GOD IS BASED ON HIS WORD!

Psalm 90:1, 2, "Lord, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God."

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THE QUESTION BOX

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

QUESTION: Please explain about God's dividing His kingdom up with the little flock. I don't understand about their form being changed. Where are His children going? I thought the good people died and went to heaven where's God's children are.

ANSWER: You seem to be getting the literal world, the eternal kingdom, and the saints mixed up. Here briefly is the thought: The Lord took eternal matter and made literal matter out of it. When time is no more, the Lord will return this literal world back into eternal matter. In regard to dividing the kingdom, the "little flock" are the saints. They already have the "experience" of the kingdom, that is salvation. God is speaking of their eternal reward, every man shall be rewarded according to his works. The saints do go to heaven and they shall be eternally with God in His everlasting kingdom.

QUESTION: Can one die at an improper time of his life, say by poison, accident, etc.?

ANSWER: Of course a person can, and many persons have. It is a mistaken idea that every person is going to live to the very moment God appointed for them to die. Such an idea is not supported by the Scriptures. It is not God's will for people to kill themselves or to commit murder. People can shorten their lives by abusing their body; a drunk can cause a wreck on the highway where an entire family is killed. God has made natural laws as well as moral or spiritual laws for us to live by, to obey, and if we do not, we must suffer the results.

QUESTION: What does "Abba, Father" mean?

ANSWER: Adam Clarke says, "This Syriac word, which intimates filial affection and respect and parental tenderness, used by our blessed Lord, ... shows his complete submission to his Father's will, and the tender affection which he was conscious his Father had for him." It is safe to assume that "the sons of God" referred to in Galatians 4:4-6 felt this same love and tenderness —thus the expression, "Abba, Father."

QUESTION: Luke 5:34 says, "And he said unto them, Can ye make the children of the bridechamber fast, while the bridegroom is with them?" Can you give me light on this verse?

ANSWER: The time of marriage was a very happy time among the Jews and they celebrated for seven days—during this time there was quite a bit of eating—feasting—not a time of fasting. Jesus says that during the time He was here on Earth with His disciples [His

bride] was comparable to the feast days of the wedding, but after He returned to the Father, His disciples were to fast. So it is proper and right for His followers today to enter into periods of fasting.

QUESTION: Why do you think God told Samuel to use this method to anoint David as future king of Israel? If God foresaw Saul's threat to Samuel's life, why did God—the all-wise, all-powerful—not assure Samuel protection? (I Samuel 16:1, 2).

ANSWER: Samuel had "retired" from his public traveling and was teaching the younger prophets. He was human! Possibly his faith did not take in the miraculous protection that would be needed, so the Lord told him to go to Bethlehem and there offer a sacrifice. The Lord uses *natural* means at times to accomplish His purpose.

QUESTION: Accusing spirits. How can one long accused know the difference between conviction and accusations?

ANSWER: There is no simple, easy answer to your question! The Spirit of God convicts; the devil accuses.

The Spirit of God convicts a sinner of his sinful ways with the purpose in mind of leading the sinner to repent of and forsake his sins. The devil would never do that. The devil will accuse a Christian of sin, to discourage him, to get him to turn away from following the Lord. The devil will press down, confuse, and discourage. God will point out our failure, even chastens us, because He loves us and wants to correct us and help us to do right.

D. O. Teasley, in his book, *The Holy Spirit and Other Spirits*, wrote:

"Of all persons in this world that need the encouragement and prayers of God's people, those who are tormented with accusing spirits need them most. I say tormented, because to be accused by the devil is the purest type of torment, and akin to the torment of hell. None but those who have felt the living torment of accusation can realize the depth of suffering inflicted thereby. And what is more cruel, the devil invariably imposes the accusing spirits on the most conscientious persons he can find. ..."

"There is one rule by which you may always detect the spirit of the devil and distinguish it from the Spirit of God. When the Spirit of God is convicting you of sin, it will point out the wrong so clearly that you will not be left in doubt; but when the devil is accusing, he can never tell what is wrong. You will feel very bad, and in every way you may feel like a sinner; but if you do not know you have transgressed God's written law, stand you grounds and defy the devil."

QUESTION: What is the abomination that causes desolation (Matthew 25:15)?

ANSWER: Daniel and Christ spoke of literal things that were to happen, and did happen, to the Jewish Temple and its form of worship. But, in a spiritual sense, the abomination that causes desolation is any teaching or practice contrary to the truth of God's Word, that hurt God's people, or causes souls to be deceived. †

A PASTOR'S NEW YEAR'S WISH LIST

Message by Bro. Greg Tyler



IHAVE ONE verse of scripture that I want to preach from this morning—III John, verse 2: “Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth.” I have a very unusual entitle for the message: “A Pastor’s New Year’s Wish List.”

It’s interesting as we get to the end of the year how our minds look forward to the new year. It’s just the turning over of the calendar, but there’s something to be said about reflecting on the past and preparing for the future. So I would like to share with you a few thoughts. I have bright hope for the coming year. I trust my few words will be encouraging to you.

John uses the term *wish*, which is always an interesting term. “Beloved, I *wish* above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth.”

To *wish* according to the dictionary is “to express a strong desire or hope for something that is not easily attainable; to desire or to crave.”

In studying for the message, I thought the term *wish* was a little weak, if I might use that terminology, so I looked up the original Greek word that *wish* was translated from. It’s *euchomai* which actually means “not only to wish for, but to pray for.” I like the terminology “to pray for.” It gives it more power. It’s more than just a whim. It’s more than just a wish. It’s based on something. It’s based on prayer. It’s based on getting hold of God. John was speaking to Gaius, his fellow laborer, when he said, “I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth.”

I have written down a few things for a pastor’s desire or wish for his congregation this new year—

I NEED TO BE FAITHFUL

Number 1: That *I will be faithful to you and to God*. There’s really no difference in being faithful to you and being faithful to God. If I’m faithful to God, I will be faithful to you. I have a responsibility. There’s more involved than just being a local pastor, and I need God’s help. I want to be the pastor that God would help me to be. I want to be able to feed the flock of God on a regular basis and lead each one aright.

I thought about the words that I found in Joshua, chapter 1, verse 7: “Only be thou strong and very courageous, that thou mayest observe to do according to all the law, which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper withersoever thou goest.” I don’t want to turn to the right hand or to the left. We’re on a course, and my leadership is important. Please pray that I may have the wisdom and grace of God that only He has for me that I might lead the congregation aright. I don’t want to turn to the right which would be fanaticism. I don’t want to stand for things that the Bible doesn’t teach or uphold. I don’t want to turn to the

lefthand side, either, which would be compromise or letting up the standard and going the way of the world. May the Lord help us to keep on track, and to continue the way we’re going that we might be successful as a congregation, that

The Way of Truth paper might continue to go forth, the school might be blessed, and every other ministry we have might be increased by the help of the Lord.

WE NEED THE HOLY SPIRIT'S BLESSING

Number 2 on a pastor’s wish list is that *God will continue to bless our services*. There’s no substitute for the Holy Spirit. We have something special here, Saints. God meets with us on a regular basis. He is meeting with us this morning. It’s very important that we have His favor and blessing in our services. His blessing can give us what nothing else can give us. An assurance, confidence, and encouragement in time of trouble. Just a blessing. Malachi said, “Prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.” We need to continue to worship God in Spirit and in truth. We need to live the kind of lives that would merit the Spirit of God meeting with us on a regular basis.

EACH SAINT WILL PROSPER IN HIS SOUL

Number 3 on the list is that *each member will prosper in his soul*. It is my prayer each day that every individual in the church will prosper in his soul. Again, our text of scripture: “Beloved, I wish above all things [above everything else] that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth.” God is interested in our material prosperity. I believe He will bless His saints as they labor. We have some businesses involved with the congregation. We need to pray for them that God will prosper them and bless the brethren that work out in the world. God cares about our physical health, too, that we might be well and be able to do His will. But especially, the soul prospering is the important thing. It is my desire as pastor to help every single soul here to prosper, to be in good health, and to know the blessings of God.

EXPERIENCING SPIRITUAL GROWTH

Number 4 on the wish list is that *each saint will experience spiritual growth during this new year*. We’re all running a race. We’re in different places in our race. We have different experiences, but I believe there is room for every one of us to grow spiritually. Peter said in II Peter 3:18, “But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.” So it is my prayer, my *euchomai*, my wish for each member of the congregation that you might make progress in your experience and grow spiritually. That you might become a spiritual giant. Every one of us is important to God. It is God’s

will, I believe, that we all make spiritual progress. We have 12 months in this year. I know the year will go by fast, but we can work on ourselves and allow God to help us to grow spiritually. As we grow individually, that growth will be seen. There will be evidence by your worship and by the life that you live that you're drawing close to God. As we grow individually, we will grow collectively.

Paul said to the Ephesian church in chapter 2, verse 21: "In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord." Did you know we're fitly framed together? Every one of us has a place in God's church, and we fit together. You don't have to force it. We have our place. God puts us in the church, and we're fitly framed together. "In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord." We want to see spiritual growth in our congregation. Yes, we want to see our numbers increase. We want to see great things done, but we want to gain ground spiritually as we labor for the Lord. Make it your aim and goal to do so. Help me to know how I can help you to do so. Any of you saints can approach me and talk to me about things that bother you. I have a desire that you make spiritual growth. I trust you have the same desire.

OUR LOVE SHALL INCREASE

Number 5 is that *the love of the saints will be evident toward each other*. Jesus said in St. John, chapter 13:35, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another." I want our love as a congregation to be renowned in the community. When people speak of the Church of God on Point Salem Road, I want them to be able to speak of the saints as people who love one another. Paul said in Romans 12:10, "Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another." It's beautiful. Love is powerful. Charity never fails. It's the cornerstone of the church. So as this year unfolds, there are going to be some attacks against our love and devotion for God and for each other. Satan will try to plant seeds of dissension among brothers and sisters. It's just like the devil to do that. We need to be aware of that. We need to be forgiving of one another and constantly encourage one another in the things of God. You might say, "Well, Brother Greg, I believe this congregation has love." Well, let me quote Hebrews 13:1—"Let brotherly love continue" as we progress in this coming year.

Number 6 on the wish list is that *our compassion for the lost will multiply*. We need our compassion for the lost to multiply. Jude 1:21-23—my prayer and desire is that we live up to this—"Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. And of some have compassion, making a difference: And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh." Let us everyone determine in this year to make a difference in the life of someone else. To have compassion upon the lost, to reach the lost, to be touched as we see people who are unsaved. Let us not be accused of never mentioning the name of Christ to them, but witness and pray for them that we might win some.

James, chapter 5, verses 19, 20: "Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; Let

him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins." If we can win someone who has gone astray, win someone who is outside the Ark of safety, we've saved a soul from death and hidden a multitude of sins. Doesn't it sound exciting to win a soul for Christ? It's the greatest work on the face of the earth.

In our hymn book we have a song that goes along with this thought. I'll read the words of it—

*Rescue the perishing, Care for the dying,
Snatch them in pity from sin and the grave;
Weep o'er the erring one, Lift up the fallen,
Tell them of Jesus the mighty to save.*
*Tho' they are slighting Him, Still He is waiting,
Waiting the penitent child to receive;
Plead with them earnestly, Plead with them gently,
He will forgive if they only believe.*

If you are unsaved this morning, I plead with you earnestly. I plead with you gently. Give your heart to the Lord. Time is passing by so swiftly. Soon our lives will be over, and when we face Christ in judgment, what will we have to give Him?

*Down in the human heart, Crushed by the tempter,
Feelings lie buried that grace can restore;
Touched by a loving heart, Wakened by kindness,
Chords that are broken will vibrate once more.*

May God give us compassion that we might be touched by the realities of those who are lost. I believe chords that are broken can vibrate once more. Christ is still in the saving business. The chords of those lives that are wrecked and ruined by sin, will vibrate once more if someone will just rescue the perishing.

*Rescue the perishing, Duty demands it,
Strength for thy labor the Lord will provide;
Back to the narrow way patiently win them;
Tell the poor wand'r'er a Savior has died.*

*Rescue the perishing, Care for the dying;
Jesus is merciful, Jesus will save.*

I pray that our compassion for the lost will multiply. I believe we have some compassion. I believe we have a love for the unsaved, but I desire to see it multiplied. You have heard this before, but it bears repeating: If each one of us could win just one soul this year, just one, our congregation would be doubled in size.

OUR SOUL BURDEN WILL INCREASE

Number 7 is that *our collective soul burden will increase*. As our individual compassion increases for the lost, I believe our collective soul burden will also increase. Isaiah the prophet said in chapter 66, verse 8: "Who hath heard such a thing? who hath seen such things? Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? or shall a nation be born at once? for as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children." We need to have a travail on our hearts, Saints of God, for the lost. If we don't care for them, who will? Jesus died for

every man. Souls are dying every day and going out into eternity lost. It's up to you and me as saints of God to have a soul burden that will be sufficient to see souls under conviction. We want greater conviction in our midst. We want unsaved people to feel the presence of God in our services in such a way that their souls will be dealt with.

John 4:35, the words of Jesus Christ: "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." Lift up your eyes, congregation! See the multitude who are lost. Among them are my children. Among them are your families. Lost! Jesus said to lift up your eyes. Get your eyes off your iPads. Get your eyes off text messages. Get your eyes off the TV screen. Get your eyes off the things of this life. Put those things away. Look upon the fields, for they are white already to harvest. Could it be possible some will be lost because we didn't take up the challenge, or because we didn't have the burden we should have had? God help us. I'm preaching to myself as well as to you.

SOULS BE ADDED TO THE CHURCH

Number 8 is that *souls will be saved in our midst, in our congregation this coming year*. We see so little salvation work done. I long to see souls saved. We have some precious ones who have been attending for quite a while but are still unsaved. We need greater power. We do not want anyone to be lost. "Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved" (Acts 2:47). Well, it might not be realistic to expect a soul to be saved every day in this congregation. Maybe not every week, but I'd like to see it every month. Certainly, every year. Souls being saved. God moving in that direction. We need more power. I need more power as a minister. You need more power as an individual Christian so we can pray through for souls to be saved. Those of you who are unsaved here, we want you to know we love you. We care for you. We have a burden for your soul. Don't fault us for praying for your salvation. Don't fault us for praying that God would convict your soul. Don't fault us for praying that God will make you so miserable in sin that you'll yield yourself to Him. That would be a blessing to you and to us.

RESISTING THE SPIRIT OF THE WORLD

Number 9 on the wish list is that *the spirit of the world would not be allowed in our midst*. We have something special here as I've already said. We do not want the world to take over. The Scriptures say in I John 2:15, 16, "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." The world is the world, the church is the church, and we can't mix the two. We want to keep the world out. We sing "Take this whole world, but give me Jesus." Do we mean it? We have something better, something richer, and something deeper. We have something to live and to die for.

CONTINUE WALKING IN THE LIGHT

Number 10 is that *each member will walk in the light as they have it*. We're all in different places in our lives, as I've already said, but the light is shining through this congregation. Down through the years, the light has been shown, the truth has been preached, and it continues to be preached. It is my desire that each individual will walk in the light that we have. Measure to the truth. You might have to struggle through some things, but pray through, and walk in the light. "If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (I John 1:7).

In III John, where our text comes from, we'll read verse 4: "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth." I know what it means as a pastor to see someone walk in truth, measuring to the Word of God, dressing holy, and acting holy. It means something to a pastor or a minister to see people walking in truth. I don't think it is too much to expect that each member of the congregation would walk in the light that you have.

LETTING THE FIRE BLAZE

Number 11 is that *each saint would be on fire*. May there not be one saint that backslides. We can't afford to lose any. We need everyone. Pray for each other and help each other that we may stay true to God. We can't afford to let the devil to make us lukewarm and cause us to lose out.

There is an interesting verse in Isaiah, chapter 50, that I want to read. Verse 11: "Behold, all ye that kindle a fire, that compass yourselves about with sparks: walk in the light of your fire, and in the sparks that ye have kindled." Is anyone kindling a fire today, spiritually speaking? Do you have sparks? Are you alive? Are you on fire for Christ? It's my desire that every single one of us would be on fire for the Lord. Full of zeal and fire and enthusiasm. Share the fire with others. Each one can have a fire burning within them. We should walk in the light of our fire. If we don't have the fire that we need, if we find ourselves in the doldrums, or lacking, we should seek the Lord. Let Him light the fire and sparks will fly from us. Though I have Parkinson's, and am not as active as I used to be, within me there is still a fire burning. There's a joy burning. There's an enthusiasm for the things of God. II Corinthians 4:16 says, "Though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day." Getting old is not an excuse to lose our fire. Walk in the light of your fire.

MORE ANSWERS TO PRAYER

Number 12 is that *each of us will receive more answers to prayer in the new year*. We need to see answers to prayer. The words of the Bible are true. The words of Christ are true. Jesus said, "Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them." Is that true or not? It's 100% true. May God inspire our faith that we might believe. In another place, Jesus said, "If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth." Let us focus on believing in this new year. Let our faith be inspired. Reach out in the things of God. Don't be cast down by the adversary. The devil

wants us to quiet down and be content. I enjoyed the blessings of God this past year, but I want more for this coming year—more fire, more zeal, more power, more answers to our prayers.

MORE HEALINGS WROUGHT

Number 13 is that *more healings would be wrought*. That is my desire. It is time for God to work. I know that the world is in a terrible condition, but God is still God. Jesus Christ is still the same as He has ever been. He is still in the healing business. In Acts, chapter 4, we read about the early morning church in their trials and difficulties, and how they met together and had prayer. This is what they prayed. Verses 29 and 30: "And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word, By stretching forth thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus." *By stretching forth thine hand to heal*. His hand can still heal. His power can still heal. There's still power in the name of Christ. We read in St. Luke: "And the power of the Lord was present to heal them." That's what I want for us. I want the Lord to be present with us to heal, to save, and to do His great work.

MORE PEOPLE SEE THE CHURCH

Number 14 is that *local families in this community will see the church and take their stand*. I want to see the congregation grow. I want us to win some families. Surely there are people out there who are dissatisfied in false religion. They want something more. We have it, Dear Ones. We have something more than the world has. Acts 6:7 says, "And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly." As I prayed and studied for this message, I substituted *Hagerstown* for Jerusalem. It would read like this: "And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in [Hagerstown] greatly." Wouldn't that be wonderful? It's possible through God. Invite people. Use your phone. Use text messages. Use whatever means you have. Invite, invite, invite! If they don't come, we must still do our best to win families to the truth.

AN ENVIRONMENT ENABLING GOD

Number 15 on the wish list (and I could mention many more) is that *we would provide an environment in which Christ can work*.

Mark 16:20 says, "And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following." That's the Bible. The Lord was working with them. We can have the Lord working with us in a greater way. I believe it. God is continually blessing us, and we appreciate His blessings, but we want more. Don't you want more? Jesus said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father." We want to see something greater this coming year. I believe it's possible with the Lord's help. There's an old song that proclaims, "With fire in the pulpit, and steam in the pew, with brakes off—this train is a 'through.'"

CONCLUSION

May we be inspired this morning as we face the new year. The possibilities are endless. God is able to do everything and anything if we but give Him our very best. I believe God is doing all that He can with what we're giving Him to work with. Don't you? If we want to see Him do more, then we have to give Him more.

If you see there's a need in your life, and you want to draw closer to God, I thought it would be a wonderful time for the church to gather together at the altar. As we face the new year, may God see our desire and bless us as the year unfolds. What does He have in store for us? I don't know, but I believe there will be good things if we'll let Him work in our midst. †



Greetings!

This month we would like to share thoughts brought by Bro. Logan Arch in a recent young people's service. We were richly blessed by this sermonette and trust you'll be as well! It's a good reminder that as Christians, we have the privilege of having the Lord present in our daily lives.

—Bro. Doug

A PRESENT HELP IN TIME OF NEED

By Bro. Logan Arch

THE TOPIC I would like to speak on this evening is "A Present Help in Time of Need." I will be using Psalm 46:1-3: "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; Though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof."



The help of God is one of the most valuable things to me as a Christian. Our service this morning focused on something similar to this: that we are able to trust Jesus with anything in our lives. To be able to go to Him with any and all problems, and know with 100% certainty that He knows, cares, and will help is such a great thing.

I have broken our needs down into three areas for tonight: *physical, emotional, and spiritual*, but first I would like to talk about the verse itself. A present help implies constant assistance. That part seems pretty obvious; God is with us helping us overcome whatever we're going through. I know we all know this already. But the second half is a bit deeper. We might think of a time of need as a period of especially tough trial, but the reality is we need Him every second of every day. Even if we feel like we have everything under control, and we're on top of the world, God is still acting behind the scenes to ensure our well-being.

Our *physical* needs are arguably the most noticeable ways God helps us. How many times have we heard saints publicly thanking Him for protecting them from car accidents, work accidents, or financial hardship? I personally have safely driven over 2,000 miles to and from college this semester alone, and I know this is due to His help and not my driving skills. When I was in Craigsville last Sunday, Sis. Andrea mentioned that we should not take lightly situations where we can plainly see where God has taken action to protect us, like when we have a close call on the interstate. That's not to mention the countless protections He gives us without us even knowing. We read in Lamentations 3:22 that "It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not." I am reminded of the story of Elijah in I Kings 17:2-6: "And the word of the Lord came unto him, saying, Get thee hence, and turn thee eastward, and hide thyself by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan. And it shall be, that thou shalt drink of the brook; and I have commanded the ravens to feed thee there. So he went and did according unto the word of the Lord: for he went and dwelt by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan. And the ravens brought him bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening; and he drank of the brook."

Ravens were actually considered unclean by Old Testament standards. I'm not very familiar with what makes something kosher or not, but I believe it was because they ate dead things, and the Israelites were not supposed to associate with anything that had to do with death. But God sets the standards, and He is free to do what He sees fit even if it violates rules He has in place for us. Elijah was in a seemingly impossible situation: stuck in the desert with no food or water and on the run from the queen who wanted nothing more than to see him dead. But this was no issue for God. Under normal circumstances, these ravens would have certainly eaten the bread and meat themselves, but God made an exception to the rules of nature to protect Elijah from starving to death. Also, important is that this was not something that could be written off as simply a coincidence or "it would have happened anyway."

The enemy would have us think that God's protection is just how things play out. The near miss on the interstate? Just good driving and paying attention. The miraculous recovery from that disease? Doctors and medicine did that on their own. While God does let things run their natural course for the most part, I believe that He still steps in on His children's behalf. It's important that we realize that despite all of humanity's achievements, all of our solutions and ways to improve our lives, we are completely and utterly dependent on God's mercies. It's easy for people to see themselves as self-sustaining, able to use science and technology to solve any problem they face. And while these are great tools, they are tools that God has given us to help better our lives, not to wean us off of His protection so we will eventually not need Him.

Another thing I notice in the world a lot is people more or less ignore God and His teachings until they get into trouble, then they run to Him expecting rescue, which they may or may not receive. They thank God

and then almost immediately turn right back around and continue doing what they were doing before. And this is not a new thing either: we can look in the Bible at the Israelites. They pledged their allegiance to God, but were swayed by the influences of the cultures around them, and eventually turned to idolatry and pagan worship. God allowed them to be conquered by the Assyrians or Persians or Egyptians, they cried out in captivity, God sent a leader to save them, and the cycle repeated. But through it all, they were spared complete destruction. Of course, the consequences of their actions were still there, but God would not let His chosen people be wiped out, no matter how much they grieved Him. They might not have understood a lot spiritually speaking, but they were all too familiar with physical threats. When they were trapped between Pharaoh and the Red Sea, God miraculously parted the waters. Of course, we know that God created and has power over everything in our world, but sometimes we (I) might need to be reminded. Our human nature tends to automatically look to ourselves and what WE can do when problems arise, especially when we can see the threat with our own eyes, and it takes lots of experience and deliberate, conscious effort to ignore our fleshly tendencies and turn to God first.

The second needs He helps with are *emotional*, most commonly sadness as we can see in Psalm 34:18, "The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart." Whenever we feel that there is nothing but sorrow, we have the promise of God that we can pour our sorrows on Him and He will take them. Everything probably won't instantly fix itself, but with God lifting us up, there is nothing we cannot overcome. We have not only the comfort of our fellow saints but also the promise of eternal freedom from sadness. Loss is another challenge God helps us with. This ties in closely to sadness. There is the obvious loss of a family member, close friend, etc., but the enemy can use anything and everything we hold dear as ammunition to keep us from serving God to our full potential. This includes obvious targets like health, friends, family, and financial stability, but also things such as our reputation or happiness. Matthew 5:4 tells us, "Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted." Loss can be an especially difficult trial to bear because most of the time, we as humans can't do anything to stop it. We like to be in charge of ourselves, at least I do, and it can be extremely difficult to hand things over to God when we're already struggling to keep our heads above water. It may feel like giving up control will only make things worse, but this is far from the truth. Another emotion we face is frustration. Maybe it's because of my job or how much time I spend on the road, but frustration seems to occur a lot more than it used to. Thankfully, God is there to provide calming reassurance. He provides strength to resist the urge to lash out or dwell on negative thoughts. He not only has our best interests in mind, but He has the power to take action. Even when we find ourselves in a situation such as is described in Hosea 13:9, "O Israel thou hast destroyed thyself, but in me is thine help." Even when Israel made mistakes and strayed from God, and the consequences caught up to them, He was still willing to offer rescue.

The final, and probably the most important area of need that God is a present help in, is the *spiritual* one. The attack on our souls is constant and severe, and to rely on our own strength guarantees almost instant defeat. But God has not only provided a way out through salvation and sanctification, but also to stay with us as we live for and grow closer to Him. I think of the familiar words from James 4:8, "Draw nigh to God and he will draw nigh to you." He simply will not forsake us. There is no situation that we could possibly find ourselves in that He would say, "Well, this is a bit much for me" or "this is your fault, you should have been more careful. I'll leave you to it, and getting out of this one will be a good lesson for the future." No, He will strengthen His relationship with us as long as we put in the proper effort. In our most crucial hour of need, when temptations seem insurmountable, we can always go to Him in prayer for victory. Our soul is the only thing we truly own. We are stewards of everything else. Being able to claim God's promise of help in any situation where our eternal life is threatened is especially important to me. To achieve and maintain our salvation and walk with God, He provides constant assistance to both resist temptation and grow closer to Him. There is a very familiar verse in I Corinthians 10:13, "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it."

I personally find relief that there is nothing I could possibly even think of facing that God hasn't already dealt with. In fact, He already knows I'm going to encounter this temptation, and has personally checked that I have ample opportunity to resist it. And when I do successfully resist, I gain trust in God and His ability to lead me. But as I mentioned in the beginning, God is present, even when we are not going through temptation. Often we are faced with trials, which may not directly threaten our salvation, but still try to drag us down. These can take shape in financial problems, job stress, or the all too familiar health issues. God is always just a prayer away, and if we ask we shall receive. As Alan and Valerie and others mentioned this morning, God knows things about us and our situations that we have no idea about. We may not get the answer immediately, or even the answer we think is best, but that's not how God always works. Our job is to ask for help and trust that the help we get is best for us.

In conclusion, God is a present help in all times and situations. He supports us physically, emotionally, and spiritually, protecting us from dangers known and unknown. Whether we are going through a very tough time, or just enjoying the benefits of a true Christian life, He is ever and always walking right beside us, ready to step in as soon as we ask. †

Hello Fellow Christians,

I'm writing to "Thank You" for sending us your magazine. We love it. Thanks so much. ... I was a little late getting our check out! ... Please use where you need it most. Once again, thank you so much. It's so nice to know there are true Christians in our world, because "Jesus" is coming soon. God bless and love. Prayers to all.

—M. & L. S., Virginia

A GOD WHO CARES

RADIO MESSAGE

BY THE LATE BRO. ALVIN A. CRAIG



UR SUBJECT for today's broadcast is "A God Who Cares." Our text of scripture: I Peter, chapter 5, verses 7-9: "Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you. Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world." God is a God of love who cares for each one of us and has given us a wonderful invitation and some sound instruction in our text.

The first word I would call your attention to is *casting*. We have many cares as we journey through life, but we do not have to bear our cares alone. We're living in a perplexing world today. There is trouble on every hand. Throughout the world there is so much trouble, heartache, misery, and woe. But "there is a God in heaven," as Daniel said, and He has offered us the opportunity of casting. "Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you." Casting instructs us to put our cares on the Lord with the assurance that He cares for us. What a consoling thought! He cares for us. Does He care? "O yes, He cares," one hymn writer said, and we know that He does. The Scriptures teach us that Jesus Christ is our High Priest, and that He can be touched with the feelings of our infirmities.

We read in the Scriptures where Jesus went about teaching in the synagogues, and there He saw the multitudes. The Bible says that He looked upon them and had compassion upon them. He healed their sick. So we know that we have a God in heaven who loves us and has shown His love by giving His only begotten Son. But not only by giving His only begotten Son, for the Scriptures say, "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." So God has shown His care for us in so many ways.

The Psalmist said in Psalm 103, "Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies; Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's." We are told not to forget all of His benefits, therefore, we know we have a God who cares.

Whatever things concern a follower of God, whether spiritual or temporal, great or small, God concerns Himself with those things. Yes, God concerns Himself with those things which concern us. Adam Clarke said, "He that knows that God cares for him, need have no anxious cares about himself." We read in Psalm 55:22, "Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee: he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved." Again, let me quote what I said before: *Whatever things*

concern a follower of God, whether spiritual or temporal, great or small, God concerns Himself with those things. Clarke: *He that knows that God cares for him, need have no anxious cares about himself.*

The Bible teaches us that we are not to worry or be fretful about anything. “Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God” (Philippians 4:6). The word *careful* in that passage of scripture is not talking about not being reckless. It’s talking about not worrying, not fretting, because we have the privilege of casting our cares upon the Lord. Again, Psalm 55:22 tells us, “Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee: he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved.”

Sometimes we carry burdens that we really don’t need to carry. I know there are burdens we need to carry. There are concerns that we have, but we don’t have to worry and fret because we have burdens and concerns. We have a God who is concerned also. He is caring for us, watching over us, for His eyes are over the righteous and His ears are open unto our prayers. We are told, “Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.”

Now, we go on in our text (I Peter 5) today. In verse 8, we read the words *be sober*. Knowing the Lord cares for us does not mean that we can be careless. We are to face the realities of life seriously. Also, we are to be *vigilant*—keep awake, be on your guard. “Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak” (Matthew 26:41). So we are to be vigilant, watchful, and prayerful, because we have a very active subtle enemy to contend with. He walks about. He has access to everywhere we go and everything we do. In the home, on the job, even in the worship service, the devil has access to come to us to trouble and to try us. Why is it that way? Because the Lord said He would have a tried people. Not only because of that, but because of the very nature and character of that wicked one that we call the devil or Satan. Jesus said, “He is a liar, and the father of it.” Jesus also said, “The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy.” So this wicked one that we are opposed by is a liar, a thief, a robber, a murderer, a destroyer, and even a supposed angel of light. “And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light” (II Corinthians 11:14). He’ll deceive the very elect, if possible.

We remember reading in the book of Job how Satan came among God’s people. The Lord asked him, “Whence comest thou?” He answered, “From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it.” He was going around doing all the evil and all the ungodly things that he could. The Lord asked him, “Hast thou considered my servant Job?” He answered, “Thou hast blessed the work of his hands, and his substance is increased in the land. But put forth thine hand now, and touch all that he hath, and he will curse thee to thy face.” The Lord said, in effect, “No, I’m not going to touch all that he hath, but I give you permission to.”

The old devil brought the storms of life on Job—he lost his livestock, all his children died when their house collapsed, etc. Yet, Job said, “The Lord gave, and the

Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.” That was Job’s attitude. Although the devil touched Job with these things, God told him that he could not take his life. Job was afflicted with painful sores from his head to the soles of his feet. He had three men that the Bible calls “comforters” but they were really accusers, who came and sat down with him upon the ground seven days and seven nights and never said a word. Finally, they began to accuse Job and tried to make him believe that he was in that state because he was a sinner, which was not so. Even Job’s wife said to him, “Dost thou still retain thine integrity? Curse God, and die.” Job answered, “Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh.” Finally, Job said, “Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him.” Even in Job’s suffering, God cared. He was watching over Job. We can rest assured that regardless of what our tests and trials and temptations may be, we still have One who cares for us.

As a roaring lion. Satan goes about seeking whom he may devour because he wants to discourage you, turn you aside, and cause you to accuse God in your trials and tests. Adam Clarke said in regard to a roaring lion: “Satan tempts under three forms: 1. The subtle serpent; to beguile our senses, pervert our judgment, and enchant our imagination. 2. As an angel of light; to deceive us with false views of spiritual things, refinements in religion, and presumption on the providence and grace of God. 3. As a roaring lion; to bear us down, and destroy us by violent opposition, persecution, and death.”

Again, Peter says, “The devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.” Satan has almost the whole world under his dominion and control. In fact, the apostle John said, “The whole world lieth in wickedness.” There are billions of people doing his bidding and his will, but thank God there are some children of God, some saints, some Christians in the world, and Satan is very angry at them. He’s determined to do all he can to destroy them and to get them to turn aside and to go back into the evil and ungodly things of this world. But we are told in the Scriptures that we are to submit ourselves to God. We must resist the devil, and he will flee from us. Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to us.

Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world. One thing the old devil would like for us to believe is we’re the only ones going through this particular trial or this test. I remember years ago my brother, Ollen, and I were traveling, and we began to talk about our trials and so forth. I mentioned something, and he said, “You?” Ollen hadn’t been saved for very long at that time, and he was surprised to know that I was having the particular type of trial or test that I was speaking of. One time in my Sunday school class, someone in the class spoke up and said, “Brother Alvin, I’m glad to hear you say that. I didn’t know you had a trial or test.” I said, “Now, I don’t know why you find it so hard to realize and to know that I’m a human being just like you.” If anything, the devil will attack preachers harder than he would anybody else, because many times if the devil can get a pastor to fail, the congregation will fail with him. So this old wicked spirit

we call the devil is walking about seeking whom he may devour, and we are told to resist him steadfast in the faith. If we will resist him steadfast in the faith, he will flee from us, and we will be able to overcome.

Jesus gives us an example. I refer to this quite often. In Matthew, chapter 4, after Jesus had fasted for forty days and forty nights, the Bible says He was hungry. Satan came to Him and tried to get Him to turn stones into bread. Jesus could have made the finest bread that was ever made out of those stones if He wanted to, but He wasn't going to submit to Satan. He wasn't going to do anything to please the devil, so he used the Scriptures on Him. That's an example for us. Beloved, when Satan comes around with his temptations, trials, and tests, we need to use the Word of God on him. "Man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord" (Deuteronomy 8:3).

Satan then took Jesus up on the pinnacle of the temple and tempted Him to jump down in the sight of people so that they could see how miraculous He was. Satan even quoted the scripture to Him. He quoted from a Psalm, "He shall bear thee up, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone." The devil knows the Scriptures better than we know them. The only thing is he puts the wrong interpretation on them, and he would try to get us to use them in the wrong way. But Jesus Christ came back with the correct scripture and the correct meaning of it. He said, "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." We are not to tempt Him, either.

Satan took Jesus up on an exceeding high mountain, and showed him all the kingdoms of the world. He said to Him, "All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me." Who was he talking to? Satan was talking to the One who had made all these kingdoms, and he had the audacity to say to Jesus, "I will give you all these kingdoms if you will worship me." Beloved, that is exactly what Satan is endeavoring to get every one of us to do—to fall down and worship him. Yes, he wants worship. I have said before, and I say it again: Those who take God's name in vain by cursing and swearing are praising the devil by the language that they are using. He delights in that kind of thing, because he wants to destroy us and wants us to fall down and worship him, but Jesus came back with the scripture, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." We are to love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength. We are to worship and serve Him. He told Old Testament Israel, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me." All the gods of the nations are but idols, but the true and the living God who cares for us is the One I'm talking about today. He will give us power and victory over that wicked one. "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you" (James 4:7, 8).

I Peter 5:10, 11: "But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, establish, strengthen, settle you. To him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen." The Lord didn't tell us we wouldn't be tempted and tried, but He did tell us that He would give us power over all the power of the enemy. He will never leave us nor forsake us. He will give us

the grace we need to face the trials and tests and to live a victorious life. Thank God we have One who cares for us. †

BIBLE LESSON OF THE MONTH

THE FAMILY OF GOD

THE BLOOD-BOUGHT FAMILY (Part I)

Scriptures: I Corinthians 6:20; Matthew 27:26, 35, 45-50.

I Corinthians 6:20 For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

Matthew 27:26 Then released he Barabbas unto them: and when he had scourged Jesus, he delivered him to be crucified.

35 And they crucified him, and parted his garments, casting lots: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots.

45 Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour.

46 And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?

47 Some of them that stood there, when they heard that, said, This man calleth for Elias.

48 And straightway one of them ran, and took a sponge, and filled it with vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave him to drink.

49 The rest said, Let be, let us see whether Elias will come to save him.

50 Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost.

Memory Verse: For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.—I Corinthians 6:20.

Aim: To impress the student with the price of membership in the family of God.

INTRODUCTION

The blood-bought family is the family that has been redeemed from the forces of evil and the power of sin by the blood or sacrificial death of Jesus on the cross. The history of this family goes all the way back to the first family, for every saved member of Adam and Eve's family and every succeeding family received redemption through the name of Jesus Christ (Acts 4:12). Error in the modern church system has obscured the truth concerning the blood-bought family, therefore it is of the greatest importance that we spread abroad the truth concerning it. The great price that was paid to make possible a blood-bought family seems to mean but little today. Men would rather have the material things that God has given rather than the deep spiritual life that is possible in Him. Even Christians are not so enthusiastic about it as they should be. We could do much, of course, if it were possible to include in the public schools a course in true Christian teaching, but this is impossible; therefore as individual Christian groups, we must devote more time and effort in teaching men the truth.

MEDITATIONS

REDEMPTION ASSURED—I Corinthians 6:20

—For ye are—Christ was completely successful in His mission to the earth. He suffered many indignities and finally was put to death. But it took this very procedure to satisfy the offended mind of God. By the sin of Adam, the whole of the human family came under the scourge of sin, were sold out to the power of sin. Only the death of God's Son (He died for all.) could redeem the lost souls of men. Each one who accepts the redemption of his soul has a very difficult course to pursue. Whereas his life, pleasures, and expectations were built around sin, he must now devote his energies to the glorification of the name of Christ. He who pays the purchase price for a thing definitely becomes the owner of it.

THE JUST SUFFERS FOR THE UNJUST—

Matthew 27:26—Scourged Jesus—Not only was redemption from sin purchased for us by Christ, but, also by His stripes we were healed. Healing is a temporary benefit granted the human family which will take care of the body until judgment day when the body will also be redeemed. At that time all Christians shall receive a new body that shall never know sickness, pain, or any discomfort of any kind. Praise without end is due our Redeemer for His great love for us. It seems impossible that even the vain world would release a murderer and destroy a just man, but this clearly shows the driving force of sin.

THE SCRIPTURES FULFILLED—Matthew 27:35—Crucified him

Vain men, blindly driven, saw no distance into the future, and being so ignorant of the purpose and justice of God, did not once imagine they would again be confronted with the man they were using so wickedly. However, even such wickedness as this would have been totally forgiven had they acknowledged their error and turned from it. We see from this situation how blind men can get and how dangerous it is to follow blind religious bigots. Had the soldiers known the truth and realized the dignity and the purity of Christ, they would have never cast lots for His clothes. Their terrible transgression, along with every other unforgiven sin, shall be made known in the judgment.

NATURE FROWNS—Matthew 27:45—Over all the land

This was an awful scene. It could not have been otherwise than that the people were greatly moved by it, but it was now too late to retrace their steps. The greatest crime in all history had been committed. The Jews had brought down upon their own heads and their children untold guilt and suffering. They are still suffering for this crime and can only escape its penalty by accepting Christ. **Verse 46—Forsaken me**—Here we see the humanity of Jesus manifested. Christ forsook the glory of heaven to take upon Himself the form of man. Being subject to the flesh, He felt every mental and physical pain. Being treated so evilly by His own creation, there was no power sought to intervene; it seemed certain that even His Father had forsaken Him. The depth of His anguish was made evident by the loudness of His cry. **Verse 47—Called for Elias**—The Jews expected Elijah to return in person even though Christ had made it plain that John the Baptist was the

Elias that was to come. Feelings were running high and many minds were tense. Fear filled some hearts. This was an awful happening. **Verse 48—With vinegar**—Things had now become very serious; some were being moved with pity because of the painful cry of Jesus. I am inclined to believe the vinegar (may be interpreted strong wine—Proverbs 31:6) was offered to Christ as an act of mercy. It doubtless, was to serve the purpose of making Him unconscious of the physical pain He was suffering, but He refused it. **Verse 49—Let be**—Some were still hardhearted and skeptical. They wanted to let things go as they were and see what would happen. **Verse 50—Yielded up the ghost**—Christ had suffered on the cross for three hours, and if nature had taken its course He could have lived on for some time, but He was to lay His life down, so He gave up the ghost by His own power, thus completing the sacrifice necessary to make possible a blood-bought family.

CONCLUSION

"The death of Christ is often represented in the Scriptures as a redemption, and men are said to be redeemed through His death. Other words of similar import are used to express the same idea, such as ransomed, purchased, and bought. 'Feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood' (Acts 20:28). 'Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus' (Romans 3:24). ...

"Christ's death is in our stead or substitutional, so we need not die as a penalty for sin. His death is propitiatory or a reconciliation, to propitiate God ... His death is redemptive, or is a ransom or price paid to buy back to a former condition. This does not mean it is a price paid to Satan, but is a satisfaction to the justice of God ... His humiliation and death are an infinite price because of the infinite dignity of the offering."

—R. R. Byrum, *Christian Theology*.

Every member of God's church has been saved through the shed blood of the Son of God, for there is no other way to be saved, so the Church of God is indeed "The Blood-Bought Family."

FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION

1. Why was a redemption price necessary?
2. Why was it necessary for the redemption price to be so great?
3. How far back in the history of the earth does the blood-bought family go?
4. In what way does the human family profit by the scourging of Jesus?
5. Why were some of the Jews so determined to destroy Jesus?
6. Is there any danger of men's becoming as blind today as were the Jews?
7. What effect did the obscuring of the sun have upon the people?
8. Why did Christ say, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me"? †

SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS—For more than 80 years, we have published literature for the Church of God. Order a free sample today.

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2025 Divine Healing Message by Bro. David Shaw

WE ARE THANKFUL for the blessings of the Lord throughout this convention. Today is a special day. It's our divine healing service when we come with great expectations, desiring to be healed in the areas of our bodies that are affected.

We are in a world where, we have seen in a vast measure, sicknesses that have affected our people. Large sums of money are spent in seeking to find methods for healing of various diseases. In many instances, there are those who have been ill for a very long time and have spent all they had to become well. It came to the point where they had to ask for aid from one source or another. They gave their bank account number so money could be sent to it, or a phone number of a family member who could assist in the support needed.

Beloved Ones, we are plagued with more and more diseases. Every day a new ailment is found out. Doctors have to find names for the ailments that affect people's bodies. Sometimes you can't even pronounce the medical name they give you, because it's a scientific name. They try to find a cure for a disease by searching and searching until they can scarcely find the right cure. But I'm thankful that we serve an almighty God, the God of all ages, the God who never fails. He is the One we can rely on and trust and have confidence in. We can have that assurance in our hearts. We are reminded that according to your faith, be it unto you. We must come believing that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. I said that to say this: Let us be diligent as we come today seeking the Lord's favor, knowing that He has respect unto our faith, and will give us according to our faith as long as we ask believing.

I shall be reading from the book of Isaiah, chapter 53. I will read verse 5 as a passage: "But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed." My thoughts for consideration will be "The Price Is Paid."

We are oftentimes reminded that Jesus Christ came into this world to save the souls of men. We are also reminded that He came to heal. I want to assure us that these words are true and faithful. Why do I believe that? These are words left on record. There are various scriptures that declare the working power of God among mankind in the person of Jesus Christ and also with the apostles. As a matter of fact, even the prophets before Christ had done marvelously. We cannot deny that many wondrous works were done by them. By such today, we want to elevate our faith. We want to ask God to help us to be inspired by the fact of His Word, and that we will be able to be benefitted like they were.

In Mark, chapter 5, we see where Christ had done wondrous works in the midst of the people He encountered. There's a story of a man who was a demoniac. He lived among the tombs. I want us to imagine just

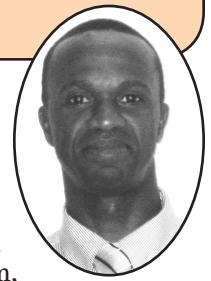
how he was. To be living among the tombs is no place of comfort. As human beings, we need shelter and comfort to be able to rest well and feel acceptable in society. Living among the tombs signifies he was living among the dead. No one to talk to. No one to comfort him, and no other living person dwelling there. But Jesus was passing that way. Bless the Lord! This man was trying to be tamed by those in the community, but it was not possible.

Beloved Ones, as we live in society today, there are issues that many people have that do not require medical intervention. These issues require the divine power of God. Medicine cannot restore a demoniac back to normality. He or she might be given some medical aid to calm them down, but the healing will not take place. Because Jesus passed that way, the demoniac was healed. The writer says in Mark 5, "But when he saw Jesus afar off, he ran and worshipped him, And cried with a loud voice, and said, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of the most high God? I adjure thee by God, that thou torment me not." The devil in the man was speaking. So the devil knew Jesus and knew that whenever He came on the scene, he would be tormented. If you look carefully, the devil was trying to rebuke Jesus. Imagine that. What a demon!

Jesus knew the demoniac's state and condition. He came to Jesus for deliverance. He commanded, "Come out of the man, thou unclean spirit." Jesus spoke with authority and power. He sought immediate removal of the unclean spirit. Do you know demons do not live in the air? Demons always want to occupy some object, and so the demons made their request. There were some swine not too far from where they were. Can you imagine the demons (devils) wanted to go into the swine? Demons do not live in space. They need something to live in. Eventually, Jesus bade them to go into the swine. The scripture says, "The herd ran violently down a steep place into the sea, (they were about two thousand;) and were choked in the sea." I wonder what happened to the demons after the swine died.

The demoniac said that he was possessed with legions of devils. I have a footnote in my Bible that says, "Demons in those days were legions, as it were, about 6,000 Roman soldiers that would group themselves as to go into war." The Bible says that there were about 2,000 swine. For someone to be possessed of legions of devils means that he has no control over his being. He is absolutely being controlled and subject to the state he's in.

Beloved Ones, as sicknesses mar our bodies, we become discomforted. The least little ailment that begins in your body brings a concern. It changes your feelings. It interferes with your energy. It bothers your heart and mind and leaves you concerned as to what is about to take place. As a human being, Jesus Christ bore our



burdens. He carried our sorrows and our griefs. He knew our heartaches would cause us to become concerned. Jesus came to be our refuge. By faith, we have to hold to His promises and hold to His Word that cannot be shaken or changed. Today can be your day of victory.

I mentioned earlier that you begin your victory by the faith you possess. If you doubt, there will be no sense for you to ask, because James declares that when you doubt, you're like the sea tossed to and fro. It means you're uncertain. You don't know what to believe and hope for, but believing in God you are firm, steadfast, and unshaken. You stand determined that this is it. If it's not God, there's no one else. You have to hold firm to His promises because they are true and faithful.

The demoniac was relieved. He was set free. Do you know he wanted to follow Jesus right away? The man who was a demoniac had become a lover of God. He was now in his right mind. He began to seek after Jesus and to be what He wanted him to be. It is something to think about. Beloved Ones, we want to ask God to help us to find that urge to follow Him and to obtain the benefits He has for us. Jesus wants us to follow Him.

Jesus wanted the demoniac to go home to his long-awaited family. Can you imagine the family knew he was living among the tombs? They sought all means to help him but could not. Jesus knew all of this. Jesus said to him, "Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee." Can you imagine the joy that filled his heart, the comfort that filled his family by seeing their loved one returning home in his normal state? He was in his right mind. I am certain he was filled with questions. His friends probably asked, "What happened to you?" I imagine he said, "I met a man called Jesus, and He healed me. I had intended to follow Him, but He told me to go home and tell my family the good news." I would to God that those of us who might be molested by any ailment whatsoever would be able to take to our family good news today by telling them what the Lord has done. Certainly, the power of God is marvelous indeed.

In this same chapter (Mark 5) a man came to Jesus to heal his daughter, but while Jesus was on His way, there met Him a woman with an issue of blood for twelve years. That wasn't normal to be undergoing such a situation for twelve years. She was deprived of associating herself with society or even her immediate family. It seemed hopeless, but Jesus came on the scene. She said in her heart, *If I could only touch the hem of His garment, I shall be made whole.* What faith! She said, "I know if I would just touch the hem of His garment, I will be made whole." That wasn't an easy thing for her to do being among the throng, but with her determination she began to press. She pushed and pushed, until by faith, she reached out and touched Him. The Master said, "Who touched my clothes?" She was made whole.

Let me say to you today, Jesus is concerned about your touch. Amidst the throng that may be pushing on Him, your touch is special, because you have a need in your life that demands you to do so. Jesus turned and looked on the woman with the issue of blood, and said,

"Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace, and be whole of thy plague." I am thankful it wasn't a few days after that she realized she was cleared of her condition, but immediately she realized her condition was removed.

We serve an immediate Christ, one who is always on time. He is just the same today. He healed in Galilee and set the suffering captives free. If you notice, they brought to Jesus all who were sick and none was ignored. Sometimes we look at a person's ailment and think *it's just something normal; nothing to worry about.* No, whatever ailment you may have today, it's your mountain. It's your dark valley, but Jesus promised to be with you and to hold your hand and to be a light in that dark valley. If you trust Him by faith today, He's simply saying to you, "I have paid the price." All you need to do in return is to give thanks to God.

We are thankful to the Lord that all things are possible with Him. He heals in every situation—every condition that mars the human body, He knows what we are passing through, and He knows before we ask. We are reminded to come believing that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

In Mark, chapter 8, verses 22-26, we read: "And he cometh to Bethsaida; and they bring a blind man unto him, and besought him to touch him. And he took the blind man by the hand, and led him out of the town; and when he had spit on his eyes, and put his hands upon him, he asked him if he saw ought. And he looked up, and said, I see men as trees, walking. After that he put his hands again upon his eyes, and made him look up: and he was restored, and saw every man clearly. And he sent him away to his house, saying, Neither go into the town, nor tell it to any in the town." I believe Jesus had a reason why He didn't want to have a crowd with Him as He touched the eyes of this blind man. Jesus led that blind man out of the town. He did something miraculously. Jesus spit on his eyes and asked him if he could see. Can you imagine? The man said, "I see men as trees, walking." That wasn't enough. Jesus gave him another touch. I want us to be informed by the fact that our healing at times goes by a process. Healing is not always miraculous. A miracle is something that is done instantaneously. Our healing can be done immediately or can be days after.

Sometimes, Beloved, you can get swayed in your faith. There are people who try to give you different advice on what you need to do. Their advice to you doesn't elevate you. It causes you to be depressed. Their advice does nothing but brings doubt, fear, and dread in your mind. It leaves you wondering what to believe. Therefore, in your sickness that you're undergoing, be careful of those who advise you what to do. I'm not here to cast a smear on doctors, but I'm here to tell you that in many instances, you become sicker than you were after seeing a doctor. I say without respect of others, every single medication that you take has side effects. None successfully works on the disease it's supposed to help without causing side effects. Even if you are cured of that particular disease, it creates another. One cure leads to another ailment. But I'm thankful to God that when Jesus heals, there are no side effects. He heals completely.

When you are prayed for, don't tell yourself you are not healed. Let me tell you this: I had a pain in my right foot, right across the instep. It was so bad that I had to hop on the other foot. I put my hand on the foot and prayed and the pain became worse. As a matter of fact, it became unbearable. I prayed again, and before I was finished praying, the pain was absolutely gone. If I had followed the first feeling, I would have given up because my prayer wasn't answered.

Beloved Ones, God tries our faith. He wants a tried people. "Try me, and prove me," said He. So when we come to God, come believing. Whatever happens, still believe. What if God says, "I will not heal thee"? It's our test for life. That doesn't sound too good. None of us want that, do we? We want deliverance. At times the condition you are plagued by is for the glory of God. Your endurance can mean your victory in the end, but it takes time.

Think of Job. Job was made ill. None of us here has ever had sores from our head to our feet. None of us. Job did. He went through a lot. His acquaintances came and accused him of being sinful and this ailment was because he had sinned. Job knew himself. He knew his sufficiency was in God. When he was accused, he did not allow the accusation to cause him to be bitter. He remained true to God. It came to the place that his wife became very concerned. Being concerned, she took the wrong attitude. She told Job to curse God and die, for his God wasn't a good God. Job looked at her and said, "Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh." Job said, in effect, "I will wait until my change comes."

Beloved Ones, let me assure you, your change is coming. Whatever it may be, however long it takes, your change is coming. I don't know for what period of time Job waited, but he waited, and certainly his change did come. All of his accusers were ashamed. His very wife was ashamed because she saw something she did not expect. Your expectation today lies with God, and you will not be ashamed. He will give you the desire of your heart. Let us ask God to help us. Whatever it takes, we're going to trust Him, and believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

Mark 10:46, 47 says, "And they came to Jericho: and as he went out of Jericho with his disciples and a great number of people, blind Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus, sat by the highway side begging. And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out, and say, Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy on me." Whatever ailments are brought to Jesus, He's capable to take care of every one. They brought all the sick folks to Jesus, and they were all made well.

I am certain that some people in this auditorium came because this is a divine healing service today. Let me assure you, Jesus honors your faith, and He promised you that if you will only believe, all things are possible. You shall receive. May God help us to be confident that He in whom we trust has told us that those who will put their trust in Him shall never be ashamed. Therefore, allow your faith to be strong in Him. As you seek His face, hold on to Him.

God bless. †

THE CHILDREN'S CORNER



LOST TREASURE

A Bible Lesson by Sis. Rebecca Bland

I love exploring this house! I said to myself as I crept silently into a small room at the top of an old, wooden staircase.

The farmhouse to which my family had recently moved had two sections. The original section had been built of stone, and was about 150 years old. The other section, framed from wood, had been added much later. That was the part of the house in which we spent most of our time because it was where the kitchen was located.

There was a large parlor downstairs in the stone section, and several smaller rooms upstairs. Apparently, these rooms had not been used very often by previous occupants of the house. The floors had a fine layer of dust on them, and the room at the top of the stairs held some shabby half-open boxes.

I was interested in those mysterious-looking boxes. They might contain forgotten treasure! One by one, I poked through the old boxes. There was very little inside them besides old magazines and tattered children's books.

I had emptied the last box and was about to toss it aside when I heard something roll across the bottom of it. I peered inside just in time to see a small, shining object slide down into the corner. I seized the object and drew it into the light for a closer look.

What I saw made me catch my breath in excitement. It was a multi-faceted crystal, about the size of a marble, sparkling in hues of blue, green, and gold. I was only a ten-year-old country girl, but I thought I knew a valuable gemstone when I saw one. I blew the dust off the crystal and put it in my pocket. I smiled as I skipped down the stairs and into the backyard.

I ran to the swingset and sat down on one of the swings. Holding the chain of the swing in one hand and my precious crystal in the other, I swung back and forth, delighting in the way the sunlight reflected off every facet of the precious gemstone.

As I swung, admiring the stone, I remembered a story the preacher had told at our church. He said that long ago there was a young man who traveled to a faraway land. While he was there, he saw someone with a valuable diamond. The young man wanted that diamond so badly that he sold all of his possessions to purchase it. Then the young man boarded a ship to return to his home country.

The voyage was long, and to pass the time, the young man took the precious diamond from his pocket to admire it. He turned it this way and that, fascinated by the way the sunlight glinted off its many facets.

Soon, however, the young man found it was not enough to watch the diamond sparkle in his hand. He

wanted to see the full effect of the sun shining straight through it. He tossed it a little way into the air, catching it deftly as it fell.

A fellow passenger standing nearby gasped in disbelief to see the young man do such a careless thing. "You'd better be careful playing with that diamond," said the passenger. "You're likely to lose it!"

But the young man laughed. "I'm not worried," he said. "I'm pretty good at catching things."

With that, he tossed the diamond even higher. But as it fell, the ship gave a sudden lurch and the diamond slipped from the young man's grasp. It hit the deck, and before he could snatch it up, the precious stone skidded under the rail and into the sea.

I thought about that poor young man. How foolish he had been! *I would never do anything so foolish*, I said to myself.

But I began to wonder what my crystal would look like if I were to throw it into the air. I was sure it would sparkle in the sun just like a diamond.

Nothing could happen to my precious crystal here in the backyard, I thought. There is no river or ocean around here to swallow it up.

I jumped up off the swing and strode to the sidewalk that circled the house. *I'll throw it up into the air just a little way*, I decided. *Even if it slips through my fingers, it will land on the sidewalk, and I will see it.*

I threw the crystal into the air a little way, but it came down so fast, I didn't have time to see the sunlight sparkle off its facets. I decided to throw it higher into the air. That time, I saw the crystal sparkle as it fell, but I was so excited, I forgot to catch it. I looked down at the sidewalk, but my treasure was not there. It had bounced and rolled into the tall grass.

Desperately, I searched for my crystal, crawling through the grass, combing it with my fingers. *I am just as foolish as the young man on the ship*, I groaned to myself.

"What are you looking for?" I heard my father's voice above me.

"My precious stone!" I wailed in reply. "I lost it in the grass!"

"Is this it?" my father asked. He had spotted the crystal right away. He nudged it with his foot, sending it up onto the sidewalk.

"Oh, thank you!" I cried. I picked up the crystal and showed it to him. "I found it upstairs in a box. I think it's probably very valuable, don't you?"

My father held the crystal between his first two fingers and looked at it carefully. "No," he said at last. "It's only made of glass."

"But it's pretty, isn't it?" I asked him.

"Yes," he said. "Pretty, but worthless."

I kept that crystal in the treasure box under my bed for a long time. Even though it didn't have any monetary value, it was precious to me. Never again did I throw it into the air to see it sparkle. I wasn't willing to take the risk of losing it.

Our wise saying this month comes from Proverbs 20:15, which says, *There is gold, and a multitude of rubies: but the lips of knowledge are a precious jewel.* This scripture tells us that knowledge is as valuable

as a jewel. The most important knowledge we can ever have is the knowledge of God.

To have a knowledge of God, and yet refuse to walk in His ways, is like throwing a diamond into the air as though it had no worth. The consequence of losing our relationship with God is far more serious than the loss of a diamond.

Always value your knowledge of God. Seek to learn more about Him each day, and ask Him to help you walk in His ways.

Activity

What does the Bible tell us about God? Read the scripture verses below, and then see if you can fill in the location for each.

1. "God created the heaven and the earth." _____
2. "The Lord thy God is a merciful God." _____
3. "God is light, and in him is no darkness at all." _____
4. "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." _____
5. "God is love." _____

Answer to Last Month's Activity

Diligence is **careful** and **persistent** effort in a task, showing **steady**, **energetic** work and attentiveness. (from the *Oxford Language Dictionary*) †

ABOUT RECEIVING THE HOLY GHOST

By the late J. E. Forrest

WHEN PAUL came to Ephesus, he inquired of some disciples he found there, "Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?" (Acts 19:2). His inquiry was perfectly legitimate, for the matter of receiving the Holy Spirit was considered of great importance by Christ and the Apostles. The question, "Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?" reads in the American Standard Version and also in Moffatt and Goodspeed as follows: "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" Some scholars insist that the Authorized Version is faulty and the other versions (Moffatt, Goodspeed, American Standard Version) are correct, hoping thereby to support the argument that the Holy Spirit is received at the time a man becomes a believer and is converted and baptized. These scholars proceed to teach that there is no such thing taught in the New Testament as what we commonly describe as a "second work of grace" known as the infilling of the Holy Spirit or baptism with the Spirit.

We gladly accept the translation of Goodspeed, Moffatt, and other translators, believing that they give us the true import of Paul's question, but we fail to see in these translations any basis for believing that the phrasing of the question does any damage to the doctrine of the infilling of the Holy Spirit as an experience received *after* conversion. The very fact that Paul made the inquiry at all shows that the Holy Spirit is not received at the time of conversion. His asking the ques-

tion was an admission that it was altogether possible, if not probable, that these disciples *had not* received the Holy Ghost when they "believed."

The question, as put in Moffatt's translation and the others, implies that one may receive the Holy Spirit at the time he believes, or he may not. If that constituted *all* the evidence in support of the doctrine, we might rightly believe that one receives the Holy Spirit at the time of conversion in some instances, but in other instances he does not. Hence there is necessity of an inquiry into this matter.

The Scriptures, it should be remembered, do not have a double meaning. Either a passage states and proves a certain teaching, or it does not. Therefore the Scriptures must teach either two consecutive works of grace (first, conversion or the birth of the Spirit, and then the pouring out of the Spirit upon those who have believed and been baptized) or they do not. The Scriptures do not teach two or more doctrines which are in conflict. If they did, how could anyone know he was right?

We have no disposition to stress the time of receiving the Holy Spirit, but we feel certain that God has a time and terms, and unless we come to His terms the Holy Spirit will not be received. Jesus said concerning the Holy Spirit: "Whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you" (John 14:17). It is self-evident that the term *world* in this passage has reference to those who do not know Christ—the unconverted. Jesus thus stated that the Holy Spirit was to come upon those who were "believers," sons of God, and not of the world.

John the Baptist said, "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but ... he [Christ] shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost" (Matthew 3:11). With reference to John's words, Luke wrote: "John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence" (Acts 1:5). The original meaning of baptism, both of the Greek and as practiced by John and the first Apostles, was immersion. Both the baptizer and the candidate went "down into the water" and the candidate was "buried with him [Christ] in baptism." Baptism was symbolic of death; the water completely covered the person, completely submerging him.

The words, "He shall baptize you with [in] the Holy Ghost," were fulfilled to the Apostles on Pentecost. When the day of Pentecost was fully come "there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. ... And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:2-4). Two distinct things happened on this occasion. The Holy Ghost, as the divine element, filled the house. There can be no question as to whether this manifestation was the Holy Spirit. No amount of argument could convince anyone the contrary. If it was not the Holy Ghost, then what was it? And would it not have taken just a manifestation to fulfill Christ's prediction? The second thing that took place was that those present were "all filled with the Holy Ghost." Not only was the room filled, but those persons in the room were filled.

Now, it is not particularly necessary that we contend that there be repeated manifestations in which the

divine element literally fills the room in which believers are waiting to be filled with the Holy Spirit. Just as a house may be filled with the Holy Ghost and yet its occupants not necessarily be filled, so may believers receive or be filled with the Holy Spirit although there may not be the filling of the room as on the day of Pentecost.

There are times, it is true, when God's Spirit actually fills a room. I well remember an occasion when I was called to pray for a woman who was an epileptic. She had had repeated convulsions and was in a coma upon my arrival at the house. As we knelt by her bedside, laid our hands upon her, and began to pray, the Holy Spirit actually and literally filled the entire room with His divine presence and power. The Lord miraculously healed the sister. A man who was present in the room so felt the presence of God that he wept, and yet he was a sinner and remained one for years. God's presence filled the room, but it did not fill the heart of this man and change his life.

But it is not necessary for us to contend that to receive the Holy Spirit means that the receiver be literally baptized with or in the Spirit, as on Pentecost. A number of the scriptures which speak of believers being filled with the Holy Spirit say nothing about baptism with the Holy Ghost. Some of these scriptures are "They were all filled" (Acts 2:4). "They received the Holy Ghost" (8:17). "The Holy Ghost fell on all them" (10:44). Although the phrasing is different in these scriptures, there is no difference regarding the fact of the experience.

Some contend that no one since the day of Pentecost has or can be filled with the Holy Spirit—receive the divine endowment of the Holy Ghost and power as did the first apostles. This teaching is a heresy. Peter told the penitent Jews to whom he preached on the day of Pentecost, "Repent, and be baptized ... for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call" (Acts 2:38, 39). But because Peter named the Holy Spirit in connection with their repentance and baptism does not mean that they were to receive the Holy Ghost at the time of their repentance and baptism. In God's plan of salvation the time element must always be considered.

The first disciples of Christ did not receive the Holy Spirit at the time they became believers. Neither did those who were converted after Pentecost receive the Holy Spirit at the time of their conversion. In Acts 8 we read about Philip going to Samaria and preaching Christ. A great revival broke out; the sick and lame were healed, devils were cast out, the people turned to God. Those receiving the Word, those who believed, were baptized.

Later on the church in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the Word of God, and so they "sent unto them Peter and John: who, when they were come down, prayed for them ... laid their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost" (Acts 8:14-17). All of this was after the Pentecost outpouring. An undisputable fact stands out: these Samaritans did not receive the Holy Ghost at the time they believed and were baptized

with water. They received the infilling of the Holy Spirit after or “since they believed.”

In Acts 10 we read about Cornelius and his household. Cornelius gave alms, was a man of prayer and fasting, had a vision of angels, was “devout,” “feared God,” “knew the baptism which John preached,” prayed to God “alway.” He is described as a “just man” who “feared God and worked righteousness.” He was certainly not a sinner. I wonder just where one might go to find a man today who could measure arms with Cornelius. Yet he had not received the Holy Ghost, and he did not until Peter came and taught him about his privileges along this line.

Some people, in order to bolster up a false theory, would pretend that the household of Cornelius was merely a group of convicted sinners, awaiting instructions as to how to get into the kingdom of God. The angel who appeared to Cornelius and told him to send for Peter said concerning Peter, “Who shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved” (Acts 11:14). But these words, in the light of other facts given about Cornelius’ righteous life, cannot be construed to mean that Cornelius and his household were not already accepted of God to the extent of their knowledge. The word *salvation* applies not only to regeneration, but also to sanctification and finally to complete redemption of the body and translation into the regions of eternal bliss.

When Peter later explained his mission among the Gentiles to the brethren, he said, “God, which knoweth the hearts, bear them [Cornelius and his household] witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us; and put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith” (Acts 15:8, 9). Peter made it clear that Cornelius and his household received the Holy Spirit in the same manner as the Apostles had received Him in the beginning, or at Pentecost (11:15-17).

When Saul of Tarsus met Jesus on the Damascus road, yielded to Him, and became obedient to the heavenly vision, he became a changed man. Who would dare deny this? Three days later he was baptized and “filled with the Holy Ghost.” Ananias was fully convinced that Saul was a converted man and addressed him affectionately as “Brother Saul.” He was indeed a brother, a “chosen vessel.” In his case three days elapsed from the time he “saw the Lord” and “received the Holy Ghost.” His receiving of the Holy Spirit was therefore subsequent to his conversion.

Paul wrote to the Ephesians, “After that … ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise” (1:13). In the same vein he taught the Thessalonians about holiness and sanctification, his language showing that they were not at the time of writing recipients of the blessed experience, although they admittedly were “in God the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ,” had the “election of God,” etc. He wrote them: “This is the will of God, even your sanctification. … God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness” (I Thessalonians 4: 3, 7). Finally, after giving them some rule by which to walk, he said, “The very God of peace sanctify you wholly.” And to the Romans, Paul declared that we are “sanctified by the Holy Ghost” (Romans 15:16). †

WINNING A CROWN

By the late C. W. Naylor

Part XI



Entire Sanctification

How to Obtain the Experience

WE ARE SOMETIMES asked to direct people over a road which they have never traveled. We may do this to the very best of our ability, telling them about all the general characteristics of the way; but notwithstanding our best efforts, they are sometimes perplexed and do not know just which way to turn, or which way to go; they do not and cannot understand our explanations and directions, and sometimes, even after we have done our best to point out the way, they must needs inquire of others. The same is true concerning our explanations of how to obtain the experience of entire sanctification. Make it as plain as we can, there will be some things that we cannot explain to the satisfaction of the seeker. He can only partly understand the things that we tell him. When he comes to some place in the road where he would put our directions into practice, he may find himself perplexed, not knowing what to do; our directions fail of being plain to him.

I used to wonder why the Bible did not make the way plainer. I could not understand why the way should not be marked out step by step even as others and I tried to mark it out for seeking souls. I tried to make the way still plainer, but failed to obtain better results. I was much troubled and prayed over the matter long and earnestly. When at last the answer came, I marveled that I had not understood it before. I saw that, if the way should thus be marked out step by step with what the teacher supposed to be great clearness, souls would often follow it out in a mechanical and formal way and would fail to obtain the experience; they would not get their hearts into the seeking enough to enable them to find. But I saw also that, if the way could not be seen as clearly as the seekers would wish, their hearts would longingly turn to God, and they would seek for Him instead of an experience. They would seek for Him instead of anything else, and in seeking Him, their hearts would seek aright and find.

I saw then the wisdom of God’s silence. I saw that, if the footsteps were sometimes uncertain, it would more fully arouse the desire, and that that pent-up desire would burst through all obstacles to God. Whatever increases the heart’s hunger for God, whatever draws us out more earnestly to Him, is a step upon the way, even though it be a step taken “in the dark.” God is not hard to find. He places no difficulties in the way of the one seeking Him; but what He desires is that He be sought so earnestly that the soul will reach that depth of consecration which will make it all His own. Though I cannot tell all the details as to just how one should seek the experience, I can point out a few waymarks that may be of benefit to the seeker.

There are some things that a person must needs know. Whether this knowledge be obtained through preaching or through his own heart’s yearnings, it matters not; but first of all he must know his need. He must

have an internal consciousness that there is something more, a deeper experience, for him. His heart must hunger and reach out after God for higher attainments of grace and spirituality. The more conscious he becomes of his need, the more certain will he be to seek so as to obtain. Also he must believe that there is such an experience as he craves obtainable. If he believes teachers who say that these heart-longings can never be satisfied in this world, he may be discouraged and not seek for satisfaction, or at least he may seek only in a half-hearted, discouraged way without really hoping to find. There are those who would tell him that life is a time of long-drawn-out dissatisfactions, of lifelong conflicts with the internal corruption. They will tell him that there is no remedy for it, no way of having his heart cleansed. If he believes this, he will have hard work getting beyond his present experience; that false idea will stand as a barrier in his way. Therefore, it is necessary that he have knowledge that he can obtain a higher state of grace. Having this knowledge, he can go forward.

Desire must follow knowledge. I have seen many persons seek in a half-hearted, uncertain sort of way, not feeling in their hearts that fervency of desire which made them earnest in their seeking. Desire is the foundation of all true seeking. The more intense that desire becomes, the more likely the soul is soon to find the thing he seeks.

There must be a consecration or dedication of ourselves to God. When we came to Him for pardon, we sought Him with all the ardor of our souls and yielded to Him so far as we could understand. But now we know Him better, and we know ourselves better; and we are, therefore, able to dedicate ourselves to Him in a higher and better and fuller and deeper sense than we could then. Some tell us that we must consecrate our houses and land, our relatives and friends, and everything that we possess to Him. This is useless. They belong to Him already. What He wants us to consecrate is ourselves. If we ourselves, with every power and resource of our being, are His, then everything that belongs to us, or everything that has to do with our life, belongs to Him. All is in His hands to use as He sees fit. The secret of consecration is but the yielding of self. Everything else may be given up to God, and yet self be held back. If such is the case, there is no real consecration; for that means that I myself am laid upon the altar of His will in a complete and unreserved sacrifice. God must have full control. There must be a "yes" in our hearts to all His will. We must empty ourselves of everything else before we can be filled with God; but when the heart is once truly empty, God will come in and fill it to the utmost.

We sometimes hear a great deal about meeting conditions in order to get sanctified. Let us remember this one fact: Nothing that we can do puts God under any obligation to sanctify us. We may meet all the conditions we ever heard of, but that does not put God under obligation to us. When He does sanctify us, He does so by the act of His free grace. We cannot purchase sanctification, we cannot earn it, we cannot do anything to bring ourselves into the experience. The whole work is God's work. All our desire and consecration and seek-

ing merely serve to remove the barriers that are in the way of God's working. When all the barriers are removed, then faith reaches forth and opens the channel of grace; and when this channel is thrown wide open, God's grace runs in as naturally as water runs down hill. In Acts 15:9 we are told that the purification of our heart is by faith. In Acts 26:18 we are told that we are sanctified by faith in God. Remember God is to do the work, but we are to do the believing.

We cannot, however, believe over any obstacles. If there is something yet unconsecrated, faith cannot act. It can overcome all obstructions without, but it cannot surmount obstructions within ourselves. These must be overcome by our own wills, by definite heart surrender to God. Faith is simply trusting, just relying on God to carry forward His plan in us when we give Him the opportunity. It is just believing that His Word is true, true for us, and true for us right now. God will not fail us. He has placed Himself under the most sacred obligations to do His part, and He will not come short. When the soul has poured out itself before God until it is conscious that it has reached the full depth of its measure, when it realizes that it has done all within its power to do, it may then rest and wait. Now has come faith's opportunity. Let her reach forth her hand and take hold upon God, and declare "it is done." Faith is not a trying to believe; it is not a straining and struggling; it is a confident relying upon God's promises. Never mind what the emotions are; they have nothing to do with the case. God does not want our faith to stand in emotions, but in His unchangeable Word. When we reach the point where our faith does take hold on God, there is an immediate result. There comes into our hearts a consciousness that God hears us and accepts our offering. Faith always brings assurance. This assurance cannot come so long as the heart is full of doubts; but when faith really takes hold upon God, assurance comes.

We must carefully distinguish between this assurance and the emotions that sometimes come along with it. Assurance is that inner knowledge by which we know that we are wholly the Lord's. It is also the testimony of the Spirit of God in our hearts. Its voice can never be heard when faith dies; but so long as faith is quick and vigorous, its voice is never silenced. When we have reached the place to believe, we may confidently believe and trust regardless of emotions. We may have no emotion or feeling at all, or we may have a variety of emotions, one following another. But no matter what emotions may come, or what emotions may go, it is our privilege to believe. Emotions are superficial; faith goes to the very foundation of things, and produces satisfactory results. The emotions, no matter how great they are, will soon subside; but the assurance stays so long as faith holds true. If we believe, we need not trouble ourselves about the outcome—God will take care of that. God wants us to rest calmly, to wait on Him, to trust Him in full assurance. He will see that our hearts are fully satisfied.

An Instantaneous Experience

Sanctification is often taught as being a state to which we gradually attain. It is said that we grow in grace and become more and more holy as time goes on

until finally somehow, someway, sometime, we reach the experience of entire sanctification. I have yet to find among those who hold to this theory the first person who claims to have reached the fullness of the experience. They are all still growing, still going toward it but never getting there, or never knowing when they do get there if they do. The fact is, this is not the method at all. Sanctification is not a thing of growth; it is the work of God. Growth there is and must be in the Christian life; but growth does not change the nature. Only the work of God can do that. In every case in the Bible where people received the baptism of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit "fell upon them," or "they were all filled with the Holy Ghost." This baptism was not a gradual thing, a thing that came by degrees; it came suddenly. It was a definite something at a definite time and in a definite manner, and so it always is.

Sanctification is received by faith; and being the result of an act of faith, it must of necessity be an instantaneous work. A man may be sick and be dying by inches, and he may be a long time in this condition, coming nearer and nearer to death; but there comes a time when he dies. One moment he is alive; the next moment he is dead. Death is invariably instantaneous. The same is true of sanctification. We may draw nearer and nearer to God. We may become more and more like Him. We may yield ourselves more and more to Him. We may receive more and more of His grace. But we cannot say that we are wholly sanctified until we have fully surrendered self and have received the baptism of His Holy Spirit and have been filled with all the fullness of God. When this is done, an instantaneous work of God has been wrought. One man under the influence of the Spirit may yield in a few minutes what it has taken others years to yield; but in either case the outcome is the same, the work of God is the same.

How to Retain the Experience

There are two things necessary to the retention of the experience of entire sanctification. One is faith. The other is a life of obedience to God. If we rebel against God, we become sinners. If we fail to believe in God, we open the door to doubts of all kinds, to fears, troubles, trials, distress, uncertainties, and perhaps despair. A mere weakening of our faith under trial will not destroy the grace out of our hearts, it will not render our hearts impure, neither will it bring us into sin. It will, however, destroy that assurance God gives to us, and it cannot be restored until our faith is restored.

Doubts do not contaminate the soul. We may get bothered and feel uncertain, having various sorts of fears about our experience, but this will not render us impure. When our faith mounts up to God again, the assurance will be restored to our souls, and we may go on our way rejoicing. Only sin can destroy the experience from our hearts. Only sin can drive away the Holy Spirit. So long, therefore, as our hearts do not turn away from God, we can rely in Him. No matter what our emotions are, no matter how dark some days may seem, no matter how we may be tested, we are still sanctified.

This subject will be further considered in the chapter on Faith. †

THE SOUL

IS THE VOLITIONAL PART OF OUR BEING.

IT IS A CONSCIOUS ENTITY, AND

IS IMMORTAL

By the late H. M. Riggle

From the book, *Beyond the Tomb*

"Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die" (Ezekiel 18:4). "Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?" (Micah 6:7). Note carefully the distinction between the physical and spiritual—"The fruit of my body for the sin of my soul." The "soul of the son," the "soul of the father," "the soul that sinneth it shall die." Materialists have no little difficulty with these and similar texts. Soul here cannot mean animal life, breath, or the physical man. "The breath that sinneth, it shall die." "For the sin of my physical animal life." How would that sound? Remember, with materialists there is no other life in man but his natural, physical life. To admit spiritual life apart from our natural life would explode all their contention.

It is not the members of our body that are accountable to God. While the hand steals, the lips and tongue profane, the feet dance, and the eyes look on the opposite sex to lust after them, the real trouble is deeper. These members are but the external instruments of the soul. You might cut off the hand, pluck out the literal eye, and tear out the tongue, but the real trouble would still remain. Sin is not a physical affair. It is a moral, spiritual evil. It is not the breath, the animal life, the physical man that stands condemned before God. It is the soul of man. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." "The sin of my soul." Thus the soul of man is vastly different from that of the brute.

There is another term that is frequently used in the Bible to denote the moral, spiritual part of us, and in a host of texts refers directly to the inward man. It is "heart." "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently" (I Peter 1:22). Here soul and heart mean the same thing. I shall now give a number of texts where the term "heart" cannot mean the muscle in our breast that pumps the blood through the body, but refers directly to the moral, spiritual man: "The law of his God is in his heart; none of his steps shall slide" (Psalm 37:31). "I will put my laws in their mind, and write them in their hearts" (Hebrews 8:10). "Written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshly tables of the heart" (II Corinthians 3:3). "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee" (Psalm 119:11). "Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts" (Psalm 51:6).

What sense would attach to these texts if man were only flesh and blood and breath and intellect? These

scriptures would be meaningless and nonsensical. Apply these texts to the hippopotamus and see how they would sound. Note also that in Hebrews 8:10 God said, "I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts." Here heart means more than merely the mind. God's law was to be written in both the heart and mind. Thought and mind in man is more than a property of matter—it is a faculty of the soul, and continues active after death, as this book will show. A person might have the Word of God so stored away in his mind that he could repeat from memory the whole Book, but that would not effect for him what these scriptures declare. It is in our spiritual and moral being that God puts His law when He saves the soul from sin.

"Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life" (Proverbs 4:23). "For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, etc." (Mark 7:21). "A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things; and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things" (Matthew 12:35). The heart then is the treasure-house, the fountain and spring from which flows our outward life. If man were no more than an animal how could this be? Will such texts apply to the ape or giraffe? Heart here can only apply to the soul, the real inner man. "Man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart" (I Samuel 16:7). The Bible speaks of the heart as being "deceitful," "desperately wicked," etc. And again we read of a "clean heart," "perfect heart," "honest and good heart," and "pure heart." All such expressions can only apply to our spiritual and moral nature, the soul, or spirit, of man. "And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us; and put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith" (Acts 15:8, 9). On the disciples at Pentecost, and later on, on the household of Cornelius, was poured out the Holy Ghost, at which time their hearts—souls—were purified.

In the great work of salvation it is not the flesh, bones, or blood, nor is it the breath or mere animal life that is converted, regenerated, and changed from a sinful state to a righteous condition, but it is the heart, the soul, the real inner man. It is more than the mind. For a Jew or Mohammedan simply to see that his religion is wrong and the Christian faith and religion is right, and in belief accept Christ as the Son of God, will not change his moral nature. It takes more than that. A man may with his mind endorse the whole truth and yet be a sinner. Salvation goes deeper than the mind. Now if man were wholly a material being and possessed no conscious spiritual entity he could not undergo a spiritual change. All the change that could be wrought upon him by his Creator would be material and physical or fleshy. The brute cannot undergo a moral or spiritual change.

The very fact that man has become morally defiled by sin and can be morally purified by the blood of Christ in salvation proves beyond all question that he is more than a physical being, that he has a spiritual nature, and that this spiritual nature is a conscious entity. This is what Paul meant in Romans 7:22, 23: "For I delight in the in my members." The twofold nature is here

clearly taught. The inward man delights in the law of God and at the same time the law of sin works in the members of the physical body. This was Paul's experience under the law before his conversion. In order for this inner man to delight in God's law he must first learn that law, get a knowledge of it. How could this be unless he is a conscious entity, an intelligent being? Yes, the soul is capable of knowing God, understanding His will and Word, and delighting in His law. "For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him?" (I Corinthians 2:11). The Spirit searcheth the deep things of God and reveals them to us, just as the human spirit knows all the things of a man and makes us conscious of them. That is exactly what this text and its context teaches. Therefore the human spirit is a conscious entity.

As we have seen the soul is the volitional part that sins against God, becomes defiled and depraved, and feels the sting of guilt and condemnation. Therefore it is the soul that needs to be saved. "Receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls" (James 1:21). "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul" (Psalm 19:7). "The salvation of your souls" (I Peter 1:9). "That the spirit may be saved" (I Corinthians 5:5). "Ye have purified your souls" (I Peter 1:22). "Purifying their hearts by faith" (Acts 15:9). "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God" (Matthew 5:8). What a beautiful wreath of heavenly truth!

In salvation the spiritual and moral nature of man is restored. "He restoreth my soul" (Psalm 23:3). All these scriptures teach the conscious existence of the human soul. God has promised "to give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of their sins" (Luke 1:77). How is this given? "He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself" (I John 5:10). "Knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance" (Hebrews 10:34).

In what part of our inward being is this precious knowledge and witness given? Answer: "The Spirit itself beareth witness with OUR SPIRIT, that we are the children of God" (Romans 8: 16). It is by our spiritual nature that we are made conscious of God. The blessed Holy Ghost communicates to "our spirit" a sweet consciousness of our acceptance with Him. Materialism cannot stand in the light of this truth. Paul further explains this experience in Galatians 4:6: "God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father." Our "hearts" and our "spirit" here mean the same thing—another proof our heart, or spirit, is a conscious entity.

But our materialist friends say spirit means breath, wind. How would this sound? "His *wind* beareth witness with our *wind*, that we are the children of God." Our "God hath sent forth the *breath* of his Son into our *breath*, crying, Abba Father." No, friends, "there is a spirit in man," an intelligent, conscious entity, that can be saved through the blood of Jesus Christ and can receive from God through the Holy Spirit a sweet inward assurance and consciousness of it. This is the immortal part of our being. †

(To be continued)

The Poetry Page

Someone has written: "*The Path into the New Year is aglow with opportunity to work for Christ.*"

ANOTHER YEAR

Margaret Armstrong

Another year! The future path lies hidden;
And shadows seem to fall across the way,
Press on! a light before thee shineth
Yet more and more unto the perfect day.

Another year! The days are growing evil,
And Satan's threat'nings dark foreboding send.
Fear not! thy Lord hath surely spoken,
"Lo, I am with you ... even to the end."

Another year! the land is parched and thirsty;
Our souls are faint—low droops the precious grain.
Plead on! Elijah's God will answer,
And pour, in mighty floods, the latter rain.

Another year! we wait with eager longing;
The hour is late—midnight comes on apace.
Look up! Redemption's day is dawning;
Perhaps this year we'll see the Bridegroom's face.

FEAR NOT

Christine Welds

There are two little words that mean a lot,
And they happen to be "Fear not"—
They're recorded in the Bible, many a'time
Not just for some, but for all mankind.
God knew the reason for saying those words,
For He knows everything unseen and unheard.
There are many things that cause us to fear,
No matter the day, month or the year.
Too often we tend to jump to conclusion,
Causing undue fear and lots of confusion.
Let's take God's Word on a personal level,
For fears will creep up sent by the devil.
He has no respect for the human race,
But God will help us by His mercy and grace.
So as we travel on in this new year,
Take God at His Word and do not fear.
Yes, "fear not, fear not," trust God all the way,
And keep in readiness for the judgment day.

MY SHEPHERD WALKS NEAR

Kay Hoffman

The Lord is my Shepherd, He ever walks near
To guide and protect me each day of the year.

Beside the still waters, through meadows so fair,
On life's troubled pathways I'm safe in His care.

His rod and His staff reassures me anew;
No hills are too steep, He's walking there too.

He preparest a table with gifts from above
And binds up my wounds with His tender love.

Through all of my days no harm will I fear—
It comforts me to know my Shepherd walks near.

THE LORD IS ALWAYS THERE

Tina M. Mundy

The Lord is always there
To guide us through the years,
He will always comfort
And wipe away our tears.

His love is always faithful
And never is untrue,
His love is overflowing
Like the sun shining through.

The Lord is always there
To lend a helping hand,
And He will surely guide us
To the Promised Land.

THIS YEAR IS YOURS

Emma Martindale

God built and launched this year for you,
Upon the bridge you stand;
It's your ship, your own ship,
And you are in command.

Just what the twelve months' trip will do
Rests wholly, solely, friend with you,
Your logbook kept from day to day—
My friend, what will it show?

The log will tell, like guiding star
The sort of captain that you are.

For weal or woe, this year is yours;
Your ship is on life's sea, your acts
As captain must decide
Whichever it will be.

So now, in starting on your trip,
We ask God to help you sail your ship. ‡

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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
Unity of God's people	Hebrews 12:10-14
Divine Healing	John 17:21
The ordinances	I Corinthians 12:13
Eternal life	James 5:14, 15
Eternal punishment	Matthew 28:19, 20
	Matthew 25:46
	John 3:15; 6:54; 10:28
	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
Christ is the Head	I Corinthians 3:11
Christ is the Door	Ephesians 1:22; 5:23 Isaiah 9:6 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
Membership is rewarded	Revelation 22:17 John 14:2, 3