Building God's House

Allen M. Hinchliff

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By Allen M. Hinchliff

Acknowledgements

My appreciation to all the members of the Body of Christ through whom the Holy Spirit moved to minister these teachings to the Church.

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FOREWARD

These writings will serve as an instruction to the teachings given by the brethren under the anointing of the Holy Spirit. They will by no means exhaust the material given in the scriptures by the revelation that has come by the Holy Spirit, in the Move of the Spirit, but will give a person a starting point in their experience.

Many who were young people when the Move of the Spirit began in 1948 are now grandparents. There is a whole new generation that needs to have these foundational principles built into their lives and experience. We would recommend that you read these articles to your children and grandchildren – where possible. Explain to them the things ministered in the articles and pray that the Holy Spirit will cause these things to come alive in their hearts. It is the responsibility of parents and grandparents to teach the way of the Lord to their children and grandchildren.

Allen Hinchliff

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YE MUST BE BORN AGAIN

Some of the most important words ever spoken were uttered by Jesus one night when Nicodemus came to see Him. Nicodemus was a Pharisee and a ruler of the Jews. We don't know whether Nicodemus sought Jesus out at night because he was ashamed to be seen with Him, or if he was a busy man looking after his office of rulership and had no time for visiting during the day.

He came to Jesus because he recognized Him as being sent from God due to the miracles that He had performed. Jesus paid no attention to the accolade of this man, but went straight to the subject of his need.

Jesus said to him, "... Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3). This was a mystery to Nicodemus, and he asked whether a man had to re-enter his mother's womb to be born again. Jesus pointed out to him that every man requires two births. The first one is a physical birth, or as Jesus put it, a fleshly birth. The second one is a Spiritual birth.

The apostle Peter points out the difference between the two births. He speaks of the fleshly birth, where a person is born of fleshly parents. He is born of a corruptible seed and is prone to physical death. Then he speaks of being born again of an incorruptible seed by the word of God. This seed lives and abides forever. I Peter 1:23-25: "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever. For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: But the word of the Lord endureth forever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you."

When Jesus spoke of being born of the flesh, he was talking of that birth where we inherit the fallen nature of Adam from our parents. Regardless of what wonderful and godly people our parents were, they had the ability to pass that carnal nature on to us. Scientists have discovered a lot of things concerning the inheritance of different traits from our parents. Carnality is written in the genes of every one of us. I am sure that any of you who have children have noticed that a child doesn't get far into life until the carnal, fleshly person begins to manifest himself. It seems that the first word a child learns is a word of rebellion: "No." Because of this nature that comes with that fleshly seed a person has to be corrected and directed all the days of their life. Galatians 5:17: "For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would."
The new birth is a spiritual birth; and by that birth one can see and enter in to the things of the Spirit. Jesus said to Nicodemus, "Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3). The reason for this is that God's kingdom is not a natural, physical, kingdom that can be seen with natural eyes. Romans 14:17: "For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost."

The kingdom of God is not a kingdom that belongs to the material realm. It can only be seen with spiritual eyes. Our physical bodies have five senses. Sight, hearing, smelling, tasting and feeling. Likewise we have at least five senses in our spiritual being. We can see spiritual things only with the spiritual eyes that are ours after we are born of the Spirit. Because Nicodemus had not been born of the Spirit, he couldn't see the kingdom of God.

The apostle Paul describes the man who has not experienced this second birth, "Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart" (Ephesians 4:18).

Jesus also told Nicodemus that since he had not experienced this new birth, he could not enter the kingdom of God. A person can be right here, going about their daily responsibilities and live and walk in the kingdom of God. It is a kingdom that is not seen or entered physically but spiritually. By the spirit, one can enjoy the blessings of the spiritual realm.

A physical birth is a very definite experience. Without this birth, none of us would be here. We all entered this earthly realm by a birth. Our mothers all suffered the pains of giving birth. A spiritual birth is also a very definite experience; and as Jesus said, without it we can neither see nor enter the realm of the Spirit. There are also birth pains with a real spiritual birth. These pains are those brought on by the conviction for sin that comes by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit talks to a person's heart and speaks of the need for forgiveness of sin and being right with God. To have our sin laid bare is always a very painful experience, but when we surrender to the drawing of the Holy Spirit and believe, we are like the woman Jesus spoke of who was giving birth to a son. John 16:21: "A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come: but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world." We also rejoice when we are born again because the burden of sin has been taken from us and laid upon Jesus Christ on the cross.

How does this birth take place? Nicodemus asked the same question when he asked Jesus, "How can these things be?" Jesus explained to him in John 3:15-18 that the new birth takes place by believing. All God's blessings come by believing. "Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness" (Romans 4:3). By faith in or believing God, many were made righteous. John 3:18: "He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God."

God sent a plague of serpents among Israel in the wilderness because of their rebellion, unbelief, and complaining over the lack of water and the type of food God was supplying. (From the days of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, the serpent has been pictured as sin.)In Israel's experience many people were bitten and died. God had Moses make a serpent out of brass and erect it upon a pole. Whenever anyone who was bitten by a snake, and we have all been bitten by sin, looked at the brass serpent, they were healed of their bites. This required believing. Likewise, by us looking to the Saviour on the cross and believing we can be born of the Spirit. John 3:14-15: "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life."
When a person accepts Jesus Christ as his Saviour, or in other words, is born again, provided he has made a real commitment, he will be a changed person. From that day forward, he will be a new person. John the Baptist told the people of Jerusalem who came to be baptized of him that they must bring forth fruit meet (suitable) for one who has repented. The apostle John said, "He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world. We know that we have come to know him if we obey His commands. The man who says, 'I know him,' but does not do what he commands is a liar, and the truth

is not in him. But if anyone obeys his word, God's love is truly made complete in him. This is how we know we are in Him: Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did" (1 John 2:2-6 NIV).

The words of the apostle Paul are quite plain in this matter. "For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again. So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation" (2 Corinthians 5:14-18 NIV).

Paul and Silas were in prison in Philippi. They sang, prayed, and worshipped God while being held in the inner prison with their feet in the stocks. In the middle of the night there was an earthquake. Because of the damage done to the prison, the keeper thought the prisoners would all be gone and would have killed himself. Paul stopped him and assured him that the prisoners were all there. Paul and Silas' attitude and this miracle caused the conviction of the Spirit to come upon the man, and he asked, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" Paul and Silas answered and said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy House" (Acts 16:25-31). The new birth or salvation, as it is expressed here, comes by believing.

Romans 5:10: "For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement." May God help you to believe.

ABSTINANCE AND TEMPERANCE

There are two words that are used in the scriptures that are very important to us in our walk with God. One of them is abstain, and the other is temperance. They are both very vital to us.

When God tells us that we should abstain from something, He means that we should completely refrain from it. We must have absolutely nothing to do with it.

We could make a lot of laws and regulations to govern ourselves, but that wouldn't really accomplish what God wants. If you walk by a law you are not walking in the Spirit. God wants to write His laws upon my heart and upon your heart, in order that by the Spirit, we accomplish the things that He has in mind for us, as we walk with Him. Paul, writing in Galatians, says that in the realm of the Spirit there is no law. When you walk in the Spirit, the law cannot touch you. There is a sign on the street in front of my house that says 50 km/hour. As long as I drive at 50, or below, that law won't touch me. It could deal with me concerning other infractions, but as far as speed is concerned I am blameless. But if I drive my car at 90 km/hour in a 50 Zone, the law has every right to deal with me. That is not a happy experience.

We pray that God will help us, that the things the scriptures teach us to abstain from won't be governed by a law. It should be something that God puts within our hearts, by the Spirit, so we will walk in the ways He has called us to walk in.

Let us read I Peter 2:11, "Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul..." As far as this world is concerned, a Christian is a stranger and a pilgrim. We are just travelling through, and this is a temporary abode. Then he says, "abstain from fleshly lusts," (or desires), which war against the soul. May I quote this from the New International Version: "Dear friends, I urge you, as aliens and strangers in the world, to abstain from sinful desires which war against your soul. Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us" (I Peter 2:11-12).

This is the thing that God desires of us. He desires that as we live our lives among the people that we are with, our light will so shine before men that they may see our good works, and glorify our Father which is in heaven. This is also the desire of our hearts.

It is very important that we abstain from the desires of the carnal nature. "Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live" (Romans 8:12-13). As we see from Paul's writing, there is nothing gained by cultivating the desires of the lower nature.

The word "abstain" is used again in I Thessalonians 4:3, "For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication..." Sanctification means something that is set apart for a holy purpose. That is what God's mind is for you and me. It is that we should be set apart for God's holy purpose. Paul continues, "That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour; not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God. That no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter: because that the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also have forewarned you and testified. For God has not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness" (I Thessalonians 4:4-7). God's calling is a calling unto holiness.

I would like to quote this also from the NIV. In our day, we understand better the terms used here. "It is God's will that you should be sanctified; that you should avoid sexual immorality; that each of you should learn to control his own body in a way that is holy and honourable, not in passionate lust like the heathen, who do not know God" (I Thessalonians 4:3-5). The age in which we live is an age of passionate lust. The desire for immoral sexual relations is displayed everywhere you look. It is most obvious in our television programs. For many it seems impossible for them to advertise their products without referring to sex. People's desires run away with them all the time. Each of us should learn to control our own body. "...and that in this matter no one should wrong his brother or take advantage of him. The Lord will punish men for all such sins, as we have already told you and warned you. For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life. Therefore, he who rejects this instruction does not reject man but God, who gives you His Holy Spirit" (I Thessalonians 4:6-8). May God help all who read to take this to heart, and walk accordingly. Another scripture that instructs us in abstinence is in Acts 15. In this instance some people went to the church in Antioch, and were teaching that circumcision was necessary in order to be saved. This caused much confusion, so the church in Antioch sent brethren to the apostles in Jerusalem, to find out what the

apostolic teaching really was. The apostles talked about this at some length, and then wrote a letter to the churches containing what they felt to be the mind of the Lord. "Wherefore my sentence is, that we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles are turned to God" (Acts 15:19). There were some of the Jews who seemed determined that the Gentiles were going to have to walk according to all the ordinances of the Jewish law. Circumcision, and the different sacrifices, were given as ordinances under the law, but were fulfilled in Christ, so there is no longer any need for them. That is why we don't have animal sacrifices, or practice circumcision. That is why we don't have all the feasts as Israel had them, because they were all fulfilled in Christ. We partake of those things in the realm of the Spirit.

The apostles' decision was, "But that we write unto them, that they abstain from pollutions of idols, and from fornication, and from things strangled, and from blood" (Acts 15:20). They were to abstain from these things. These Gentiles had been worshippers of idols, so they were instructed to abstain from everything that had to do with idols.

Often we find that there are idols in our lives. Perhaps not idols of wood and stone, but other objects of devotion. One of the brethren recently said that an idol is something that takes our mind away from God, and that is right. We can find ourselves so wrapped up in some particular thing that our mind is completely taken away from what God wants it to be on. The dictionary says that an idol is an object of excessive devotion. Things can become that way, if we give them too much of our time and devotion. We can do this with our work, our pleasure, or our possessions. The apostles' instruction then is, to abstain from the pollution, or the worship of idols. God will bless us if we can walk according to this direction.

They were also instructed to abstain from fornication. Fornication is, by the definition in my dictionary, sexual intercourse between unmarried persons.

"Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all men. See that none render evil for evil unto any man; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men. Rejoice evermore. Pray without ceasing. In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you. Quench not the Spirit. Despise not prophesying's. Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. Abstain from all appearance of evil" (I Thessalonians 5:14 - 22). There are many things that could appear evil. If it looks in any way like it might be evil, abstain from it. One time I went with my son to a trade show. He was interested, on behalf of the company he worked for, in looking at the things that were for sale there. The sponsors of the show were serving all kinds of drinks. One could have almost any kind of liquor, or Coke, or one of many other types of carbonated beverage. The people attending were all getting their glasses filled with drink. I had in mind to get a Coke, and there would have been nothing wrong with that. I began to wonder though, how those people were going to know whether I had Coke or Rum in my glass. Even if I took a glass of water, someone might get the idea that I was drinking liquor. It could have appeared evil. It is strange how most non-Christians know exactly how a Christian should live, and they will judge you accordingly. In judging another, they never consider their own life style.

I believe you can understand what Paul meant when he told us to abstain from everything that could appear evil. Things that are completely innocent could appear evil in the eyes of someone who didn't know all the

circumstances. There would have been nothing wrong with drinking a Coke, but it might have caused someone to stumble.

I was talking to a young person recently, who was very much in love with another young person of the opposite sex. Other cultures would be horror stricken by this, but in our culture, it is customary for young people to spend time courting before marriage. I told the young person I was conversing with, to "abstain from all appearance of evil." In other words, don't be found in circumstances that would give people the wrong idea concerning your conduct. "Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings..." (I Peter 2:1). Malice is spite, or ill will. We are instructed to lay it aside. Also, lay aside all guile, or deceit, and hypocrisy, and envy, and all evil speaking. Peter doesn't use the word abstain here, but these are things we should abstain from. There is really no place for these things in the life of a Christian.

The church is very strong on its teaching on abstinence concerning the use of alcohol, tobacco, and the non-medical use of drugs. There should be no place for these things in our lives. The reason you should abstain from these things is because they are addictive. Anything that you can become addicted to should be abstained from. Nothing looks as ridiculous as a grown man or woman being enslaved to a little cigarette. They find themselves in bondage to it. You often see a person put a cigarette in their mouth, and then go through all their pockets looking for a match to light it. They almost become a nervous wreck while they are hunting for the match. They have become a slave to tobacco. We pray continually, for those who were addicted, before they became Christians. We long to see deliverance come to them, and most of them feel the same way. Don't allow yourself to become snared by the evil one. These things that people become addicted to are the devils way of destroying their lives. Let us seek God to live on a higher plain.

The same is true concerning alcohol and drugs. People become slaves to these things, and lose control of their lives. The brethren have very definitely taught that we should abstain from anything that is addictive. May God help everyone, whether young or old, to avoid these things. We all know the consequences of the use of these things, as far as bodily health is concerned. They should have no part in the Christians life, because they are destructive to the temple of God, which is your body.

Another thing we should abstain from is bitterness. Bitterness is a terrible thing. The scripture talks about it being a root of bitterness. "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord" (Hebrews 12:14). It is very important to follow peace and to follow holiness. He says that if we don't follow these things we won't be able to see the Lord. I don't believe that he is talking just about the future, when he talks of not being able to see the Lord. I am quite convinced that if we don't follow peace and holiness, we will not be able to see the Lord through the eyes of the Spirit, which is the way we see Him at this time. Our vision is blocked.

When we are born again, our spiritual senses come alive, and we are able to see things that belong to the realm of the Spirit. They are foolishness to the natural man (see 1 Corinthians 2:9-12), but to he who is born of the Spirit, they make a lot of sense. When Jesus spoke to Nicodemus he said, "Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3). That applies to the present as well as the future. I am thankful that God has given His people vision, that they might be able to see the kingdom of God. The kingdom is the thing that God has planned, and purposed, and I am thankful that we can see that realm

through the eyes of the Spirit. Referring back to the scripture we just read, if we are walking in the ways of error, our eyes are blinded to the things of God.

I am thankful that through the eyes of the Spirit, we can see those things that pertain to the kingdom of God. It is a wonderful thing to feel His presence. It is a wonderful thing to reach out and touch Him. I am not speaking of touching Him physically, but in the realm of the Spirit we can touch Him. We can see Him through the eyes of the Spirit.

The lack of peace and holiness often leads to the growth of bitterness in our soul. "Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled" (Hebrews 12:15). Bitterness is just like certain kinds of weeds that get into your garden. You dig them out in one place, and the roots creep underground, and come up in another place. Bitterness is a very destructive thing.
Notice that the writer speaks of many being defiled. When a person becomes bitter, they never seem to be able to keep it to themselves; but they have to talk to everyone they meet, and share that bitterness with them. By their talking, they impart that spirit of bitterness. I trust that we are mature enough to discern the bitter spirit, and then refuse to listen to it. Not only do we have to watch this spirit of bitterness for ourselves, but also for the sake of others. We must abstain from bitterness.

We pray that God will help us to abstain from all these things we have mentioned, and that they will in no way become a part of our lives. We pray that by the help of the Holy Spirit, we may be able to keep the place where He has come to dwell, holy.

The other word that we spoke of, that is mentioned in the scriptures is temperance. There are a lot of good things that we are able to partake of, but if we over indulge they become bad. Temperance is a very important part of our lives. Another word for temperance is self-control. "Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord," (II Peter 1:2). It is wonderful to have grace and peace multiplied. In no way do we want it subtracted from our lives. "According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue:" (II Peter 1:3). By God's power we have been given all things that pertain to life and godliness. To be godly means to walk in God's ways, or to be like God. This power to walk a godly life comes to us by knowing Him who has called us; even Jesus Christ.

Glory is a spiritual state that we enter into, when we are born again. We have partaken of the realm of the Spirit. The word virtue refers to godly qualities that the believer partakes of. "Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust" (II Peter 1:4). The divine nature is God's nature. Because of the promises that have been given us, we can be partakers of God's nature. What a wonderful thing to be able to escape all the things that corrupt mankind. I thank God for His blessing, in that we don't have to be snared by all the things that go on in the world.

We all have battles from time to time with the things of the world, but because of His promises, we don't have to be taken captive by them. The enemy tries to get in and upset our faith, and cause us to walk in the wrong way. We should be thankful to God, and I'll say I'm really thankful, that I am not a drunkard, or

addicted to tobacco, or drugs. I'm not saying this because I am proud of the fact, but I just thank God for it. It is by God's grace. I thank God on your behalf too, if these things haven't taken hold of your lives. By the help of the Lord, we have been able to escape the corruption that is in the world.

"And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity" (II Peter 1:5-7).

We are saved by faith. Paul wrote in Ephesians 2:8, "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God..." After you have believed, you add virtue to your lives. Virtue is holiness and goodness. When Peter spoke of knowledge, he was not talking about natural knowledge, but that knowledge of the realm of the Spirit.

To these things we are instructed to add temperance. Temperance means self-control. It is important that we be in control in every facet of our lives. That is what temperance is: being in control. To temperance we are to add patience, and to patience godliness. Temperance is one of the qualities that belong to God, and by embracing it, along with the other things mentioned here, we become godly.
II Peter 1:8: "For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ." These things all cause us to be fruitful in the Lord, and temperance is one of them.

"Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible" (I Corinthians 9:24, 25). Here Paul is talking about competing in athletics. If the athlete is going to win he must be temperate in all things. In those days an athlete's reward for winning was a crown made of leaves. The crown we hope to win is an incorruptible crown that will not decay and fade away.

"I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway" (I Corinthians 9:26,27). If we are going to win in the race we are in, we must learn to be temperate, or in control, in all things. He says he keeps his body under control. What chance would a runner in the Olympics have, if he did nothing but over indulge in chocolate pie, and ice cream? That might be a very tasty diet, but it wouldn't fit a person who was preparing to run in the Olympics. I am not talking only of food, but we have to curb our appetites in many things, in the race that God has privileged us to run in. There are many things that there is nothing wrong with, in a temperate amount, or in moderation, but if you overdo them, they will spoil your life and experience. Anyone who is striving for the mastery is temperate in all things. We are striving for sonship, and it is important that we be self-controlled or temperate in all things. If we can't govern ourselves, how can we govern the kingdom of God?

The devil tries to get us to go to extremes in everything. He is not satisfied unless you are in the ditch on this side of the road, or in the ditch on the other side of the road. Human nature always wants to go to extremes. Error starts with an extreme viewpoint. A person gets overbalanced in an excessive way, and that is where error begins.

Philippians 4:5, "Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand." Another word that is similar to temperance is moderation. It is not necessary to talk a lot about our moderation, but let it be known by the way we walk and live. Paul says the Lord is at hand. In other words, the Lord is watching, and He is close enough for you to reach out and touch Him. He is there to help us control our lives.

When Paul was writing to Titus concerning the qualifications of elders, he mentions temperance as one of them. That which applies to an elder applies to every member of the church. "For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not self-willed, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre; But a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate;" (Titus 1:7,8). In Titus 2:1 we read, "But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine: That the aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience." Something that is becoming is beautiful. We use the word in this way, when we say that a ladies dress is very becoming. It is beautiful. Here Titus is instructed to teach the things that become sound doctrine, or make the doctrine of the Lord beautiful. Here temperance or self-control is emphasized. The older ladies also are to live with the same qualities in their lives. Self-control is such an important thing in the lives of all of us.

"I will therefore that men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting" (I Timothy 2:8). It is important that when we lift our hands to the Lord that they are holy, and that they are not blighted with wrong kinds of actions and deeds.

"In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works" (I Timothy 2:9-10). The word modest is related to the word moderation. To be modest means, not being excessive. Intemperance is when a person goes to excess. Some people dress excessively, to draw attention to themselves, but the best way to draw attention to yourself is by a good spirit within. So use moderation.

I believe that the thing on the apostle's heart as he wrote this was that a woman should make herself beautiful, not by the things she wears on the outside, but by the spirit that is on the inside. That will make a person far more beautiful than anything they can put on the outside. Let me quote this from The Living Bible: "So I want men everywhere to pray with holy hands lifted up to God, free from sin and anger and resentment. And the women should behave in the same way, quiet and sensible in manner and clothing. Christian women should be noticed for being kind and good, not for the way they do their hair or because of their jewels or fancy clothes." These things that the apostles wrote apply to us all. Oft times you see men dressed in extremes, and I am sure it is just to draw attention to themselves. That is not the way to get attention. More often it will turn people away. The way to get attention is by demonstrating that meek and quiet spirit from within.

In connection with this let us read I Peter 3:1-4, "Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives; While they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear. Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; but let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in

the sight of God of great price." It is nice to see a woman nicely dressed. And I am sure there is nothing wrong with curling your hair or wearing some jewellery, but don't depend on that for your beauty. Depend on that flow from the inner man. Don't seek attention by your extreme demeanour, but let it come because of the manifestation of a meek and quiet spirit. I would like to quote this scripture from the Living Bible: "Don't be concerned about the outward beauty that depends on jewellery, or beautiful clothes, or hair arrangement. Be beautiful inside, in your hearts, with the lasting charm of a gentle and quiet spirit which is so precious to God" (I Peter 3:3-4). These things come through self-control. Everyone should use self-control in the things that they wear.

We must also learn to control our inner man. The book of Proverbs says much about self-control. One of the most often referred to subjects is self-control in the things we say. The following scriptures talk about the things that we say, and how we should use wisdom, and self-control, with our words. "In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin: but he that refraineth his lips is wise. The tongue of the just is as choice silver: the heart of the wicked is little worth. The lips of the righteous feed many: but fools die for want of wisdom" (Proverbs 10:19-21). Here he is speaking of the person who talks too much. That isn't being temperate. "The mouth of the just bringeth forth wisdom: but the froward tongue shall be cut out" Proverbs (10:31). "The wicked is snared by the transgression of his lips: but the just shall come out of trouble" (Proverbs 12:13). "Heaviness in the heart of man maketh it stoop: but a good word maketh it glad" (Proverbs 12:25).

The previous words speak of what an evil tongue will do, but this speaks of the accomplishment of a kind word. A person can be so discouraged, and someone will come with a kind word, which will lift him right out of his despondency. "He that keepeth his mouth keepeth his life: but he that openeth wide his lips shall have destruction" (Proverbs 13:3). "Go from the presence of a foolish man, when thou perceivest not in him the lips of knowledge" (Proverbs 14:7). This speaks of the intemperate use of speech. Do not keep company with, or listen to this type of person. Think about these scriptures concerning our speech. In fact, read the rest of the book of Proverbs. There must be at least another one hundred scriptures that speak of temperance, or self-control in our speech, in Solomon's writings.

The apostle James has quite a bit to say about the control of our speech. He tells of how we can control horses and ships, but that we are unable to control the tongue. He ends his discourse with James 3:13 "Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? Let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom." It is very important that we be in control of the things that we say, and that our speech be temperate.

The writer of Proverbs also has much to say about temperance and self-control in the use of money. We must use what God has given us in a proper way. "He becometh poor that dealeth with a slack hand: but the hand of the diligent maketh rich. He that gathereth in summer is a wise son: but he that sleepeth in harvest is a son that causeth shame" (Proverbs 10:4). The person described here is careless with what God has given him, and needs to learn how to be temperate, and in control, in financial matters. "There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty" (Proverbs 11:24). This person is the opposite of the one we just mentioned. His money has control of him, and where he should be giving, he is withholding the blessing God has showered upon him. There are many other scriptures that teach us how to control our finances, so let us seek God for the leading of the Holy

Spirit. I don't think God wants His people to be in poverty. I doubt if He wants them to be excessively rich either. I believe that often when God's people are poor, it is either because they don't tithe, or they have been foolish in the administration of their finances.

God desires temperance or self-control in our work too. Proverbs also talks about this. We have two extremes in the earth today. We have the lazy man and we have what they call a workaholic. All the workaholic does is work. He neglects his family, and his Spiritual life, and loses out with both. Jesus spoke of this type of man in the parable of the sower and the seed, "And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprung up, and choked them: ... He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful" (Matthew 13:7 & 22).

There are many scriptures concerning the lazy man and his fate. Proverbs 6:9-11: "How long wilt thou sleep, O sluggard? When wilt thou arise out of thy sleep? Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep: So shall thy poverty come on you as a bandit, and thy want as an armed man." Proverbs 12:24, "The hand of the diligent shall bear rule: but the slothful shall be under tribute." Proverbs 13:4, "The soul of the sluggard desireth, and hath nothing: but the soul of the diligent shall be made fat."

Temperance is also one of the fruits of the Spirit listed in Galatians 5:22: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law." An intemperate life brings the manifestation of the works of the flesh as listed in Galatians 5:19-21. Paul says, "... they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." Let us crucify the flesh with all its intemperate affections and lusts, and learn to live and walk in the Spirit.

There is much truth in all these scriptures. The secret is to walk a temperate, self-controlled life, whether it is in the things we say, the things that God has given us to use, or in our work habits. What we are really talking about, when we speak of a self-controlled life, is a life that is led by the Holy Spirit, and controlled by our heavenly Father. Throughout our whole life and experience, it is important that we be in control, and not let the desires and lusts of the flesh control us. If the desires of the lower nature control us, we will miss the kingdom of God, but if we can walk as the scriptures teach us, and enter into the things that God has called us to, we can see before us the glorious realm of the kingdom. We pray that the things written here will stay with you, and that the Holy Spirit will write them on your heart. Those things that God says to abstain from, abstain from them. Have nothing to do with them. In things where we are instructed to be temperate and self-controlled, be that way! It is a wonderful thing to see that mark that is before us, and press toward it. Those that reach that mark will be people who are in control, and have lived temperately with their eyes upon the goal. They do not deviate from the path, going from one side of the road to the other. They will be the administrators of the Kingdom of God.

THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD

I. THE GOVERNMENT OF THE CHURCH AND THE HOME WILL BECOME THE GOVERNMENT OF THE EARTH.

We want to talk about the administration of the kingdom of God. We pray that the Holy Spirit will make the truths concerning the kingdom very real to our hearts. The things that we will talk about have a great deal to do with the government of the church. This government will actually be the government of the whole earth when the kingdom of God is fully established. It is important that the Spirit of God move upon the hearts of men to change them.

A. THE MOVING OF THE SPIRIT OF GOD WILL CHANGE MEN'S HEARTS.

Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world" (John 18:36). You cannot legislate the order of the kingdom of God. It has to be a work of the Holy Spirit that is done in people's hearts. So we look to God that His Spirit will move in the hearts of His people and in the hearts of men in all the earth.

I was thinking about the scripture that talks about men beating their swords into ploughsheares and their spears into pruning hooks (Isaiah 2:4). It will take a tremendous move of the Spirit of God to cause that to come to pass. Treaties between nations will not bring this about. The natural, carnal man will still manufacture arms on the side without other nations knowing about it. It is the moving of God's Holy Spirit that will change the hearts of men so the words of the prophet can come to pass. I pray that God will cause the reality of the thing He is doing to fill our hearts in such a measure that these things will flow from us.

1. EPHESIANS 1:15-23

"Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set Him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all."

2. GOD WILL MOVE BY HIS SPIRIT THROUGH MINISTRIES.

God works from both ends of a situation. God will move upon the hearts of the people of the earth, but He has chosen to put Himself in a position where He needs more than that. He needs the function of the body

of Christ in the earth to bring these things to pass. He requires the function of your ministry; and without the ministry of the different members of the body, these things will never happen. God could do it by a snap of His fingers, if He wanted to; but He has chosen to call out a body, that they may minister the things that are in His mind and heart. We will be able to understand the things of the kingdom of God as the Holy Spirit opens our hearts to them, and then we will be able to enter into them.

II. FIRST, CHRIST MUST BE RECOGNIZED AS THE HEAD OF THE BODY.

The only hope that we have of entering into these things, first of all, is to recognize Christ as the Head of the church. Everything, as we have just read, has been put under His feet, and God has given Him to be the Head over all things, to the church. Any authority in the kingdom of God is spiritual.. You can't legislate the kingdom of God. You can't bring it about by laws and dogmas. It is established by the moving of the Spirit of God, working in the hearts of the different ministries of Christ's body, and at the same time working in the hearts of the men of the earth.

A. THE WORDS OF THE PROPHETS WILL COME TO PASS.

1. HEBREWS 8:11

This is quoted from the thirty first chapter of Jeremiah: "And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more." That will be a glorious day.

As far as the church is concerned, it is a very important thing for them to know that God has forgotten their sins and their iniquities. Every so often you run across the person who thinks back to their old life, and they are worrying about the things in which they walked in former years. But you know, that when a person is cleansed by the blood of Christ, God says that He remembers their iniquities no more.

There are some things that God can't do. The children sing a little song that says, "God can do anything but fail." That is not completely true. There are at least two other things that the Bible teaches us that God can't do. One is that He can't remember your sin after you have confessed it to Him and put it under the blood of Christ. Another thing that God can't do is tell a lie (Hebrews 6:18).

It is a wonderful thing to have the hope of the righteousness that God will cause to come to the whole earth. We were asked this morning to pray about a situation, where someone was trying to steal a widow's house. We pray that God will cause the conviction of the Holy Spirit to come upon this person. How much the whole earth needs the righteousness that comes from the Lord.

III. CHRIST THE HEAD OF THE CHURCH.

God has given Christ the place of Headship over the church, and also the place of Headship over His kingdom. It is necessary that we also recognize Him as our Head, and that all things flow from Him.

A. COLOSSIANS 1:18

Paul writes here, "And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the pre-eminence. For it pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell."

Christ is the Head of the body, the church. We must recognize Him as that, for it is in Him that all our hope dwells.

1. COLOSSIANS 2:9-10

"For in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power."

God has given to Christ the fullness of His own headship. Christ is the source of our growth, maturity and completeness. He is the head of all principality and power; He is the head of the church, and in fact, He is the head of everything. He will lead us into oneness and unity, which thing He has in mind for the church, and in fact, for all of creation.

B. EPHESIANS 4:15

"But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ."

Here Paul is talking about growth, which is necessary for the members of the body of Christ. The source of that growth is Christ the head of the body: the Christ who has come to dwell within us. He is that incorruptible seed that Peter says we are born of. That seed grows within us to maturity; and, as it grows, He becomes manifest in His people.

1. COLOSSIANS 2:18,19 NIV

Here Paul talks about those who have severed their connection with the head.

"Do not let anyone who delights in false humility and the worship of angles disqualify you for the prize. ..." There are many things that can disqualify us for the thing that God has called us to. "...Such a person goes into great detail about what he has seen, and his unspiritual mind puffs him up with idle notions. He has lost connection with the head, from whom the whole body, supported and held together by its ligaments and sinews, grows as God causes it to grow."

The person spoken of here has lost connection with the Head. It is imperative that we keep our connection with the Head well connected. Our growth in the Spirit comes by the connection that we have with Christ the Head.

C. EPHESIANS 5:23-24

"For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything."

We do not want to deal with the husband and wife relationship here, but we would like to talk about Christ being the Head of the church. It is a necessary thing that we recognize Him as the head of the church and we must walk as if He is our head. Many believe that He is the head of the church but it hasn't affected their personal lives.

In many church organizations there is no recognition of the head. They preach everything, and do everything that is contrary to the mind of the head. We must recognize Him as the head of the church, because He is the head of the church, and we must walk in ways that are pleasing to Him as the head. The church must respond to the direction of the head of the church, in the same way that a healthy human body responds to the direction of its head.

IV. CHRIST THE HEAD OF THE CORNER.

A. MATTHEW 21:42- NIV

"Jesus said to them, 'Have you never read in the scriptures: the stone the builders rejected has become the capstone; the Lord has done this, and it is marvellous in our eyes.'"

Christ has been made the capstone of the church. In our King James Version it says that He is the chief corner stone.

Jesus continues, "'Therefore I tell you that the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people who will produce its fruit.'" These Jews had lost the vision of what God was trying to do through them. God had promised them His calling of being a holy nation, and a royal priesthood, or in other words, a nation of priests, but they missed it.

They didn't recognize the capstone of the temple that God was building, and because of that they didn't bear the fruits of the kingdom. We pray that we might truly recognize our head and produce the fruits of His kingdom.

God is building a temple of which Christ is the chief corner stone or the capstone. From that temple will flow righteousness into all the earth.

Matthew 21:42 KJV: "Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes?"

God has ordained that Jesus should hold that position. Jesus was willing to suffer in order to be worthy of the position that God had planned for Him. Philippians 2:5-1I tells us of the way that Jesus took. He did not consider equality with God something to be grasped after, but made Himself nothing, humbling Himself and becoming obedient unto death. God gave Him a name above every name, and every knee will bow to Him and confess that He is Lord. He is worthy to be the chief cornerstone or the capstone of the temple that God is building.

In Isaiah 14:12-17, we read of the attitude of Lucifer, son of the morning. He exalted himself and consequently will be brought down to hell. This is a contrast that God wants us to be mindful of. This contrast will be made more apparent by reading Luke 4:18. Jesus came to set free and restore, whereas Satan will never release his prisoners unless he is forced to. Read these scriptures prayerfully and I believe

you will see why Jesus was made the head of the corner. Let us recognize our head. Let us look up to Him and worship Him.

The scripture that we read from Matthew 21:42 is quoted from Psalms l18:21-22. The same scripture is quoted in Mark 12:10 and Luke 20:7. In Acts 4:11 Peter quotes the same scripture in his sermon to the Sanhedrian.

In I Peter 2:7, we read, "Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner..." In verse 9 we read, "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light." This is so because of our belief in, and our adherence to, that stone which is the chief corner stone.

V. CHRIST THE CHIEF CORNER STONE.

A. Ephesians 2:19

"Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone." We are not strangers or foreigners to one another but we are fellow citizens of God's household. We thank God that we can travel anywhere in the world, and wherever people are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Jesus Christ being the chief corner stone, we find the same wonderful spirit. You may not be able to understand the words they say, but you can sense the moving of the Spirit of God. Please note that the key to this unity is being built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, and most important of all is that Jesus is the chief cornerstone. He is the number one stone in the temple that God is building.

1. I PETER 2:6

"Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded." To be confounded means to be mixed up in your thinking. A person in this state is disillusioned and doesn't know where they are going. We are thankful that we can believe in that stone upon which the church is built.

VI. THE FOUNDATION.

A. ISAIAH 28:16

"...Behold I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation; he that believeth shall not make haste." The NIV says that he that believeth shall never be dismayed.

1. I CORINTHIANS 3:10

"According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ."

God's building is the church, and Paul had laid the foundation for it in Corinth. Having our experience built upon this foundation is where our security lies. There we find our rest.

B. EPHESIANS 2:19, 20

"Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone." To some, what Paul said about the foundation is confusing. In I Corinthians 3, he spoke of the foundation being Christ, and here he talks about the foundation of the apostles and prophets. The ministry of an apostle or a prophet, is actually that measure of Christ that dwells within the individual to whom the Lord has divided the ministry. Any ministry is the manifestation of Christ. Without Christ, there is no ministry. If you are building on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, you are building on Christ. The only way a ministry can be a part of the foundation is that Christ dwells within him, and he in Christ. He is appointed to that office as was Paul and Barnabas in Acts 13: 1,2.

C. EPHESIANS 4:7-11.

"But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ." The word grace means benefit or favour.

1. In Ephesians 4:7, the word that is translated "gift" here comes from the Greek word "dorea," which means a free gift or a present. It carries a similar meaning to what we do when we give gifts or presents to one another. The same word is used in several different scriptures.

a. "Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water" (John 4:10). Christ offered to give the woman of Samaria living water.

b. "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:38). Here Peter speaks of receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost.

c. "Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift" (II Corinthians 9:15). Paul is speaking of God's gift to us.

2. Often the word translated "gift" here is confused with the gifts of the Spirit listed in I Corinthians 12. It is a different word and carries a different meaning.

3. Ephesians 4:8

"Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men." Here the Greek word "doma" is translated "gifts" and it means a "present."

a. Matthew 7:11

"If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?" Here Jesus speaks of giving gifts to our children.

b. Philippians 4:17

"Not because I desire a gift: but I desire fruit that may abound to your account."

4. Where these words are used Paul is not speaking of what the scriptures term spiritual gifts.

a. I Corinthians 12:4

"Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit."

b. The Greek word that is translated "gifts" here is "charisma." The gifts that are spoken of here are spiritual abilities or enablements that come by the Spirit of God. All may possess these abilities or enablements as they are divided to us by the Holy Spirit (I Corinthians 12:11).

5. Ephesians 4:11

"And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers." Apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, and teachers are God's gifts to the church. These gifts to the church are men who possess the Spiritual gifts of I Corinthians 12:8-10. These gifts are God's gift to mankind, to bring about in the earth the fulfilment of God's purpose. The spiritual gifts of I Corinthians 12 are the tools, used by these men that God gives to the church.

D. GOD IS RESTORING THE FOUNDATION TO THE CHURCH.

1. Acts 3:20

"And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began."

The foundation of apostles and prophets has been destroyed, but God is restoring it. That foundation must be restored for Jesus to come. We pray that the foundation will be restored, and that it will fulfil its purpose in the earth,

2. PSALM 11:3

"If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?" Without the foundation you have division and argument. You have all kinds of chaos in the church and in the earth. The foundational ministries are being restored to bring an end to all this disunity and chaos. In His prayer in John 17, Jesus prayed that His disciples might all be one. We pray that the day will soon come when all who profess to know him will truly be one, and His prayer will be answered.

VII. THE PREVALENT TEACHING CONCERNING APOSTOLIC MINISTRIES.

A. The common teaching of our day is that the last apostle died in the early church age. This is not what the scriptures teach, but it is the teaching of many denominational churches.

They also teach that the only apostles were the twelve and Paul.

B. It is also taught that Malachi was the last prophet, and that prophecy was complete. We are told there is no further revelation.

C. The evangelist is seen as one who goes from church to church having meetings, and endeavouring to get people saved. The evangelist's ministry has a far wider scope than this.

D. The pastor is seen as one who oversees a local church. This is not right either.

E. We very seldom hear of the teacher. If we ever hear of him, he is the one who argues the theology and dogmas of the denomination to which he belongs. These things have sapped all his life away.

VIII. WHAT THE SCRIPTURES TEACH.

A. APOSTLE.

l. Our word for "apostle" comes from two Greek words. "Apo" meaning "from," and "Stellien" meaning "sent."

a. "Apostolus:" one sent forth. An apostle is one who is sent.

b. Apostles are sent by Christ. Mark 3:13,14; Luke 9:1,2; Galatians 1:1; Romans 1:1-5.

c. Apostles are sent by the Holy Spirit. Acts 13:2. The mark of an apostle is that he is sent of God. In this instance, the Holy Spirit spoke through prophecy to send Paul and Barnabas to the task that God had in mind for them.

B. There are twenty apostles named in the scriptures besides Christ. Christ was named as an apostle in Hebrew 3:1. All the ministries of the church are embodied in Christ. He is the apostle and high priest of our profession. Peter speaks of Him as the chief shepherd. The different apostles are mentioned as follows:

1. In Matthew 12:2 are the twelve.

2. Matthias is chosen to fill the place of Judas (Acts 1:26).

3. In Acts 13:2; 14:14, Paul and Barnabas are sent by the Holy Spirit and are called apostles.

4. In Romans 16:7, Andronicus and Junia are mentioned as being of note among the apostles.

5. In I Thessalonians 1:1; 2:6, Paul names Sylvanus and Timothy as apostles with himself.

6. In I Corinthians 4:6-9, Paul calls Apollos an apostle.

C. A prophet is one who speaks for another. We want to talk about those who are the mouthpiece of God.

1. In Acts 13:1, certain prophets and teachers are mentioned as being present here. Every member of the body of Christ may prophecy (I Corinthians 14:31), but there are only certain people who have the ministry of a prophet. As every one of us should exercise ourselves in giving, only certain ones have a ministry in giving.

2. Agabus is mentioned in Acts 21:10. He was a man who had the ministry of a prophet. That was his place in the body of Christ.

3. In Acts 11:27, prophets came from Jerusalem to visit the church at Antioch.

4. In Acts 15: 27-32, Judas and Silas, who were prophets, were sent with Barnabas and Paul with a letter from the apostles at Jerusalem. This letter was to correct false teaching in the churches.

5. In Matthew 21:11, Luke 24:19, and John 4:19, Jesus is called a prophet. It is in Him that the fullness of the ministry dwells. Every ministry in the body of Christ is also found in Him, and by Him every ministry operates. By the work of the Holy Spirit, He divides the Gifts of the Spirit to every man severally as He wills. As we walk with the Lord, and enter in with Him, that part of Christ, which has been divided to us, will manifest itself in our ministry.

D. THE EVANGELIST - ONE WHO ANNOUNCES GOOD TIDINGS.

1. The ministry of the evangelist was found in Jesus (Luke 8:1). As an evangelist He preached the good tidings of the kingdom of God. It seems that it is almost impossible for the evangelist to bring bad news. He carries, not only the good news of salvation, but he also carries all the good news of the kingdom of God. People need to know all about the kingdom of God and have it presented to them from every angle by all the ministries. The man who only brings the message of salvation is selling himself short. There is a lot more good news than the fact that Jesus saves.

2. Acts 21:8 speaks of Philip the evangelist. He was one of the seven deacons that were set in Jerusalem. His office in the church was that of a deacon but his ministry was that of an evangelist.

3. In II Timothy 4:5, Timothy was instructed to do the work of an evangelist. An evangelist bears good news to both the saved and the unsaved.

E. THE PASTOR.

The Greek noun for pastor is "poimen," which means shepherd or feeder. In the King James Version, this word was translated pastor once (Ephesians 4:11), and shepherd fifteen times.

1. Jesus was a pastor or shepherd: "I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine" (John 10:14). The Greek word "poimen" is used here in the original. Jesus said that he knew His sheep. The same should be true of the elders of the local churches. They should know what the gift and ministry is of each of the members of their church. This is important so the elders can give direction to the people in their ministries. It is also important that the people have confidence in the shepherd.

In Hebrews 13:20-21, Jesus is described as the great shepherd of the sheep. "Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is

well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen." This is the purpose of the shepherd's ministry. The great Shepherd is making us perfect to do His will.

2. Peter had a pastors or shepherd ministry. In John 21:15, Jesus gave Peter that responsibility. He said, "Feed my lambs." In verse 16, He said, "Feed my sheep." The words translated "feed" are from two different Greek words. In verse 15, the Greek word is "bosco," which means to give them nourishment. It means to give them food or pasture. In verse 16, the Greek word is "poimaino," the translation of which is, "tend as a shepherd." If you have ever worked with livestock, you know there is a lot more to tending them than feeding them. You have to look after the sick animals, those who get through the pasture fence have to be brought back, and you must care for the young. Peter had this tending ministry given him by Jesus.

Acts 9:32

"And it came to pass, as Peter passed throughout all quarters (travelled about the country, NIV), he came down also to the saints which dwelt at Lydda." Peter travelled throughout the churches, and that is the purpose of the pastor mentioned in Ephesians 4:11. Peter was functioning as an apostolic pastor, ministering to the needs of the churches.

In Acts 9:33, 34, Peter ministered to Aeneas, the man with palsy, healing him, thus causing many to turn to the Lord.

In Acts 9:36-43, Peter was called to Joppa where he raised Dorcas from the dead.

Acts 10 tells us about Peter's ministry in the house of Cornelius at Caesarea.

These are only three of the places where Peter ministered. Secular history tells us that Peter the shepherd travelled far and wide throughout the known world visiting the churches that had been established. He is said to have gone as far as India.

These Scriptures describe the nature of Peter's ministry. It was not a ministry in shepherding a local church, but his shepherd ministry was to the universal church. Oversight of the local church is taken by elders.

F. THE TEACHER.

The Greek word "didaskalos" is translated teacher. The Greek word means instructor. Teaching is instruction.

1. Jesus was a teacher. Nicodemus speaking to Jesus in John 3:2 said, "We know thou art a teacher come from God."

2. Romans 12:7

Here Paul exhorts the teacher to wait on his teaching. He instructs all ministries of the body of Christ in the same way. There is no way that any one ministry can fulfil the purpose of Christ, in the sharing of the gospel of the Kingdom. God has anointed the ministry of the teacher in the move of the Spirit.

3. The meaning of the word "teach" from the dictionary is to cause to understand, or to provide with knowledge and insight.

Isaiah 30:20,21

"And though the Lord give you the bread of adversity, and the water of affliction, yet shall not thy teachers be removed into a corner any more, but thine eyes shall see thy teachers; and thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, this is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand, and when ye turn to the left."

Isaiah is saying that the teachers will not be removed any more, but they will instruct the people in the way they should walk. There is a very important ministry for the teacher.

4. II Timothy 1:11

The apostle Paul said, "...I am appointed a preacher (NIV herald (an official who makes proclamations)), and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles." Read also verses seven to ten, and you will see all the things that the Lord instructed Paul to teach Timothy.

Timothy was to pass Paul's teaching on to the people. There is no end of things which the teacher should instruct the people. This instruction is given that they may walk in the ways of the Lord. Paul was a teaching apostle.

I Corinthians 2:1-, "And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought: But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory." Here Paul describes the nature of his teaching ministry. The teacher doesn't have to have man's wisdom and he doesn't have to have excellent speech. Paul was determined that his message would be about Christ and his death for us. The strength of his message was by the demonstration and power of the Spirit. He wanted the faith of the Corinthians to be in the power of God.

5. Acts 13:1

"Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul." Here, prophets and teachers are mentioned as being present in the church at Antioch

6. I Corinthians 12:29, NIV: "Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers?" When speaking of these questions, one of the brethren one time gave this answer. He said that not all are apostles but some are. Not all are prophets but God has called some to this ministry. Likewise not all are teachers, but some are.

Paul goes on to say, "But you are eagerly desiring the greater gifts" (I Corinthians 12:31). He was writing to a carnal church. All through the book of Corinthians he was rebuking that church for their carnality. Here we see that they were setting one gift before another, and one ministry before another. They were seeking to be whatever they thought was the greatest. He begins the thirteenth chapter by saying, "And now I will show you the most excellent way." It is very important that we do not set in our own minds and estimation one gift or ministry above another. We must recognize the gift and the ministry for what it is in the sight of God. We must not let carnality creep in.

7. In Acts 15, we read of contention that had arisen in the church at Antioch over the matter of circumcising the believers. Paul and Barnabas were sent to the apostles in Jerusalem for their decision on the matter. The apostles talked about the thing in question and weighed everything that was said.

Verse thirteen reads, "And after they had held their peace, James answered, saying, Men and brethren, hearken unto me."

James then sums up what has been said and what the scriptures had to say on the matter. The apostles were pleased with the summary and sent men and a letter to the churches to straighten out the problem. James is not called a teacher here, but the operation of his ministry exhibits the fact that he was a teacher.

8. Psalm 25:8, "Good and upright is the Lord: therefore will He teach sinners in the way." It has been thought that the evangelist is the only one who can get people saved. The teacher can teach sinners the way of repentance, and faith in the redemptive work of Christ.

IX. EVERY GIFT AND MINISTRY IS EMBODIED IN CHRIST.

A. We find manifested in the life and ministry of Christ, every ministry and gift that is manifested in His body, the church. All the gifts of the Spirit spoken of in I Corinthians 12:8-10 were found in the ministry of Jesus. When you speak of ministries, He was all of them.

1. Colossians 1:15-19

"Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence. For it pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell." It pleased the Father that everything should dwell in Christ and that everything should be found in Him. We are thankful that He shares Himself with us, so we can fill a place in His body. Let us be submissive to our Head. Every function of the human body starts in the head, and so it must be with the body of Christ. We must learn to be led by His Spirit.

I Corinthians 12:11

"But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will." He is speaking of the nine gifts of the Spirit. Christ takes all the gifts and ministries that are embodied in Him, and divides them out as He pleases to the different members of His body. To one He gives certain gifts, and

to another certain gifts. The result is that the fullness of Christ is manifest in His body. What is in Him has been divided out to all the different members of His body.

Colossians 2:9

"For in Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily."

X. A NUMBER REFERRED TO AS APOSTLES WERE ALSO REFERRED TO AS:

A. Peter, one of the twelve apostles, was given the ministry of a shepherd by Jesus in John 21:15-17.

B. James, another of the apostles, was a teacher (Acts 15:13-39).

C. Paul is described as a teaching apostle (I Timothy 2:7, II Timothy 1:11).

D. Timothy was a deacon who was set in that office by the apostles. He apparently traveled among the churches with Paul, and on one occasion, was left in Ephesus to correct disorders in that church. He was what we have termed an apostolic deacon or a traveling deacon.

In II Timothy 4:5 we read, "But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry." Timothy's office was that of a deacon but his ministry was that of an evangelist.

In I Timothy 2:7, we find Paul described as an apostle and also a teacher. His office was apostolic, but his ministry was that of a teacher. It appears that there are four ministries that are apostolic in nature, calling, and authority.

Apostle indicates a man's office, whereas prophet, evangelist, pastor, and teacher indicate his ministry. The apostles and elders, along with their deacons, hold offices of authority in the church, the body of Christ. The apostle's authority reaches to the universal church. The elder's authority is limited to the local church in which he has been ordained as an elder. The apostolic deacons and local church deacons act as agents for, or serve, the apostles and elders respectively. Women, in no ministry take leadership over men.

OFFICE MINISTRY

Office: Apostles, Pastor, Deacons, Prophet, Evangelist, Shepherd, Teacher, Elders.

No office: Prophetess, Evangelist, Shepherd, Teacher

An apostle can be a prophet, an evangelist, a pastor, or a teacher. These all carry that apostolic authority. The deacon, Timothy, who was deacon to the apostles, had the ministry of an evangelist. You will find that elders have different ministries. There are some elders who are prophets, some elders carry the good news, or they are evangelists, some elders tend to be more of a shepherd than others, and although all elders are to be able to teach, some have a very definite ministry in teaching.

All elders are to care for the flock of God, and feed them, but some elders have more of a shepherd's nature than others. God has given them a shepherd's ministry. Some elders have a ministry in teaching. As we have said, all elders must be able to teach, but with some it is a definite ministry.

It is also true that among the people of the congregation who hold no office of authority, you will find prophets and also prophetesses (Luke 2:36; Acts 21:9). There are also people in the congregation who carry the good news. It is a ministry that God has given them. You will find people in the congregation who are continually shepherding people. Among the women of the congregation you will find shepherds, or I suppose we should call them shepherdesses. We often see a woman, who we call a mother in Israel, who is like a mother hen with a bunch of chicks. They must function under the authority of their elders. We also find in the local church, men who are local teachers. God has given to them the ministry of teaching.

There are also things that women are instructed to teach. Older women are to teach the younger women to be keepers at home (housekeepers), to love their husbands, to darn socks and patch overalls and also a few other things the scriptures do not specifically mention. These things must be taught and it is the older ladies who have the ability to teach them.

XI. HOW DO APOSTLES GET THEIR OFFICE?

A. Ephesians 4:11

"And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; ..." These ministries are Christ's gift to the church. They are given for the benefit of the church, for the benefit of all mankind, and for the benefit of the whole creation.

B. Luke 9:1-2

"Then he called his twelve disciples together, and gave them power and authority over all devils, and to cure diseases. And he sent them to preach the kingdom of God, and to heal the sick." They were sent by Jesus.

1. Luke 6:12-13

"And it came to pass in those days, that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God. And when it was day, he called unto him his disciples: and of them he chose twelve, whom also he named apostles." He appointed twelve and called them apostles.

2. II Timothy 1:1

"Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, according to the promise of life which is in Christ Jesus." In verse one Paul speaks of his appointment by Christ to his apostleship. In verse eleven he says, "Whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles."

I Timothy 1:1

"Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the commandment of God our Saviour, and Lord Jesus Christ, which is our hope." Paul's apostleship was not his own idea, but it was the commandment of God. A true apostle is not self-appointed.

Similarly, we read in Galatians 1:1, "Paul, an apostle, (not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead)." His calling was by divine appointment.

In most of his epistles Paul makes mention of his office as an apostle, and the fact that he was called of God.

I Peter 1:1

"Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia." Peter speaks of himself as an apostle of Jesus Christ. We have already spoken of his appointment.

C. TO BE AN APOSTLE THE OFFICE AND MINISTRY MUST BE RECOGNIZED.

1. I Samuel 3:19-20

"And Samuel grew, and the LORD was with him, and did let none of his words fall to the ground. And all Israel from Dan even to Beer-sheba knew that Samuel was established to be a prophet of the LORD." This is an example of this recognition. The brethren have often spoken of the verse in Proverbs 18:16, which says, "A man’s gift maketh room for him, and bringeth him before great men."

I trust you are all well acquainted with the story of Samuel. His mother was barren but God answered her prayer for a son. When her prayer was answered she dedicated that son, Samuel, to the Lord, and brought him to the temple, where he served in the presence of the Lord. Everyone knew that Samuel was established to be a prophet. He was appointed by God.

There was no argument about it, and everyone recognized his appointment. The same is true of the apostolic ministries in our day, because the Lord has established them in their office and ministry. There is no way apostles could function, unless they were established by the Lord, and recognized by the people.

2. An apostle, to be an apostle, must be recognized by those who were apostles before him. After Paul had been called of the Lord, he went and spent some time with Peter, as he states in Galatians 1:18, "Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days." The scripture doesn't say what they talked about but I am sure they talked of many things pertaining to the kingdom of God. "Then fourteen years after I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and took Titus with me also. And I went up by revelation, and communicated unto them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to them which were of reputation, lest by any means I should run, or had run, in vain" (Galatians 2:1-2). Paul says he went by revelation or in other words he was led of the Spirit to go. Between these two visits to Jerusalem, Paul and Barnabas had had hands laid on them, and prophecies given over them by a presbytery in Antioch. They had been commissioned and sent by the Holy Spirit into the work that God would have them to do. Paul was anxious to know whether or not he was on the right track, and came to check his revelation with the other apostles.

"And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision" (Galatians 2:9). We see that Paul was recognized by the other apostles. If a man is going to be an apostle, it is essential that he be recognized by those who were apostles before him.

We notice here that Paul took his revelation to the apostles. He could have taken his teaching to the local church in Jerusalem, and had his teaching not been right, he could have caused a division in the church there. True apostles never fear submitting their revelation to other apostles.

"And David went on, and grew great, and the LORD God of hosts was with him. And Hiram king of Tyre sent messengers to David, and cedar trees, and carpenters, and masons: and they built David an house. And David perceived that the LORD had established him king over Israel, and that he had exalted his kingdom for his people Israel's sake" (II Samuel 5:10-12). Why did Hiram do that? The reason was because he could see that God had established David as king of Israel, and he wanted to be on good terms with him.

3. How were the present day apostles established in their office? For most of the brethren who hold that office today, their ministry began in the local church. It was recognized there. The brethren, upon whom God had laid his hands as apostles, at the beginning of the move of the Spirit, recognized the ministry of certain ones in the local churches. They began to send them to different places to minister as a Timothy or Titus. As time went on they were recognized as part of the apostolic body. It was a matter of growing up into that ministry, and also it was the appointment of the Lord. The ministry began in the local church and grew. They were always sent under the direction of the apostles.

XIII. THE QUALIFICATIONS OF APOSTOLIC MINISTRIES.

A. I Timothy 3:1

"This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work. A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach; Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous; One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?) Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil. Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil."

These are the qualifications given for elders. As far as his life and ministry are concerned, the apostolic ministry must have the same qualifications as an elder. There is not one set of rules for an elder and another for an apostle. In fact, the qualifications that apply to an elder's life should apply to every member of the body of Christ.

B. I Peter 5:1-4

"The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; Neither as

being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away."

Peter, one of the apostles, considered himself an elder of the universal church. The things that he says here apply to the elders of the local church, and also to the elders of the universal church. They apply also to every member of the body of Christ.

The elders are to willingly feed the flock of God. They are not to do it for money. They are not to act as bosses over the church, but be examples to them and lead them in the way of the Lord. To be a lord over God's heritage means to be overbearing toward the people. These qualifications apply to apostolic ministries as well as elders. Both should be examples that the flock can follow.

"For not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth" (II Corinthians 10:18). This applies to the apostolic ministry as well as every member of the church.

C. AN APOSTOLIC MINISTRY MUST BE ABLE TO LAY A FOUNDATION.

1. I Corinthians 3:10

"According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon..." Paul was a wise masterbuilder, and had the ability to lay a foundation.

2. II Corinthians 12:12

"Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds." The signs of an apostle followed Paul's ministry. No doubt those signs will differ with different apostles. It will depend on the type of ministry they have.

Someone said to me that there are no apostles in this present day because an apostle has to be able to raise the dead. There are men in the church today who have been used in raising the dead.

D. AN APOSTLE SHOULD BE AN EXAMPLE TO FOLLOW.

1. I Corinthians 4:15-16

"For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel. Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me." These Corinthians were born of the Spirit through the help of Paul's ministry.

He was a spiritual father to them. He told them to follow him, and we should all be able to say to people, "Follow me."

We should all live in such a way that if people follow us they will be walking right with the Lord.

2. I Corinthians 11:1.

"Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ." We should be able to say to the person who desires to enter into the kingdom, "Follow me, and I will lead you there."

3. Philippians 3:17

"Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample." Paul says, "Follow me, and take special notice of those who are following me so we can all walk together.

4. II Thessalonians 3:6-9

"Now we command you brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us. For yourselves know how ye ought to follow us: for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you; Neither did we eat any man's bread for nought; but wrought with labour and travail night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you: Not because we have not power, but to make ourselves an ensample unto you to follow us." The "command" is that we mark and withdraw ourselves from the brother who isn't walking right. In this way we will not be drawn aside from the ones who we should be following.

The apostles are to make themselves an example for the people to follow.

E. THE AUTHORITY OF THE APOSTLE.

1. I Corinthians 4:17-21

"For this cause have I sent unto you Timotheus, who is my beloved son, and faithful in the Lord, who shall bring you into remembrance of my ways which be in Christ, as I teach everywhere in every church. Now some are puffed up, as though I would not come to you. But I will come to you shortly, if the Lord will, and will know, not the speech of them which are puffed up, but the power. For the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power. What will ye? Shall I come unto you with a rod, or in love, and in the spirit of meekness?"

a. Timothy was sent to remind the church of Paul's ways, "Which I teach everywhere in every church."

b. Paul had the authority to come to them with a rod. He did not depend upon words for his authority, but upon the power of God. He was going to come with a rod because of their carnality and their disorderly conduct. Paul would have to rebuke and deal with those who were causing disorders in the church. He asked them, "How would you like me to come, in love or with the rod?"

2. II Thessalonians 3:4-15

a. Verse 4 says, "And we have confidence in the Lord touching you, that ye both do and will do the things which we COMMAND you."

b. Verse 6 says, "Now we COMMAND you, brethren, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us."

c. Verse 10. "For even when we were with you, this we COMMANDED you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat."

d. Verse 12. "Now them that are such we COMMAND and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread."

e. Paul didn't ask them to do these things, but he commanded them. The apostle has this authority in the realm of the Spirit, given him of the Lord. He cannot lord it over God's people, but he must be in the Spirit when he issues any commands. Paul did not suggest to them, but he commanded them, that they should withdraw from every brother who walked disorderly. We have learned from experience that if we walk with the disorderly we will become disorderly ourselves. It is important that we exhort the person who walks disorderly, but we cannot condone his actions in any way.

XIV. THE PURPOSE OF APOSTOLIC MINISTRIES.

A. I Corinthians 3:10-11

"According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ."

The first purpose of the apostolic ministries is to lay the foundation. The apostles lay the structure upon which the church is built. In laying the foundation, Paul is not only speaking of Christ, the Head, but he is also speaking of the body of Christ. This includes the establishing of ministries in the body of Christ. When a foundation is properly laid, a church can minister to its needs, as every joint supplies the necessary edification for the health and growth of the body.

We often think of the body of Christ as a group of people. It isn't a group of people. It is a group of ministries. The establishing of those ministries is absolutely necessary in the laying of the foundation.

1. Ephesians 2:19-20

"Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone." In the laying of the foundation, the ministries of the apostles and prophets are established in the hearts and minds of the people. The people learn to lean on them for spiritual guidance and leadership. The people then have to be established in their ministries. This is alsoa part of the laying of the foundation. The church then follows the example and ministry of the apostles, and walks in the way of righteousness in which they walk.

Paul talks about not building on another man's foundation. You can't build on a foundation laid by a man. A foundation must be laid by a ministry. You certainly couldn't build on many of the foundations that men have tried to lay in the earth today. As we have seen, many of these foundations have crumbled. I pray that God will help us to lay a proper foundation, and to walk in a way that is pleasing to Him. I pray that a body may be established that shall minister in the earth, carrying the good news of the kingdom of God to all creation.

You can't build the kingdom of God like you would build an earthly organization or a political party. It is something that is established in the hearts of the people by the Holy Spirit. It can't be established by the

legislation of an earthly government. It comes by the moving of the Holy Spirit. The kingdom of God must be established as Paul describes in I Corinthians 2:1-8: "And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God. Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to nought: But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory."

B. THE APOSTLES RECEIVE REVELATION.

Revelation means an uncovering. It is the uncovering of the plan and purpose of God, in order that people might have an understanding of what He has in mind. We have been taught that revelation comes from God to the apostles. They teach the revelation to the elders, and the elders teach the members of the local church. The parents of every family, that receives the revelation, teaches it to their children. In that way everyone knows the plan and purpose of God, right down to the smallest child. The thing that is in the mind of God has flowed right through the church. In this way everyone walks in the unity of the faith.

1. "But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man" (Galatians 1:11). It was not the invention of a man's mind. "For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ" (Galatians 1:12) In the NIV, this verse is translated in this way: "I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it; rather I received it by revelation from Jesus Christ."

2. "But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood" (Galatians 1:15, 16). Revelation doesn't come from man or the mind of man, but it comes from God.

3. "Surely you have heard about the administration of God's grace that was given to me for you, that is, the mystery made known to me by revelation, as I have already written briefly" (Ephesians 3:2 NIV).

In our King James Version it speaks of the dispensation of the grace of God. Paul had been given the responsibility of dispensing, or administering, the revelation that had been made known to him by the Spirit of God.

4. "Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit" (Ephesians 3:5). The revelation came to the apostles and prophets. It is a wonderful thing that we have this avenue by which we can receive the revelation of God's plan and purpose.

5. In Romans 2:16, Paul refers to the revelation that came by him as "my gospel."

6. "Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, But now is made

manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith" (Romans 16:25-26).

The mystery that he is talking about here is the bringing together of the Jew and Gentile, and the making of one body of the two, joining them together in the way of the Lord. This was part of the revelation that had come to the apostles.

C. The teaching of the apostles of the move of the Spirit has been received by revelation. So much of the tradition of men had crept into the church, that at the beginning of the move, God told us to put all our teaching on the shelf, and teach only what He revealed by the Holy Spirit. Much of that tradition of men has been hard to forget, and we are still somewhat tainted by those old ways. We must all forget the ways of man and be led by the Spirit of God.

Water baptism is an example of this. There were many arguments about water baptism. One said you should baptize in the name of Jesus, and another said you must baptize in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Actually the scripture doesn't say you have to say anything when you baptize a person. When you baptize someone you are acting as an agent, and you are doing it in the name of Jesus, or you are acting as an agent for the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. To many people, if you didn't pronounce the right formula, the one baptized would never go to heaven. Some thought you had to be immersed face down, and some face up. Some thought you should be put under the water once, and others three times. Some thought you should be sprinkled, while others thought you should have water poured on you. The whole thing was confusion. All that tradition was put on the shelf, and there were several years when nobody in the move of the Spirit was baptized.

Then God began to reveal what the true purpose of water baptism was. Rather than being a thing to fight and argue about, it is a tremendous experience with God.

Romans 6:11: "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." Doing this plays a great part in our walk with God. We must die to the old way of life and rise again in newness of life. It is very important that as soon as possible after a person has accepted Christ as his Saviour, that he be baptized. When Philip rode in the chariot with the Ethiopian and explained to him the way of salvation, as soon as they came to water, they stopped and he was baptized. Philip must have also spoken to the eunuch about water baptism, because as soon as they came to a slough along the side of the road, he said, "Here is water. What hinders me from being baptized?"

I John 5:4-8: "For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God? This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth. For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. And there are three that bear witness in earth, the spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one."

As this scripture is read, a person can't help but feel that there is an important part that the water plays. It is the experience of water baptism. Believing in Christ and the cleansing of His blood takes the guilt of sin away. This is something that everyone needs to know. Once you believe in Christ, the guilt of your past sin is gone. You have been forgiven and God has forgotten your sin. From there on, we have to contend with

the power of the carnal nature that is within us. The power of that carnal nature is broken in water baptism. We must reckon ourselves dead unto sin, but alive unto God. The power that is over the unbeliever can be broken in the experience of water baptism. We must enter into it.

Water baptism was set on the shelf for a long time, until God began to reveal its true nature and purpose. A lot of other things were set aside, some of which God has re-established, but there are many other things that will be forgotten forever.

D. In I Corinthians 7, there are things that Paul speaks of as revelation, and other things that he tells us are not spoken by revelation. In I Corinthians 7:6-9, he speaks by permission and not by commandment. This wasn't revelation but was a personal opinion. We must be very careful not to confuse personal opinions with revelation. Some have done so and have made shipwreck of their life and ministry.

"And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from her husband: But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband: and let not the husband put away his wife" (I Corinthians 7:10,11). These two verses are revelation. This is the commandment of the Lord. We pray that all married couples will hear the voice of the Lord.

Of verses 12-40 of this chapter Paul says, "But the rest speak I, not the Lord" (I Corinthians 7:12). In verse 40 he says, "And I think also that I have the Spirit of the Lord." This will tend to show us that apostolic ministries don't feel that they are infallible. When the brethren say things that they are not absolutely sure of, they will tell you. It is a wonderful thing for the apostolic ministries to be able to confirm the teachings with one another. It is important that they do this.

E. Ephesians 1:9

"Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: That in the dispensation of the fullness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him:..." When Paul talks about God making known the mystery of His will, he is speaking of the revelation that came from God concerning this particular aspect of His plan and purpose.

Ephesians 1:15-19. "Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power." Here Paul tells us that we need the Spirit of revelation in order to be able to receive revelation. To understand the things that God reveals to the apostles, the church needs the Spirit of revelation. In other words, they need the anointing of the Holy Spirit. You cannot know anything of the realm of the Spirit without the revelation of the Spirit. You may be able to gather a lot of the knowledge of man, but to understand the things of the Spirit you need the Spirit of God to reveal them to you.

1. The result of seeing, and walking in the revelation is seen in Acts 2:42-43: "And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. And fear came upon every soul: and many wonders and signs were done by the apostles."

F. ANOTHER PURPOSE OF THE MINISTRY OF THE APOSTLES IS TO KEEP THE REVELATION PURE.

1. Galatians 1:18-19

"Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days. But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother." This scripture tells us how Paul went to Jerusalem to confer with the apostles there. He saw Peter and James.

2. Galatians 2:1-2

"Then fourteen years after I went up again to Jerusalem with Barnabas, and took Titus with me also. And I went up by revelation, and communicated unto them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but privately to them which were of reputation, lest by any means I should run, or had run, in vain." Paul was led of the Spirit to make this trip.

Paul didn't want to be doing a lot of talking and sowing disunity. He wanted to be sure he was running in the right race. After consultation, the apostles found they were all teaching the same thing. Because of our human inability to know many things, it is good to check our revelation with other apostles. If we do this, we will know whether or not we are on the right track.

For Paul to be an apostle, he had to be recognized by those who were apostles before him. He probably felt the call of God in his heart, but it wasn't valid without that apostolic recognition. His desire was to keep the revelation pure.

3. Ephesians 4:11-13

"And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." Most of the disunity in the church of the present day is caused by arguments over doctrine. One of the purposes of the apostolic ministry is to bring about a unity of the faith. If revelation comes from God, through the apostles to the elders, then to the church, no disunity could come. When someone gets a revelation that is an invention of his own mind, and refuses to submit it to the apostles, it is sure to cause disunity. If Paul had come to Jerusalem and started circulating among the members of the local church rather than going to the apostles, he could have caused real division among God's people. When the right procedure is followed, it will bring about a unity of the faith. It is the responsibility of the apostles to maintain that unity.

4. I Timothy 1:3,4

"As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine, Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith: so do."

A fable is something that isn't grounded in truth. Don't give heed to fables. All that many things or teachings do is bring up questions in a person’s mind, and make them question their salvation, the blood of Christ, and the work of the Holy Spirit. Don't pay any attention to these kinds of things. There is nothing wrong

with an honest question, but that which makes you doubt in your mind the things that God has established, avoid. An honest question will help to bring understanding to people, but avoid those things that bring doubts, rather than edification, to you.

5. I Timothy 6:3-5

"If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness;

He is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself."

This scripture talks very straight. The one spoken of here is proud and doesn't know anything. All the things spoken of here are contrary to the way of the Lord. Railing always feeds a bad spirit. We are told to withdraw ourselves from this type of person, and that is a good piece of instruction. When someone comes to you in a railing spirit, tell him/her that you don't want to hear it, and walk away. You will do yourself a good service.

6. The passage Acts 15:1-35 need not be quoted, but you read it as we make comment. Certain men came from Judea to the church in Antioch, saying that except they were circumcised, they could not be saved. Paul and Barnabas couldn't persuade them of their error, so it was decided that they, along with others, would go to the apostles in Jerusalem about this question. This is the route to follow. If someone brings up something that is causing unrest and confusion in the church, the best thing to do is to go to the apostles.

The apostles and elders in Jerusalem considered the matter. Peter told them about his experience in Cornelius house. Paul and Barnabas told them about what had happened in their ministry. James summed up what had been said, and turned to the scriptures for the final answer. He quotes from Amos 9:11: "After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up; that the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things" (Acts 16-17). This makes the benefit of having knowledge of the scriptures very apparent to us. With this knowledge, James was able to settle the whole argument. Their decision was not to trouble the Gentiles with circumcision. What they felt was the mind of the Lord was made very plain. They sent a letter by Barnabas and Paul, who were accompanied by others, to the churches, which outlined the things the apostles felt they should walk in. The apostles had given no commandment to those who went out from them, that to be saved, a person must be circumcised. Those sent with Barnabas and Paul to deliver the letter to the churches, were chosen men.

"For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things; that ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication: from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well. Fare ye well" (Acts 15:28). This is the letter the apostles sent.

They sent the letter, and men along with the letter, so the revelation could be kept pure and that there wouldn't be confusion and disorder in the churches. They felt by the Spirit of God that they had come up with the right answer. I have often observed that when a problem is being discussed, no one seems to have

the right answer. Suddenly, the Holy Spirit speaks through someone by the gift of the word of wisdom; immediately the problem is solved, and the answer seems good to the Holy Spirit.

I am thankful that God has given us a way to keep the revelation pure. Because of that we need not be tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine

7. "And as they went through the cities, they delivered them the decrees for to keep, that were ordained of the apostles and elders which were at Jerusalem. And so were the churches established in the faith, and increased in number daily" (Acts 16:4-5). The disunity, the frictions, the difficulties and divisions had been taken away. A unity among brethren, and among churches prevailed. In this circumstance we read that the churches increased in number daily. If there were unity in the church of the present day, there would be no trouble in evangelizing the world. What God wants most of all today, is unity in the church and in the body of Christ.

8. I Corinthians 11:2

"Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances, as I delivered them to you." We thank God for the unity there is among the churches of the move of the Spirit. The ordinances were the orders that had come from the apostles. They were keeping them just as they had been delivered.

9. "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us" (II Thessalonians 3:6). Traditions are the things that are handed down. In this case they came from Christ, to the apostles, to the elders, and to the people. They were instructed to withdraw from every brother that did not follow these teachings. This action will protect you, and it may help the disorderly to realize that they are not right.

Verse 7 reads, "For yourselves know how ye ought to follow us." The ministries have taught the people how they should follow in the revelation.

10. "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ" (Colossians 2:8). Let me quote it again from the NIV: "See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ."

We have to learn to recognize the difference between the tradition of men, and the tradition that is part of the revelation of the church.

11. "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them" (Romans 16:17).

To mark someone means to clearly identify him so no one will be mistaken concerning his walking in error. These people can sometimes be very convincing in the things they talk about, but they will destroy the faith of the people.

Who are the people to believe? Those who convey the apostles' doctrine, or the person with his pet theory? Mark those who cause divisions, and avoid them.

Sometimes the division doesn't come out in the open; it is a division in the spirit. A division of this kind will greatly affect the function of the church and should be dealt with by the elders.

G. ANOTHER PURPOSE FOR THE APOSTOLIC MINISTRY IS FOR THE PERFECTING OF THE SAINTS.

1. "And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ" (Ephesians 4:11,12).

The literal translation of the Greek word that is translated "perfect" in our King James Version is "complete adjustment." All the members of the body are adjusted so they fit into their place. When you are building in the natural, the material usually has to be adjusted to fit into the building. So we have to be adjusted, or perfected, to fit into our place in the body of Christ.

The laying on of hands with prophecy by a presbytery contributes greatly to the perfecting of the saints. It fits a person into their place in the body of Christ. The way to find out where you fit in, or what God's will is for your life, is through the prophecies. It is important that everyone know his place in the body of Christ. Then, it is important that we war a warfare according to the prophecies that have been given over us.

Weymouth's translation of the words "for the perfecting of the saints" is, "in order to fully equip His people for the work of service."

"This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou by them mightest war a good warfare;" (I Timothy 1:18). Paul is reminding Timothy about the time that hands were laid upon him, and prophecies were given. He encourages him to walk in the ministry that God had called him to. Those who have not had this experience, which is part of the perfecting of the saints, do not know how to war a good warfare. Paul had asked Timothy to stay at Ephesus to warn certain people that they teach no other doctrine. He committed this charge to Timothy according to the prophecies that went before on him. Paul didn't ask Timothy to do something that wasn't in the line of his ministry.

"Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery. Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all" (I Timothy 4:14-15). Here Paul exhorts Timothy again. Timothy was perhaps a little shy and backward and needed a lot of encouragement.

"Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands" (II Timothy 1:6). A person doesn't just select the gift they want, like the Corinthians were endeavouring to do.

The gift, or gifts, that you will receive is the result of the laying on of hands and prophecy. The scripture doesn't tell us of any other way to receive gifts of the Spirit. We should be very thankful for this part of the perfecting of the saints that takes place when hands are laid on us.

H. ANOTHER PURPOSE IS FOR THE WORK OF THE MINISTRY.

The Greek word for ministry is "diakonia." The literal translation is "ministration." In our King James Version it has been translated "administration" twice, "ministering" three times, "ministration" six times. The work of the ministry relates to the administration of the church.

I. ANOTHER PURPOSE IS FOR THE EDIFYING OF THE BODY OF CHRIST

"...[F]or the edifying of the body of Christ; Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" (Ephesians 4:12-13). It is very hard, or perhaps impossible, for us to measure our stature spiritually. In many things you can put up a mark and measure your progress. It is not so easy to measure the stature of the church, or our individual growth in Spiritual things. May the Lord help us to go on to the place of being a perfect man. This applies to the body of Christ, as well as to us as individuals. We desire to see a body that is perfect in unity, with all the members perfectly adjusted to one another so they can minister together.

There is no way that we can measure Christ. Paul tells us that in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily (Colossians 2:9). It is God's mind that the church should grow into the place of the fullness of His stature.

To edify means to build up. The dictionary says this: to instruct or improve morally. This is the constant prayer of the apostles, that they may be able to help to edify the body of Christ.

J. THE APOSTLES ARE TO HELP BRING MATURITY TO THE BODY OF CHRIST

"That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ" (Ephesians 4:14,15).

You can tell a child almost anything and they will believe you. The sad thing is that many Christians are living in that same childlike state. Paul is talking here of growing to that place where we won't be carried about with every wind of doctrine; where we will be able to tell good from evil, and walk in that which is good and right.

The truth is the important thing. Jesus said that He was the way, the truth, and the life (John 14:6). We must speak those things that are truth and that are in the mind of Christ. We must partake of His attitude and His way of thinking in all things that we may grow up into Him.

"Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind. And not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God" (Colossians 2:18-19). This scripture speaks of people who are puffed up by their fleshly mind. They have separated themselves from the Head. Our desire is to be joined to the Head. "From whom the whole body, fitly joined together, and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love" (Ephesians 4:16). The body is perfectly adjusted through the function of the apostolic ministry, so

it will function together in the same way as the members of a healthy human body. This body will make increase of itself by those that God has called being added to the church.

K. THE APOSTLES ARE FATHERS TO THE UNIVERSAL CHURCH.

1. "As ye know how we exhorted and comforted and charged every one of you, as a father doth his children, That ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory" (I Thessalonians 2:11-12). Everyone who is a father knows what Paul is talking about here. A father will exhort, comfort, and give advice to his children. He will do all that is in his power to persuade them to walk right before God.

Paul, along with the other apostles, as fathers to the church, let their hearts go out to the church. They longed and desired to see them walk right. A true apostle will do this.

2. "For though ye have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers: for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel. Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me" (I Corinthians 4:15,16). In this day and age, we could easily have ten thousand instructors; but we are not wise to listen to every voice that calls itself an authority. There may be many voices but there are few fathers.

The ministry God has set over the church is concerned about the spiritual welfare and benefit of every member of the body of Christ. The thing that the true apostle lives for is the benefit of the church. When they deal with disorders, they are dealing as fathers, and have in mind the good of the children of God. The apostles' desire is that they may lead the people in the ways of the Lord, and give them instruction in walking in the right path.

L. THE APOSTLES ARE A COVERING FOR THE CHURCH.

A good husband is a covering and a shelter to his wife and children. There is a shelter that they find in his ministry, as the head of the home. Children find a covering in a good home. When they are hurt or in trouble, the first place they go is home. It is a place of shelter. The people find the same thing in the church with the covering that comes in the eldership. It is a shelter for them to come to and hide under.

The apostles are the elders of the universal church, and they function as a shelter, in much the same way as fathers in the home and the elders in the local church. The apostles are a hiding place and a shelter where the church can come and find the help that they need.

"He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty" (Psalms 91:1). God has given us a shadow, a shelter, and a covering for His people to dwell under. The children dwell under the shadow and shelter of the home, the people of the church dwell under the shadow and shelter of the elders and deacons of the local church, and the whole church is able to dwell under the shadow of the apostolic covering.

Jesus talked about His ministry to Jerusalem in Matthew 23:37-38: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate." Jesus had in mind to be able to gather and shelter the people. He desires to do the same thing today through His body, the church. He wants people to be gathered in, to find a shelter and a

place of rest. The kingdom of God is that age of rest, when people will find the rest that God has provided for them. Enter now into the order of His kingdom and rest.

XV. APOSTOLIC DEACONS OR TRAVELLING DEACONS.

A. The word deacon comes from the Greek word "diakonos," which being translated means "to act as an agent," or, "to serve." Deacons are a very important part of the church, and they have a very important ministry. The travelling deacons act as agents for the apostles; they carry the word of the apostles. They are often sent by the apostles to carry out that which the apostles feel is necessary for the good of the church.

1. The first deacons mentioned in scripture are found in Acts 6:1-7. In this case their duty was to look after the welfare of certain people who were gathering with the church. The apostles had seven men who were full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom set before them. The apostles laid their hands on them and prayed for them. These men were to look after the need of the Grecian widows so the apostles could give themselves continually to the ministry of the word.

These men were not deacons of the local church in Jerusalem, but were men who served the apostles, and belonged in the apostolic realm.

To many people, the deacon is the man who looks after the material needs of the church, and the elders care for the spiritual needs. That couldn't be further from the truth. We find that in the case of some of these deacons, their ministry had a far wider reach than just the material affairs of the local church. We have the record of Stephen ministering in Acts, chapter seven. He ministered the things of the apostles' doctrine. Because of the power of his ministry, the Jews stoned him. His ministry reached far beyond feeding some of the widows in the church. Looking after the widows is very important, but he did more than that. He did more than sweep the floor of the meeting place and take up the offering. We pray that deacons will look to God for this broader ministry.

We also have Philip, who because of the persecution went to Samaria where his ministry caused a great many people to turn to the Lord. In Acts 21:8 he is called Philip, the evangelist. His office in the church was that of a deacon, but his ministry was that of an evangelist. There are many people, who are members of the local church, who hold no office in the church, who are evangelists, and are continually carrying the good news of the kingdom of God. They should be reaching out with that good news all the time. Philip was a deacon who served the apostles. He was called Philip, the evangelist, the deacon who carried the good news. We also have the case of Philip ministering to the man from Ethiopia. He led him to the Lord and then baptized him.

2. "As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine, Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith: so do" (I Timothy 1:3,4).

Timothy was one of the travelling deacons in the early church. Paul was directing the ministry of Timothy, the deacon. There were needs in the church at Ephesus, and Paul was leaving on a trip to Macedonia, so he left Timothy there to charge some that they teach no other doctrine. Paul was laying this responsibility upon Timothy. In verse 18, he was also speaking of the charge that was given to Timothy concerning the Ephesian church: "This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou by them mightest war a good warfare."

He was left there to help the members of the church overcome the difficulties that were among them. Often in this present day, one of the travelling deacons is sent to a church that needs help.

3. "To Titus, mine own son after the common faith: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour. For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee" (Titus 1:4-5). When a church is in the developmental stage, a travelling deacon, or perhaps one of the apostles, will stay in that particular church to help them to get established. Paul spent extended periods of time in both Corinth and Ephesus.

In this particular case, Titus was left in Crete to set in order the things that were wanting. Paul and Titus must have discussed the things that were wanting. Titus was to establish, and set in order the things that were lacking. Titus was to also appoint elders in the churches of Crete. We do not know if Titus was alone or not. We feel it is always good to have at least two ministries present for the setting of elders. Even if Titus was alone, we are sure, from the context of the scripture that we read, that he and Paul had talked about the situation. I think, in all likelihood, they had thoroughly discussed who should be placed as elders in each of the churches. They felt the leading of, and the indication of the Spirit of God as they talked about it. If Titus was alone when the elders were appointed to their office, in a sense, he and Paul were doing it together.

Our King James Version speaks of "ordaining" the elders spoken of here. Other translators, and the literal Greek, indicate that Titus was to "appoint" elders. The brethren have felt to follow this practice. Elders are first appointed for a time of probation, and at a later date are ordained to the office.

In doing the things he was instructed here, Titus was carrying out the wishes of the apostle. This is the scope in which the travelling deacon operates. He fills his office by serving the apostles.

4. "All my state shall Tychicus declare unto you, who is a beloved brother, and a faithful minister and fellow servant in the Lord: Whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose, that he might know your estate, and comfort your hearts; With Onesimus, a faithful and beloved brother, who is one of you. They shall make known unto you all things which are done here" (Colossians 4:7-9).

Paul, who was in Rome, sent Tychicus and Onesimus to the Colossian church. Paul was in prison in Rome, and they were sent to let the church know how Paul was getting along. Also, on the heart of the apostle, was a desire to know the state of the church there. They were to comfort the hearts of the people. In the days in which they were living, comfort from their spiritual father would have been very important to them.

These men were also apostolic deacons. They were carrying out the wishes and instructions of the apostle.

5. "And Tychicus have I sent to Ephesus" (II Timothy 4:12). This happened about two years after Timothy had been left in Ephesus. In verse 11, we find Paul giving instructions to Timothy. Timothy was to bring Mark and come to Paul. From what is said in the previous verses, one would think that this was written just before Paul's execution, and that he was anxious to see Timothy again. He said, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith" (II Timothy 4:7).

6. In Titus 3:12, we have another instance of deacons being sent: "When I shall send Artemas unto thee, or Tychicus, be diligent to come unto me to Nicopolis: for I have determined there to winter." Paul is sending either Artemas or Tychicus with word for Titus to meet him in Nicopolis.

B. It appears from the scriptures that we have read concerning apostolic deacons that they can do anything that an apostle can do, but they must be sent by an apostle.

The men that we have talked about held the office of an apostolic deacon. This was not their ministry. Philip was an evangelist and Timothy was told to do the work of an evangelist. To be an evangelist was their ministry. The particular ministry of the other deacons is not revealed by the scripture.

XVI. LOCAL CHURCH ELDERS.

We will now deal with the part that the local church elders play in the administration of the kingdom of God.

A. In Exodus 18:13-27, we read about how Moses sought out able men to judge Israel. Moses was judging all the differences that arose among the Israelites by himself. It was a very long and tedious job. The people stood and waited in line all day, and Moses tired himself out through the procedure. His father in law, Jethro, warned him that he shouldn't try to do it all alone, lest he wear himself out. He suggested that Moses communicate with God on behalf of the people, and teach them the ordinances and laws that would govern them. Also, Moses was to pick out from among the people, "able men such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness" (Exodus 18:21), and set them over the congregation. They were to judge the people, settling the small disputes themselves, but they were to take the great matters to Moses. These able men would bear the burden along with Moses, making the load much easier for him to carry.

The apostolic ministries depend upon the elders in the same way. We have been taught that the elders are to handle the matters of the local church and judge them. When difficulties arise, which they feel are beyond them, they have been instructed to call upon the apostles for help.

B. "And the LORD said unto Moses, Gather unto me seventy men of the elders of Israel, whom thou knowest to be the elders of the people, and officers over them; and bring them unto the tabernacle of the congregation, that they may stand there with thee. And I will come down and talk with thee there: and I will take of the spirit which is upon thee, and will put it upon them; and they shall bear the burden of the people with thee, that thou bear it not thyself alone" (Numbers 11:16-17). This scripture is very enlightening concerning the ministry of elders.

A very necessary part of eldership is that the spirit that is upon the apostles be upon the elders also. I don't know what the church would do without elders. It couldn't function because there is no way that the apostles could bear the whole weight of the church alone. Elders are a necessity for the church. The apostolic ministry depends upon them in the same way that Moses depended upon these men.

In Exodus 3:16, we read that God sent Moses to the elders of Israel to announce their deliverance from Egypt.

There were also elders of the congregation mentioned in Leviticus 4:15. Their authority is demonstrated in the offering of the sin offering. The elders would lay their hands upon the head of the bullock before it was offered for the sin of the people.

Deuteronomy 19:12 mentions elders of cities. In this particular case those mentioned are the elders of the cities of refuge.

From these scriptures we see that God has used elders in the governing of His people for many, many centuries. It is only modern man, who has removed himself so far away from the pattern that originated with God, who does otherwise.

C. In Acts 14:19, we read of Paul being stoned at Lystra. After this, he and those accompanying him visited many churches in order to strengthen the people by the presence of their ministry. They warned the people that through much tribulation, they would enter the kingdom of God.

"And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed" (Acts 14:23).

You will notice that wherever we have read about elders, it is always in the plural. Here they ordained them elder"S" in every church. In Crete, Titus was not instructed to ordain an elder in each church, but he was told to ordain elders. The modern day church seems to refuse to recognize this. They will set one man as an overseer. They may have a church board that they call elders, but they are not true elders. They have been elected to their office, and they can also be voted out.

A true elder is set by God through appointment by the apostles. His appointment is for life, unless he is disqualified by sin, and he has to be removed from office.

There is safety in numbers as the scriptures tell us in Deuteronomy 19:15: "One witness shall not rise up against a man for any iniquity, or for any sin, in any sin that he sinneth: at the mouth of two witnesses, or at the mouth of three witnesses, shall the matter be established." The word of one witness doesn't count. This is spoken in connection with condemning the sinner, but it should also apply in other things too. Everything should be established in the mouth of more than one witness. Paul quotes this scripture in II Corinthians 13:1.

This is also true concerning eldership. You need the mouth of at least two witnesses to establish anything. Paul, in writing to Timothy, told him that he should not receive an accusation against an elder, except by the mouth of two or three witnesses.

The apostles did not install pastors in the churches. They appointed elders to take the oversight of the churches.

D. THE QUALIFICATIONS OF ELDERS.

1. "This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work. A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach; Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous; One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?) Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil. Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil" (I Timothy 3:1-7).

The word "bishop," used in verse one above, is translated from the Greek word "episkope," and it refers to the office of an overseer. If a man desires the office of an overseer, he desires a good work. In other words he must have the call of God upon his heart.

We read in I Peter 5:1-3, "The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock."

Filthy lucre is dishonest gain. We have known where people have practiced charging money to pray for the sick, or to prophecy gifts. This money is filthy lucre.

If a man is to be an elder, he must have the people upon his heart. He must desire to help them, to oversee them in their Spiritual walk, and be able to direct them in their ways before the Lord. He must have the call of God upon his heart to be able to fill that office. When a man desires the office of an elder, it must not be a carnal desire. A carnal man will never fit the office of an elder. He might desire the office because he feels it will give him prestige. He may feel that office will give him opportunity to boss people around. An elder is not to be a lord or a boss over God's heritage. A true elder is a man who gives himself for the people. In the different churches in the move of the Spirit, we have seen many times over how the elders will give themselves for the people.

Peter speaks of himself as also being an elder. Peter shared the eldership of the universal church, and the men to whom he was writing were elders of the local churches. They shared the eldership, and Peter was well aware of the burdens they bore.

An elder has to accept the office willingly. If he has to be coerced into taking the office, he will not make a good elder. An elder cannot be a boss. He must lead the flock as a shepherd leads his sheep. He goes before them and they follow. They heed the shepherd's voice, but they will not heed the voice of the stranger. An elder is an example for the church to follow.

We discussed what Peter says about feeding the flock of God when we talked about the pastor's ministry. The Greek word translated "feed," actually means more than giving the sheep nourishment. It means to tend as a shepherd. That embraces a lot more than giving your sheep some hay. It means to care for them in every aspect of their life. A good shepherd will look after the sick. He will seek those who have gone astray and bring them back to the fold. He will deal with the rebellious.

In I Timothy 3:1, the word translated "bishop" refers to the office that the man holds. In verse 2, the word bishop comes from a different Greek word, "episkopos," referring to the man that holds the office.

An elder must be blameless. He must not be one at whom everyone in the community can point their finger. He must be the husband of only one wife. He must be vigilant (that means he must be very watchful concerning the flock). He must watch for sickness (I am speaking of Spiritual sickness). He must watch for the wolf, who often comes in sheep's clothing and is hard to detect. He must be careful to see that the flock is fed a proper ration.

A question was asked about divorced men holding the office of an elder. To my knowledge no one who has been divorced, or has a wife who has been divorced, has been set as an elder or a deacon. The reason for this is that it would be a poor example for the church.

An elder is to be sober. That doesn't mean that he never smiles, but that he is serious minded about his responsibility. He is to be of good behaviour. That is, he walks uprightly in the community in which he lives. All his neighbours must be able to look up to him.

An elder's family should be hospitable. Their home is open to the members of the church, so they can come for council whenever necessary.

An elder should not be given to wine: "It is not for kings, O Lemuel, it is not for kings to drink wine; nor for princes strong drink: Lest they drink, and forget the law, and pervert the judgment of any of the afflicted" (Proverbs 31:4-5). This is true of elders also, because they sit in a place where they have to make judgements. If their judgement is impaired by strong drink, how can they judge righteously?

There is no place for liquor in the life of an elder, or any Christian for that matter. Not only the elders, but we must all be examples in this matter.

The next qualification mentioned is that an elder must not be a striker. This goes beyond the strikes that we often have in our labour force. God's people should not be involved in promoting strikes. Sometimes to be able to hold our job we have to belong to a union, but don't let us partake of that striking spirit. There is a real difference between having a striking spirit, voting for a strike, and promoting a strike, and having to be involved to be able to keep our job.

Paul is talking about the striker's spirit when he speaks of elders not being strikers. That spirit should never get into the eldership of the church. An elder can go on strike against the other elders. He can say, "If I don't get my way, I won’t do anything." He may not say it in so many words, but it will be in his heart. People do take that attitude sometimes. If they don't get their way they sit down and do nothing. People who have this spirit will find that it will rule them. Some take this strikers attitude toward the government. The scriptures teach us to obey the laws of our country. The scriptures also teach that God sets those who govern us, so we should obey. The attitude that we have been speaking of must never invade the church.

There must be a flowing together of ministries so that all speak with one voice, whether it is the eldership of the local church or the apostles. If there are differences of opinion we must seek God until we are of one mind, whether it is husband and wife in the home, elders in the local church, or the apostolic ministries. The words that our King James Version translates, "no striker," the NIV translates as "not violent but gentle." It is the same spirit that rules the violent man as rules the striker.

"And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient, In meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth" (II Timothy 2:24-25). An elder must be a man of great patience. Often times, he will need it. He must not be a brawler or one who gets involved in noisy fights. In fact, he should not be involved in fights of any kind. An elder must not be covetous.

An elder must rule his own house well. If his home is in disorder, there is no way he can rule the church. His home must be an example for the rest of the church.

He is not to be a novice or an inexperienced man. He should be one who is well acquainted with life. "He must not be a recent convert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgement as the devil" (I Timothy 3:6 NIV). An inexperienced man may become proud of the fact that he is an elder. To become proud is to fall into the trap of the enemy.

An elder must have a good report among those outside the church. This is necessary lest he be reproached and fall into the devil's snare. The scriptures have much to say about this. "That ye may walk honestly toward them that are without, and that ye may have lack of nothing"(I Thessalonians 4:12); "Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time. Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man" (Colossians 4:5-6); "We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain. (For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.) Giving no offence in anything, that the ministry be not blamed: But in all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses," (II Corinthians 6:1-4).

When Paul speaks about the ministry here he is not talking about clergymen but he is talking about your ministry. Giving no offence in anything that your ministry be not blamed. If a person is continually giving offence in the community, and if he can't get along with his neighbours, then his ministry will be of no effect whatever. Such a man does not qualify for eldership. In these scriptures Paul enumerates many of the things that should be found in all of us, and especially elders. These are the things that should be seen by the community where you live. The man who has a poor report will have an ineffective ministry. An elders business-dealings and everything about him should be aboveboard and without reproach.

ELDERS' AND DEACONS' WIVES.

"Even so must their wives be grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things" (I Timothy 3:11). An elder's or a deacon's wife must be grave, which means they must be serious minded. Especially, they should be serious minded about Spiritual things. They are concerned about the church and the ministry of the church.

They must not be slanderers. A slanderer is one who utters falsehoods that are injurious to another person. They must be sober. This is very similar to being grave. They conduct their lives in a proper way, and they are a good example.

The wives of elders and deacons should be found faithful in all things. That means to be loyal and reliable. Through their husbands, elders' and deacons' wives will pick up a lot of information about people in the church. If their husband is dealing with a problem in the church, it is easy for them to figure out what is happening. In matters of this kind, the wives lips should be sealed. They should never discuss things that belong to the eldership, especially with other women. That is part of being faithful and reliable.

F. PAULS INSTRUCTIONS TO TITUS ABOUT ELDERS.

"If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly. For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not selfwilled, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre; But a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate; Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers" (Titus 1:6-9).

The first qualification mentioned is that he should be blameless. He should not be a man accused of the wrong kind of living or of an improper walk. He should be the husband of one wife, and he should have faithful children. A man's children can disqualify him for the office of an elder. He should not be self-willed. That means he is not someone who always wants his own way whether it is right or not. A self-willed man is never satisfied unless he has his own way. An elder should not be soon angry. He must be able to control his temper. He is one not given to wine. We have already talked about this when discussing Paul's instructions to Timothy concerning elders.

An elder cannot be a striker. The original language indicates that he must not be a violent person. A spirit of violence often gets into strikes of the labour force. There won't be any strikes in the Kingdom; or perhaps I should say, when the Kingdom is fully established. When all men have come to know the Lord, all employees and employers will walk according to Ephesians 6:5-9. With all that is in them, all employees and employers should be striving to enter into this.

An employee should respect his employer, and he will work for him as though he was working for Christ. An employer should treat his employees as the Lord would treat them. An employer should remember that he has an employer in heaven who has no respect of persons. He deals justly with every man. If both the employee and the employer are walking in the Spirit, there will never be labour problems. The employee will give an honest days work for a days pay. The employer will treat his employees as he would like to be treated of the Lord.

Paul, again, speaks of filthy lucre. This is dishonest gain. All of an elder's business deals should be absolutely honest.

An elder is a lover of hospitality and a lover of good men. An elder will choose the company that he associates with. We often say, "Birds of a feather flock together." If you always find an elder with the unsaved, unruly element of the world, there is something wrong. He should exhort them, and endeavour to lead them to the Lord; but if he spends his time in fellowship with them, he is in error. An elder should choose his company very carefully.

An elder should be sober, or serious minded. He should be just or righteous. To be righteous means to be right in the sight of God. He should be holy, or righteous and pure in thought and deed. He should be temperate, or self-controlled in all aspects of living. To many people temperance just refers to not drinking liquor. Self-control should go into every avenue of a person's life, from the time he gets up in the morning, until the time he goes to bed at night. A person should even be temperate in those things also.

In verse 9, still speaking of elders, he says, "Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught." An elder must teach the apostles doctrine. If he doesn't, he disqualifies himself. That is the only way that unity can prevail in the church. An elder's authority comes in teaching the apostle's doctrine.

"That he may be able both to exhort and to convince the gainsayer" A gainsayer, in this case, is one who contradicts the revelation that God has given to the church through the apostles. If a man teaches his own theory he has no authority behind him. If the elders teach what they have been taught, God will stand with them, and the apostles will stand with them. In this way, they will be able both to exhort and convince the gainsayer.

Let us read II Timothy 2:2: "And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also." Paul is writing to Timothy about the kind of men who should be appointed as elders. He is telling Timothy to commit the apostle's doctrine to men, who will in turn be able to teach the people of the local churches.

G. TO SUM UP CONCERNING ELDERS.

To sum up what has been said about elders, we would like to say the following:

If there are qualified men, there should always be more than one elder in a local church. There are churches that only have one elder because there is no one else who is qualified. In that circumstance there is nothing that can be done. It is better to have just one elder than to have an unqualified man trying to fill the office.

Elders are called of God to the office. They must have a desire that is put in their heart by God to fill that office, rather than a carnal desire.

Elders are indicated by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit will make it apparent to the apostolic ministries as to who should fill that office. They are set in office, or appointed by the apostles or the travelling deacons for a period of probation before they are ordained to the office.

Elders are not elected. The church is not a democracy. It is a theocracy where God reigns. We have known three types of government. There is a democracy, which is the weakest form of government there is. It is weak because everyone is free to have his say in that government, no matter how far he is from that which is right. It is a government of compromise. Then, there is the dictatorship, where you have one person who lords it over everybody and everything according to his own carnal desire. He does everything according to his own unregenerate will. The third type of government is a theocracy, where God reigns through the ministries He has set. They reign through the leading and direction of the Holy Spirit. This type of government works after the fashion of a good home. In

Ephesians 5:25, husbands are instructed to love their wives as Christ loved the church, and gave Himself for it. A man should give wholly of himself for his wife and his family. The same applies in a theocratic government. Every office in that government doesn't seek his own good, but the good of those he is responsible to govern. They give themselves for the people they have the charge of. Their whole being flows out for the benefit of the people as a whole. Jesus said that the good shepherd gives his life for the flock.

The church is very similar to a home. God has set the man as the head of his home, and given him a wife to help him in the direction of that home. In the church, we have elders and deacons who give direction and leadership. In a home you don't have periodic elections to see who will be dad. He has the job for life. A well ordered home is a theocracy, where God reigns through the head that He has set, and through the one that helps him. The home is a little kingdom, and the children are the subjects of that kingdom.

It is a wonderful order that God has established. The apostolic ministries are appointed by God. The elders are appointed by the apostles, through the leading and direction of the Holy Spirit. An elder is appointed for life, so long as he is faithful, and walks in an orderly fashion. His appointment comes to an end if he

moves from the local church where he was appointed. If he moves to another local church, he doesn't automatically assume eldership there. His eldership is only in his own local church. Neither does a local church deacon's ministry reach outside his own local church.

"I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not. Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them out of the church" (III John 1:9-10). We are told here about a man named Diotrphes. It would appear that Diotrophes was an elder who had gone astray. This man was railing against the apostles and the revelation God had given. He wouldn't receive the apostles, and any who did he cast out of the church. Demetrius was, in all probability, another elder.

John was encouraging the people to follow that which is good and not that which is evil. Johns promise was to come and deal with the situation. The apostle possesses that authority because it has been given him by God.

H. THE RESPONSIBILITIES AND WARNINGS GIVEN TO ELDERS.

Many of these responsibilities are outlined in Acts 20:26-32: "Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I am pure from the blood of all men. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God. Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over that which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears. And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified." Paul had asked the elders of the Ephesian church to meet him in Meletus when he was on his way to Jerusalem. His first instruction to these elders was that they should "take heed to themselves." He was exhorting them concerning their walk before God. They were to be very careful about their walk, and see that they walked in the Spirit and that they were led by the Spirit in the oversight of the church. If an elder fails in his own walk there is no way he can lead the church.

They were to "take heed to the flock" over which the Holy Ghost had made them overseers. These elders had been indicated by the Holy Spirit and appointed by the apostles. I imagine it was Paul who had appointed them, but we are not sure of that. Tradition says that Peter also visited Ephesus.

They were to watch over the flock. When he speaks of taking heed to the flock, we must remember that every member of the church is different. Elders often find that they have to deal with different people in different ways. We have found that in a natural family, every child is different. A word to one child will have far more effect on them than the rod will have on another. It is because of their different temperaments. It is important that an elder should know his flock, so he will best be able to deal with all their needs.

He should also be acquainted with each individual ministry and know what gifts of the Spirit they have received, so he can be of help in directing their ministry. If the elders get word that there is a need in the

church, or in the community, for someone with a ministry of showing mercy, he should know whom to call on from his flock.

An elder is an overseer. He doesn't do all the ministering. In the old order church you found that the pastor did everything. He did the praying, he preached the sermons, he visited the sick. There was no room in the church for the operation of other ministries. The elders should make use of the ministries that are in the church. Their responsibility is to oversee and direct the church in its ministration.

The elders are "to feed the church of God." "And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also" (II Timothy 2:2). Elders are to be able to teach the things committed to them by the apostles. Teaching these things is a great part of feeding the church. In I Timothy we read that elders are to be apt to teach, or able to teach. This ability should be manifest either in or out of the meetings.

A church is like a family. Moses instructed Israel to continually remind and instruct their children in the ways of the Lord, and the same procedure should be followed in the church. Elders teach in the same ways that parents do: by word and action, or example.

The word "feed" here is translated form the Greek word "poimaino," which means to tend as a shepherd. As we have mentioned, tending a flock takes in far more than feeding.

It takes in every aspect of caring for the flock. I once heard the story of a man who had an unruly sheep that wouldn't follow with the flock. In desperation he broke the sheep's leg so it couldn't walk. He then picked it up and carried it until its leg was healed. By the time the sheep's leg was healed it was so attached to the shepherd that it followed him everywhere he went. Sometimes elders have to exercise judgement on members of the flock. We would hope that it would always bring the same results as the shepherd had with his sheep.

The noun in the Greek language for "shepherd" or "feeder" is "poimen." It is translated "pastor" once, in Ephesians 4:11. It is translated "shepherd" fifteen times in other places. This word is used of the servant who feeds cattle in Luke 17:7.

"So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs. He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep" (John 21:15-16). Where Jesus says, feed my lambs, the Greek word for feed is "bosko," which means to "feed or pasture," or just simply "to give them nourishment" and no more. Where He said feed my sheep in the next verse, The Greek word "poimaino" is used which means to tend as a shepherd. Paul's instruction to the elders was to tend as a shepherd (poimaino), the flock of God.

I. THE ELDERS ARE TO COLLECT AND ADMINISTER THE PEOPLES TITHES.

Let us read Malachi 3:8-10, "Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole

nation. Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and 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." Malachi said that Israel was cursed with a curse because they robbed God.

I have been asked at different times to help people who are in financial difficulties. I have come to the place that the first question I ask is, "do you tithe?" If a person is not careful with their tithing it seems they always end up in financial difficulty. There is a law connected with it that is something like the law of gravity. If you drop an object it always goes down, and if you rob God of the tithes that are His, you will be cursed with a curse. It seems that if a person doesn't tithe, their pockets are full of holes. As fast as they put money in, it leaks out and they don't know what has happened to it.

"Not because I desire a gift: but I desire fruit that may abound to your account" (Philippians 4:17). Paul was talking here about the help the Philippian church had given him. He was expressing his thanks for their generosity. His desire was not for their gift, but it was for fruit in their lives. The same is true concerning tithing. God doesn't need your money or mine. He could get along very well without it because He owns everything, but He entrusts His blessings to us and asks us to give Him back ten percent.

Some people wonder whether they should tithe on their gross pay-cheque, or whether they should tithe on what is left after deductions are made. These deductions are usually taxes, insurance, health care benefits, etc. These are all things that are for our personal benefit. Your tax is used to build roads, hospitals, schools and for all these things that benefit all of us. As far as the brethren are concerned you tithe before these things are deducted. You don't have to worry about giving the Lord too much. He will make it up to you. If you tithe on the gross and you get a tax refund at the end of the year, that refund has already had the tithe paid on it.

J. THE ELDERS ARE RESPONSIBLE TO PRAY FOR THE SICK.

"Is any sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him" (James 5:14-15).

7. In John 10:1-15, Jesus speaks of Himself as being the good shepherd. Elders should watch for thieves and robbers. Men will want to come and address the church. In the old order, we often found that some outsider would come along and preach his sermon in the church, and the first thing you knew he was drawing people away after himself. Paul told the Ephesian elders that men would arise from among themselves that would draw away disciples.

Jesus talks of the same thing when He speaks of the thieves and the robbers who don't come through the door, but climb up some other way to steal the sheep. "But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out" (John 10:2-3). Someone, who was recently in the Middle East, saw how the different shepherds bring their sheep to a common fold in the evening. In the morning, when they want to take them out to graze, they come to the fold and their own sheep know their voice and follow their own shepherd. "And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice. And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of

strangers" (John 10:4-5). This teaches us a great deal about the ministry of an elder. His sheep get to know his voice.

"For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears" (Acts 20:29-31). This is the elder's responsibility to be a good shepherd to the sheep. Watch out for the wolves. Many come in sheep's clothing. In no way do you want to distrust fellow elders. It would be terrible to have that spirit among elders. But if a fellow elder begins to draw the sheep after himself, it is time get in touch with the apostolic ministries. If an elder sets himself up as one voice in the church, there is something wrong. This also is part of the elder's responsibility.

Let us read also Ezekiel 34:1-10:

"And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel, prophesy, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD unto the shepherds; Woe be to the shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves! Should not the shepherds feed the flocks? Ye eat the fat, and ye clothe you with the wool, ye kill them that are fed: but ye feed not the flock. The diseased have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was sick, neither have ye bound up that which was broken, neither have ye brought again that which was driven away, neither have ye sought that which was lost; but with force and with cruelty have ye ruled them. And they were scattered, because there is no shepherd: and they became meat to all the beasts of the field, when they were scattered. My sheep wandered through all the mountains, and upon every high hill: yea, my flock was scattered upon all the face of the earth, and none did search or seek after them. Therefore, ye shepherds, hear the word of the LORD; As I live, saith the Lord GOD, surely because my flock became a prey, and my flock became meat to every beast of the field, because there was no shepherd, neither did my shepherds search for my flock, but the shepherds fed themselves, and fed not my flock; Therefore, O ye shepherds, hear the word of the LORD; Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I am against the shepherds; and I will require my flock at their hand, and cause them to cease from feeding the flock; neither shall the shepherds feed themselves anymore; for I will deliver my flock from their mouth, that they may not be meat for them."

This is a very sad story. The elders should lead the flock in walking in the Spirit and as God has ordained that they should walk.

8. "The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock" (I Peter 5:1-). The elders here are exhorted to feed the flock. As we previously mentioned, this actually means, "to tend as a shepherd." The elders are to give themselves for the church family as a good father gives himself for his wife and children.

Verse 3 mentions elders not being lords over God's heritage. Someone gave us this illustration one time. A man had seen another man driving a flock of sheep and wondered about it. Someone else told him that the one driving the flock was not the shepherd, but he was the butcher and was taking them to the slaughterhouse. The shepherd leads the sheep. An elder is not a boss, and he does not drive the sheep. He must lead them. He must have the right attitude toward the church, and not lord it over them because he has

an office of authority. The Lord promises elders who are faithful a crown of glory. Sometimes elders become weary under the load of responsibility, but remember the Lord's promise: "A crown of glory that fadeth not away."

9. "Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous" (I Peter 3:8).

In this scripture, Peter is talking about husbands and wives; but it applies to all of us as members of the body of Christ. We will always find that where there are people, there will be differences of opinion, whether it is in a family or a church. The thing that God asks us to do is to become of one mind. In a home, if husband and wife differ, they should look to God and seek Him until they become of one mind, in order to bring agreement and harmony. It should be the same in the church among the elders. There may be differences of opinion about certain things. As we have read, an elder should not be self-willed. We should be willing to change our mind if that is the will of the Lord. To compromise is not the answer. The necessary thing is to seek God until we become of one mind. In compromising, one may give a little on one thing and then expect the other to give a little on something else. That really doesn't change anything. "A man convinced against his will is of the same opinion still." What God desires is that our minds will be changed by His Spirit so we will become of one mind.

10. "The husbandman that laboureth must be first partaker of the fruits" (II Timothy 2:6). This means that an elder must walk in the things that he teaches. If he teaches one thing and does another, his teaching doesn't bear fruit in the church. He must walk in the things that he teaches and lead the flock in them.

"I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me" (John 5:30). Jesus said this about Himself. He was led by the Spirit of God in His judgement; thus, He judged according to the will of His Father and His own will didn't come into play at all. This also has to be so in the office of an elder. They do not judge according to their own mind and will, but according to the mind of the heavenly Father.

F. THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE PEOPLE TOWARD THE ELDERS.

We have talked about the responsibility of the elders toward the people, now we will consider the responsibility of the people toward the elders.

1. "Rebuke not an elder, but intreat him as a father; and the younger men as brethren" (I Timothy 5:1). This is Paul writing to Timothy, who was an apostolic deacon, and whose authority was over the elders. This also applies to all the church. If a member of the church feels that an elder is not doing something right, there is nothing wrong with going to him; but you must go in the right attitude. You should go to him with a submissive attitude and talk to him respectfully, as a good child would speak to their father. A rebellious attitude is wrong. You must entreat him, rather than speaking to him in a disrespectful manner.

2. "Against an elder receive not an accusation, but before two or three witnesses" (I Timothy 5:19). If only one person brings an accusation against an elder don't listen to it; but if a second person makes the same accusation, it is time to listen. Remember that this letter was written to the travelling deacon. If someone comes to a travelling deacon accusing one of their elders, don't listen to it if there is only one person. If there are two or three witnesses it should be looked into. There are always people who can find fault. As long as we walk in the realm of the carnal, we are going to have faultfinders. It is not a good thing for the

people of the church to be talking about these kind of things among themselves. The best is to go to someone in authority. The people should show respect for their elders and uphold them in prayer.

3. "Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation" (Hebrews 13:7). We are talking here about the responsibility of the people toward the elders. In speaking of the end of their conversation, the word conversation means manner of life. The people are to consider where the elder's manner of life is leading them, and we are instructed to follow them. Those who had the rule over them would be the elders, and the church is instructed to follow their faith. At different times Paul instructed the people to follow him as he followed Christ. The people are to follow the example of the elders and walk in the ways of the Lord. I would like to quote this verse from the NIV: "Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith."

4. "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you" (Hebrews 13:17). Other translators say, "Obey them that guide you." To submit means to come under authority. Our word, "submit," comes from two Latin words. "Sub" meaning "under," and " mitto," meaning "to send." We are all sent under God's authority, the apostle's authority, and the elder's authority. The people are to obey their elders who rule over the local church and submit themselves, because they watch for the souls of the people as they that must give account. The day will come when elders will have to stand before the Lord and give account of those who were in their charge. The important thing is that when the elders give account before the Lord, they may do it with joy and not with sorrow. When an elder stands before the Lord and the Lord asks him about a certain brother, it would be wonderful for the elder to be able to say that he was the most faithful brother; he walked in his ministry, and was a most wonderful brother. Then the Lord asks the elder about another brother and he hangs his head and says, I am sorry, I did everything I knew how to do but he just would not walk in your ways. That would be unprofitable to the person concerned. The people should walk according to the direction of the elders; the elders should walk in the ways of the apostles; and the apostles walk in the ways revealed unto them by the Lord Jesus Christ.

G. CAN A WOMAN BE AN ELDER?

I won't try to answer this question myself but we will look in the scriptures for the answer.

1. "But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence" (I Timothy 2:12). An elder's ministry is a ministry that carries authority. Paul says here that he doesn't allow a woman to teach or to have authority over the man. She should not be teaching the doctrine of the church, or trying to establish the revelation from the Lord to the men of the church. Also, she is not to have authority over the man. That rules out the office of eldership for a woman.

We have the reason given in verses 13 and 14 why the woman should not have authority over the man. When it comes to teaching men, and having authority over them, she is supposed to be quiet. "For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression" (I Timothy 2:13-14). A woman cannot be trusted to teach the revelation. It wasn't Adam who was deceived but it was Eve. I would like to quote some of this from Phillips translation: "... I don't allow women to teach, nor do I ever put them in positions of authority over men--I believe their role is to be receptive. (My reasons are that man was created before woman. Further, it was Eve and not Adam who was

first deceived and fell into sin. Nevertheless, in spite of the curse upon Eve, I believe that woman will come safely through childbirth if they maintain a life of faith, love, holiness and gravity.)."

2. Where a woman is under the supervision of elders, she can prophecy, sing, pray and exhort in the public meeting. She should not prophesy in a ladies meeting where there are no elders present. To prophesy, she must be under the supervision of elders.

A woman is not limited in receiving Spiritual gifts or in operating them. All the gifts of the Spirit have been prophesied to women.

3. We are well acquainted with what Isaiah says concerning this world in which we live: "As for my people, children are their oppressors, and women rule over them. O my people, they which lead thee cause thee to err, and destroy the way of thy paths" (Isaiah 3:12).

4. Paul writes to Titus about a very important part of a woman's ministry. Titus is another travelling deacon to whom has been given the responsibility of teaching the order of the kingdom of God in the churches. "But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine" (Titus 2:1). The word become can be used in two different ways. In this case, something becoming is something beautiful. If you see a lady with a pretty hat, you say, "That hat is very becoming." It is an adornment that makes her look nice. Here Paul exhorts Titus to teach the things that become sound doctrine, or in other words, teach the things that adorn the doctrine of God and make it appear beautiful.

"That the aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience. The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things" (Titus 2:2-3). Here the word "become" is used again. The older women's behaviour should adorn the way of the Lord and make it beautiful to the beholder. Then Paul says they should be teachers of good things. In the next two verses, he tells who and what they should teach. "That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed" (Titus 2:4-5). These are the things the older women are to teach the younger women. As Paul says, that the word of God be not blasphemed or, that the way of the Lord not be spoken of in an evil manner.

I feel that in many ways we have been more interested in making our daughter's nurses, secretaries, and school-teachers than in teaching them to keep house. I pray that in the church this thing can be turned around, and that mothers and older women will teach the younger women the things that have to do with making a good home. Paul says they should be taught to be sober, or in other words, to think seriously about their marriage and their home.

Often you find that young women would like to have a husband, but they are having such a good time in their career and with the money they are making that they don't have time to think seriously about marriage. The ones that are married should be taught to love their husbands and their children. It is a sad thing when a home is broken up, especially when a woman leaves her husband and children. To be discreet means to be sensible and wise in your choices. "Chaste" means to be pure and holy and faithful to her husband.

The young women are to be taught to be keepers at home, or in other words "housekeepers." My wife and I have visited in the apartments of young women where you would think a hurricane had struck. If a man was interested in the young woman and saw her apartment, he would forget her immediately. The living quarters of other young women have been very well kept and perfectly in order.

Older ladies should take the responsibility of teaching the younger women upon themselves and, younger ladies should take close heed to what the older ladies have to teach them. I think it would be well if a young woman could seek out an older woman in whom she could have confidence and ask for her help.

I believe it is intended that these things should be taught younger women on a one to one basis. Older women should visit in the homes of the younger women, and young women should visit the older women. If the elders see a young woman having problems in her home, and there is an older woman who can be of help to her, be sure and send them to minister to the need.

There have been occasions where the elders have felt there was a need among the young women of their congregation, and they have had an older woman teach the young women in a meeting for younger women. This type of meeting is initiated by the elders and is under their supervision, although they probably will not attend.

There are a lot of things that young women need to be taught so they can look after the things of the home. A woman can destroy her own home by not looking after things in a proper way. She can be so wasteful that it is impossible for her husband to be able to finance her waste. A husband and wife need to work together and have objectives before them. They need to know what their plan as a family is. A wife can get completely out of order in her spending and run up bills that there is no way that her husband can meet them. Teach these things to the younger women. This is a real responsibility for the older women.

"That the word of God be not blasphemed." A young woman in the church who doesn't walk right is a poor example in the community. Rather than her life being "becoming" to the doctrine of God, it puts a black mark on it and it puts a black mark on the whole church.

5. The question has been asked whether an elder's wife has any more authority than other women in the church. She has no more authority than the other women, but she has a greater responsibility because of her husband's office in the church. Her life must set a good example for the other women. The same would be true of a deacon's wife. These women perhaps deserve respect because they are wives of elders and deacons. In fact they should live in such a way that their lives demand respect; but this will not give them authority over any other members of the church.

H. WAYS WOMEN MINISTERED IN THE SCRIPTURES.

We will mention some of the ways the women of the scriptures ministered. The ministry of the ladies is greatly appreciated in the church; and we don't want to put them in such a tight corner that they can't minister. We want them to minister according to the order that God has set in the church. If they minister in this way, they will bring glory to the Lord.

1. "And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul. And

when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there. And she constrained us" (Acts 16:14-15).

This woman had Paul and Silas, and any others travelling with them, come and stay in her house as long as they were in Philippi. This is a wonderful way of ministering, and as the brethren have travelled throughout the churches over many years, there are many sisters who have ministered in this way. This has been a tremendous blessing and is a ministry that should not be discounted in any way.

2. "I commend unto you Phebe our sister, which is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea: That ye receive her in the Lord, as becometh saints, and that ye assist her in whatsoever business she hath need of you: for she hath been a succourer of many, and of myself also" (Romans 16:1-2). This woman is described as being a succourer or a helper of many. Apparently she had a ministry of helps. The word "servant" that is used here is from the Greek word "diakonos" which means servant. This is the same word as is translated deacon. Deaconesses have been mentioned from the very beginning of the move of the Spirit, but this is a matter that God has to give us more revelation on. Pray that the Lord will lead us concerning this ministry, and that He will give us a good understanding of the area in which a deaconess ministers. We need further revelation.

It is apparent that this woman served as a deaconess. We do not want to be short of the blessing of any ministry, but we do not want to get ahead of what God has in mind.

3. "Greet Priscilla and Aquila my helpers in Christ Jesus: Who have for my life laid down their own necks: unto whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles. Likewise greet the church that is in their house. Salute my well beloved Epaenetus, who is the firstfruits of Achaia unto Christ" (Romans 16:3-5).

We run across the couple, Pricilla and Aquila, at different times in the record of the New Testament church. Paul calls them "helpers" in Christ Jesus. The Greek word translated helper here is "sunergos" which means a companion in labour, a fellow labourer or a fellow worker. The brethren have felt led of the Lord to appoint men as helpers to help in ministering to the church. We don't know exactly how Pricilla fitted into this, but I feel that she would have fit in the same way as one of the ministries' wives would fit in when she travels with her husband. The ministries' wives are very helpful in many things in that they pray, and are standing ready to prophecy or sing in the meetings. Their ministry has been a great asset and blessing. I am sure that Pricilla was standing ready in the meetings to minister as the Spirit of God moved. She would have also been a great blessing in private conversation with the women.

It is mentioned here that Pricilla and Aquila had a church in their house. This is also mentioned in I Corinthians 16:19. To have the church meet in a house is quite a burden upon the sisters. There are many house churches and God has blessed them. There are many people who have adverse feelings about a church meeting in a house, but I feel it is a wonderful thing to have a church meet in someone's house. It is hoped that the time will come when a house gets too small to hold all the people and the church will have to move to a rented hall. If the church is ministering according to the gift of each particular member, on a one to one basis outside the meeting, people will feel at home in a house meeting. It won't make any difference to people whether they meet in a cathedral or someone's humble home. God bless the people who have had the local church meet in their house.

The women of the local church also have important ministries in intercession, helps, exhortation and various other kinds of ministry as assigned to them by the Holy Spirit.

XVII. DEACONS OF THE LOCAL CHURCH.

When we talked about the ministry of the apostolic deacons, we covered a lot that could also be said about the deacons of the local church.

A. The Greek word for deacon is "diakonis" which means to give help, to act as an agent or to serve.

B. We have the qualifications of a deacon given in I Timothy 3:8-13: "Likewise must the deacons be grave, not double-tongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre; Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience. And let these also first be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon, being found blameless. Even so must their wives be grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things. Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well. For they that have used the office of a deacon well purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus."

1. The deacons are to be grave. In other words, they are to be serious minded about Spiritual things in general, and, in particular, about their office in the church. Paul says they should not be double-tongued. That is they don't say one thing out of one side of their mouth and a different thing out of the other.

2. They are not to be consumers of alcohol. The same things apply to deacons in this matter, as was said about the elders. A man's vision and judgement is impaired by the use of alcohol, and there is no way he can perform in his ministry in this condition.

This same qualification applies to the whole church for the same reason.

3. A deacon must not be greedy of filthy lucre. Filthy lucre is dishonest gain. All his dealings must be honest and above board.

4. I would like to read verse 9 from the NIV, "They must keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience." They are to walk in the things that the Lord has revealed; if one does that one's conscience will be clear.

5. "They must first be tested; and then if there is nothing against them, let them serve as deacons" (I Timothy 3:10 NIV). Paul was recommending a probation period.

6. Deacons' wives must have the same qualifications as elders' wives. A deacon can only have one wife and his children must walk in an orderly way. He must manage his household in a proper way.

7. "Those who have served well gain an excellent standing and great assurance in their faith in Christ Jesus" (I Timothy 3:13 NIV). Some have thought that if a deacon performs well, he is sure of a promotion. As we have already said there are no promotions in the body of Christ. We all just fit into the calling of God and

the ministry He has given us. The scripture we have read throws a good light on it. Those who have served well gain an excellent standing and great assurance in their faith in Christ Jesus.

C. THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF DEACONS.

1. The deacon's ministry is to serve and give help. They should look for ways to be of help in the church. They should help the elders as directed by the elders. A deacon can do anything an elder can do, but he must act under the direction of the elders.

A deacon's ministry is very important, and the church would be at a great loss without the help that they give.

I will add this also. If a man is to be a good elder, he should have the ability to be a good deacon. If he would not make a good deacon, he will never make a good elder. There are many elders who have never served as a deacon; but if a man would make a good elder, he would also make a good deacon. Not all deacons will make good elders.

XVIII. THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF MEMBERS OF THE LOCAL CHURCH.

A. All members of the local church have a responsibility in promoting the kingdom of God. Every ministry in the local church should be ready to function twenty-four hours a day, whether in the meeting or out. Your ministry is not something you take out of the drawer and dust it off Sunday morning just before you go to the meeting, then come home and put it away until next Sunday. Those of the move of the Spirit should be the best soul winners in all the earth because of the ministries they have received. If every member of the local church functions in the ministry that they have, it cannot help but effect the community in which they live.

1. "For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith" (Romans 12:3). If we think soberly concerning ourselves, we think according to the prophecies that have been given over us.

2. "For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching; Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness" (Romans 12:4-8). When he speaks of ministering, he is referring to the ministry of serving. He who teaches should wait on his teaching. Teaching doesn't just happen in the meeting. God speaks of "teaching sinners in the way" (Psalms 25:8).

Paul gives us a list of the ministries, possessed by the different members of the local church. We pray that all these ministries will function daily in the life of the church. That is what is going to make the church effective in the earth. We pray for a continual growth in the church.

The prophets prophesied about the day when you won't say to your neighbour, "...know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest" (Hebrews 8:11). God has given unto us the understanding of the function of the kingdom of God. What was prophesied by the prophet Jeremiah should be coming to pass under the order of the kingdom of God. There should be a continual increase in the church, until the glorious day the prophets spoke about comes to pass. May the vision of every one of us be enlarged so we can see what God has in mind. God's mind is that every knee will bow to Jesus Christ and that every tongue will confess that he is Lord. The sooner the better. So let your ministry function.

Look to God that you may see your gifts operating. Give great thought and consideration to your ministry, that it will bear the fruit that God has in mind for it.

3. "Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is part of it. And in the church God has appointed first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, also those having gifts of healing, those able to help others, those with gifts of administration, and those speaking in different kinds of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret? But eagerly desire the greater gifts" (I Corinthians 12:27-31 NIV). Paul was writing to a very carnal church and was talking to them about their carnality. There are no “greater" gifts in the body of Christ, but the Corinthians seemed to think there were. There are ministries with more authority than others, but one is not greater than another. May god help us to seek the operation of the gift that God has given us that it may further the cause of Christ in the earth.

Paul continues, "And now I will show you the most excellent way. If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging symbol. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing" (I Corinthians 12:31-13:2). There has to be, along with the gift and the ministry, a love or great concern for the people of this earth; a great concern for their need. This may be a different way of expressing what Paul is saying here. If I can prophecy like he says, and have not love, I am nothing. If I can move mountains, and there is no love in my heart, or no concern for the man who is walking out there in the sin and disorder of the earth, it doesn't count for anything. Let this concern grow in the church.

Remember that the elders don't do all the ministering. The elders are there to be overseers, and to direct the church in its ministry. Sometimes, I think that the elders could be somewhat at fault. The elders may have to give the people a little push to get them into the thing that God wants them to do. Encouragement works wonders, too. The elders will often do things themselves when other members of the body should be doing it. That is not right. Often in the home, people will say it is easier to do it yourself than to get the children to do it. That might be very true, but it doesn't help the child who should be doing it. The same is true with elders and the people in the church. This attitude will never help the people to get into their ministry. Elders, give the people the encouragement, and the incentive to reach out and minister in the way God has called them.

XIX. THE GOVERNMENT OF THE HOME.

1. The home is a little kingdom, and all the blessings of the kingdom of God can rest upon a home. A home is just like a little church. The husband is the elder of the home. He is the head of the woman, and he should be the head of his home. The wife is the helper and the children are the members of the congregation. The church in the home should meet together every day in family worship. One of the brethren said one time that the family should meet together every day. The local church should meet together once a week, and the whole church should meet together once a year. This is important. Israel was instructed to meet together at certain times of the year.

2. "But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God" (I Corinthians 11:3). This is the order that God has set.

We'll go back to Genesis 3:16: "Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee." This is God speaking to Adam and Eve after they had fallen in the temptation that the serpent brought them. Notice that God says, "Thy desire shall be to thy husband and he shall rule over thee." I have never met a girl yet who didn't desire to be married. This is what God is talking about. God has put it in the heart of woman that her desire should be toward her husband. Circumstances could arise in a home where this desire is destroyed by drunkenness, or abuse of some kind or other, and the order of God be destroyed. In a normal home, a woman's desire is toward her husband and it is in her heart to please him. It is something that God has placed in the man's heart to rule over the home. A carnal man will sometimes abuse this authority by trying to be a boss or a taskmaster. He should rule with the love of God in his heart, always caring for his wife as he would care for his own body, for they two are one.

4. THE WIFE'S RESPONSIBILITY TO HER HUSBAND.

"Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord" (Ephesians 5:22). We often hear of women who, in their speech, seem willing to submit to the Lord, but it is another question when it comes to submitting to their husband. Their attitude in submission should be the same to their husband as to the Lord. "For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything (Ephesians 5:23-24)." We have talked about the importance of the submission of the church to Christ, and walking according to the leading of the Holy Spirit. The wives' relationship to their husbands should be very similar to the relationship of the church to Christ. We have a similar reference to the wife's responsibility in Colossians 3:18 (NIV), "Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord."

5. THE HUSBANDS RESPONSIBILITY TO HIS WIFE.

"Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church" (Ephesians 5:25-29). It is a great responsibility for the man to love his wife as Christ loved the church. A man should expect to

give himself for his family. I am not talking about a man having to lay down his life to protect his family, but, day by day, he puts his whole effort into providing for his family both the things that belong to the material realm and the Spiritual realm. He has to be sure to keep these two in balance. Often in our country, men will over provide for their family, which doesn't do the family any good, but rather spoils them.

Just as often, the home is underprovided in the things of the Spirit. A man is obligated before God to take the Spiritual leadership in the home. A mother has a lot to contribute in ministering to the children in these things. In a good home, the mother is at home with the children. From the time they are born, until they go to school, they are with her all day long, and she can be instilling into their lives those things that are of Spiritual value. This is very important and is the reason that we teach very strongly that a mother's place is in the home and not in the workplace. There are circumstances where the husband is sick, or has met with an accident, that the wife may have to work outside the home in order to provide for the family. This could be a place where the ministry of the church could fit in. Also a family should try to have some savings set aside to cope with such circumstances.

I would like to say something about welfare. Welfare should be administered by the church; and if the church had looked after their responsibility, governments would not have to be involved. The church has failed in their tithing, and what money they have, they have put into buildings and other such projects. They have failed to minister to the needy. Welfare would be administered properly if it was administered by elders. It is important that the church look after their own. Looking after the needy is first of all a family responsibility. If the needy have no family to support them, or the family won't support them, or the family doesn't have the resources to support them, then the church has to take over. Under the present circumstances that we have where we pay taxes to support our welfare system, those entitled to receive government welfare should accept it. As we have said, the system is not good, but we will likely have to live with it until the fullness of the Kingdom of God has come.

When a man marries, he must leave his father and mother. If it were possible, it would be better if a young man and his wife lived far away from both sets of parents. This is not always possible because of business relationships etc. A young man has to make that separation from his parents. He can no longer run home to mummy. That break with his parents has to come, and it must come if he is going to have a happy marriage. "For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife" (Mark 10:7).

It is the mind of God that that tie with father and mother's home be broken. A man must let go of his mother's apron strings and establish his own home. "He shall be joined unto his wife and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery" (Ephesians 5:31-32) When I look at a man and his wife, I see two people, but God sees one. This is a mystery to us, but nevertheless, it is true.

As we have said, the father in the home is to provide Spiritual leadership, and he is also to provide materially for the home. The mother is his helper in that she cares for the home.

"And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him" (Genesis 2:18). When God speaks of a help meet for him He speaks of a helper that is sufficient to meet mans' need. If a man had to take the entire responsibility in caring for the provision for the home, as well as all the housekeeping duties, he would certainly be in need of help.

God created woman that she might help him where he lacked. In the NIV, we read, "The Lord God said, 'It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him'" (Genesis 2:18). A man has many limitations, and a wife can help him in these, whether a man wants to admit it or not. That is why women are different than men. It seems that God sees that a man gets the wife that will meet his limitations and compliment him. She is his completeness.

6. WHO IS MOST IMPORTANT, MAN OR WOMAN?

Paul answers this question for us in I Corinthians 11:11-12: "Nevertheless neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord. For as the woman is of the man, even so is the man also by the woman; but all things of God." Neither man nor woman can lay claim to being most important. If there were no women there would be no men; and if there were no men there would be no women. Every man has a mother and every woman has a father. It is not a matter of one being more important than the other, but it is a matter of the order that God has set. Everything has to be controlled by guidelines, and in the family, God has set the man as the head of the woman and the woman as the man's helper, she being in submission to her head. As far as God is concerned, they are of equal importance. The man is being tested in his faithfulness in one way and the woman in another.

"Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful" (I Corinthians 4:2). I might include that a woman must be found faithful too. God has given man one test to prove his faithfulness and the woman another. The man's test is that of being faithful in the headship in the family as God has appointed him, and the woman's test is that of being a submissive helper to her head. Neither is one more important than the other. Both are absolutely necessary in the orderly function of the family, and both must be faithful to the requirements of God.

7. FATHER AND MOTHERS RESPONSIBILITY TO THEIR CHILDREN.

This is what God says of the man of faith who walked with God and pleased Him. "And the LORD said, Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do; seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment; that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him" (Genesis 18:17-19).

Parents have a responsibility to bring their children up so they will keep the way of the Lord. God had confidence in Abraham that he would do this. Because of this, God was able to share His secrets with him. We see from this the importance to both parents and children that children know the Lord and walk in His ways.

"Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it" (Proverbs 22:6). For a proper and balanced training, a child needs both the home and the church. Parents should never protect their children from the elder's correction. A child should be brought to the meeting of the church as soon as possible after birth. The moving of the Spirit of God has an effect on them, even at that early age. Even if they got nothing else from the meeting, they would be learning how to behave in church.

Parents need to teach their children in the home, not only in family worship, but also throughout the whole day. We are instructed in this way in Deuteronomy 6:6-7: "And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them

when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up." The precepts of the Lord need to be kept constantly before the family. Both mother and father play an important role in this.

We are taught similarly in Deuteronomy 4:9-10, "Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life: but teach them thy sons, and thy sons' sons; Specially the day that thou stoodest before the LORD thy God in Horeb, when the LORD said unto me, Gather me the people together, and I will make them hear my words, that they may learn to fear me all the days that they shall live upon the earth, and that they may teach their children."

8. CORRECTION AND CHASTISEMENT.

I would like to quote the words of the wisest man the earth has known; Solomon was his name and he was king of Israel: "He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes" (Proverbs 13:24). Then there is another similar scripture a few chapters further on in his writings: "Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying" (Proverbs 19:18.) I am not talking about beating children or injuring them physically with the rod. Chastisement has taken the disobedience and foolishness out of the minds and hearts of many children in the past, and it still works today. A parent must be sensible in the use of chastisement and never let him/herself get carried away with anger.

"Withhold not correction from the child: for if thou beatest him with the rod, he shall not die. Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and shalt deliver his soul from hell. My son, if thine heart be wise, my heart shall rejoice, even mine" (Proverbs 23:13-15). Not all correction needs to be done with the rod. There are other effective ways that should be tried first. One thing that is very important is, that if a parent tells a child that they will punish them for disobedience, they had better be sure they carry it out. So often a mother or father will say, "If you do that again, I give you such and such a punishment." The child does it again and there is no punishment. The disobedience grows and the child loses all confidence in their parents. Their promise is no good in this case and it will be the same in other things as well.

9. CHILDREN'S RESPONSIBILITY TOWARD THEIR PARENTS.

"Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. 'Honour your father and mother' - which is the first commandment with a promise - 'that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth'" (Ephesians 6:1-3 NIV). This is the first commandment that carries a promise with it. First of all, if children obey their parents, things will go well for them. Secondly, they will enjoy long life. The disobedient don't often enjoy life. If they disobey parents, they will disobey the elders and their teachers at school. Then they will disobey the police and will end up in a very sad state. The place for a child to learn obedience is at home while they are still very young.

Verse 4 in the NIV is instruction to fathers: "Fathers do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord." Phillips translation reads this way. "Fathers, don't overcorrect your children or make it difficult for them to obey the commandment. Bring them up with Christian teaching in Christian discipline." Nothing is more exasperating to a child than someone continually yelling at them. It would be far better to correct them, with whatever means necessary, and be finished with it. Also, if a

child feels that he can never do anything to please his parents no matter how hard he tries, he will give up with discouragement. Encouragement is very necessary.

Paul wrote the same thing to the Colossian church as he did to the Ephesians: "Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord. Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged" (Colossians 3:20-21). The churches in Paul's day had the same needs and problems as they do today.

CONCLUSION.

We have talked about the administration of the universal church under the headship of Christ with apostolic ministries laying the foundation for the church and taking the oversight of the whole church. They do this with the help of the deacons that God has given them to be their helpers.

The administration of the local church rests in the hands of the elders and deacons who have been appointed by the apostles. They take the oversight of the local church.

The home is administered by the father of the home, along with the help of his wife. They run the home together and bring up their children to love the Lord and walk with him.

We have endeavoured to bring to you some of the revelation that has come from the Lord since the move of the Spirit began. This revelation has come through many ministries and has not come through any one member of the body of Christ. We pray that God will lead us on to enter into the fullness of His kingdom and that we will be faithful in following the leading of the Holy Spirit.

ADVICE ON ADMINISTRATION

November 1988 Sharon Star

The things I am going to write about administration are not intended to be law, but advice to help in the governing of our affairs that pertain to the natural realm. In fact, for a spiritual person, I believe it is impossible for us to separate the natural from the Spiritual. When handled in the proper way, the natural becomes spiritual. It is the same as when something was placed on the altar in the tabernacle in the wilderness it became holy. All our affairs should become holy.

Some time ago, I read through the book of Proverbs, and as I read I listed all the subjects dealt with in separate columns. Under each heading, I listed the Scripture references that dealt with that subject.

The subject most spoken of in Proverbs is wisdom. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom..." (Proverbs 9:10). This is true. He is not talking about being scared of God, but being reverent before the Lord. That is the beginning of wisdom. In Proverbs 3:13 we read, "Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding."

"Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom..." (Proverbs 4:7). We should perhaps ask what wisdom is. It is the ability to use knowledge in a sane manner. It is good judgement. It is very important that we should ask God for wisdom. James says, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him" (James 1:5). Wisdom is very, very necessary in dealing with things in this temporal realm.

The subject that made the next longest list had to do with the words we speak. "In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin: but he that refraineth his lips is wise. The tongue of the just is as choice silver: the heart of the wicked is little worth. The lips of the righteous feed many: but fools die for the want of wisdom" (Proverbs 10:19-21). "The mouth of the just bringeth forth wisdom: but the froward tongue shall be cut out. The lips of the righteous know what is acceptable: but the mouth of the wicked speaketh frowardness" (Proverbs 10:31,32). There are many scriptures that speak concerning the things that we talk about.

This may be a surprise to many, but the third most frequently spoken of thing in Proverbs involved the acquisition and use of money or material things. This will be the theme of my writing. Never has there been a day when so many people are having financial problems. At a recent meeting that I attended, many people came seeking help for their financial needs.

They were prayed for, but people with this kind of problems need more than prayer. They need teaching on their methods of administration, and then a will to follow the instruction given.

I do not intend to deal with tithing in this article. That is another subject. We have been taught that we are obligated to God to give Him one tenth of our increase, and anyone who has done this has found that God's blessing overflows to him.

The Lord is speaking to us in Proverbs 8:17-21, "I love them that love me; and those that seek me early shall find me. Riches and honour are with me; yea, durable riches and righteousness. My fruit is better than gold, yea, than fine gold; and my revenue than choice silver. I lead in the way of righteousness, in the midst of the paths of judgement; That I may cause those that love me to inherit substance; and I will fill their treasures."

Some people feel that a Christian should be poor. Nothing is further from the truth. There is nothing wrong with having riches.

In the acquisition of riches we must keep our priorities right. If we seek first the riches, very likely we will never get them, or if we do we will lose out spiritually. As Jesus said, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matthew 6:33).

The important thing is how we use that with which God has blessed us. May I quote Proverbs 10:16 from the Living Bible: "The good man's earnings advance the cause of righteousness. The evil man squanders his on sin." Nothing is more true. We see it all around us every day of our lives.

Let us now read Proverbs 10:4, "He becometh poor who dealeth with a slack hand: but the hand of the diligent maketh rich." The Scriptures promise us that if we are careless with the things God gives us, we

will become poor. People put a lot of faith in the promises of God, but this is one that I am sure most people never think of.

Proverbs 10:5 continues, "He that gathereth in summer is a wise son: but he that sleepeth in harvest is a son that causeth shame." God is teaching us to lay up for the future. Whether it is the season of summer, or the summertime of your life, a man should lay something up in store for the wintertime of life. A son that sleeps in harvest causes shame. This applies to what I have just said. Of course, there is no sense in a man laying up beyond his need. It seems that people sometimes get an insatiable hunger for riches. They get a little, then they want more and more. Eventually they have far more than they will ever need. In such cases, a person should learn the joy of giving. When we have enough, ask God for wisdom in what we do with our surplus.

If the church is to administer the affairs and finances of the kingdom, we must learn to administer in the personal realm now. Even now, our administration reaches beyond the personal level. The elders administer the affairs of the local church according to the teaching of the apostles. They give advice and help in many areas. The older women are to teach the younger women the administration of the home and so on.

Our experience is much the same as the ones Matthew describes in chapter 25:14-30. A man delivered his money to his servants and went to a far country. Two profited and were rewarded, but the third one was afraid and hid his talent in the earth. Consequently, he lost it and any reward as well. Jesus was teaching administration, and it applies whether it is in the spiritual realm or the temporal. This is a time of learning for the administration of the kingdom. If we learn well now, God will give us a place of administration in His Kingdom.

We have an example of how God has blessed in the administration in the church. The people are taught to tithe. The elders gather the tithe on the first day of the week. One third of that is kept for local needs. The other two thirds are put into a fund, which looks after the extension work of the church and foreign needs. As a result, men can be sent with the message of the Kingdom to the end of the earth and never have to take up an offering. When a church is established, they are taught to tithe and follow the same pattern. No pleas for money are ever made.

I would like to talk about the use of credit. For most people, credit is a trap. Lending institutions get a person in their snare and it is very hard to get out. Let us read Proverbs 22:7, "The rich ruleth over the poor, and the borrower is servant to the lender."

Credit is very tempting when you are looking at that new dress or a new car. The sales person will tell you about all the advantages of buying now and paying later. You can enjoy it while you pay for it, etc., but it is a trap and a snare. A person should never buy consumer goods or depreciable asset on credit. We should always save for such purchases until we have enough saved, then buy. There may be times when a person has to buy a car on credit, such as for a business or transportation to work. In this case, the car will be contributing to your income.

But by the time you need the second one, a person should have saved enough to buy it. Never buy a pleasure vehicle on credit.

The reason we shouldn't buy consumer goods on credit is that credit puts you in the snare of the moneylender; and unless you are very careful, you will remain there all your life. You will contribute thousands of dollars to his purse that you could very well use yourself. For instance, you are considering buying an article of furniture on credit and you will pay x number of dollars a month. It would be better to put your x number of dollars per month in the bank and collect interest on it than to pay the credit company fifteen to twenty percent carrying charges.

It is surprising how fast interest on savings builds up and adds to your increase. Think seriously about this.

In the case of a house, very few young people have any way of saving enough to buy one. A house is an investment that will hold its value and is not like the toy set or a new car, which depreciates so quickly. In buying a house, a person should never go beyond his ability to pay. Some have done that, and because they couldn't meet the payments, have lost their house. Some have also brought undue hardship on their families by buying a house they couldn't afford. Payments took so much of their income they didn't have enough left for food and clothing.

It is a good idea to start small and when that is paid for, sell and buy better. Many financial experts will tell you that your best investment is to pay off your house mortgage.

Usually a farm, farm equipment, or a business must be bought on credit. These are things that, with God's blessing, will bring increase, and the original investment will often appreciate in value. Again do not buy beyond your means to pay. You have to allow for business slumps or crop failures. There many people in our province who, when they had all they needed bought more land and larger equipment to farm it with, have gone into bankruptcy.

Why does a man, when he has enough to supply the needs of his family, go and buy more land that he doesn't need? The price of wheat has fallen so low, they can't pay their debts and consequently, they have lost everything. We should be very, very wise in borrowing and continually ask for God's guidance. There is a place for borrowing money to finance a business or a farm because it will bring you increase, but avoid purchasing things on credit that will bring no increase.

We must all be warned about the use of credit cards. Some of us should never have one. It is so easy to purchase the things we want and pay for them with the credit card without considering that at the end of the month we have to pay the credit card company. The only reason a person should use a credit card is to avoid carrying cash.

If you are going on a trip and would have to carry a large amount of cash, there is a place for a credit card; but be sure you have enough in the bank at home to cover all credit card purchases. Otherwise, when you get home you will be in trouble. The credit card company will take great pleasure in charging you twenty percent interest.

Do not use your credit card as a means of borrowing and do not overdraw your checking account. It would be better for most of us to always use cash. Many times we can get a good discount for cash. If we have no

credit cards or chequing accounts when the cash is all gone, we could spend no more. Remember the borrower is the servant to the lender.

I believe that God wants us to be very careful in our administration. There are many times in our lives when we may have no money, but we should be very thankful too, if we have no debts.

There is a lot of instruction in the book of Proverbs on how to use your money. This may not sound like a very spiritual writing, but if we can't administer the things of the natural and material realm, how can we administer the Spiritual?

We must also say something about savings. I heard a man say one time that we should give away ten percent of our earnings, save ten percent, and spend the rest. He wasn't a professing Christian, but I think his words were wise. This was good advice. We are instructed of the Lord to give Him ten percent, and it is wise to save some.

I spoke of saving for consumer goods; clothes, furnishings and things for pleasure. The savings that I am talking about now are above what we need for those things.

We should all have some laid aside for an emergency so we don't become a burden upon the church. I know the church would never see you go hungry, but we should assume, where possible, the responsibility of looking after ourselves. We must be warned where our savings are concerned, to avoid get-rich-quick investments. Many people have lost their life savings in this type of investment. "He that is greedy of gain troubleth his own house..." (Proverbs 15:27). "Wealth gotten by vanity (other translators say scheming) shall be diminished: but he that gathereth by labour shall increase" (Proverbs 13:11).

Some people feel we should not accept interest on our savings. God gave Israel instruction in this. "Thou shalt not lend upon usury to thy brother, usury of money, usury of victuals, usury of anything that is lent upon usury: Unto a stranger thou mayest lend upon usury; but unto thy brother thou shalt not lend upon usury; that the Lord the God may bless thee in all that thou settest thine hand to in the land whither thou goest to possess it" (Deuteronomy 23:19,20). God plainly tells us we should not charge our brother interest on that which we lend him. With the stranger it is a different thing. To me, a bank is a stranger. Just try getting indebted to them and they will show no mercy. If the stranger or sojourner is poor we are also instructed not to charge him interest (Leviticus 25:35,36). Another thing we should consider is life insurance. A Lot of people don't believe in life insurance or fire insurance. I knew a man who wouldn't insure his house against fire and it burned down. Who had to help him get another? The church.

The Scripture gives instruction about caring for our own. "But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel" (I Timothy 5:8). I think that we will all agree that we are responsible for providing for our family while we are alive. What happens in the event that we get sick and die, or get killed in an accident? These things happen and we should make provision for them. When a young man gets married, he should invest in some life insurance in case the worst happens. Don't buy beyond what you can afford or beyond your family’s needs. Besides providing for your families day to day needs, consider insuring your house mortgage so your family will be sure of a place to live.

A man will reach the place in life where he doesn't need life insurance. His children have grown up and left home, and he has enough savings to care for his wife. But if a young man with a family goes on to be with the Lord, what does his family do? No doubt the church will care for them, but he has not properly taken his responsibility. It is just as important to provide for your family next year, as it is today.

Term insurance is the best investment. You can get enough to care for your family at a fairly reasonable price. Shop around and ask God to guide you in it. Term insurance can be adjusted year by year, according to your families need.

Another important thing is taxes. We all hate paying taxes, but we have instruction in the word of God and responsibilities along this line. In Matthew 17:24-27, the tax collector in Capernaum, Peter's hometown, asked Peter if Jesus paid taxes. Peter answered positively. When Peter entered the house where Jesus was, Jesus anticipated the question Peter was going to ask Him. Peter was probably going to ask about the tax. But Jesus in turn asked Peter a question. "Of whom do the kings of the earth take custom or tribute? Of their own children or of strangers? Peter saith unto Him, of strangers. Jesus saith unto him, then are the children free. Notwithstanding, lest we should offend them, go thou to the sea and cast an hook, and take up the fish that first cometh up, and when thou hast opened his mouth, thou shalt find a piece of money: that take, and give unto them for me and thee" (Matthew 17:25-27). As far as I can see, they really didn't have to pay this tax; but Jesus instructed Peter to go pay it anyway so they wouldn't offend the government. I don't advocate paying any tax we don't have to pay, but let us be careful not to offend the tax collector by not paying what we owe. It is a poor testimony.

Let us read Matthew 22:15-22. The Pharisees were trying to plan how they could get Jesus into trouble with the Roman law. They asked question: "Is it lawful to give tribute unto Caesar, or not?" Jesus was able to see what they were planning, so He asked for a coin. He then asked them, "Whose is this image and superscription?" They answered that it was Caesar's. He then answered their question, "Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's." We have a responsibility to render to Caesar the things that belong to Caesar. As much as we hate to do it, we must do it. We must give to God also the things that are God's. I don't think there are many of God's people who find it hard to tithe their increase. Most of get a blessing, a joy and a pleasure from it, especially when we read the promises of God and see them coming to pass in our lives. God says that if we will bring our tithes into the storehouse, He will pour out a blessing that we cannot contain. There is no doubt about it; God has blessed us in the material realm besides His great blessing in the things of the Spirit.

We always find it difficult to give Caesar his share. Maybe it is because we are not spiritual enough, or perhaps it is because we find it hard to give to something that is poorly administered. We will have to pray that the Lord will help us in this, because Jesus instructed the people to pay their tax.

Let us read Romans 13:1-7: "Let every soul be subject to the higher powers. For there is no power but of God; the powers that be are ordained of God..." He is talking about governments here. "...Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God..." This is true; when we resist those that govern us in the natural, we are resisting those that are ordained of God. "...and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation (or condemnation). For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt

thou then not be afraid of the power? Do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same: for he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. Wherefore you must be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake...." We should obey not only to avoid punishment, but also that we can live with a clear conscience. It would be terrible to be living constantly in fear of the law. "...For this cause pay ye tribute also..." In other words, pay your taxes. "...For they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing. Render therefore to all their dues; tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear: honour to whom honour."

We do not need to enlarge on what Paul has said about paying tribute or taxes. It is very plain and needs no explanation. We are to render to all their dues. We should also be absolutely honest in compiling our income tax return. Not only for the sake of avoiding the wrath of the tax collector, but so we can live with a clear conscience. We should take advantage of all legitimate deductions, but never withhold tax. If we follow the scriptural guidelines, God can bless us.

"Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul; having your conversation honest among the Gentiles" (I Peter 2:11-12). The word "conversation" here means "manner of life" in our modern English. This is something that every Christian should strive for. Our business dealings should be absolutely honest. There is no place in the church for any shady business. "...that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation. Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king as supreme; or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well. For so is the will of God, that with well doing you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men:" (I Peter 2:12-15). The best way to silence a foolish man is by your well doing or good behaviour. God will establish your righteousness. He will cause it to be seen in the earth. "As free, and not using your liberty for a cloke of maliciousness, but as the servants of God. Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king" (I Peter 2:16-17). These things are instructions for us that we should be subject to the powers that God has ordained. When they ask for tax money, we will just have to ask God for the ability to rejoice in giving it to them.

The greatest cause for divorce is disagreement over money. Money problems break up more homes than anything else. Sometimes the problem is with the husband. He is either a spendthrift or a tightwad (extremely stingy). Sometimes you find a man who, instead of engaging himself in the responsibilities of marriage, spends all his time in his high-powered car or carousing with his friends. He has never grown up and matured. He is still a boy, and unless God helps him, he always will be. "Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For everything in the world-the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes, and the boasting of what he has and does-comes not from the Father but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever" (I John 2:15-17 NIV). The man described here is the spendthrift who uses all his resources to indulge the desires of the flesh.

The tightwad is the one who thinks only of how large his bank account is. He will hardly let his wife have enough to buy food, let alone any of the other necessities of life. Both extremes are wrong. The place of balance is Spiritual. The best cure for the stingy person is for him to start giving to those in need. "There is

that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty. The liberal soul shall be made fat; and he that watereth shall be watered also himself" (Proverbs 11:24,25). It is a wonderful thing how God blesses giving. When the Scriptures talk of scattering here, it is speaking of giving. I don't know how God brings an increase, but He does. He that withholds that which he is able to give will end up being poor.

A husband and wife should seek that place which is balanced, that place that is spiritual. They should work together in both saving and spending, rather than letting these things get into the realm of disagreement.

We must remember though that, because of his God given headship, the husband must make the final decision concerning these things. If the wife is submissive and mistakes are made, the husband must bear the responsibility for those mistakes. Husbands have a great responsibility in asking God for guidance in the direction of their families.

We have talked about how the husband can waste all his substance on frivolous things. The wife can do the same thing. There is a German saying (at least it was German man who quoted it to me), which says, "A wife can throw it out the back door faster than her husband can bring it in the front door." A wife can be very wasteful. "Every wise woman buildeth her house; but the foolish plucketh it down with her hands" (Proverbs 14:1). We see this happening where a woman doesn't take her responsibility in the home. She actually destroys by her foolishness the thing that God has given her.

A husband and wife should work together on financial things that concern their home. When they want to spend any appreciable amount of money, they should consult one another and be agreed on it. A man should never buy a new car without talking it over with his wife. Neither should a woman go and buy a whole new outfit of clothes without consulting her husband. Couples should work together concerning their finances.

I am talking about even trivial things, like a cup of coffee in a restaurant. This though can become a burden, and if indulged in excessively, will eat up many dollars in a month. These small things can eat away at our finances and then we wonder why we have no money. Use discretion and wisdom.

A family should keep books. This would be very hard for a lot of people, but those who are having financial problems should definitely keep an accurate record of all their spending. The reason for this is so we know what we have done with our money. Often when there are no records kept, people don't know what has happened to their money. If we keep a simple form of records, we can go back over them and see what we have done with our money. You have a means of controlling your expenditures when you have things written down. You can look at your accounts and see where mistakes have been made, and husband and wife can agree on how to remedy the situation in the future. This will help families to rectify their financial problems. This would also be good for the young, as oftentimes, young people squander their money on things that are of no value.

Your books do not have to balance to the very cent, but they should be fairly accurate so you know what you have done with your money. If you do this God will bless you for it. "The soul of the sluggard desireth and hath nothing; but the soul of the diligent shall be made fat" (Proverbs 13:4). "Seest thou a man diligent in his business? He shall stand before kings; he shall not stand before mean men" (Proverbs 22:29).

A man and his wife should work together on these things. They should be of one mind in them. If there is disagreement, they should make it a matter of prayer until they can agree. Oftentimes, a person will think they just have to have something, but if they leave it for a few days, it is not nearly so tempting. A person should never buy on impulse.

"The hand of the diligent shall bear rule: but the slothful shall be under tribute" (Proverbs 12:24). We like to think of sitting with Christ in His throne in His Kingdom. We think of ruling with Him, but it is the one who is diligent who will sit in that place. The one who is careless in all his affairs, whether they are in the material realm or the spiritual, is the person who will be ruled over. Banks and finance companies enjoy being our rulers.

Talking of these things does not bring a great deal of rejoicing in the realm of the Spirit, but I am sure it is part of being spiritual to look after the material things in a way that is pleasing to God.

CONCERNING THE USE OF ALCOHOL

The brethren asked me to speak to the young people who gathered in North Battleford between Christmas and The New Year about the use of alcohol. Since then, I have been asked to write on this subject for the Sharon Star.

I might begin by saying that neither the church nor the apostolic ministries in any way endorse the use of liquor or alcoholic beverages in any form except in two cases.
Firstly, God has revealed to the ministries that we should use wine for the communion. The reason for this is that all the leaven, or the elements in the grape juice that would cause it to spoil, have been purged through the process of fermentation. This is a perfect type of the blood of the sinless Son of God.

Secondly, it may be used for medicinal purposes under a doctor's orders and direction only. We have all known the person who has used liquor to cure their cold or ease the pain of rheumatism. What happens is that they drink so much that they become insensible to any feeling, and the complaint is still there when the effect of the alcohol wears off. Paul told Timothy to use a little wine for his stomach's sake. Notice that he said, "a little." I do not have to write at length concerning the havoc the use of alcohol plays on society. Homes are broken up, wives or husbands suffer severely, and children are neglected and uncared for. Many cases of wife and child beatings have taken place at the hand of a drunken husband. I am sure that we all know of cases where these things have happened.

During our Christmas season our Department of Health put an advertisement on the TV concerning the use of alcohol. At first, there was a picture of a mother with her children on Christmas Eve arranging presents under the Christmas tree. Then the children hung up their stockings, and the mother wished them goodnight and sent them upstairs to bed. The next picture showed the father driving his car and being stopped by the police. The caption was, "The police will make you an offer you can't refuse," signifying that it is illegal to

refuse a breathalyzer test. The next picture showed the guard in the jail closing the cell door with the father inside. The last showed the worried mother looking at her watch and wondering why her husband was so late getting home. The sad thing is that in many cases, this is what happens. Both men and women bring untold sadness to their families. Alcohol is a curse, and the further we stay away from it, the better.

I do not have to write about the drunk driver behind the wheel of an automobile, either. The statistics in our newspapers or on our TV give us all the information we need along this line. I might say this, though: a man who will drive while impaired has no concern, nor care for his fellowman, and doesn't deserve the privilege of driving a car.

Now I would like to discuss what the attitude of the Christian should be in this matter. We are told by the medical profession that alcohol is very harmful to the human body. Even the use of small amounts of alcohol will cause the death of brain cells that will never be replaced. Many people suffer with alcohol-induced stomach and liver ailments. The list of physical and mental disorders caused by alcohol is endless.

In I Corinthians 3:16-17 we read, "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are." Deliberately causing physical or mental harm to our bodies is defiling the temple of God, and, when we do that, we leave ourselves open to His judgment. Remember that when we have been enlightened to these things, God will no longer wink at our foolishness. We will not only suffer physical incapacities, but we will also suffer the judgment of God.

In Leviticus chapter ten, we have the account of Nadab and Abihu, Aaron's sons, offering strange fire before the Lord. It would seem from the story that they had consumed enough alcohol to make them careless before the Lord and instead of offering the fire from the altar, which God had lit, they offered fire of their own making, thus bringing the judgment of God and death upon themselves.

I would like to quote Moses' words to Aaron after the death of his two sons as recorded in Leviticus 10:9: "Do not drink wine nor strong drink, thou, nor thy sons with thee, when ye go into the tabernacle of the congregation, lest ye die: it shall be a statute forever throughout your generations."
Aaron and his sons were priests in Israel. They ministered before the Lord in the holy place. Perhaps I should briefly describe the tabernacle where God dwelt among His people. There was an outer court at the door of which stood the altar on which sacrifices were offered. This altar, and the sacrifices offered upon it, are a type of the cross and Christ being offered for our sin. Inside the court was the tabernacle, which was divided into two parts. The one part, the holy of holies, was only entered once a year by the high priest who took blood with him to offer for the sins of himself and all the people of Israel. The other part, called the holy place, was where the priests entered daily to offer incense, tend the candlestick with the seven lamps, and care for the table of shewbread. This tabernacle and the priests service is described in Hebrews 9:1-10.

Now, may I quote from I Peter 2:9: "But ye are a chosen generation, A ROYAL PRIESTHOOD, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvellous light." In Revelations 1:6, we are told that those who have been cleansed by the blood of Christ have been made kings and PRIESTS unto God. And again let us read Revelation 5:9-10: "...for

thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred and tongue and people and nation; And hast made us unto our God kings and PRIESTS; and we shall reign on the earth."

As God's people, we have been called as a nation of priests. "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an HOLY PRIESTHOOD, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ" (I Peter 2:5).

This first tabernacle was an earthly sanctuary, but God is building a heavenly. Christ has entered the heavenly tabernacle and has presented His blood on behalf of all who will believe (Hebrews 9:23-28). He has gone beyond the veil to appear in the presence of God for us in the holy of holies in that heavenly sanctuary. The high priest of Israel went in once a year to the holy of holies of the earthly tabernacle, and then came out again until the next year when he would go and offer for the sins of Israel again. Christ has gone into the holy of holies in the heavenly tabernacle, and there, He remains "and is set down with His Father in His throne" (Revelations 3:21).

We, as priests unto God, have entered the holy place, which is our place of ministry. The altar of incense is a type of our prayers, and we are instructed to pray without ceasing (I Thessalonians 5:17). The candlestick is a type of the light that the church is in the world, and it must never go out. The table of shewbread from which the priests ate is typical of us partaking of Christ the bread of life.
Our priesthood is our ministry, and our place of ministry is in the holy place. As Christ has entered the holy of holies and remains there, so we enter the holy place and remain there.

To some people, their ministry is something like their Sunday clothes. They put them on and go to church; then come home, take them off, and put them away until next Sunday. But your ministry in the body of Christ is something that is with you at all times. It is as much a part of you as your personality. You can never lay it down or put it on and off at will. It is a part of you and will remain so. You enter the holy place, and there you remain, ministering before the Lord.
Now, going back to the Lord's instructions to Aaron and his sons: they were not to drink wine or strong drink when they went into the tabernacle, lest they die. If we apply this to ourselves as a part of that holy priesthood, we will never be able to drink wine or strong drink, because we go into the holy place of that new tabernacle, and there we abide. In Israel, the penalty was death. To us, it may be a death from the physical effects of alcohol, or an alcohol related accident. Even more serious than this is the effect alcohol has on our spiritual life.

Let us read I Corinthians 6:9,10: "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor DRUNKARDS, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God."

In Galatians 5:19-21, Paul lists many of the works of the flesh. Among them is drunkenness and he says, "...they who do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God."

Proverbs 23:1-3 says, "When thou sittest to eat with a ruler, consider diligently what is before thee, and put a knife to thy throat, if thou be a man given to appetite. Be not desirous of his dainties for they are deceitful

meat." This could well be applied to a business lunch with your employer. People can't seem to do anything without bringing alcohol into it. But as the wisest man who ever lived said, "Consider what is before thee, and put a knife to your throat." This expression simply means, "don't partake of that which will not glorify the Lord in your body." If you are questioned as to why you abstain from alcohol, don't be afraid to say, "I am a Christian and I feel that as a Christian I should not use liquor."

"It is not for kings to drink wine; nor for princes strong drink: lest they drink and forget the law, and pervert the judgment of any of the afflicted" (Proverbs 31:4-5). As this scripture points out, they who drink forget the law. They forget the law of God and also the laws of our country. The judgment of a person who is under the influence of alcohol is definitely impaired, and he cannot judge his own matters properly, let alone those decisions that affect other people. Also, in business in our day, many matters are decided in favour of the man who supplies the most liquor. Many a deal is settled unfairly by the bottle that is passed under the table. Judgment is perverted, and everyone suffers. Remember that Christians are "KINGS" and priests unto God.

This scripture applies to members of the body of Christ. We must, many times a day, make judgments and decisions concerning our ministry. If we are to be sons of God, we must be led by the Spirit of God, and this is impossible if our judgment is impaired by alcohol. "Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise" (Proverbs 20:1). This is very plain to understand and no comment is necessary.

Let us read Proverbs 23:29,30: "Who hath woe? Who hath sorrow? Who hath contentions? Who hath babbling? Who hath wounds without cause? Who hath redness of eyes? They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine." Solomon answers all his own questions, and we know he was right by observing the experience of those who indulge in alcohol. His questions very aptly describe what happens to the one who uses liquor. They have woe, they have sorrow, they are contentious, they talk a lot and loud, and many people are wounded without cause.

The rest of the chapter further describes the results of the use of wine. "Look not upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup, when it moveth itself aright. At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder" (Proverbs 23:31-32). People don't usually realize they are being bitten until it is too late. I have heard people say that they had become an alcoholic with their first drink. It is the mind of God that we abstain completely from the use of alcoholic beverages. This includes the social drink and the liquor served at a business lunch or banquet.

He goes on to say, "Thine eyes shall behold strange women, and thine heart shall utter perverse things" (Proverbs 23:33). When a person is drunk, their inhibitions seem to leave them; they will do and say things they would never do or say when sober. In the warfare we are in against principalities, powers, and our own carnal lusts, we need all our faculties at their best at all times.
Perverse things are things that are not right or acceptable. They are things that are wicked and disobedient. Perverseness displays stubbornness and contrariness. Alcohol will cause these things to be in our heart, and out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaketh.
"Yea, thou shalt be as he that lieth down in the midst of the sea, or as he that lieth on the top of a mast" (Proverbs 23:34). The drunkard not only loses control of his mental faculties, but also his physical. We

have all seen the person who couldn't walk straight because of alcohol. If you have ever walked on the deck of a ship in rough seas, you will have some idea of how a drunken person acts on solid ground. As Solomon describes him, he is tossed here and there by the waves and is carried wherever the wind takes him. This often applies not only to the physical, but also to the person's whole lifestyle.
You will have to use your imagination to understand the feeling of a man on the top of a mast unless you have had the experience. If the boat rocks, the top of the mast will move much further than the deck of the boat. The distance the top of the mast moves will be in proportion to the height of the mast. Some of you geometry students can figure that out. The truth that Solomon wants us to understand is that this is what the drunkard acts like in his whole lifestyle. He is tossed to and fro and moves back and forth with no stability in his life, either physically or mentally.

"They have stricken me, shalt thou say, and I was not sick; they have beaten me and I felt it not: when shall I awake? I will seek it yet again" (Proverbs 23:35). It doesn't seem to matter what an alcoholic goes through; he will seek more drink. He is just like the pig that has been washed and then returns to the mud puddle. Never let yourself be tempted to even experiment with liquor. The results could be disastrous for you and for all with whom you have to do.

In Isaiah 28:5-6, Isaiah begins by prophesying about the priesthood of the kingdom of God: "In that day shall the Lord of hosts be for a crown of glory, and for a diadem of beauty, unto the residue of His people, And for a spirit of judgment to him that sitteth in judgment, and for strength to them that turn the battle to the gate."

In verse 7, he speaks of the priesthood that had turned to wine: "But they have also erred through wine, and through strong drink are out of the way; the priest and the prophet have erred through strong drink, they are swallowed up of wine, they are out of the way through strong drink; they err in vision, they stumble in judgment."

The next verse further describes the result: "For all tables are full of vomit and filthiness, so that there is no place clean." This type of thing could happen literally, but I believe the prophet is speaking figuratively. Nothing is right when the priesthood debauch their ministry by entering into a life such as this. Even the thoughts of their hearts become unclean.

One of the qualifications that Paul lists for elders, deacons, and their wives, is that they be not given to wine. This is found in I Timothy 3:3-8 and also in Titus 1:7. The reason he gives this as a qualification is obvious from the other scriptures we have read. When Paul speaks to the older women about being examples and instructors to the younger women, he speaks of the same qualification (Titus 2:3).

Ephesians 5:18 reads, "And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit." I like the way J.B. Phillips translates this passage: "Don't get your stimulous from wine, (for there is always the danger of excessive drinking), but let the Spirit stimulate your souls." Finally, I would like to quote Romans 14:17: "For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost."

I have addressed this article mainly to the non-drinker to let them know the dangers of alcohol and the attitude of the Lord toward its use. The church believes in and recommends complete abstinence. If there is anyone who reads this who already has a problem with alcohol, remember there is help from the Lord. I have known of many that He has helped and changed their lives completely. I pray that He will help you to call upon Him.

AMBASSADORS OF RECONCILIATION

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"For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again" (II Corinthians 5:14,15).

In verses 10 and 11, just before the above quote, Paul is speaking of the judgement seat of Christ. We must all appear at this judgement seat. We will all be judged according to what we have done, whether it be good or bad.

Paul is thinking seriously about this judgment. In I Corinthians 9:24-27, we read his words thus, "Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth the prize? So run, that ye may obtain. And every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown; but we an incorruptible. I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air; But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway."

The literal meaning of the word "castaway" in the Greek is to be disapproved. I am sure his worries were not about being saved, but he was concerned about the high calling of sonship.

Paul was concerned about what his contribution was to what was being built upon the foundation that had been laid. We read in I Corinthians 3:12-15, "Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire." This too should be our concern. I pray that we may have more than a pile of ashes to show for our life and ministry here. Paul was not only concerned about himself, but about others. In fact, his concern reached out to the whole creation, which is groaning and travailing in pain. He says, in II Corinthians 5:11 "knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men." In Colossians 1:28,29, in speaking about Christ he says, "Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus: Whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily."

In II Corinthians 5:16-18, he continues to speak of the tremendous work of grace that God performed on our behalf. They knew Christ as a man after the physical, but the only way we can know Him now is by the Spirit. Therefore, as Christians and members of Christ's body, we must come to know one another in the same way. No longer should we recognize the flesh, but the Christ who dwells within. God has made this possible.

In verse 17, Paul speaks of the change that should take place in a person's life when they accept Christ as their Saviour. "He is a new creation. Old things are passed away; all things have become new." With a true "born again" experience, this is what happens.

Sometimes, we see people come to the altar and go away with no change. They have not met with the Lord, and continue to live in their old ways. No birth has taken place.

On the other hand, others come with a real repentant heart and go away a new creation. They go away born of the Spirit. They may have struggles with the power of sin in their lives, but a birth has taken place; a new creature has been created, and changes will come.

In our King James Version we read in verse 18, "And all things are of God." Some people have taken this part of a sentence and isolated it, and blame God for everything that happens. We know that many things have their origin in the mind of Satan, and also many things originate in our own carnal minds.

Most modern translators translate this scripture in this way. "All this is from God." It is speaking of what God has done for us as described in verses 14-17. It speaks of the tremendous change that takes place when we are born again. He has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ.

To reconcile means "to make friendly again." "For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life" (Romans 5:10). "And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven. And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblamable and unreprovable in his sight" (Colossians 1:20-22). Because of the reconciliation that has taken place through the cross, we are no longer the enemies of God; provided, that is, that we continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel.

Now that we have been reconciled to God through Jesus Christ, God has given to us the ministry of reconciliation (II Corinthians 5:18). This was the responsibility that Paul spoke of when he said, "Knowing the terror of the Lord we persuade men" (II Corinthians 5:11). This was a burden upon his heart, and it should be upon ours as well. We have a responsibility to the rest of mankind, according to the ministry God has given us and the place we fill in the body of Christ. These ministries are all important, from the one who intercedes in prayer to the one who is an exhorter or personal worker.

Peter instructs us all in our responsibility in this matter in I Peter 3:15, "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts." Another translation put it this way: "But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord." It is our first

responsibility to manifest Christ in our lives. "Keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behaviour in Christ may be ashamed by their slander" (I Peter 3:16 NIV).

Peter continues "And be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear" (I Peter 3:15). We owe this to our friends and neighbours. "For I am not ashamed of the gospel or Christ: For it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth" (Romans 1:16). God has given us the best thing there is: life in Jesus Christ; so let us share this wonderful experience through the ministry God has given us. We must not live unto ourselves, but unto Him who died for us and rose again.

It is the ministry of the church to be instrumental in reconciling the world unto God. Through His sacrificial death and resurrection, Christ has made this possible. He has provided the atoning sacrifice. The responsibility of the church is to make the knowledge of this sacrifice available to the world through the help of the Holy Spirit and our individual ministries.

If a person will believe in the sacrifice of Christ, God will no longer impute their trespasses unto them. (To impute means to attribute something to another). Because of this belief and acceptance, we are no longer the enemies of God. We have been reconciled.

Because we have been reconciled, God gives to the church the "word or reconciliation" (II Corinthians 5:19). Other translations say, "the message of reconciliation," which probably gives us a better understanding of God's mind and purpose.

Verse 20 of II Corinthians 5 outlines the calling of the church. Paul says, "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ..." God is making an appeal to the world through us. Christ has returned to His Father, but has sent the church to the world to bring them the message of reconciliation. As an ambassador for Christ, Paul asks the people to be reconciled to God.

Today the creation is groaning, as it never has before. The world is filled with unrest and war. Hunger and starvation torture millions of people. The message of the gospel of the Kingdom is the only answer to these problems. It is only the Prince of Peace who can bring peace among men and nations. It is only the love of Christ that can bring proper administration to the earth to relieve hunger and starvation. The order of the Kingdom of God will teach men and nations how to properly care for the need of everyone.

When speaking of caring for people's needs, I am not speaking entirely of giving to them the things that will sustain physical life. First of all, they need to be reconciled to God. Secondly, men must be reconciled to one another. How many civil wars are being waged at the present time? Then there must be a reconciliation concerning the conditions in which men live.

I remember several years ago hearing the following: "Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day. Teach him how to fish and you feed him for a lifetime." Men must be taught how to make the earth yield her increase. The prophet speaks of the day when every man sits under his own vine and his own fig tree. This speaks to me of plenty in the earth; but how can a man sit under his own vine and his own fig tree if he doesn't know how to plant them in the first place?

Too often we see the ministry of the church manifest only in the preacher. The churches' ministry reaches into every corner of men's lives and will minister to the whole need of the whole creation.

This is why God is bringing together a many-membered body for Christ; so the different parts of the body with its different ministries can minister to the whole need of all mankind.

To some, the calling of sonship is a calling to prestige and honour. In no way is it that. It is a calling to service. Jesus spoke of the princes of the Gentiles exercising dominion over their people. He said, "But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many" (Matthew 20:26-28).

As ambassadors of Christ, the church has the responsibility to bring a state of reconciliation between God and man, and the whole creation. The church has the responsibility of teaching the people of all nations godly administration of all their affairs. The plight of many needy is the result of poor administration. Sometimes it is on their own part, and at other times it is caused by those who control their lives.

To the church has been committed the word of reconciliation. May God give us faithful hearts in reaching out to others, both by example and word. Jesus instructed us to pray, "Thy Kingdom come." That is what the whole creation needs, and it will only come through the church: "His called out ones," those who are His ambassadors.

THE ANOINTING OF GOD

By the moving of His Spirit, God accomplishes His plan for the Ages. Men and nations are changed and molded and made to comply with the purpose of Him who is from everlasting to everlasting. The same Spirit who brings conviction to the heart of the unbeliever leads those who believe on to maturity and sonship in Jesus Christ.

Over the years, God has revealed much concerning the way He moves upon His people. Jesus said, "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him" (John 6:44). We are thankful for the drawing of the Spirit of God that draws a man to Jesus Christ, for apart from that we would have never met Him. It is a glorious experience to be drawn willingly. But once God begins to tug at our hearts, we seem almost powerless to resist.

God has made the truth to this scripture very real to us when it comes to reaching those outside the church. We have struggled and strained to reach people, whether God was talking to them or not. And when He wasn't talking, all our talking was in vain. It would be a very simple thing for God, if He chose to do so, to bring whole nations to their knees in a very short time. When the time is ripe for it that very thing will happen.

After the Spirit of God has drawn us to Him, the first thing He wants us to know is how to be led by the Anointing. This is a very hard thing for anyone to learn when they have walked after their own reasoning and learning all their life. The mind of man only produces envyings, strife, covetousness, wars, etc., but God desires to lead us to a place where we by the Spirit exercise His mind from which emanates peace, righteousness, joy and thankfulness. God's ways are so much higher than our ways. Why do we hang on to our own mind so desperately?

God has far better things for His People. John in his epistle writes, "But ye have an unction from the Holy One and ye know all things" (I John 2:20). There is here an anointing of the mind and life that would cause us to draw near to God and walk in His ways. In the context of this verse I have quoted, John speaks of antichrist and how that no truth dwells in him. The anointing produces truth and causes men to walk in truth and its order. "Let that therefore abide in you which you have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father. And this is the promise that He hath promised us, even eternal life" (I John 2:24,25).

Every day I believe we realize more and more the necessity and importance of the anointing of God. We cannot stand, let alone walk, without His moving within. We cannot see, let alone understand, the glorious truth and ways of God, except by illumination from above. And I must also say, it is an impossibility to enter His Kingdom except by His anointing.

"But the anointing which ye have received of Him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in Him" (I John 2:27).

The true anointing abides. It does not come and depart again on the tide of enthusiasm. He dwells within as a constant source of strength and wisdom. In the natural, a helper who is never there when you need him is of very little value. In the spiritual realm, where our warfare is not carnal; but against principalities and power and spiritual wickedness in high places, it would be very much worse. We would find that we could not stand at all in the evil day, except that He abides continually. We, who would walk with Him, require the shelter of the Anointing more than anything else.

When the anointing dwells within, we do not require a man to teach us of Him. In fact, that is impossible. The only way we can learn to know God is by the moving of His Spirit. When God employs a ministry as a channel by which He teaches, that ministry operates by the anointing. When we gather together and one prophesies, one exhorts, one sings and one teaches, it is the anointing that causes that which is ministered to be of edification to the Body of Christ. I could talk to you all day, but unless God's Spirit was moving in me, I could teach you nothing except the inventions of my own mind; and unless He was moving in you, you could receive nothing, even though those all around you were receiving much. That is why some people can go to a meeting and receive much, while others come away empty handed. It is an impossibility to impart anything or receive anything that belongs to God except by His Spirit.

John goes on to speak of the Anointing teaching us all things. We often get in a hurry to learn many things and begin to pry into them with the natural mind. That is why the earth is so filled with the doctrines of

men. One man will pry into something God his not revealed, and another will add his little bit, and the result is Babel, or confusion. "The secret things belong unto the Lord our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and our children forever, that we may all do the words of this law" (Deuteronomy 29:29). The secret things are Gods, and He will keep them that way, no matter how much time we spend figuring them out. But when He chooses to reveal them and teach them to us by His Spirit, we wonder at their simplicity and beauty. The anointing will teach us what it is necessary for us to know to walk in the way God has planned for us. Men will take the Word of God and debate loud and long concerning its meaning, and, when they a finished, no one is any wiser. How much better to walk quietly before Him and wait for that anointing to enlighten your mind and understanding in God's time? The anointing is truth and is no lie. The anointing comes out from God "who is truth" to rest upon His People. When God wished to confirm His promise to Abraham, He confirmed it by an oath; "That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation" (Hebrews 6:18). It impossible for the anointing to teach anything but truth. Anything that is not true is not of the anointing, but is of the mind of man. The anointing will teach you and me the "Truth," and lead us in the way of truth.

"And even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in Him" (I John 2:27). If the anointing teaches us, we shall abide in Him. We will abide under the cover and shelter of the church and not find ourselves running here and there in search of satisfaction and finding none. By running here and there, a man may find excitement or something to consume upon his flesh, but he will not find truth. The idea many of us had concerning the anointing was something to make us feel good, something to give us a hilarious meeting, or something to vindicate our own ideas. The anointing is not for that purpose at all; the anointing is to lead you in the way of truth and to cause you to abide in Him, to cause you to abide in that shelter and place of safety God has provided and is calling us unto.

"Oh safe to the Rock that higher than I,
My soul in its conflict and sorrow would fly.
So sinful, so weary, Thin Thine would I be,
Thou blest Rock of Ages, I'm hiding in Thee."

Abiding in the Anointing place of rest, where you have ceased from you own works; a place where you do not worry about what every verse in the Bible means. A place where you let God move and carry out His program according to the plan He formulated before the world began.

Man has endeavoured to figure out standards of righteousness by which to walk for generations. These are also the product of men's minds and will not receive the blessing of the anointing in walking in them. That which the Spirit of God puts into your heart by revelation, He will empower you to walk in. Perhaps I should mention in passing that revelation is received from ministries that are set in the Body by God for the giving of revelation, and that it is also the Spirit of revelation that causes us to be able to receive what is given. I wondered many years and came up with many ideas about what walking in the Spirit was, but I believe it is simply receiving God's order by the Spirit and then being anointed by the Spirit of God to walk in it. We have learned long ago that unanointed self-effort is as useless as nothing in the sight of God.

The Apostle Peter writes, "Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature" (II Peter 1:4). What is the divine nature? It is the nature of God;

and the nature of God embodies everything that is right and good. God's nature is life. In fact, He is life because death flees from His very presence. God's nature is love because He is love. God's nature is light because in Him there dwelleth no darkness at all. God's nature is peace, rest, joy, truth, wisdom, knowledge, understanding, and we could go on and on listing things that are embodied in His nature. And the glory of it all is that we are able to become a partaker of that nature as His Spirit moves upon us. We are becoming partakers of His nature, not by self-effort, but "According as His divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness" (II Peter 1:3). What comfort to know that God is leading us into the place where we shall be like Him; where we shall be created in His own image.

"Now He which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God; Who hath sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts" (II Corinthians 1:21,22). I felt I wanted to quote these words of the apostle Paul in closing, and urge you to walk by the anointing, not by your own mind, for it is the seal of the anointing through Christ that brings the approval of God. It is the anointing that conveys to us the mind of God and enables us to walk in His ways.

APOSTLES

God began a mighty Move of the Spirit in the church and established an apostolic ministry to oversee the body that He was bringing together from all the peoples of the earth. This apostolic ministry was the gift of Christ to all mankind for the establishment of the kingdom of God and its order in all of the whole creation.

"Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men" (Ephesians 4:8). These gifts were, "...some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers" (Ephesians 4:11). To be able to reach out to other lands, representatives of that apostolic ministry were required. As the apostolic brethren ministered in those other countries, God seemed to bring men to the surface who would fit this need. These were men called of God, and they are known as apostolic deacons or just simply travelling deacons. The word travelling is used in order to differentiate between them and the deacons of the local churches. The word "deacon" means "one who assists." In the local church, the deacons assist the elders. In the universal church, the travelling deacons assist the apostolic ministries in the establishing of the order of the kingdom of God. They have a mighty and important ministry given them.

We are shown what the work of the apostolic ministry is in Ephesians 4:12. It says the apostolic ministry was given for the perfecting of the saints. As the word "perfecting" is used in the scriptures, it means, "to bring to full maturity." The saints are to be perfected, or brought to maturity, for the work of the ministry. It is the members of the body of Christ who, through their personal ministry given them by God, are used to bring the knowledge of the Lord to the earth. Perfect saints will be recognized by their walk in the unity of the faith, and in unity of the knowledge of the Son of God. They will be one as Jesus prayed, and this unity will cause the world to believe. "That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me" (John 17:21). That will cause the saints, collectively, to become a perfect "MAN." Not perfect men, but a perfect man, referring to

the body of Christ. That perfected body will have come to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

Embodied in Christ was the fullness of every gift and ministry. Those gifts and ministries were shared with the members of the body of Christ as the Holy Spirit wills, and as God has set (I Corinthians 12:11 and 18). Because of this setting and dividing to all the members of His body, the body, when it is perfected, will have come to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. The complete Christ will be revealed in His body. The body will minister as He ministered. Because of the physical body in which He dwelt, He was limited to only one locality at a time. His body will have many, many members in every nation of the earth, and the gospel of the kingdom will flow out as a mighty river to all mankind.

We must not put this wonderful time off "to some day when." A part of the perfecting process is the faithful function of the members of His body in the gift and calling that has been given them. We are stewards of the gift of God. "As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God" (I Peter 4:10).

Children can be very easily confused and tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive. This body that God is perfecting will not be confused or deceived. It will grow up in all things.

The body will grow into a union with Christ, the Head of the body. In Ephesians 5:26-33, Paul uses the union between a man and his wife to illustrate the union between Christ and His church. We look at a man and a woman, and we see two people. God looks at them and sees one, and then says, "This is a great mystery." The same type of mystery exists between Christ and the church. We see many members scattered throughout all the nations of the earth, but God sees them along with Christ as one. As a man and his wife grow together and become one, so Christ and His church grow into the same type of unity.

In Ephesians 5:23-26, Paul speaks of the marriage union, saying: "For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word." This speaks of that union where one gives himself or herself unreservedly for the other, according to the order that God has established. This has proven to be the most workable of relationships when God's pattern is followed. This is what a good marriage is.

In Ephesians 4:16, Paul returns to the relationship between Christ and the members of His body and also the relationship of the members of the body to one another. "From whom the whole body (the Head and also the members of the body) fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love." The marriage union, where the members of that union fit together and grow in unity, was still in Paul's mind. As in a marriage, the church is joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplies. All the members must effectively work together to cause growth and for love to multiply.

The leadership of the apostolic ministries and the deacons who assist them will be used of God to cause this union between Christ and His church to grow and develop that the knowledge of the Lord may cover the earth as the waters cover the sea.

THE CHRISTLIKE ATTITUDE

"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 2:5). The word "mind" here indicates the attitude that Christ had. From the word of God, and from our experience as born again Christians, we find there are two minds or attitudes manifested in our lives. There is the carnal or fleshly attitude, and the mind or attitude that God is imparting to His own as a manifestation of the indwelling Christ.

What is the carnal mind? It is the mind that Paul spoke of in Romans 8:6-7: "For to be carnally minded (or the possessor of a carnal attitude) is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." Any desire or ambition that is within us that is not subject to that good, acceptable and perfect will of God (Romans 12:2), is the product of the carnal mind. Philippians 3:19 pertains to those who mind earthly things. Giving earthly things the preeminence in our lives is making our minds carnal and leads to a selfish attitude. That is not causing them (our minds) to be subject to the will of God.

The mind that is in Christ opposes the carnal mind. The mind that Christ shares with us as Christians is subject, as Christ was, to the will of God. It, as Christ did, delights in His will. "I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart" (Psalms 40:8).

The scripture also speaks of "the mind of the Spirit," which is the same mind that was in Christ. This mind will be in us if we are subject to, and are led by, the Spirit of God. The Holy Spirit helps us and leads us in our prayer lives because He knows what is the mind of Him who searches our hearts. That is why it is so important that we pray in the Spirit. "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God" (Romans 8:26-27).

We must mind the things of the Spirit if we are to be well pleasing in the eyes of our Heavenly Father. Look to Him and seek Him for His mind in all things. In I Corinthians 1:10, Paul beseeches us in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ, that we, as children of God, be perfectly joined together in the same mind: "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment." This is the mind that is in Christ Jesus.

Unity of mind and spirit are so essential for the growth and progress of the church. Remember Jesus prayer in John 17:21, "That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me."

"Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:" (Philippians 2:6). Taking on the mind and attitude that He did caused Christ to go through great humbling. As far as our carnal minds are concerned, His obedience cost Him dearly. First Christ humbled Himself. Then we are told that He made Himself of no reputation and finally took the form of a servant, made in the likeness of man. Lucifer fell because of lack of humility. He wanted to make himself as God. Christ overcame by making Himself of no reputation when He was already equal with God.

In every way, Christ was obedient. He humbled Himself and was obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Adam fell because of lack of obedience. Because of His obedience Christ overcame. Because of the mind that was in Him, Christ overcame where both Lucifer and Adam failed. We are instructed by the word of the Lord, to let the same mind be in us-a mind or attitude of humility and obedience. By this we shall be victorious overcomers in Jesus Christ.

This mind or attitude reaches right into our inner being and is stamped on our nature. When we are saved, we are a new creation in Christ and receive a new mind and attitude. "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (II Corinthians 5:17).

Paul teaches us in Romans 12:2, "And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God." We are transformed as that new mind we received when we were born again grows within us. When one becomes a Christian, they have to change their mind about many things: in fact, almost everything.

Previous to our salvation, we only had a carnal mind. As the new mind, or the new mind that is in Christ, develops and grows, the old carnal mind is crucified with the old man. We seek to bring the carnal mind into subjection by the power of the Lord Jesus.

The difference between the carnal mind and the mind that was in Christ is clearly illustrated in Galatians 5. The carnal man walks in the works of the flesh listed in Galatians 5:16-21. It is the mind of Christ that we walk after the Spirit and bear in our lives the fruit of the Spirit. "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law" (Galatians 5:22).

Peter also teaches us of those things that are found in Christ's nature and will be found in ours as we grow in Him and surrender to His will. "Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity (love). For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ" (II Peter 1:4-8). These things must be in us if we are going to bear fruit.

Jesus spoke of false prophets who are recognized by their fruit. "Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them" (Matthew 7:16-20).

In John 4, we read the story of Jesus talking to the Samaritan woman beside the well. His disciples had gone into town to buy food. When they returned He didn't eat. His reply to their urging was, "My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work" (John 4:34). He would rather serve His Father in ministering to this needy person than to partake of natural bread. We need to partake more of this attitude. How long is it since we have missed a meal in service to the Lord? How long is it since we have entered into fasting and prayer? We are instructed to have the same mind as that which was in Christ our Lord. Our meat or food should be to do the will of Him who sends us.

Throughout the life and ministry of Christ, we often find that it was His mind to deny Himself. He often spent whole nights in prayer or got up early in the morning to go to prayer. "Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it. For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Matthew 16:24-26). "For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace" (Romans 8:6).

WATER BAPTISM 1

Water baptism is a very important step in a Christian's life, and if you have not been baptized, it is something you should consider very seriously. It is important that a person think over the things that they do in their Christian life.

When a baptismal service is being held, don't just get baptized on the spur of the moment, but think about it and consider it well ahead of time. I would like to quote the scripture in Luke 14:26-28, "If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple. And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple. For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it?" This scripture is not spoken concerning water baptism, but the same principle does apply. If you are considering walking with God, you should sit down and consider the cost, because it is going to cost you something. In fact, it will cost you everything. "Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him, Saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish" (Luke 14:29-30). Something like this is a real tragedy in a person's life. They begin to walk with God and then find that they can't carry on in their walk because they haven't considered the cost.

It is just as important that you think seriously about water baptism. You should think about it and pray about it. In fact, it would be good for you to miss a few meals in fasting and prayer as you wait on God about it.

Water baptism is actually an experience between you and God that you enter into. You don't join anything by being baptized. To many, water baptism is the means by which they join their particular church, but that is not its purpose. In a sense, it is a testimony that you have left the old life behind, but that is not its primary purpose. It is important that when a person is baptized they realize that they are leaving the past behind. I have been at baptismal services over in India. When a person is baptized there, it means that the old religion, the old life, and everything about it, is left behind. People don't hide the fact that they are being baptized. They form a parade that is led by a drummer with a large drum, which he beats fervently. When I have been there, the river where the baptism was carried out was quite a distance down the road. Everybody knows that there are Christians being baptized, and that they are severing themselves from the old life, and are entering into the new. It should be the same with us. We are turning our back upon the old ways and entering a new life. But there is a more important purpose in water baptism.

Jesus commanded that those who believed should be baptized. "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world" (Matthew 28:18-20). The same commission is given in the other gospels as well. We need to realize what Jesus said here: "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." When we baptize people "in the name of the Father, and the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," we are acting as agents for the God-head. The power that has been given unto Christ has been given unto the church to administer this ordinance. "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." This goes along with baptism. It is the responsibility of the church to teach the ways of the Lord along with baptism.
"And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:15-16). We see from this that baptism plays a part in our salvation.

There are a lot of things about water baptism that we can't explain, but we know it works. There are people who have never had the experience of water baptism who will proclaim it as a useless right, but those who have had the experience know that something takes place in their lives. It plays a very important part in the fullness of our salvation. Baptism is the submitting unto the death of the carnal nature. It is a very important part of our experience that the carnal man should die, and that the new man should come alive.

There are several scriptures telling us of when baptism was practiced in the New Testament. In Acts 2:37-41, Peter is speaking to the people and tells them to repent and be baptized, and they would receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. In Acts 8:12, we read how Philip went to Samaria, and the people of the city accepted the gospel and were baptized.

I would like to quote part of the scripture concerning Philip and the Ethiopian. This Ethiopian had been in Jerusalem to worship and was on his way home. The Lord had sent Philip down this road toward Gaza, and Philip heard the Ethiopian in his chariot reading from the book of Isaiah. Philip went up to the chariot and asked the man if he knew what he was reading. The man said that he really couldn't, and that he needed

someone to explain it to him. So Philip got in the chariot with him and explained the way of the gospel to him.

"Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus. And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized..." They had probably come to a slough along side the road. "...And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him" (Acts 8:35-38).

In his explanation of the way of salvation, Philip must have included water baptism. It is important that it should be included in our message concerning redemption through Christ. When the man asked to be baptized, Philip said that he could be if he believed with all his heart, and his reply was that he believed that Jesus Christ was the Son of God. That is the only requirement that I know of in the scripture concerning baptism. It rules out all unbelievers and all those who are not old enough to believe.

A person should be baptized as soon as possible after they accept the Lord. Some people put it off for years, but they are really robbing themselves of a part of their experience. A person will find that water baptism plays a big part in the change that comes into our lives when we are saved.

Some people who have been baptized immediately after accepting Christ don't know which part of their experience to attribute the change to. Probably it should go partly to both. There should be a real change in our lives.

In Acts 9:18, we read of Saul, who became the apostle Paul, being baptized. In Acts 10:47, Peter baptized the people who believed at Cornelius' house. In Acts 16:15, Lydia and her household were baptized; and in Acts 16:33, the Philippian jailor was baptized. Not only was the jailor baptized but his family also.
During their imprisonment, Paul and Silas must have ministered to the whole household, causing them all to seek the Lord in salvation.

I would like to refer to Paul's experience with the people at Ephesus in Acts 19:1-5, "And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples, He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism. Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus."

Johns' baptism was a baptism of repentance, but the baptism that Christ instructed His disciples to baptize with was a death and a resurrection. It was a severing from the old and walking in a new life. It was a different experience, and included far more than Johns' baptism. Johns' baptism was an indication that a person had repented of the way in which he had been walking. The baptism that Jesus instructed us to enter into was an indication that a person was willing to die to the flesh and live unto the Lord. So Paul baptized them again because with Johns' baptism they lacked much of what God really wanted them to partake of.

After they were baptized, Paul laid his hands on them and the Holy Spirit came on them and they spoke with tongues and prophesied.

Some people have been quite worried about the order in which the different experiences in our Christian life should take place. When Peter spoke to the people in Cornelius' house, the Holy Spirit came on them and they spoke with tongues, and then Peter baptized them afterwards. In this instance, Paul baptized them first, and then laid hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit. Don't let the order in which these things happen trouble you, because we find it both ways in the scripture.

Let us consider the baptism of Jesus in Matthew 3:13-15: "Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. But John forbad him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me? And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him." I have wondered why Jesus said this, but I believe it is an indication to us that to be able to fulfil all righteousness in our life, we must experience water baptism. Water baptism is necessary to fulfil all righteousness. His was our example, and we must follow Him. Water baptism is necessary to be able to walk in the fullness of the calling of God.

"And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matthew 3:16-17).

In this case, Jesus was baptized, and then the Spirit descended like a dove upon Him after the baptism. I have wondered why the Spirit of God came on Jesus like a dove, but when he fell upon the one hundred and twenty in the upper room on the day of Pentecost, He came as tongues of fire. The reason was that Jesus was the sinless Son of God, who knew no sin or carnality. Those in the upper room were ordinary carnal men, as you and I, who needed the fire of the Spirit of God to refine from them the fleshly nature.

"Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil" (Matthew 4:1). Don't be surprised if you go through a lot of temptation after you are baptized. It happened to Jesus. The scripture goes on to tell us about the temptations that Jesus went through, and how He overcame those temptations. Don't get the idea that after you are baptized you will have no more problems, because I expect you will have lots of them. But because you are able reckon yourselves dead indeed unto sin, you will be able to overcome the temptations in a far better way than you ever could before. The experience of water baptism will build something into you that nothing else will be able to do. That is why the Lord is so anxious that people should be baptized.

"Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; And did all eat the same spiritual meat; And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ. But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness. Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted" (I Corinthians 10:1-6). When Israel came out of Egypt, they went through a baptism in the sea. If, rather than walking in unbelief, they had believed God, their faith would have brought them right into the Promised Land. Because of their hardness of heart and their idolatry, God

was not pleased with them, and they all died in the wilderness. They had left Egypt, which to the Christian is a symbol of the world. When they stood on the other shore of the Red Sea, their enemies were all dead in the sea. Israel's experience in crossing the Red Sea is a symbol of our experience in water baptism. We have left Egypt, and our enemies have been buried in the sea. They rejoiced and sang of the deliverance God had wrought among them. But they didn't continue to walk in the new life that God had brought them into. These things are an example to us that we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted. Their experience didn't profit them.

"Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them; as it is written, the people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play. Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand. Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents" (I Corinthians 10:7-9). It is very easy for us to tempt the Lord by entering into things that we know we shouldn't be entering into. That is tempting Christ. That is what Israel did. "Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer. Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come" (I Corinthians 10:10-11). If we will look at the story of Israel, we will find it an example of what will happen to us if we fail in our walk with God. God wants us to learn from their experience. It seems very hard for people to learn from the experiences of others. If we weren't so hard headed, we could. What happens to other people should teach us, and what happened to Israel should teach us. "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 Corinthians 10:13). This is instruction that goes with water baptism. Israel failed after their baptism in the sea. God was displeased with them, and destroyed the nation in the wilderness. Of those who came out of Egypt there were only two that entered into the Promised Land. This was a very small remnant.

Whenever you are tempted, remember that everyone else has the same temptations. You are no worse off than anyone else. God is faithful, and He will not allow you to be tempted above what you are able to bear. This goes along with your baptism. We must all make up our mind that we are going to walk with God and fulfil His purpose. "But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death. Do not err, my beloved brethren" (James 1:14-16).

Let us read Exodus 15:23-24. "And when they came to Marah, they could not drink of the waters of Marah, for they were bitter: therefore the name of it was called Marah. And the people murmured against Moses, saying, What shall we drink?" When they came to their first test, they immediately began to complain. That sounds just like us. In the next verse, we are told that God showed Moses how to heal the waters. The verse ends with, "and there He proved them." Israel was being tested, but they failed in the test.

God spoke to them again and made further promises to them in Exodus 15:26, "If thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the LORD thy God, and wilt do that which is right in his sight, and wilt give ear to his commandments, and keep all his statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians: for I am the LORD that healeth thee." I believe that in a proper walk with God, after we are baptized, we can claim these things. God says, "I am the Lord that healeth thee," and He also says, "I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought upon the Egyptians." These things

are true in our day, too, if we will walk right. The plague of Aids that is going through the earth at the present time is a disease that belongs to the Egyptians (symbolically speaking), but if we will walk right, we never need to worry about it coming near us. There are many other things that come upon the world because of their disobedience to God that there is no need for the church to partake of, or be afflicted with.

We find that during their testing, Israel wanted to return to Egypt. "And the whole congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness: And the children of Israel said unto them, Would to God we had died by the hand of the LORD in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the flesh pots, and when we did eat bread to the full; for ye have brought us forth into this wilderness, to kill this whole assembly with hunger" (Exodus 16:2-3). Unless we are careful, we can become murmurers too, and find ourselves wanting to go back to the old life.

In Exodus 17, we are told of the war that Israel had with Amelek. Amelek is a type of the carnal nature. "And Joshua discomfited Amalek and his people with the edge of the sword. And the LORD said unto Moses, Write this for a memorial in a book, and rehearse it in the ears of Joshua: for I will utterly put out the remembrance of Amalek from under heaven" (Exodus 17:13-14). God desires to do the same thing with our carnal natures. What a wonderful day when carnality exists no more.

"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?" (Romans 6:1-2). Never continue in sin because you think that God will forgive you anyway. Paul is talking about the person who has been saved and baptized. How can we continue to live in sin? We have just talked of how Israel went through their baptism in the Red Sea, yet they walked contrary to the ways of God. "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?" (Romans 6:3). That is what happens when you are baptized. You are baptized into the death of Jesus. "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life" (Romans 6:4). Paul is talking here to people who have been baptized in water. He says we are buried with Him by baptism into death. Just as Christ was raised from the dead by His Father, so we should walk in a new life. "For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection" (Romans 6:5). Praise God! If we are willing to die to the carnal, to the old man, to that reprobate nature, we will be in the likeness of His resurrection. There is only one way into the resurrection, and that is through death. You can't be resurrected until you have died.

There are two ways that we can die, and one of them is necessary before we can enter into the resurrection. You can die physically, and go the way of the grave, and partake of the resurrection at some time in the future, or you can die to the carnal man, and enter into the resurrection like Enoch did. "Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him" (Genesis 5:24). If we have died like Jesus died, we will also partake of His resurrection like He did.

"Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin" (Romans 6:6). Our old man was crucified with Him. That is part of the work of the cross, and if we can believe it, our old man was nailed to the cross with Jesus Christ. If we are dead, we are free from sin. A dead man can't sin. Did you ever see a dead man sin? If we can enter into that death that Christ died on the cross, if our old man has been nailed to the cross there with Him, and we leave

him there, the body of sin will be destroyed. Our trouble is that we keep taking our old man down off the cross and reviving him. Our old man is crucified with Him that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. "For he that is dead is freed from sin. Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him" (Romans 6:7-8). What a wonderful statement; a very, very positive statement. If we are dead with Christ, we also shall live with Him. "Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him" (Romans 6:9). I pray that we may enter into this experience where death has no more dominion over us because we have died to sin and we have been resurrected. Once Christ had been resurrected, there was no way that He could ever die again, and the same will be true of us, if we can enter into that resurrection with Him. "For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God" (Romans 6:10).

"Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 6:11). You have to reckon yourself dead. When you are tempted, tell the old carnal man, "You are dead. You are buried. You have been nailed to the cross with Christ. When I believed, I partook of the benefit of Christ's cross, and when I was baptized I was buried." The carnal man is dead on the cross, and he is buried in baptism. Paul says you are dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

"Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof" (Romans 6:12). Paul is writing here to people who have been baptized, and he had to warn them not to let sin reign in their mortal bodies. Don't obey the lusts of the flesh. "Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God" (Romans 6:13). We have been buried and resurrected.

"For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace" (Romans 6:14). There is a difference between walking under the law and under grace. Some of us need a law in our immature state. When we are under the law, the law says, "Thou shalt not sin." Under grace we say, "I don't want to sin." There is a tremendous difference, and by the help of the Spirit that God has sent to us to be our helper in our walk with Him, we can overcome.

"What then? Shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid. Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?" (Romans 6:15-16). Somebody quoted a poem that said, "The choice is yours." In this scripture, it is pointed out very plainly that the choice is ours as to whether we yield ourselves to sin and become its servant, or we yield ourselves unto obedience and unto righteousness.

Reckon yourselves dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God, through Jesus Christ our Lord (Romans 6:11). The carnal nature has been crucified with Him, if we can believe it and enter into it. The carnal nature is buried in baptism. After baptism, we must continually practice this reckoning.

"For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit" (I Peter 3:18). Christ bore the penalty of our sin. He took the blame on the cross for every low and despicable thing that we have ever done. "By which also he went

and preached unto the spirits in prison; which sometime were disobedient, when once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water. The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ" (I Peter 3:19-21). It is not a matter of washing the physical man, but it is the answer of a good conscience toward God. Different translations throw quite a bit of light on the experience. Phillips translates this scripture this way: "There is in every true baptism the virtue of Christ rising from the dead." Notice that Peter says, "Baptism doth also now save us by the resurrection of Jesus Christ." He has talked about Noah here and is comparing Noah's experience to baptism. Those who entered into the ark were saved. I would like to read this scripture from the NIV: "...and this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also. Not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a good conscience toward God. It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ" (I Peter 3:21-22). It is very evident from the scriptures that baptism is a very necessary part in entering into the resurrection and the fullness of our salvation. I can't explain, nor can I understand, what water baptism does, but we have to accept by faith that it works and will lead us on into the resurrection. I am sure that those who enter into baptism with a sincere heart finds that it does help them. It makes a change in their life and walk when they are able to reckon the old man dead to sin and the new man alive unto God.

There is something we must note about the word, "pledge". We must make up our mind that we are going to walk with God, and allow the resurrected new man to control our lives. We read in Romans 6:16 that whoever we yield ourselves to, his servants we are.

Baptism saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ. If Christ hadn't been resurrected, there is no way that we could be saved. In the resurrection that takes place in us, when we rise from the waters of baptism, we find there is an element that enters into the fullness of our salvation. This part of our salvation is very important to us.

Read Acts 22:12-16. "And one Ananias, a devout man according to the law, having a good report of all the Jews which dwelt there, came unto me, and stood, and said unto me, Brother Saul, receive thy sight. And the same hour I looked up upon him. And he said, The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest know his will, and see that Just One, and shouldest hear the voice of his mouth. For thou shalt be his witness unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard. And now why tarriest thou? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." I believe that Ananias prophesied these things to Paul. Paul had sat in darkness for three days since he had met the Lord. Now Ananias says, "What are you waiting for? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord." There is a cleansing in this experience that will change us. Ananias was very anxious to see Paul baptized. "Why tarriest thou? Arise and be baptized." Everyone who has accepted Christ should seek to be baptized as soon as possible.

If you have not been baptized, diligently seek the Lord about entering into this experience. It is a necessary part of your salvation, to bury the old man so you can reckon him dead to sin, and the new man alive unto the Lord. It will not be the end of your battles. It could be the beginning of worse battles, but you have something to stand on. You can say to the enemy, when He tempts you, that you have died with Christ and been buried with Him. "My old man has been nailed to the cross, and when I was baptized I buried him. He is dead, so don't bother me anymore!"

I pray that we all may be able to do this. We will have times when we fail. John says in I John 1:9,2:1 "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.... My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous." An advocate is one who pleads our case, and when we do make mistakes, or fall, Christ is there as our advocate.

The devil is also present to accuse us as we read in Revelation 12:10, " And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night." Don't be dismayed by the accusations of the devil. If we confess our sin, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sin, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

If you do slip, don't give up, but confess your sin, and go on again. The Scriptures teach us that once God forgives our sins, He forgets them. The children were singing a song that says God can do anything but fail. There are other things that God can't do. When God forgives your sins, He forgets them, and He can't remember them anymore. Also, in the book of Hebrews we are told of another thing that God cannot do, and that is lie. So if we do have difficulty, and we find that the old man has arisen from the waters of baptism, put him down again and go on. May God bless you as you walk with Him.

WATER BAPTISM 2

Water baptism is a very important part of our experience and our walk with God. Water baptism was a command of Jesus. "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned" (Mark 16:15-16). Baptism is an important part of our salvation. That doesn't mean that if someone is saved and doesn't have an opportunity to be baptized that he is lost. Water baptism just adds to our experience with the Lord. Water baptism is one of the steps toward sonship.

If we will enter into the experience and walk in it, it becomes a tremendous part in our walk with God. Our acceptance of Christ is the beginning of our salvation. As you walk with God, your experience of salvation grows. Water baptism is a part of the progressive salvation that God has called us to.

"Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; And did all eat the same spiritual meat; And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ. But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness. Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted" (I Corinthians 10:1-6). Israel was on their way out of Egypt. When they were leaving, Pharaoh changed his mind about letting them go and pursued them with his army. Pharaoh could see his labour force leaving him, so his intention was to bring them back.

This is similar to the experience that we have. We accept the Lord and the enemy won't leave us alone. Israel went through the sea on dry ground. Pharaoh's army came into the sea and were drowned. Israel's enemies had been destroyed. If we can believe it and accept it and walk in it, the same thing is true in our experience of water baptism. This is not to say all our troubles will be over. In the case of Jesus, after He was baptized by John, He went out into the wilderness, where the scripture says He was tempted of the devil; but He overcame the enemy. And you will be tempted. After Israel had crossed the Red Sea, they had many tests and temptations; but the Egyptian army never tried to attack them again.

A person should be baptized as soon as possible after they are saved. In the story of Phillip and the Ethiopian (Acts 8:26-39), Phillip explained to him the way of salvation and he believed. Somewhere he must have heard about being baptized; perhaps Phillip had instructed him: for as soon as he saw water along the roadside, he asked to be baptized. Phillip said, "If you believe with all your heart you may." The Ethiopian replied, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." The only qualification necessary is to believe.

We can imagine that they were going along the road on the way to Ethiopia when they came to a slough. Perhaps many of you don't know what a slough is. We have many of them where we live. A slough is a depression in the earth that fills with water when the snow melts in the spring. Some will hold water all year and others dry up to be filled again the next spring.

When the jailor accepted the Lord, while Paul and Silas were in jail in Philippi, he and his family were all baptized before morning. They must have had water accessible. I am sure there was a lot of rejoicing going on in that household. So we see that being baptized is an important part of our experience and should be carried out as soon as possible.

"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? Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?" (Romans 6:1-3). That is what happens when a person is baptized. You are baptized into His death. You become a partaker of the death of Christ. There is a death that should take place with baptism. "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life" (Romans 6:4). We should desire a death for the carnal man and that we should walk in a new life. I remember one of the brethren saying one time that if we could enter into it, water baptism is the only death we should ever have to die. That is what our hearts cry out for. We long to enter into life, but before we can enter into life we have to enter into death. That like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. You who have been baptized, and you who are planning to be baptized, look to God that that experience will be an experience of death to the carnal man, and an experience of resurrection for the new man. We want the new man to come to life and live in the image and likeness of Christ. "For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection" (Romans 6:5). That is what Paul prayed for, and also what we pray for: "That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection" (Philippians 3:10).

"Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin" (Romans 6:6). This is what we

desire and pray for, that that death will take place and sin will no longer have dominion over us and we will be free to walk in the Spirit. We are not saying you won't be tempted or tried; but because of the death that we die in baptism, He gives us the ability to have the victory in Christ. "He that is dead is freed from sin." We have never seen a dead man commit sin, no matter what kind of a person he was previously. "Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him" (Romans 6:8).

God's mind for Israel when they crossed over the Red Sea, and their enemies were drowned, was that they would go out and live in victory. They didn't do that. Paul is warning us not to walk in the ways that Israel walked. They very soon started to complain and would have stoned the man God had set as their leader. They even longed for the leeks and garlic of Egypt. God desires that, when we go through that watery grave, we enter into the life that has been purchased for us through Jesus Christ, and that we live with Him far above the old realm of sin. "Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God" (Romans 6:9-10).

The next verse outlines a very important part of our walk. "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 6:11). Instead of looking for opportunities to sin, Paul says to reckon yourselves dead unto sin. The carnal man is very subtle, and will try to get you to do things that aren't right. Don't listen to the carnal, but let us reckon ourselves dead unto sin. "Dead unto sin but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord."

"Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof" (Romans 6:12). I was given something to read recently and the author said that we are not free moral agents. God does watch over us as a Father, and directs us many times without us even knowing it; but we do have a lot of responsibility concerning the things we do. Paul says, "LET" not sin therefore reign in your mortal bodies. We can allow sin to reign, or we can reckon ourselves dead unto sin.

We have a choice concerning which way we go. When Joshua was speaking to Israel, he told them to choose whom they would serve. Paul continues on and says, "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?" (Romans 6:16). We have a responsibility, whether we yield ourselves to sin, or whether we yield ourselves to righteousness. We are not just a bunch of puppets that God manipulates, but we are a people to whom God gives the responsibility to walk in righteousness. We can choose to go one way or the other. "Know you not, that to whom you yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants you are to whom you obey; whether of sin unto death or of obedience unto righteousness." The important thing is who we yield to. That is why we are told to "RECKON" ourselves dead to sin but alive to God. There is a choice that is our responsibility. We pray that God will give us the spiritual stamina to be able to stand and not fall into sin. We pray for the ability to consider both good and evil and to choose the good, thus rejecting the evil.

You will find that if you go into water baptism with the anointing of the Holy Spirit upon you, it will change in your life. When I accepted Jesus as my Saviour, I was baptized the next day. I have always been thankful for that. A change came into my life. I'm not sure whether to attribute the change to the fact that I had

accepted Christ or that I had been baptized. They happened so close together, I wasn't sure; but I know I was changed.

After Israel went through the Red Sea, Pharaoh couldn't touch them. That is true of us also. The only way that sin can touch us is if we allow it to touch us. If the Israelites had decided to swim back into Egypt, they would have been under the bondage of Pharaoh. Pharaoh couldn't touch them because they had been redeemed by the blood of the lamb that had been put upon their doorposts and the lintel of their house. Then they went through the experience of baptism in the Red Sea, and Pharaoh couldn't get at them, not only because his army was all drowned; but the sea separated them, the one from the other. Let that be our experience in baptism. The experience of baptism separates us from the sin that is in the world. Israel complained and wished they had stayed in Egypt, and we could do the same thing. May God help us that we will press toward the mark of sonship and the glorious realm that God has called us to.

"But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness" (Romans 6:17-18). When you are baptized, believe that this will happen. Reckon yourselves dead unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ. I pray that God will change us all and that, as we walk in the experience that is ours through baptism, it will be another step toward sonship and entering in completely to the realm of the Spirit. When you are tempted of the evil, one you can say that your sinful nature was crucified with Christ and was buried, and that you are alive unto Christ.

WATER BAPTISM 3

Peter's exhortation to his listeners on the day of Pentecost was that they should repent and be baptized. In response to this exhortation, about three thousand people, who heard the message given, were baptized, and were added to the number of the disciples.

Wherever we read in the scriptures about people being born of the Spirit, they were baptized as soon as possible after believing. The keeper of the prison in Philippi accepted the Lord and became a believer sometime after midnight. By morning, his whole household had become believers and had been baptized. He rejoiced, believing in God with all his house.

Philip, one of the deacons set by the apostles in Jerusalem, was travelling on the road south of Samaria. He met the treasurer of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who was returning home from worshipping in Jerusalem. As this man of great authority rode along in his carriage, he was reading from the book of Isaiah. When he read about the sacrifice of Christ on the cross, he was unable to understand what he was reading. He asked Philip to get up in the carriage and ride with him, and explain the scripture to him.

Philip spoke to him of Jesus. He must have also talked to him about being baptized. When they came to water, the Ethiopian asked to be baptized. Philip said, "If thou believest with all thine heart, thou may," to which he replied, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God" (Acts 8:37). He stopped the chariot, and

they went down into the water, and Philip baptized him. The only qualification for being baptized is that you believe.

In the church of that day, they seemed to feel it important for a person to be baptized as soon as possible after accepting Christ. We feel the same way. As soon as the new spiritual man is born, the old carnal man should be buried by baptism. The person baptized is to consider themselves dead to the old way of life. The apostle Paul speaks of the experience of the new born Christian, who has been baptized in Romans 6:3-4: "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." When the new man is born, and the old man and his way of life are buried in baptism, we can expect to be changed. That is provided we yield ourselves to the Lord so that He can change us. We should seek the death of the old carnal man.

"How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" (Romans 6:2). A death and burial have taken place. "Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God" (Romans 6:12-13). We have a responsibility, first in reckoning the old man dead to sin, then in not allowing sin to reign within us, and finally, in not yielding ourselves to sin. Paul instructs us to yield ourselves to God as those that are alive from the dead. What a wonderful position to be in: alive from the dead. "Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit" (Galatians 5:25 NIV).

In Romans 6:11 we read, "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." The key word here is reckon. It means to regard as being accomplished. When baptized we must regard ourselves as being dead to sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ. If we regard ourselves as being dead to sin, sin will lose its hold on us. "For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin" (Romans 6:5-6).

This doesn't happen without the exercise of our responsibility. We must yield to God and the leading of the Holy Spirit. "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?" (Romans 6:16). God will not compel us to walk in obedience to Him. He will lead us in His ways by the Holy Spirit. We all have something in us that we call conscience. I believe this is the Holy Spirit trying to direct us in the ways of the Lord. We are responsible to yield ourselves to this urging of the Spirit of God.

Paul thanked God for the change that had come into the lives of the Christians in Rome. They had obeyed from the heart the things the apostle had taught them. They were made free from sin, and became the servants of righteousness. Their old lifestyle was made up of things that they were now ashamed of. Now, being delivered from the bondage of sin, they were bearing the fruits of holiness. The end of this lifestyle is everlasting life. "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 6:23).

In speaking of his own life, the apostle Paul said this, "I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air: But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway" (I Corinthians 9:26-27). Paul was seeking an incorruptible crown and was putting every effort into seeing that the carnal man remained buried.

Israel, as a nation, went through a baptism when they crossed the Red Sea. Their experience is a picture of the experience that we have in baptism. They were in bondage in Egypt, just as we were in bondage in the sin of the world. The Passover lamb was slain, and the blood sprinkled on the sides and top of the door. The death angel passed over all the houses in Egypt. The oldest child in every house that had the blood upon it was spared. Because of this judgement, Pharaoh allowed Israel to leave Egypt. They were delivered from the bondage of Pharaoh.

This is similar to our experience when the sacrificial blood of Christ is applied to our hearts. Our sins are washed away, and it is time for us to leave Egypt. When Pharaoh saw them leaving the captivity and slavery of his kingdom, he began to pursue them. In their flight, Israel found themselves with mountains on either side of them, the Red Sea in front of them, and the Egyptian army behind them. When we leave the sin of the world, the devil never wants to relinquish his hold on us, and will pursue us relentlessly. Moses stretched out his rod, and God caused an opening to come in the sea. Israel walked into that opening and into deliverance on the other side. The Egyptian army continued to pursue them. God caused the water to come back into the opening that Israel had walked through, and the Egyptians were drowned.

Israel sang, danced, and rejoiced over their deliverance. When we are baptized, our enemies are drowned in the waters of baptism. It is our responsibility to leave them dead and not do as Israel did. The Egyptians no longer pursued them, but as soon as some hardship or test came, they would have stoned Moses and gone back to the bondage and slavery they had come out of.

Because of their rebellion against God, and the leaders God had set over them, all who were twenty years old when they left Egypt were denied the privilege of entering the Promised Land. That is, except Caleb and Joshua. May we pray that trial will not cause us to want to turn back. "Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; And did all eat the same spiritual meat; And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ. But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness" (I Corinthians 10:1-5). Because we have accepted Christ as our Saviour and been baptized, does not mean that we will not have trial and testing.

We read in Hebrews chapter twelve in family worship this morning. There, we are told not to despise the chastening of the Lord. "And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons." (Hebrews 12:5-8). The author goes on to talk of how we honoured our natural fathers when they chastised us as they thought best. God chastises us so that we might be partakers of His holiness.

Jesus was tested and tried after He was baptized by John the Baptist. We read that, after His baptism, "Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil" (Matthew 4:1). He was tempted by the desire of the flesh. "And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungred. And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread" (Matthew 4:2-3).

He was tempted by the pride of life. "Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple, And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone" (Matthew 4:5-6). When Paul lists the works of the flesh, he calls this particular work of the flesh "emulation." Other translators call it "selfish ambition."

He was tempted by the lust of the eye. "Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me" (Matthew 4:8-9).

We will be tempted many times by all the works of the flesh. Jesus overcame Satan's temptations by quoting the Word of God. Get the word of God into your heart, so you, too, will be able to overcome. Learn to worship and serve Him. After Jesus overcame the temptations, we are told that the devil left Him, and angels came and ministered to Him (Matthew 4:11).

In his gospel Luke says, "And when the devil had ended all the temptation, he departed from him for a season" (Luke 4:13). We must realize that we will not be tempted just once. The devil may leave us for a while, but it will only be for a season. We thank God we have been given the power and ability to overcome. Always continue to reckon yourselves dead to sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. We see from these scriptures the importance of burying the old man and his sinful way of life.

Water baptism is probably the most argued about teaching of the New Testament. There is really nothing to argue about. The thing is to bury the old man and his way of life, and then yield yourselves obediently to the way of righteousness. You don't become a Christian by being baptized. That is accomplished when you believe in Christ as your Saviour. You don't join an organization by being baptized. It is an experience between you and God, where the carnal man is buried, and the new man is resurrected.

We also read of Jesus' suffering and obedience in Hebrews 5:8: "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered." I feel that the previous verse, verse seven, is speaking of Jesus' trial in the Garden of Gethsemane. He prayed that the experience that awaited Him would be taken away, but he was willing to go through it: "Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour" (John 12:27). His perfection was demonstrated by His obedience, and because of that perfection, He became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him. He was a proven Son of God.

Water baptism is a help and a step in our pursuit of the experience of the manifested son. After Paul talks of the experience of water baptism in Romans six, he talks of the struggle with the carnal man in Romans

seven, and in chapter eight, he speaks of the manifestation of the sons of God. "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death" (Romans 8:2). He talks of the deliverance of the whole creation from the bondage of corruption. This is accomplished by those who are led by the Holy Spirit; in those who have reckoned themselves dead to sin, but alive unto God; in those who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God" (Romans 8:14).

WATER BAPTISM 4

Baptism in water is a wonderful experience. People respond in different ways when the baptism takes place. Some receive a tremendous anointing of the Spirit of God. Some have received the baptism of the Holy Spirit simultaneously with water baptism. Others, on the other hand, feel very little when they are baptized; but the true blessing comes later on with the results of baptism.

The purpose of water baptism is to bury the old carnal man. In Romans 6:6, we read, "Knowing this, that our old man was crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin." By believing, we recognize the old man as having been crucified with Christ. A crucifixion means a death has taken place. Of course, we must believe this for it to be effective in our lives. It is very important, then, that the old man be buried. A carnal man that is not buried becomes very odoriferous, and also offensive to the Name of Christ.

"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?" (Romans 6:1-2). If he has died with Christ, how can a dead man continue to sin? Continuing to live in sin is where the offence comes in.

"Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?" (Romans 6:3). This verse is speaking of much more than water baptism. It also speaks of the experience that Paul mentions in I Corinthians 12:13: "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit." When we are born again the Holy Spirit baptizes us into Christ, or in other words, places us in our place in the body of Christ. "But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him" (I Corinthians 12:18).

In water baptism, "we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life" (Romans 6:4). By believing we are crucified with Christ and that the carnal man dies with Him, we can look forward to rising in newness of life in water baptism. In water baptism, we are buried with Him, in order that we may be raised up to live, and walk, in a new life. "For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection:" (Romans 6:5).

Our responsibility is to walk in the new life that we have been called to. God forbid that we should continue to walk in sin. "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through

Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 6:11). To reckon means, "to regard as being". In other words, we regard ourselves as being dead to sin and alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Paul talks of this process of reckoning ourselves dead in Colossians 3:5: "Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry." Mortify means, "to put to death." God doesn't make us perform as a bunch of puppets, but leaves the responsibility to us to put these things to death in our life and walk. He has given us the Holy Spirit as our helper, who is willing to stand with us, if we will yield to Him.

"It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with Him, we shall also live with him:" (II Timothy 2:11). "Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with Him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead. And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses;" (Colossians 2:12-13). What a glorious picture God gives us of the privilege that is ours in our relationship with Him. To quicken means, "to make alive." God causes His life to flow to us, as we are raised from the dead, with Christ.

There isn't much to be said about the method of water baptism. It would appear from the scripture that the method of baptism used there was immersion. I like to think of the old man being buried completely in the waters of baptism. I have been given to understand that the method of sprinkling was introduced in the third century A.D. I don't know why sprinkling would be used, except for convenience, in a time when Christianity became the state religion and everyone was forced by law to become a Christian.

There is a great argument among Christians about the words that should be said by the baptizer, when a person is baptized. In Matthew 28:19, we read "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." When Peter ministered to the Gentiles in the house of Cornelius in Ceasarea, he said, "Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord" (Acts 10:47-48). In Acts 19, we read of the experience of those who had been baptized according to John's baptism. They were instructed to believe on Christ, and then, "When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus" (Acts 19:5). Peter's words to the multitude on the day of Pentecost were, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:38). I am sure that it doesn't matter in the least if anything at all is said over a person when they are baptized. It is the experience of dying to the carnal man and being raised again in newness of life before God that counts. It is an experience between the one being baptized and their heavenly Father that is important. A few words actually mean nothing.

Those who did the baptizing in the scriptures that we quoted were acting as agents for the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. They were acting on their behalf, in their Name, and with their authority. The same applies when they baptized in the Name of the Lord, or in the Name of the Lord Jesus. They were baptizing with the authority given them by Jesus. They were acting in His Name. The same is true if I were to appoint an agent to do a certain piece of business for me. I would give him authority to act on my behalf, in my name. The baptizer is given authority to act either in Jesus' Name, or in the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. I am sure that the unity that Jesus speaks of between Him and His Father in John 17

isn't destroyed by whether we act in the Name of the Lord Jesus, or in the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

"To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God" (II Corinthians 5:19-20). In this scripture, God has appointed the members of the body of Christ as the agents He uses to cause men to come to Christ. We are ambassadors for Christ, or His representatives, or agents acting on His behalf, in presenting the gospel to mankind. The same is true concerning water baptism. Those baptizing are ambassadors of Christ.

Whether you are looking forward to being baptized, or looking back to a past experience, I trust that it will mean to you what God intended it to: the wonderful experience of dying to the old man and rising again in newness of life. Don't let the arguments of men spoil your relationship with your heavenly Father, and your older brother Jesus Christ, or the comfort of the Holy Spirit. May God bless you.

I HAVE COME TO BELIEVE

I have come to believe

In someone greater than me,

Who guides and protects me

And will at last set me free.

He is restoring my soul

And my destiny

And all because

I have come to believe.

We recently sang this song in our meeting in the local church. It caused me to think about what believing really is. To me, it is being entirely consumed by whatever we are endeavouring to believe, so much so that it becomes a part of our being. As the songwriter says, "I have come to believe in someone greater than me," and our whole life becomes centered around the One in whom we believe.

First, let us look at "unbelief" and what results it brings. We are all partakers of unbelief in some measure or other. Jesus had to constantly deal with unbelief. In Matthew 13:53-58, we read of Jesus' visit to the synagogue in His hometown, where He taught the people. They didn't recognize Him as the Son of God,

but only saw the carpenter's son as one of a family of children. "And he did not many mighty works there because of their unbelief" (Matthew 13:58). We often think that when someone is prayed for to be healed of their sickness and they aren't healed that the one who was praying lacked faith. As we see in the case of Jesus' ministry here, that not many mighty works were done, not because of Jesus' lack of faith, but because of the unbelief of those around Him. It is imperative that all who witness the prayer believe for anything to be accomplished.

In Matthew 17:14-21, we see where Jesus' disciples had trouble with unbelief. The man mentioned here had brought his son who was possessed of a devil to Jesus disciples for a cure. They were unable to help and Jesus informed them that their difficulty was unbelief. "And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you" (Matthew 17:20).

"By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God. But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him" (Hebrews 11:5-6). The first step to a Spiritual experience is to believe. Jesus said in Mark 1:14-15, "Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel."

The message of John 3:16 is that "whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner" (I Peter 2:5-7).

Speaking of the believers Peter says this, "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy" (I Peter 2:9-10). What a glorious standing in the sight of God our Heavenly Father! In John, chapter 9 Jesus healed the blind man. He made clay with His spit and anointed his eyes. He instructed him to go and wash, and the blind man came back seeing. Many, including the Pharisees, questioned the man about how he had received his sight. They cast him out of the synagogue saying that he was born in sin. The man steadfastly spoke of his belief in the One who had healed him. Jesus came to him (vs.35) and asked if he believed on the Son of God, to which he answered with the question, "Who is he Lord, that I might believe on Him?" Jesus then told him who He was, and the man replied, "Lord I believe." His belief brought forth worship and belief will have the same effect in our lives.

In Matthew 9:27-30, we read of two blind men being healed. They followed Jesus crying out, "Thou son of David, have mercy on us." They must have been acquainted with Jesus ability to heal. Jesus said to them, "Do you believe that I am able to do this?" Jesus touched their eyes and said, "According to your faith be it unto you." Their eyes were opened. The result rested on them believing.

In II Chronicles 20, we read of the Moabites coming to engage in war with Jehoshaphat. Jehoshaphat went to prayer and called a fast of the people of Judah. They called on God to destroy the invaders. "All Judah stood before the Lord, with their little ones, their wives and their children" (II Chronicles 20:13). The Spirit of the Lord came upon Jahaziel and he prophesied, telling Jehoshaphat and the people not to fear, because the battle was not theirs, but the Lords. They were told where the enemy would be and that they were to go down against them. They would not need to fight, but were to stand still and see the salvation of the Lord. They bowed in the presence of the Lord, and many praised the Lord with a loud voice. Jehoshaphat spoke to the people saying, "Believe in the Lord your God, so shall ye be established; believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper" (II Chronicles 20:20).

God made many promises to Israel through the ministry of His prophet Isaiah. "But now thus saith the LORD that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine" (Isaiah 43:1). Because of their relationship to their heavenly Father He watched over and protected Israel. We need to rejoice that the promises of this chapter do not only apply to natural Israel but to spiritual Israel as well. "Ye are my witnesses, saith the LORD, and my servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and BELIEVE me, and understand that I am he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me" (Isaiah 43:10). Their redemption and protection came through believing. "I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins" (Isaiah 43:25).

"Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul" (Hebrews 10:38-39). We pray for the day when every man will believe and know the Lord. We pray for the fulfilling of what was written in Hebrews 8:11,12: "And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more."

THE BLOOD OF CHRIST

The enemy is engaged in a battle in which he is endeavouring to destroy the efficacy of the sacrifice of Christ and the shedding of His blood for the cleansing of the sinner. He has even gone so far as to have denominations remove from their hymnbooks all references to the blood of Christ. Songs that we learned to love, like the following, are not in keeping with the times:
"There is a fountain filled with blood
Drawn from Immanuel's veins;
And sinners plunged beneath that flood,
Lose all their guilty stains.
Lose all their guilty stains;
And sinners plunged beneath that flood,
Lose all their guilty stains."

Let us refer to the scriptures concerning the purpose and place of the blood of Jesus in our experience with God. The apostle, Peter, writes concerning the church, "...who have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctifying work of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and sprinkling of His blood:" (1 Peter 1:2 NIV). Under the old covenant, Moses was instructed to sprinkle blood upon the mercy seat in the tabernacle in the wilderness. "Moreover he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle, and all the vessels of the ministry. And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission" (Hebrews 9:21-22). The whole spiritual experience of Israel centered around the sacrifices and the blood that was offered as an atonement for sin.

At the time of the installation of the priests of the nation of Israel, they were cleansed from sin by the offering of blood. "And thou shalt cause a bullock to be brought before the tabernacle of the congregation: and Aaron and his sons shall put their hands upon the head of the bullock. And thou shalt kill the bullock before the LORD, by the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. And thou shalt take of the blood of the bullock, and put it upon the horns of the altar with thy finger, and pour all the blood beside the bottom of the altar" (Exodus 29:10-12). By the laying on of the hands of Aaron and his sons, their sin was laid upon the head of the bullock, and its blood was poured out as atonement for them.

The book of Hebrews recounts what God had commanded Moses; "Whereupon neither the first testament was dedicated without blood. For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book, and all the people, Saying, This is the blood of the testament which God hath enjoined unto you (The covenant which God hath commanded you to keep). Moreover he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle, and all the vessels of the ministry. And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission" (Hebrews 9:18-22). Why? We will try to answer this question.

Under the new covenant, Paul, the apostle, speaks of the blood of Christ and its purpose in our relationship with God. "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now JUSTIFIED BY HIS BLOOD, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life" (Romans 5:8-10). To be justified means to be free from all blame. It is accomplished by Christ's death and the shedding of His blood on our behalf. To reconcile means to be made friendly again.

Paul again speaks of our redemption through Christ and the shedding of His blood in Ephesians, "In whom we have REDEMPTION THROUGH HIS BLOOD, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;" (Ephesians 1:7). Redemption means to buy back. We, who have been enslaved by Satan, have been purchased or bought back by the blood of Jesus Christ.

What part does the blood play in our relationship with God? To be a holy God, He must judge sin. When an animal sacrifice was offered in Israel and the sinner was repentant and believing, the judgement for his sin fell upon the sacrifice. Read several verses both before and after this scripture: "The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon

him" (Ezekiel 18:20). This teaches us that the judgement of God will rest upon the sinner for his sin. But there was a remedy for sin.

"For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ. Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon ALL MEN to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men, unto justification of life" (Romans 5:17-18). We have all inherited a sinful nature from Adam because of his disobedience to God. Rebellion against God seems to be imprinted on the human genes. This problem can be reversed by faith in Christ and the offering of His blood in His death on Calvary. We can partake of life instead of death because of His death on our behalf.

These scriptures are speaking of spiritual death and separation from God. In many instances, living a life style in a state of spiritual death leads to physical death as well. God is a God who is holy and righteous; and He is one who judges sin equitably. He never judges one man's sin and winks at the others'. By repentance and believing, we can attain righteousness in the sight of God through the blood of Jesus Christ.

God is very particular about life. He told Noah after he disembarked from the ark after the flood, "Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you; even as the green herb have I given you all things. But flesh with the life thereof, which is the blood thereof, shall ye not eat" (Genesis 9:3-4). Again in Leviticus 7:26, "Moreover ye shall eat no manner of blood, whether it be of fowl or of beast, in any of your dwellings. Whatsoever soul it be that eateth any manner of blood, even that soul shall be cut off from his people." An in Leviticus 17:10, "And whatsoever man there be of the house of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn among you, that eateth any manner of blood; I will even set my face against that soul that eateth blood, and will cut him off from among his people. For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood (the life) that maketh an atonement for the soul." The blood was given as an atonement, which means to make amends. When the blood of an animal was poured out as a sacrifice, that animal's life was given on behalf of the transgressor to satisfy the judgement of God. The judgement demanded by God's law and His holiness was met in the sacrifice. The judgement that was upon that life in the shedding of its blood was substitution on the sinner's behalf. The life (the blood) of the sacrifice was a substitute for the sinner.

God was so particular about respect for life, that He gave this instruction to Israel: "And whatsoever man there be of the children of Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn among you, which hunteth and catcheth any beast or fowl that may be eaten; he shall even pour out the blood thereof, and cover it with dust" (Leviticus 17:13).

The earthly sanctuary or tabernacle is described in Heb.9:1-10. The high priest went beyond the veil once every year to offer blood on his own behalf and also for the errors of the people. These offerings were only a figure for that time. "Which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience;" (Hebrews 9:9).

With the coming of Jesus a time of reformation or a new order was instituted. Jesus is the high priest of that new order. "Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of

God, let us hold fast our profession" (Hebrews 4:14). Hebrews 9:10 speaks of the old covenant or the time previous to the coming of Christ, but His coming brought a change, a time of reformation; "Which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them UNTIL THE TIME OF REFORMATION." With the new order, Christ offered Himself as the sacrifice for our sin and satisfied the righteous judgement of God. "But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building (or of this creation); Neither by the blood of goats and calves, BUT BY HIS OWN BLOOD he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance" (Hebrews 9:11-15).

Christ did not enter into the earthly temple in which Israel offered their sacrifices to offer Himself. He entered the heavenly temple, which is the true tabernacle, in order to enter into the presence of God for us.

Israel's sacrifices had to be an annual event, but Christ's sacrifice was offered once for all time. "Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others; For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself" (Hebrews 9:25).

By faith and by believing, we are privileged to reap the benefits of Christ's death and sacrifice. "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; And having an high priest over the house of God; LET US DRAW NEAR WITH A TRUE HEART IN FULL ASSURANCE OF FAITH, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water" (Hebrews 10:19).

Because we accept and believe in the sacrifice of Christ and the atoning power of the blood that He shed, we have many scriptures to strengthen our faith. "But 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). What a wonderful thing to have fellowship with God because of the cleansing of the blood of His son, rather than living all our days in fear of His judgement.

"And, having made peace through THE BLOOD OF HIS CROSS, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven. And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreproveable in his sight" (Colossians 1:20-22). We are privileged to be at peace through the blood He shed on the cross.

The book of Revelation describes the worship that takes place in Heaven: "And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast

redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth" (Revelation 5:9-10).

"But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in His blood" (Romans 3:21-25 NIV). Oh! Praise God.

"Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. In whom WE HAVE REDEMPTION THROUGH HIS BLOOD, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace" (Ephesians 1:5-7). Paul reminds the Ephesian elders that Christ had purchased the church with His blood: "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood" (Acts 20:28).

"Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot" (I Peter 1:18-19). We pray that God will help you to believe with all your heart in the sacrifice of Christ and the shedding of His blood. By that, He took upon Himself the judgement of God for your sin, and by believing, you can be pure and holy in His presence.

BORN ANEW

When we were born into this world, we were born sinners and were alienated from our Heavenly Father by the nature we were born with and our natural inclination to walk and live in sin. We inherited sin from Adam because of his transgression in the Garden of Eden. Every man and woman, since Adam, has inherited this nature.

"This, then, is what happened. Sin made its entry into the world through one man (Adam), and through sin, death. The entail of sin and death passed on the whole human race, and no one could break it for no one was himself free from sin" (Romans 5:12 Phillips).

The death that Paul the Apostle speaks of here is the death of the spirit and the soul as well as the body. "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive" (I Corinthians 15:22). The exercise of sin brings about the death of the spirit and the soul, and in such a few years, the death of the body as well. But we thank God that there is hope in Jesus Christ.

David, in Psalm 51:5, says this, and it is also true of every one of us. "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me," (iniquity means wickedness). Isaiah also says in Isaiah 53:6, "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned everyone to his own way; and the lord hath laid on Him (Christ) the iniquity of us all."

Let us also read Romans 3:9-18,23: "...we have proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin; As it is written, there is none righteous, no, not one-there is none that understandeth, There is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Their throat is an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips; Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness; Their feet are swift to shed blood; Destruction and misery are in their ways; And the way of peace have they not known; There is no fear of God before their eyes.... For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God."

We must realize the truth of these scriptures and come to the conclusion, which we have probably learned from experience, that our natural tendency is to walk in sin and against all the laws and precepts that God has given us.

It is not God's mind that this state of affairs should continue. It is His plan and purpose that the sinful nature be overcome, and that we inherit a new nature: that of Jesus Christ. It is also His plan and purpose that our spirit and soul, yes, and also our bodies, come alive with a new life which we will find in Jesus Christ.

When we realize our true state, we become uneasy in the presence of God. There is a sense of conviction or a feeling of guilt before God for our sin. It is the Spirit of God that speaks to us to bring this about. This is an indication that God has brought our spirit to life, that we might hear His voice. Jesus said in John 16:8, "And when He (the Holy Spirit) is come He will reprove (convict) the world of sin." Also, it is impossible for a man to come to God and learn to walk with Him without God drawing him. Here are the words of Jesus in John 6:44: "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him."

With the feeling of conviction and guilt that we have just spoken about comes a fear of punishment and judgment. This is no idle fear, for the judgments of God are very real, as we shall see from the following scriptures: "For if we sin willfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who had trodden underfoot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? For we know Him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, the Lord shall judge His people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Hebrews 10:26-31). "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent: because He hath appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom He hath ordained" (Acts 17:30). "The desire of the righteous is only good: but the expectation of the wicked is wrath" (Proverbs 11:23).

God draws us to Himself because He loves us and wants to make us His children. In Ezekiel 33:11, we read, "As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn

from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways." God extends His love to us, as we read in John 3:16-17, "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. For God sent not His son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved." God does not enjoy punishing the wicked any more than a parent enjoys punishing a disobedient child. As a father chastises his son with the hope that he will become obedient, so God punishes the wicked. Not only does God love us in His chastisements and judgments, but He loved us in offering His Son a sacrifice for our salvation from the bondage of sin and wickedness.

Just as we had a natural birth so we must have a spiritual birth. Jesus says in John 3:3, "Except a man be born again he cannot see the Kingdom of God." Jesus is talking here about the birth of the soul; and, in John 3:6-7, He points out the difference between the birth of the natural body and the coming alive of a person's soul: "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, ye must be born again."

How does a spiritual birth take place? Nicodemus wondered that and confused it with a natural birth. God's word points out the simplicity of a spiritual birth. Our part is believing. "Whosoever BELIEVETH in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). "What must I do to be saved? ... BELIEVE on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house" (Acts 16:30,31). "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt BELIEVE in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man BELIEVETH unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Romans 10:9-10). "To Him (Christ) give all the prophets witness, that through his Name whosoever BELIEVETH in Him shall receive remission of sins" (Acts 10:43).

God's part of our spiritual birth is accomplished through the death and resurrection of His Son, Jesus Christ. "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin" (I John 1:7). "For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our lord Jesus Christ, Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him" (I Thessalonians 5:9-10). "And we can see that it was while we were powerless to help ourselves that Christ died for sinful men" (Romans 5:6, Phillips). "But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8). "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit" (I Peter 3:18). "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29).

Many people believe that Christ died to take away the sin of the world generally, but they fail to make it a personal matter. Every experience in God has to be personal. God always deals first with the individual before he deals with households, nations or the world.

Take notice that in the scriptures quoted, all the experiences concerning believing refer to the individual. We cannot believe for another person. We must believe for ourselves. We must make our own choice as to whether or not we serve God. The man asked Paul, "What must I do to be saved?" The answer was, "You believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." Again Paul says, "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth and believe in thine heart thou shalt be saved."

The first result from our believing and accepting Christ as our personal redeemer is that a spiritual birth takes place. We become a child of God, one on whom His hand rests to guide and protect. Spiritually speaking, we are newborn babes. God becomes our heavenly Father, and Christ, our older brother. We belong to God's family. We can sing with the songwriter, "Now I belong to Jesus, Jesus belongs to me."

Believing and accepting Christ brings peace with God and freedom from guilt. We have entered into a new relationship. Whereas before we were afraid of God, He now becomes our loving Father. "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Romans 5:1). To be justified means to be free from blame or guilt. God says in Isaiah 43:25, "I, even I, am He that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins."

"But God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life. And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement" (Romans 5:8-11). Atonement means the redeeming or buying back of you and I through Jesus' death. When we belong to God, we not only find Him a Father who cares for us, but we have joy in our relationship with Him. We can have fellowship with Him.

Becoming a child of God is only the beginning of our experience with Him. "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is" (I John 3:2). "But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for them that love Him" (I Corinthians 2:9). Some people would put all these things God has prepared for us off until some future age. There will be lots for future ages, but there is much that God wants us to accept the privilege of receiving right now.

When we become a Christian (I don't mean in name, but in experience), the pattern of our life will change. Let us read 1 John 3:1. "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew Him not." We will find that we don't fit into the world or its system anymore. The world didn't recognize Christ. In fact, the world hated Him; and don't be surprised if the world doesn't love you any too much. The world recognizes its own children by the things that they do, but they can't recognize a Christian because they do things differently. Christ will change a man's life to make it like His. His mind is to create us in His image and likeness.

God's instruction to us, as given through the apostle John in I John 2:15-16, is: "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, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world." God expects a life lived above the ways of this world, and it is the happiest and most rewarding kind of life.

Someone said to me one time that, if there were absolutely nothing beyond our three score and ten years, it would be well worth it to live a Christian life. A person would be spared so many heartaches and sorrows, and would have the privilege and blessing of the fellowship of our Heavenly Father. But three score and

ten years is just the very beginning; so let us look forward, Christian, to the ages to come and all the glorious things God will share with us, then, as well as now.

Let me quote the words of Paul, "With eyes wide open to the mercies of God, I beg you, my brothers, as an act of intelligent worship, to give Him your bodies, as a living sacrifice, consecrated to Him and acceptable by Him. Don't let the world around you squeeze you into its own mould, but let God re-mould your minds from within, so that you may prove in practice that the plan of God for you is good, meets all His demands and moves toward the goal of true maturity. As your spiritual teacher I give this piece of advice to each one of YOU" (Romans 12:1-3 Phillips).

As we see in II Corinthians 5:14-15, God's desire is that, when we are His, we will live for Him and not for ourselves. "For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: And that He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them, and rose again." We are constrained to live for Him because of the love He has for us, and it is our desire, not to live for ourselves, but to yield our lives to Him.

That is the only worthwhile thing, because, as John says in I John 2:17, "The world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever."

BRETHREN

July 1985

Abraham was the friend of God, Enoch walked with God, and God spoke face to face with Moses as a man speaks to a friend. Moses knew the ways of God while Israel only perceived His acts. Our relationship with God is very important to us, both for our growth in the Spirit and our enjoyment of our walk with Him.

To most people, and I'm sorry to say, to a lot of Christians, God is some far-off being standing over them in judgement. God wants us to learn to fellowship with Him, and to walk in the Spirit. He wants us to learn to worship Him in the Spirit, because God is a Spirit; they that worship Him must worship in Spirit and in truth. That is where we enter into the joy of fellowship with Him.

Many Christians think of their relationship with God only as a relationship of master and servant. They endeavour to serve Him, but live in a constant fear that they will displease Him and come under His judgement. Our relationship with God should be one that grows in its intimacy as we walk with Him and learn to know Him.

In John 13, where we read of Jesus washing His disciple’s feet, He says, "Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. If I then, your master and Lord, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one

another's feet" (John 13:13-14). At this point, their relationship hadn't gone beyond the master and servant stage. Many people never go beyond this relationship in their spiritual experience.

In John 15:15, we find a change in the relationship has taken place: "Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his Lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you." What a change in the relationship. They had become friends and could confide in one another. Jesus was sharing with them the revelation "Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit" (Ephesians 3:5). In the order of the church, God has made it possible for us all to share in this revelation. Let us become friends with Him that we might all share in His secrets.

No doubt that previous to this, had Jesus shared these things they wouldn't have understood. The "all things" that He speaks of are spiritual things and could only be understood by those who walk in the Spirit and understand by the Spirit. "But as it is written, Eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. BUT GOD HAS REVEALED THEM UNTO US BY HIS SPIRIT; for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God" (I Corinthians 2:9,10).

Knowledge of the Father and the Son are acquired by the revelation of the Holy Spirit. "In that hour Jesus rejoiced in Spirit, and said, I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so Father; for so it seemed good in Thy sight. All things are delivered to me of my Father: and no man knoweth who the Son is, but the Father; and who the Father is, but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal Him" (Luke 10:21,22).

Later on, in John 15, Jesus speaks of the work of the Holy Spirit in testifying of or revealing Himself. Acquiring an intimate knowledge of the Father and the Son is definitely the work of the Holy Spirit within us, as we, by the Spirit commune with God. "But when the comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father ... He shall testify of Me" (John 15:26). By the Spirit, He is making known to His friends the things that He had heard from His Father. I pray that as we learn to walk in the Spirit that He, as our friend, will share with us more of the revelation of Himself.

Make me know you Jesus as you really are:
Not a dream or just a vision from afar.
Self dethroned, no room for sin;
Flow out through me from within.
Make me know you Jesus as you really are.

After Jesus' resurrection, we read of a closer bond that had developed between Him and His disciples. Mary stood weeping in the garden because she thought someone had taken Jesus body away. When Jesus spoke to her, she recognized Him. He then instructed her to go to His "BRETHREN" and tell them that He would meet them in Galilee (John 20:17, Mark 16:7). This is a newer and closer relationship that God wants us to enter into with His Son.

Romans 8:29 describes this relationship: "For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren," or as Weymouth translates this scripture, "the eldest of a vast company of brethren."

Sometimes I hate to think in this vein for fear I may be assuming something that is beyond the calling of God. I can hardly imagine being so conformed to the image and likeness of Christ that I would be recognized as His younger brother. Yet that is the relationship God has in mind for those who yield to the forming that takes place by the Holy Spirit.

Paul, in Romans 12:1-2, speaks of being transformed by the renewing of our mind and not letting the world squeeze us into its mould. We long with the rest of creation for this transformation, that we in truth may be recognized as His brothers.

The writer of Hebrews, quoting from Psalms 22:22, further substantiates this relationship: "For it became Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through suffering. For both He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one; for which cause He is not ashamed to call them BRETHREN, Saying, I will declare thy Name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto Thee" (Hebrews 2:10,11).

Jesus not only calls His people brethren, but says He will declare His Father's name unto them. In Scripture, and in God's purposes, names are always descriptive of the one bearing the name. Christ, in declaring His Father's Name, is revealing the secrets of His Fathers nature and gives us understanding and access to the divine Nature by the work of the Holy Spirit within us. "According as His Divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him that hath called us to glory and virtue: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the Divine Nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust." (II Peter 1:3,4). God has always wanted to fellowship with His people. When Israel was in the wilderness, He had them fashion a tent and pitch it in the midst of the twelve tribes so He could be among them.

When they entered into the Promised Land, He had Solomon build a temple so He could dwell among His people. Today He is building a spiritual house of living stones, which stones ye are, so He can dwell in His temple by the Spirit. "Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto a holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit" (Ephesians 2:19-22).

If we are to get the most from our experience as Christians, it is important that we enter into fellowship with our Heavenly Father and with Jesus our Saviour. There is a great deal of joy in this fellowship. God wants us to experience this in our walk with Him.

We may think of ourselves as the servants of Christ or even His friends but He wants us as brethren. He doesn't want us to work for Him, but as the apostle, Paul, put it, we are workers together with Him in the establishing of His kingdom.

One of the fruits of the Spirit is joy. Joy then is necessarily part of God's nature. Our Heavenly Father enjoys Himself and enjoys the presence and fellowship of His people. Let us learn to enjoy more and more the presence of God in our daily lives. Let us walk in the Spirit and live in the Spirit that we might share together with our Heavenly Father the joy of our salvation and the hope of the glorious plan and purpose He has for the whole creation.

"That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ. And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full. This is the message that we have heard of Him and declare unto you, that God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: But 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 1:3-7).

BUILDING GOD'S HOUSE

Simeon has related how God first looked graciously on the nations to take from among them a people to be called by His Name. This is in harmony with the language of the prophets which says, "Afterwards I will return, and build again David's fallen tent (house), Its ruins I will rebuild, and I will set it up again; that the rest of mankind may seek after the Lord - even all the nations which are called by my Name, says the Lord, who has been making these things known from ages long past" (Acts 15:14-18 WEYMOUTH).

When God speaks of a people who will be called by His Name, He is not only talking of a people who will bear His Name, as a wife bears her husband's name, but He is talking of a people who His Name will describe. The names that God gives describe the character, personality, ministry and everything else about the person receiving the name. The people who will bear His Name shall indeed bear His likeness.

This people that God is calling out is a special people for a special purpose. Christ is picking out a governing body for His Kingdom. Not all people who have accepted Christ as their Saviour fit this purpose. To fit this purpose, we have to learn to do His will and learn to be led by His Spirit (Romans 8:14). It is necessary that any who would receive this calling become mature in the life and walk with God.

Note the words of Jesus in Matthew 7:21: "Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? And in thy name have cast out devils? And in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity." These people had operated Spiritual gifts and performed miracles in the Name of the Lord, but because they hadn't learned to submit to His will, Christ will never know them in His Kingdom. Iniquity is rebellion or lack of submission; we all have our wills to overcome and surrender to His will, or we will never see His Kingdom.

That does not mean that if we miss the Kingdom, we are not saved and have no place in the plan of God. It is in my heart to enter into the Kingdom and take my place in ruling with Him and I am sure it is in your heart too. But there will be many saved people who will not enter the Kingdom.

In Revelations 20, we have the plan of the resurrections outlined. There are those who will be priests of God and of Christ and shall reign with Him a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. After the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed and then defeated and cast into the lake of fire. While he is loose, he encompasses the camp of the saints and the beloved city. This city I wish to say more about later.

Then comes the time of the great white throne. John says, "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works" (Revelation 20:12). The very fact that the book of life was open would tell us that there were people present whose names were written there. In verse 15 John says, "And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire." Obviously there were some whose names were in the book of life, but who had not shared in the governing of the thousand years of the kingdom.

The word "church" in the scriptures is translated from the Greek word "ekklesia, which means, "that which is called out." The church, therefore, is God's called-out ones, a people for His Name, a royal priesthood, a holy nation. To my knowledge, Abraham was the first called-out one mentioned in the scriptures; "Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee" (Genesis 12:1).

Abraham found the land that God was directing him to, but he sought "a city which hath foundations whose builder and maker is God" (Hebrews 11:10). Abraham was called out of his country for the special purpose God had for him. But those left behind believed in God and worshipped Him, as is clearly shown by the story in Genesis 24, where Abraham and his servant seek a bride for Isaac. They believed in God, but Abraham was called out.

There were many more called out ones in ages past. Some of their names are listed in Hebrews 11.

The last while, I have been made more and more conscious that God is calling out a people. I believe God is giving us a greater understanding of the purpose of these called out ones. In Hebrews 3:4-6, it says, "For every house is builded by some man; but he that built all things is God. And Moses verily was faithful in all his house, as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after; But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end." Christ is establishing His house.

We usually think of a house as the place of our abode, but in this instance, God is speaking of a house as a governing body as we think of our house of parliament. Christ is establishing His house, and this house is made up of His called-out ones.

In Acts 15:16, where the tabernacle of David is discussed, reference is made to the same house that Christ is building. May I quote to you a part of the covenant God made with David in II Samuel 7:11-16: "And as since the time that I commanded judges to be over my people Israel, and have caused thee to rest from all thine enemies. Also the LORD telleth thee that he will make thee an house. And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom...." This is speaking of Christ and His kingdom. "...He shall build an house for my name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be his father, and he shall be my son. ...And thine house and thy kingdom shall be established for ever before thee: thy throne shall be established forever."

There is something very important that we must remember: the day will come when Christ is finished building His house and it will begin to function in its purpose. I am not sure how we will know when this day has arrived, but let us all minister to the fullness of the ability that God gives us, whether it is to build the house or the function of the house in its purpose in the earth.

Now we come to the purpose of the house. God intends that the house He is building be a refuge to which all the earth might flee. At the Feast of Pentecost this spring, someone made reference to the cities of refuge in Israel and I couldn't help but think of that great city that God is building.

I do not need to tell you of the needs that are in the earth today, for they are very plain to all of us. The whole system is sick and on the verge of collapse. Men try continually to patch it up with very little result - only that it gets sicker. The only remedy will be for the whole earth to take refuge in the house that He is building.

There is something that I think very few of us realize and that is that as this house comes to full maturity, there will not be a need in all the earth that it will be incapable of ministering to.

In John 14:1-4, we read the words of Jesus, "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." The word "mansions," as used here, denotes abiding places. Some would have us think that it speaks of a lot of separate houses in the heavenly realm. It is speaking of abiding places in the same house as stones are placed in their place in the building that is being constructed. In this case, they are living stones; "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ" (I Peter 2:5).

Christ has prepared a place for each of His called-out ones in this house. He sets each stone in its place and divides the abilities and responsibilities to each. "But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.... But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased Him" (I Corinthians 12:11&18).

There is something very important that we need to understand about this house. In a natural building, every part has its own purpose. In the past, we have tried to make every stone in this building fill the same place and there is a tendency for some to try to do the same thing today. It is very easy for us to view the house

through the eyes of our own ministry and forget that there are many other parts just as important as ours without whom the building could not be complete, nor could it function.

Some parts of this house minister to the house itself in all the various ways that a house needs ministering to. If you own a house you know all the attention a house needs. It needs painting, the door needs to be fixed, the taps drip, the sewer gets plugged, the neighbour's boy throws a stone through the window, and I could go on almost endlessly. So some parts of the house minister almost exclusively to the house.

But what is a house if its warmth, friendliness and comfort cannot be shared? There are other members of the house who reach out and make it possible for the blessing of the house to be shared. There are members who reach outside the house and lift the heavy burdens and set the captive free and bring him to enjoy the blessing of the house.

God is calling out a people to bear His Name. They are a called-out out body or group of living stones with which He is building again the tabernacle of David. And the reason for this: that the rest of mankind may seek after the Lord. The rest of mankind will be able to come into the shelter of the house He is building and find rest in the presence of the Lord.

"And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills: and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob: and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And He shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. O house of Jacob, come ye, and let us walk in the light of the Lord" (Isaiah 2:2-5).

This is a wonderful description of the house the Lord is building and of His purpose during the Kingdom age. Isaiah prophesies again of the Kingdom in the 11th chapter. This time he describes the house as a branch growing out of the vine. The Spirit of the Lord rests upon him; He shall not judge after the hearing of the ear or the seeing of the eye; and righteousness shall be the girdle of His loins (Isaiah 11:2-5). This describes the house He is building. He goes on to tell about the wonderful things the Lord shall bring into the earth through the ministry of His house. It is a glorious shelter where righteousness, equity, peace and rest shall abound. A child shall lead wild animals as a small boy plays with his pup. The animals shall dwell in peace with one another, and nothing shall hurt nor destroy in all His holy mountain. And why? Because the ministry of the house He is building shall have filled the earth with the knowledge of the Lord even as the waters cover the sea. Oh, come let us dwell in the house of the Lord.

David knew his calling. I suppose that God, by His Spirit, had placed the assurance of it in his heart. "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: AND I WILL DWELL IN THE HOUSE OF THE LORD FOREVER" (Psalms 23:6).

I do not believe that any of us can claim to have entered into being a part of this building. We, like Paul, must press toward the mark of the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

"Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (II Peter 1:10-11).

I would exhort everyone to find the place in His house that God has called you to; and then minister in it with all the ability God gives you in conjunction with every other part of the house. God is not building many houses, but He is building one. Every part of the house He is building will submit to every other part that all may accomplish their purpose in harmony with one another. If the door of my house couldn't recognize the ministry of the light on the wall outside the door, we would have a sorry state of affairs. The light lights the way to the door, which is the entrance into the house. Only after entering that door can I enjoy the blessings of many other members of the house. I share in the warmth and comfort of home.

I pray that His house will prepare itself for a great ingathering.

THE CALLING OF GOD

In Revelation 17:14, we read, "These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful." This speaks of the battle that will take place at the end of this age between the Lord and the beast and his followers that are arrayed against Him. The Lord has many followers that are spoken of as being called, chosen and faithful. This is the last great battle between the forces of evil and the Lord.

Being called, chosen, and faithful are the three qualifications necessary for sonship. There are many scriptures that speak of the calling of God. The Greek word that is translated called is "kletos," which means invited. Paul speaks of the Thessalonian church as being called or invited to partake of the glory of His kingdom; "As ye know how we exhorted and comforted and charged every one of you, as a father doth his children, That ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory" (I Thessalonians 2:11-12).

Ephesians 4:1-3 is an exhortation to walk worthy of that calling: "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."

The call of God is unto holiness. "For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness" (I Thessalonians 4:7). Our calling is because we have been chosen: chosen to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth. "Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle" (II Thessalonians 2:14-15). What a hope. We are called to obtain and partake of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

"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, stablish, strengthen, settle you" (I Peter 5:10). We have been called to His eternal glory, or as Philip's translates it, "to His eternal splendour." He warns us that there will be suffering. If not physical suffering, we will suffer because we are troubled by the carnal nature. Look unto Him for His strengthening and settling power.

Paul, in I Corinthians 1:2, says, "Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours." That is the calling of the church.

Then in I Corinthians 1:9, he says, "God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord." That is a tremendous and extraordinary calling. What a fellowship we are privileged to enter!

To help us understand how privileged we are, Paul said this: "For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world
to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: That no flesh should glory in his presence" (I Corinthians 1:26-29).

Another word describing those who are called is "chosen." When a person responds to God's call, the relationship becomes closer and he is chosen. The word chosen is translated from the Greek word "eklektos," which means laid out, chosen or elect. In Matthew 20:16, and in Matthew 22:14, Jesus said that many are called but few are chosen. To be chosen requires a response on our part to the call of God.

Peter says to those who have accepted Christ as their Saviour, "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy" (I Peter 2:9-10). His words put the believer in Christ in a special category. I pray that God will help us to appreciate that.

Israel was a chosen nation, which is still evidenced today after many thousand years. God spoke to Israel in Exodus 19:5, "Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel."

We find later on that, because of Israel's sin and rebellion, God had in mind to destroy the whole nation. "And the LORD said unto Moses, I have seen this people, and, behold, it is a stiffnecked people: Now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them: and I will make of thee a great nation" (Exodus 32:9-10).

This was Moses' great opportunity, but rather than take advantage of it he interceded for the nation of Israel. "And Moses besought the LORD his God, and said, LORD, why doth thy wrath wax hot against thy people, which thou hast brought forth out of the land of Egypt with great power, and with a mighty hand? Wherefore should the Egyptians speak, and say, For mischief did he bring them out, to slay them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth? Turn from thy fierce wrath, and repent of this evil against thy people. Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, thy servants, to whom thou swarest by thine own self, and saidst unto them, I will multiply your seed as the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have spoken of will I give unto your seed, and they shall inherit it forever. And the LORD repented of the evil which he thought to do unto his people" (Exodus 32:11-13).

The following quotation describes the Spiritual state of the nation of Israel at the time: "They made a calf in Horeb, and worshipped the molten image. Thus they changed their glory into the similitude of an ox that eateth grass. They forgat God their saviour, which had done great things in Egypt; Wondrous works in the land of Ham, and terrible things by the Red sea. Therefore he said that he would destroy them, had not Moses his chosen stood before him in the breach, to turn away his wrath, lest he should destroy them" (Psalms 106:19-23).

Concerning the church (the word church means called out ones,) Peter again says, "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed. But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light" (I Peter 2:5-9).

Ananias prophesied to Paul how God had chosen him, "And one Ananias, a devout man according to the law, having a good report of all the Jews which dwelt there, Came unto me, and stood, and said unto me, Brother Saul, receive thy sight. And the same hour I looked up upon him. And he said, The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldest know his will, and see that Just One, and shouldest hear the voice of his mouth. For thou shalt be his witness unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard" (Acts 22:12-15).

John also describes those with the Lord as being faithful. The Greek word translated faithful indicates steady, strict and thorough in the performance of duty. Paul, writing in I Corinthians 4:1&2 says this; "Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful."

Jesus tells in Matthew 25 of the man who was planning a long trip. He put his goods in the charge of his servants while he was away. Two of the servants doubled their master's money while he was gone, but the third man dug a hole in the ground and buried the money he was responsible for. When the master returned, he described the first two as faithful servants and promised them the privilege of entering the joy of their lord. The third, who buried the money in his charge, was called a wicked and slothful servant. The money

was taken from him and given to one of the others. What Jesus said here is very true in Spiritual matters. "For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath" (Matthew 25:29). We are responsible. It is very important that we enter into what God has made real to us by the Holy Spirit or we will lose even what we already have. We must be faithful.

In speaking of his own ministry, Paul says in I Timothy 1:12-14, "And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry; who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus." It is very important to our spiritual wellbeing that we walk in such a way that God can call us faithful. Lord, give us a faithful heart.

Christ is a faithful high priest in things pertaining to God. "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation
for the sins of the people" (Hebrews 2:14-17).

"And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it" (I Thessalonians 5:23-24).

Christ was faithful in the appointment given Him of His Father. "Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus; Who was faithful to him that appointed him, as also Moses was faithful in all his house" (Hebrews 3:1-2). We pray that we may be faithful in the appointment given us of our heavenly Father, especially that given us by the laying on of hands and prophecy.

The elders of the churches must be faithful men as stated in I Timothy 3:1-7. Elders' wives must also be faithful women; "Even so must their wives be grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things" (I Timothy 3:11). In fact all wives are expected of God to be faithful.

Let us hear the exhortation of John, the apostle, in Revelation 2:10: "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death." Praise God.

CALLED TO SONSHIP - NOT WORLDLINESS

The priests tended the table of shew bread, the altar of incense, and the golden candlestick. They were in the first room beyond the outer court called the holy place. The holy place is a type of our place of ministry. The table of shewbread is where we partake of the living bread. Literally, the shewbread means the bread of the presence. As we partake of it, we partake of the presence of God in our life and in our walk. Right in front of the veil was the altar of incense, where our prayers ascend as incense unto God. Then, there was the golden candlestick, which they kept lighted all the time in that holy place. That is a type of the church as the light of the world. Our whole ministry is typified by this table on which the bread was placed, by the altar of incense, and by that golden candlestick. Beyond the veil, the veil that was rent when Christ died on the cross, was the holiest of all that is spoken of in the scripture that we just quoted, and is where we enter into sonship. That is where Christ went into the presence of God with His own blood as a sacrifice in the holiest of all in the heavenly tabernacle. Going beyond that veil is a type of our entering into the presence of God in sonship.

OUR CALLING IS TO SONSHIP - NOT WORLDLINESS.

Our calling is to sonship, not worldliness. That is something that we have to be very careful about and guard against worldliness creeping into our lives. "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God" (I Corinthians 6:9-10). Inheriting the kingdom is another term that you could substitute for sonship. Our calling is to a much higher level than these things listed. "And such were some of you: but ye are washed," Praise God for that washing and cleansing! "...ye are sanctified, ye are justified in the Name of the Lord Jesus by the Spirit of God" (I Corinthians 6:11). What a wonderful experience to be able to enter in to. "As children copy their fathers you, as God's children are to copy Him. Live your lives in love - the same sort of love which Christ gives us and which He perfectly expressed when He gave Himself up for us in sacrifice to God. But as for sexual immorality in all its forms, and the itch to get your hands on what belongs to other people - don't even talk about such things - they are no fit subjects for Christians to talk about. The keynote of your conversation should not be nastiness or silliness or flippancy, but a sense of all that we owe to God. For of this much you can be quite certain: that the immoral nor the dirty minded nor the covetous man (which latter is, in effect, worshipping a false God) has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Don't let anyone fool you on this point, however plausible his argument. It is these very things which bring down the wrath of God on the disobedient. Have nothing to do with men like that - once you were 'darkness' but now you are light" (Ephesians 5:1-8 Phillips).

That is very good instruction. Have nothing to do with men like that. "Live then as children of light. The light produces in men quite the opposite of sins like these - everything that is wholesome and good and true" (Ephesians 5:8 Phillips). We pray that the light will produce the opposite within us - the opposite to the sins of the age in which we live. Let the light of God produce within us the things that glorify His Name. "Let you lives be living proof of the things which please God. Steer clear of the activities of darkness; let your lives show by contrast how dreary and futile these things are. (You know the sort of things I mean - to detail their secret doings is really too shameful)" (Ephesians 5:10-12 Phillips). Paul was ashamed to even

talk about the things that go on in the earth. "For light is capable of showing up everything for what it really is..." The light of Christ, the light of the gospel, shows up the things of darkness and sin for what they really are. "...It is even possible (after all, it happened with you) for light to turn the thing it shines upon into light also" (Ephesians 5:13 Phillips). We thank God for the change that has been brought about in the lives of God's people because the light of the gospel has shone upon them. Paul then quotes from the scriptures. "'Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall shine upon thee.' Live then life with a due sense of responsibility, not as men who do not know the meaning and purpose of life but as those who do. Make the best use of your time, despite all the difficulties of these days. Don't be vague but firmly grasp what you know to be the will of God" (Ephesians 5:14-17 Phillips). We pray that God will help us to enter in fully to the things that God is calling us to. We don't have time to be playing around with the things that belong to the carnal realm. We pray that God will help us to press toward the mark that He has set before us. Be followers of God.
"Mortify (put to death) therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection (affection that goes beyond the proper limits), evil concupiscence (evil desire), and covetousness, which is idolatry: For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience: In the which ye also walked some time, when ye lived in them. But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him" (Colossians 3:5-10). How thankful we are for that transformation that takes place when our lives are surrendered to the Lord.

"For the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is an householder, which went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard" (Matthew 20:1). When he hired these men, they agreed to work for a penny a day. Later in the day, he hired more men and made the same agreement with them. About the 11th hour he hired other men. When it was time to pay the men, he paid the ones that were hired last the same as he paid the others. That caused an argument. "We have worked all day in the heat and mosquitoes and have sweat and laboured. These who have only been here an hour get the same as we do." "Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil, because I am good? So the last shall be first, and the first last: for many be called, but few chosen" Matthew 20:15-16).

It was the attitude of the workmen that comes into play here. It was the householder’s prerogative as how much the men were paid. He said, "I can do what I want to with what is mine." The last shall be first and the first last. We must have the proper attitude. Many are called but few chosen. Our attitude toward the things that God has called us to have a great deal to do with our entering into the things of God. It is important that we learn to minister the Spirit of God.

"Let this mind be in you ["let this attitude be in you"], which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery ["something to be grasped after"] to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men. And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross" (Philippians 2:5-8). That is the attitude that was in Christ, the Son of God.

In Luke 4:18, we read about His purpose in coming. "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach

deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised." This was the purpose of the coming of Christ, and describes the ministry that He had. I would like you to make a comparison between this scripture and Isaiah 14, which describes the attitude of Lucifer. We read here how Jesus came to give recovering of sight to the blind and to set at liberty them that are bruised and to preach the acceptable year of the Lord.

"How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High. Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit. They that see thee shall narrowly look upon thee, and consider thee, saying, Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms; That made the world as a wilderness, and destroyed the cities thereof; that opened not the house of his prisoners?" (Isaiah 14:12). There is a tremendous contrast between the attitude of the devil and Christ. We see that the devil is to be brought down to hell. Because of His attitude, Christ is to be lifted up, as we read in Philippians 2:9-11: "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." Christ has become the Head of the body the church. Attitude plays a tremendous part in our growth and in our progress toward sonship.

There is a lot of good instruction in I Thessalonians. "Abstain from all appearance of evil" I Thessalonians 5:22. We have to be very, very careful. Abstain from things that could appear evil. Maybe there is nothing wrong with it if you could see the whole picture, but because people don't always see the whole picture, it could appear evil to them. So abstain from anything that could appear evil. This is very important for the Christian who is walking with the Lord. "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ"(I Thessalonians 5:23). To sanctify means to set apart for a holy purpose. This was Paul's desire for the Thessalonian Christians: that they would be set apart completely for God. Paul prayed about their whole spirit, soul, and body. We talk about entering into life. When we become conscious of God, our spirit has taken on life. A dead spirit isn't conscious of God at all, but when we become conscious of the fact that God is speaking to us, there has come a measure of life to our spirit. When we accept Jesus Christ and are born again, our soul comes alive, and we are praying for the day when our body takes on life, the day when our bodies enter into the resurrection. We are praying for the day when we enter fully into sonship. God desires that we should be set apart for His purpose. Israel was set apart as a holy nation, a nation of priests.

Let us consider our responsibility to those who are "without". I didn't realize that there were so many scriptures along this line. "That ye may walk honestly toward them that are without, and that ye may have lack of nothing" (I Thessalonians 4:12). To walk honestly is a very important thing, and this advice must be adhered to in all things with all diligence. This next scripture is talking about the qualifications of elders. "Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil" (I Timothy 3:7). This applies to all of us. The qualifications for elders' characters actually apply to every member of the church. It is not just the elders who have to measure up to these things, but we all should have these fruits in our lives. "That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being

fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God;" (Colossians 1:10). We must walk in such a way that we bring credit to our Master's Name by our works. When Paul speaks of our knowledge of God increasing, he is not speaking of mental knowledge, but experimental knowledge where our knowledge actually bears the fruit of the Spirit. "Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time." (Colossians 4:5). We must be wise in our dealings with the world.

"Giving no offence in anything, that the ministry be not blamed:" (II Corinthians 6:3). Whose ministry is he talking about? Mine or yours or someone else's? He is talking about our own personal ministry. Giving no offence in anything that the ministry be not blamed. "But in all things approving ourselves (or commending ourselves) as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, In stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours, in watchings, in fastings; By pureness, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, by the Holy Ghost, by love unfeigned, By the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, By honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report: as deceivers, and yet true; As unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and, behold, we live; as chastened, and not killed; As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things" (II Corinthians 6:4-10). What a list of wonderful things to enter into! The mature son will possess them all. We have such a responsibility in letting our light shine, and in letting the knowledge of God be spread abroad in the world.
Peter talks of similar things in I Peter; "Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous: Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing. For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile: Let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it. For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil" (I Peter 3:8-12). You have to read these over and meditate on them and think about them. We see that what God is calling us to is a noble, high, and holy calling.

"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. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever" (I John 2:15-17). Loving the world is not the way into sonship. John says that what the world consists of is the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. These things do not come from God. These things belong to the world, and it will pass away. He who does God's will, will abide forever. He enters into the calling of sonship. "Never give your hearts to this world or to any of the things in it. A man cannot love the Father and love the world at the same time. For the whole world system, based as it is on men's primitive desires, their greedy ambitions and the glamour of all they think splendid, is not derived from the Father at all, but from the world itself. The world and all its passionate desires will one day disappear. But the man who is following God's will is part of the permanent and cannot die" (I John 2:15-17 Phillips).

When Jesus was tempted after His baptism, He was tempted in these three things. He was baptized of John in the Jordan River. A voice then came from heaven saying, "This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased. Then was Jesus led up of the spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil" (Matthew 3:17-4:1). It is possible to be led of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted. Probably that is what is happening

on those days when we think that God has forsaken us. This would give us a chance to manifest the strength of the Lord that is in us. Jesus fasted forty days and forty nights, and then the tempter came to Him.

The first temptation was to command the stones to be turned into bread. It was the desire of His flesh to have something to eat. Jesus answer was, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4).

Then the devil took Him and put Him on the pinnacle of the temple, and said, "If you are the Son of God cast yourself down. The scripture says that His angels will take charge of you and guard you from even stumbling over a stone." This is the pride of life. Why, I can jump off the pinnacle of the temple and God will pick me up and look after me. Some people have similar ideas. Jesus answer was, "It is written, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God" (Matthew 4:7).

Then the devil took Him to a very high mountain and showed Him the glory of all the kingdoms of the world. He said to Jesus, "All these things will I give you if you will fall down and worship me." Jesus told him to leave because we are instructed in the Word of God, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God and Him only shalt thou serve" (Matthew 4:10). Jesus could look out from that high mountain and see all the kingdoms of the world. His eye could desire those things, and we likewise could desire many, many things that probably are not good for us. As we read in I John, "Love not the world, neither the things in the world, for all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life is not of the Father, but is of the world." These are the three points in which Jesus was tempted after His baptism. We are tempted in exactly the same way as He was tempted by the things that are in the world. Love not the world. Our calling is to sonship and not to worldliness. Not entering into the things of the world or desiring the things that the world gives.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN CHILDREN AND SONS.

There is a definite difference in the scriptures between children and sons. "He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:" (John 1:11-12). He gave them authority, or put within their grasp, the ability to become children. In our King James Version it says "sons," but the other modern translations say children.

When we accept Jesus Christ, we are born into the kingdom of God. We have the authority to be children of God. We can say with no fear, "God is my Father." We are born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. This is how our new birth takes place. We are born as children into the kingdom of God.

We must look at the words that are translated "sons" and that are translated "children." "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together" (Romans 8:16-17). "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not" (I John 3:1). Notice that of these three scriptures that we have just quoted, the first one, John 1:11, used the word sons, Romans 8:16 used

the word children, and I John 3:1 uses the word sons. These three are all translated from the same Greek word, which is "teknon." This word means "one born," and it denotes immaturity. It is never used of Christ when He is spoken of as the Son of God. Let us read I John 3:2-3 from Weymouth: "Beloved, we are now God's children, but what we are to be has not yet been manifested..." Hallelujah! He says we are God's children, but what we are to be has not yet been manifested. That is still ahead of us. That is what we are desiring with all our hearts to enter into. "...We know that if He appears we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him as He is...." We'll see Him in one another; we'll see Him with our eyes as the disciples saw Him that day when He was taken up into Heaven, and the angel said that in like manner He would come again. "...Anyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifieth himself as He is pure."

"For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God" (Romans 8:14). This is a different Greek word that is used here for sons. The Greek word is "huios," and, translated into English, it means descendant, or offspring. It denotes maturity or one full-grown. When Christ is spoken of as the Son of God, this word is always used. In Matthew 3:17, we read, "And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." The word Son here is the Greek word Huios. It shows that He was mature. "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren" (Romans 8:29). The same word "huios" is used to speak of Christ again.

"But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons" (Galatians 4:4-5). Huios is used here to speak of God's Son, and also to speak of those who are to receive the adoption of sons. That is what God has in mind for us: the adoption of Sons. "For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father" (Romans 8:15). The expression "Abba, Father" can only be used by someone who is a fleshly descendant of the father. When Paul speaks of "Abba, Father," it is because we have been born into the family of God. An adopted child could not use the word, "Abba." Only one born into the family could use it. We have received the spirit of adoption whereby we cry, "Abba, Father."

CARNAL AND THE SPIRITUAL MIND

Our mind is that part of us which thinks and is the seat of consciousness; it is our intellect, and in it dwells our ability to reason.

When we are born of the flesh, as Jesus describes our natural birth in John 3, we are born with a natural mind. We are born with five senses: sight, hearing, smelling, taste and touch. These are the natural physical senses that feed information to our natural mind.

Peter talks about our new birth in I Peter 1:23. "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth forever." This new birth is by an incorruptible

seed. It is by the Word of God. This is the Word, as spoken of in John 1:1-2, which is Jesus Christ. This incorruptible seed is Jesus Christ, who comes to abide within us at the time we accept Him as our Saviour. He is the author of eternal life. "He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life" (I John 5:12).

When we are born of the Spirit, God gives us these same senses that operate in the realm of the Spirit. In the natural, no one has ever been able to see, unless they have been born. It is the same in the Spiritual realm. Jesus speaks of Spiritual sight in John 3:3, "Except a man be born again (born of the Spirit), he cannot see the kingdom of God."

In John 10, where Jesus was speaking of the good Shepherd, He talks of the sheep hearing His voice and following Him. "But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear His voice: and He calleth His own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. And when He putteth forth His own sheep, He goeth before them, and His sheep follow Him: for they know His voice" (John 10:2-4). In following the Lord, it is so important to be able to hear and recognize His voice. If a man has not been born of the Spirit, he has no Spiritual hearing and cannot be led by His voice. I know God speaks to the unsaved man, but he communicates somehow with his natural mind, drawing him to accept Jesus as his Saviour. After a person is saved, he is able to hear the voice of God and enjoy His fellowship.

The sense of smell is also mentioned in II Corinthians 2:14-16. "Thanks be to God who leads us, wherever we are, on His own triumphant way and makes our knowledge of Him to spread throughout the world like a lovely perfume! We Christians have the unmistakable 'scent' of Christ, discernible alike to those who are being saved and to those who are heading for death. To the latter it seems like the very smell of doom, to the former it has the fresh fragrance of life itself" (Phillips).

We have the exhortation of David to taste of the realm of the Spirit in Psalm 34:8. "O taste and see that the Lord is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in Him." When a man really tastes of the things of the realm of the Spirit, it is hard for him to be satisfied with anything else. And, especially if he has tasted of the moving of the Holy Spirit in his life, it is very difficult for him to go back to feeding his soul on form and the traditions of men.

The people flocked around Jesus to try and touch Him that they might be healed of their many infirmities. Many times Jesus touched them, and they were made whole. He touched the leper and he was cleansed; He touched Peter's mother-in- law's hand and the fever left her; He touched the eyes of the two blind men and their eyes were opened; He touched the deaf man and his ears were opened; and He touched the bier of the mother's only son and commanded him to arise, and he that was dead sat up and began to speak. How often have those who have never been born again been able to reach out and touch Him, and He has heard and answered the cry of their heart? And those who know Him are able to reach out and touch Him in the Spirit. He meets their need and ministers to them strength for the inner man.

We sing the song, "He touched me, and Oh! The joy that floods my soul." This is a real experience; and if you have not known the touch of the Lord, reach out to Him, and, whether you need to be saved or to receive strength for your spiritual walk, He will minister to you.

These spiritual senses, if I may call them that, are all the result of a spiritual birth. As we read in I Peter, this birth is by an incorruptible seed, and our spiritual senses feed our spiritual mind, which mind no man has without a spiritual birth.

When we are born of the flesh, we are born of a corruptible seed. By that birth, we inherit all the corruption of the sin of Adam. We inherit a sinful nature and we inherit death. In our spiritual birth, we inherit "Life," but in our natural birth, we are subject to sin and death. David said in Psalms 51:5, "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity (rebellion), and in sin did my mother conceive me." "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon ail men, for that all have sinned" (Romans 5:12). This is what we inherit through that corruptible seed. The senses of the unregenerate man seem to seek those things that are sinful and feed the sinful mind.

After we have been born again, we have two minds. In Romans, Paul speaks of the reprobate (depraved) mind, which men who have never been born of the Spirit are controlled by. "And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient (not proper); Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, Backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, Without understanding, covenant breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them" (Romans 1:28-32).

Paul, in I Timothy 6:5, speaks of the corrupt mind: "Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself."

Paul also speaks of the fleshly mind: "Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, And not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God" (Colossians 2:18,19).

We also read of the carnal mind in Romans 8:6-8. The reprobate mind, the corrupt mind, the fleshly mind, and the carnal mind, are all the same mind; and it is the mind that we were born with in the natural. As Paul says here, it is the enemy of God. It is not subject to God and it can't be subject to Him. This does away with all benefit of self-reformation. We must have a new mind to be able to change, and this only comes with a spiritual birth. The result of walking according to the carnal mind is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God" (Romans 12:1-2). God's will is that our minds should be renewed or changed. Up until our new birth, we have been controlled by the fleshly carnal mind. At our new birth, another mind is born within us and, as we are transformed by the exercise of this new mind, as it is led by the Holy Spirit, we are changed into the likeness and image of the Son of God.

There will continue to be a raging battle between the two minds. The Apostle Paul speaks of his experience in Romans. He says, "I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me" (Romans 7:21). His new man delighted in the law of God. "But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members" (Romans 7:23). It seemed that in desperation he cried out, "O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" (Romans 7:24). The answer he found is our answer: "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 7:25). Through Him we can receive a new mind, and, also through Him, the new mind can win the battle and overcome the carnal mind. "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death" (Romans 8:2).

In his discourse on water baptism in Romans 6, Paul tells us that our old man was crucified with Christ, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. Our old man must be crucified and we must not listen to the reasoning of our old mind. We must reckon him dead and ourselves dead unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not 1, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me" (Galatians 2:20).

"Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness" (Romans 6:16).

In I Corinthians 2:9-16, the apostle speaks of those things that God has prepared for those that love Him and how He has revealed them unto us by the Holy Spirit. The natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit. They sound like foolishness to him because they are only understood by the Spirit. Paul explains to us that only the Spirit that is in man knows what is in his mind. Likewise, only the Spirit of God knows the mind of God. Because we have received of the Spirit of God, we can know the things that are freely given to us of God.

"The spiritual man, on the other hand, has insight into everything, and that bothers and baffles the man of the world who can't understand Him at all. How could he? For certainly he has never been one to know the Lord's thoughts, or to discuss them with Him, or to move the hands of God by prayer. But strange as it seems, we Christians actually do have within us something of the very thoughts and mind of Christ" (I Corinthians 2:16 Phillips).

Another translator puts it this way, "The spiritual man has insight into the meaning of everything." Because God's people have shared of His mind, by the moving of the Holy Spirit within them, this thing is possible. The renewed or new mind is able to partake of the thoughts and mind of Christ.

We must allow the Holy Spirit to lead us according to God's mind. The man who tries to ride two horses at once is asking for trouble. If we were to follow the carnal mind and the spiritual at the same time, we would make shipwreck of our life and ministry. James says, "A double minded man is unstable in all his ways" (James 1:8). By God's fellowship and presence, we will come to know His mind and purpose. We will be transformed by the renewing of our mind.

"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God" (Philippians 2:5,6). Weymouth reads this way, "Yet He did not regard equality with God as something at which He should grasp. Nay, He stripped Himself of His glory and took on Him the nature of a bondservant by becoming a man like other men." This is a great contrast to what is recorded in Isaiah 14:12-14. Lucifer desired to exalt himself to equality with God, which is something that will never happen. Paul tells us that at the end when all things have been subdued unto Christ, "then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, that God may be all in all" (I Corinthians 15:28), or as Phillip's says "wholly and absolutely of God." There was no grasping for power and authority in the nature of Christ, and neither can there be in us. "Let nothing be done through strife or vain glory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves" (Philippians 2:3).

"And being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross" (Philippians 2:8).

Christ became a servant. He walked in the likeness of men and served as a man, even to the place of giving Himself in death for us as a sacrifice for our sins. That is why we are exhorted in Romans 12:1 to offer ourselves as living sacrifices. We must also take upon ourselves the form of a servant. This mind should be in us. We must be very diligent in serving the body of Christ with the ministry that God has given us.

If a person would rule, it is very important that he first learn to serve. If a man would fill the office of an elder, well, it would be of great benefit to him to first prove himself in the ministry of a deacon. All elders have not had this opportunity, or should I say privilege. Regardless of our office, let us learn to serve the body of Christ faithfully according to the ministry we have been called to. All deacons will not eventually become elders, but some may. It will be according to the calling of God and the ministry that God has given.

"Hereby perceive we the love of God, because He laid down His life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren" (I John 3:16).

In Colossians 3:12, Paul writes about us putting on different things that are necessary for those who would go on to perfection. One of these is humbleness of mind. "As, therefore, God's picked representatives of the new humanity, purified and beloved of God Himself, be merciful in action, kindly in heart, humble in mind" (Phillips). This is a qualification of being "sons." If we have a proud spirit, we will have to be changed. One of the things Jesus said defiles a man is pride, along with adultery, fornication, murder, theft, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lust, an evil eye, and blasphemy (Mark 7:21, 22). "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble" (James 4:6). "These six things doth the Lord hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto Him: A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, A false witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren" (Proverbs 6:16-19).

Peter exhorts us, "Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin;" (I Peter 4:1). When Peter speaks of suffering in the flesh, he is talking about the flesh being crucified. The flesh suffers; it is put to death. The suffering of Christ was His death for our sins, and here he is speaking of death to the carnal man. This

must be our mind: that the old man be put to death so we no longer live according to the lusts of men and in the way of the Gentiles in whom were manifest the works of the flesh.

God is making a new covenant with His people, both the natural Israel and that Spiritual Israel which has been grafted in. This covenant is not the one God made with Israel, when He took them out of Egypt, which was the law given to Moses. According to the new covenant, God will put His laws into the minds of His people and write them upon their hearts (Hebrews 8:10), not on tables of stone. This is the equivalent to walking in the Spirit. "Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh" (Galatians 5:16). The result is, as God says, "I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people" (Hebrews 8:10). How glorious to have that relationship with our Heavenly Father.

I might illustrate our experience in this matter in the following way. All parents know the difficulty they have in teaching their children. You usually find that you have to instruct them many times before they begin to act according to your instruction. For instance, when they come home from school, there is a trail of articles between the door and the kitchen cupboard, where they go to get something to eat. It is their books, their lunch pail, their mittens and their coat. Mother has to instruct them to put their things away and not leave them lying around. She may have to tell them many times, and, perhaps, eventually her law is written on their minds. That is evident when your children grow up and get their own house and everything is kept very tidy and in its place.

God has to act toward us in the same way in order to put His laws in our minds and write them upon our hearts. Let us pray that our minds will be subject to the moving of the Holy Spirit, that we may learn to walk in the Spirit.

We are also instructed in the Scripture concerning our state of mind regarding one another. "Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things (or his own interests), but also every man on the things of others" (Philippians 2:3,4). This attitude demands a great change of mind from that of the average carnal man. May God help His people to yield to this change.

In speaking of love, in I Corinthians 13:5, Paul tells us that love "seeketh not her own," and again in Galatians 6:2, he says, "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ."

The carnal man has his own idea about everything. We have a number of Scriptures instructing us how spiritual men should have unity of mind. "Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus:" (Romans 15:5). This speaks of God's great desire for unity among brethren. If there is to be unity, we must respect each member of Christ's body the same and not have favourites.

"That ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God" (Romans 15:6-7). God is no respecter of persons, and neither can we be.

It is very important that God's people should all speak the same thing. The church is divided throughout the earth, and the unbeliever doesn't know where to turn. Jesus prayed in John 17 that his people might be one. His prayer will be answered, so let us yield to that Spirit of unity. Paul's burden was that His brethren might be one. "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment" (I Corinthians 1:10).

In Philippians 4:2, Paul is speaking to two people who, it would appear, may have had an argument. There is no place for carnal argument in the church. He besought them that they would be of the same mind in the Lord. If we are of different minds, we must seek the Lord until we are of one mind. Division is something that God hates among His people. We must be divided and separate from the world, but let unity prevail among God's people. This requires submission to the rest of the body.

In I Peter 3, Peter is talking of family relationship. He sums it up in this way: "Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous: Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing" (I Peter 3:8,9).

In family relationships, it is essential that husband and wife be of one mind. If they are not, they should pray and seek God until they can be of one mind. It is also their object to bring up their children in such a way that they will be of one mind with their parents.

In the church, elders must be of one mind, or they will foster division in the church. They, too, must exercise themselves in prayer that they may partake of His mind. This will produce the unity that Jesus prayed for. The same is necessary for the apostles of the church.

Let us pray that none of us will succumb to the dictates of the carnal mind, but let us always seek the Lord that we may have His mind.

COMMENTS ON PAULS LETTER TO THE COLOSSIANS

Chapter 1

The letter to the Colossians was written by the apostle, Paul, in approximately 64 A.D. Paul had never visited this church. His knowledge of their spiritual state came through Epaphras.

"Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timotheus our brother..." (Colossians 1:1).

The letter was apparently written jointly by Paul and Timothy. Paul establishes himself as an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God. No man can take upon himself the office of apostleship. It is a divine

appointment made by Christ according to the will of God. As we read in Ephesians 4:7 and 4:11 Christ gave gifts unto men and those gifts were apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers.

"To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ which are at Colosse: Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ" (Colossians 1:2).

Saints are righteous and godly people. To be godly means to be like God. A godly person carries God's attributes. In other words, their lives manifest the fruit of the Spirit. When Paul is speaking of faithful brethren, he is speaking of those who are loyal, true, and constant. Their belief establishes their loyalty.

"These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful" (Revelation 17:14). John is speaking here of that last great battle against the forces of evil. The company that is with Christ are described as called and chosen and faithful. Jesus said that many are called but few are chosen (Matthew 20:16).

It would seem from Paul's writing in Romans 1:18-23 that all mankind has been called. "For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse" (Romans 1:20). The company that John is speaking of has been chosen, first of all, because of their belief and then because of their faithfulness.

Paul's desire was that the grace or favour of God be extended toward the Colossian believers. He also wanted them to be partakers of the peace that comes from God and a good relationship with Him. "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God" (Romans 5:1-2). What a wonderful position to be in, where we can live in harmony with Him and enjoy His peace and favour.

"We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, Since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which ye have to all the saints," (Colossians 1:3,4).

It is good to be thankful; we should be very thankful for the faithful members of the body of Christ. They are our support and lend us their strength. Always let our prayers and intercessions be heard of God on behalf of the rest of the body of Christ.

"For the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, whereof ye heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel;" (Colossians 1:5).

Paul's prayer of thanksgiving extended to being thankful for their heavenly hope. That is something that every born again Christian has and should be thankful for.

Heaven, the realm of the Spirit, is entered either by death or by the resurrection (entering into life). In Philippians 1:20, Paul speaks of Christ being magnified in his body whether it is by life or death. To the Christian death is just entering into the spiritual realm. He goes on to say, "For to me to live is Christ and to die is gain. If I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labour for me. Yet what shall I

choose? I do not know! I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far; but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body" (Philippians 1:21-24 NIV).

The only reason Paul wanted to remain in this earthly realm was to be able to minister in person to the members of Christ's body. Our reason for remaining on this earth is be of use to God in ministering to mankind and in fact to His whole creation. That hope laid up for us in heaven gives the Christian a desire to depart and be with Christ, but we, too, have responsibilities in our ministry given us by God.

"Which is come unto you, as it is in all the world; and bringeth forth fruit, as it doth also in you, since the day ye heard of it, and knew the grace of God in truth:" (Colossians 1:6).

The fruit spoken of here is the fruit of the Spirit as listed in Galatians 5:22. "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law."

The term "Born Again" is used very loosely in our day. People have said that they have accepted Jesus Christ as their Saviour, and that they were born again, but there has been no change in their lives. A new birth brings a change in lifestyle. A new birth brings with it the production of the fruit of the Spirit.

We are so thankful for the grace of God. Grace is the free unmerited favour of God toward us. It brings about the operation of the Spirit of God within us to regenerate us in the image and likeness of God.

"As ye also learned of Epaphras our dear fellow servant, who is for you a faithful minister of Christ; Who also declared unto us your love in the Spirit." (Colossians 1:7,8).

The Colossians had learned and accepted the truth of the gospel through the ministry of Epaphras. Paul describes Epaphras as a faithful ministry of Christ. He had carried the message to Paul concerning their experience in the things of the Spirit.

"For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding;" (Colossians 1:9).

Paul's prayers were constant for these Colossians. His longing and prayer for them was the same as the prayer and desire of the present day apostles is for the church of today. This is that they might be wise in the knowledge of God's will for them and that they might have spiritual understanding.

Spiritual understanding is much different than natural understanding. "Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness. And again, The Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain. Therefore let no man glory in men...." (I Corinthians 3:18).

"That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God;" (Colossians 1:10).

Paul's prayer continues with the desire that they might walk worthy of the Lord. He wanted to see them walk in such a way that they would bring credit and honour to God's Name and please Him. Not only should we please God, but also our life should be pleasing to other people. "To all pleasing" has to do with the testimony that our life bears to others, both inside the church as an example and on the outside as a testimony of the grace of God. In Colossians 4:5, Paul says to walk in wisdom toward them that are without. It is so important that we be a good example to the unbeliever. I have heard people say that if a certain person was a Christian, I want nothing to do with it. This is a shame and should not be. Also in I Thessalonians 4:12, we read, "That ye may walk honestly toward them that are without." Also an elder must have a good report of them that are without (I Timothy 3:7).

When being fruitful is mentioned here, it is speaking of the works that we do. Jesus said, "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples" (John 15:8). In Luke 13:6-9, Jesus speaks of the tree that bore no fruit. Except for the intercession of the gardener, the tree would have been cut down.

Paul also prays that they might increase in their knowledge of God. To get to know someone, you have to spend time with him or her. It is the same in getting to know God. As we walk with Him, we get to know and understand His ways. We learn to be led by the Holy Spirit.

"Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness;" (Colossians 1:11).

He prays for their strength and might. There is no way we can stand alone against the evil that is around us in the world. We need the strength and might of our Heavenly Father. We need the help of the Holy Spirit. We need the support of the other members of the body of Christ. "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might" (Ephesians 6:10).

Patience is among the Christian virtues that Peter writes about. "And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ" (II Peter 1:5-8). "Longsuffering" means "long and patient endurance of injury or provocation." Note that he says the longsuffering should be mixed with joyfulness.

"Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins:" (Colossians 1:12-14).

The scripture very often exhorts us to be thankful. In this case, we are to be thankful to our Heavenly Father who has made us meet or fit to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light. Another translator says that "we are made a partaker of the kingdom of light." Firstly, He delivers us from the power of darkness. What a tremendous deliverance is ours when we are set free from the power of sin. He makes us fit by the

cleansing that is ours through the blood of Christ that was shed on our behalf. We are born into the kingdom of His Son. Then, day-by-day, He changes us into that image portrayed by the glory of the Lord. "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord" (II Corinthians 3:18). Redemption means to buy back. Christ purchased us by shedding His blood in our place, thus paying the redemptive price for our salvation.

"...Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature:" (Colossians 1:15).

The writer of Hebrews describes Christ in this way: "Who being the brightness of his glory (He radiates God's glory), and the express image of his person (the exact representation of His Being), and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;" (Hebrews 1:3).

In I Timothy 3:16, it says, "And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory." Jesus displayed godliness, or was like God: so much so that the scriptures declare He was God manifest in the flesh. Here Paul says He is the image of the invisible God: No man has seen God at any time, "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that He should taste death for every man" (Hebrews 2:9).

The Son of God existed before God made anything else. In fact, he is the creator of everything.

"For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him"(Colossians 1:16).

This verse continues to tell us about the creator, and is also spoken of by John in his gospel in John 1:3: "All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made." John also mentions this in John 1:10; "He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not." The writer of the book of Hebrews confirms this in several places. "Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds" (Hebrews 1:2). In speaking of the Son, he also says this: "And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands" (Hebrews 1:10).

We are told here that all things were created by Him and for Him. Much of His creation is in rebellion against Him. We look forward to the day when, as the prophet said, all shall know Him, from the least to the greatest. "Because the creation itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God" (Romans 8:21).

Chapter 2

"For I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you, and for them at Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh;" (Colossians 2:1).

Paul was fighting a great conflict in the realm of the Spirit concerning the Colossian and Laodicean churches. His concern was for all the members of the body of Christ that he had never met. He was very concerned for them because of the influence of false teachers. A false teacher can always seem to pick out those who are weak in the faith and concentrate on them. Because Paul had never taught them personally and established them on the foundation, he was very anxious. He speaks as if he had interceded much on their behalf.

"That their hearts might be comforted, being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgement of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ; In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Colossians 2:2-3).

The Holy Spirit was called "The Comforter" by Jesus: "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever; Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth Him..." (John 14:16-17).

It is the Holy Spirit that knits people's hearts together. It is by the moving of the Holy Spirit that love flows. Paul prayed that they might know the full riches of a complete understanding of the mystery of God. This mystery is God the Father, and Jesus Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. This mystery can only be understood by the revelation of the Spirit of God.

"And this I say, lest any man should beguile you with enticing words" (Colossians 2:4).

Paul's letter to them was for the purpose of keeping them from being led astray by people's fine sounding arguments.

"For though I be absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the spirit, joying and beholding your order, and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ" (Colossians 2:5).

Paul wasn't physically present with them, but his heart was with them because of the message Epaphras had brought him concerning this church. He rejoiced in the order that existed in their church, and their steadfastness in their faith in Christ.

"As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him: Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving" (Colossians 2:6).

Just as the Holy Spirit had drawn them to accept Christ, they were instructed to walk in His ways. Trying to use Him as an example, without knowing Him personally as Saviour, avails nothing. As one who has become His child, we are responsible to walk as led by the Holy Spirit. We must grow out of Him and receive our Spiritual nourishment from Him, as a plant grows and receives nourishment from the earth. They had been planted and established in their walk, so now they were to walk as they had been taught. Always let thankfulness abound.

"Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ" (Colossians 2:8).

The world is full of the traditions of men, and we are instructed to be very careful in what we accept. As Paul says, our faith could be spoiled through philosophy and the traditions of men. These things sound good but can be very deceiving. I would like to warn students of higher education to weigh things well in the light of the Scriptures, and be careful to follow Christ's teaching, and not the high sounding nonsense of men.

"For in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power:" (Colossians 2:9,10).

We don't need the philosophy of men, because in Christ dwells the completeness of the wisdom of God, and we are complete in Christ. God walked the earth in bodily form in Christ, and Christ now walks the earth in bodily form in His Church. He is the Head of all principality and power. Paul's prayer for these people was that they might be filled with the knowledge of His will, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding.

"In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ:" (Colossians 2:11).

Circumcision is the cutting away of the flesh. Under the new covenant, we are set free from our evil and fleshly desires by the circumcision of Christ. It is the operation of the Spirit of God within us. Our flesh is cut away in Him. The sacrifices and circumcision, as practiced under the old covenant, were fulfilled in Christ. Christ died to annul the system of Jewish laws: "Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain (The Jew and the Gentile) one new man, so making peace" (Ephesians 2:15).
"Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead" (Colossians 2:12).

Jesus was buried and rose again. When we are baptized, we share in His death by being buried with Him, and we also share in the miracle of rising again to new life. This is possible because we have faith in the power of God that raised Christ from the dead and enables us to walk in a new life.

"And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses;" (Colossians 2:13).

We were dead and under the bondage of sin. Our flesh was our master. We have been made alive with Him, and all our trespasses have been forgiven. What marvellous grace.

"Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it" (Colossians 2:14,15).

Christ has utterly wiped out all the evidence of broken laws that were against us. It was all nailed to His cross. He has spoiled the powers that were against us. He triumphed over them and showed them up as powerless.

"Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath days: Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ" (Colossians 2:16,17).

Under the law, Israel had all kinds of regulations concerning what they ate, what they drank, holy days that they observed, and new moons and Sabbaths. The Christians were instructed not to be brought into bondage by people's judgement concerning these things.

Jesus cancelled the written code with its regulations. It was nailed to the cross with Him. These things had divided the Jew and the Gentile so that there was no fellowship between them. The cross provided a way for unity; "For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby: And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father" (Ephesians 2:14-18). Paul's word to the Romans was, "For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost" (Romans 14:17). These were only temporary rules and shadows of the real thing. They ended when Christ came.

"Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, And not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God" (Colossians 2:18).

Don't let anyone take away your reward in Christ by artful tactics in persuading you to fall down and worship angels. The person who promotes these things is inflated by an unspiritual imagination, and is pushing his way into matters he knows nothing about. They are not holding on to the Head from which flows through every joint the nourishment needed to knit the body together. Holding on to Him and receiving from the rest of the body is the only way that we can grow, increase, and get strength from God.

"Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances, (Touch not; taste not; handle not; Which all are to perish with the using) after the commandments and doctrines of men?" (Colossians 2:20-22).

If we have died with Christ and risen with Him, why should we be subject to human injunctions and teachings, such as touch not, taste not, and handle not? These are the commandments of men. The Jews were trying to make the Christians subject to many of their man-made traditions. Christ had, through His death, delivered them from all these traditions.

"Which things have indeed a shew of wisdom in will worship, and humility, and neglecting of the body; not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh" (Colossians 2:23).

These regulations may look wise with their self-imposed efforts at worship. They may be humiliating and hard on the body, but they do nothing in restraining sensual indulgence.

Chapter 3

"If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God" (Colossians 3:1).

When Paul is talking here of rising with Christ, he is talking of rising with Him from the waters of baptism: "Buried with Him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with Him through faith of the operation of God, who hath raised Him from the dead" (Colossians 2:12). As someone who is risen with Him, we are to seek the things which are above the carnal earthly plain: things that belong to the realm where Christ sits on His father's right hand. He is talking about having our priorities right. Every day we must judge many things, and decide which things belong above, and which are from the lower carnal desire. Many of the things which are above are listed in Colossians 3:12-17: "Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him."

"Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection:" (Romans 6:3). Paul's instruction is for us to reckon ourselves dead to sin. "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 6:11). To "reckon ourselves dead" means to, quoting from the Living Bible, "look upon your old sinful nature as dead and unresponsive to sin, and instead be alive to God, alert to Him, through Jesus Christ our Lord."

"Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth" (Colossians 3:2).

A number of earthly things are mentioned in Verse 5. The tendency of the carnal man is to be taken up with these earthly things. When Paul speaks of things on the earth he is speaking of the works of the flesh, along with all the desires of the carnal man. There are many things that some might consider earthly, such as our responsibilities to family etc. In most cases those things, when done by the wisdom of God, become Spiritual. In our day, many families are provided for much beyond their need, and this over-provision does more harm than good and would be considered earthly. How great is our need for the wisdom of God. On the other hand there are many parents who waste what God has given them. They indulge the flesh in tobacco and liquor. They are always trying to make the fast dollar by Bingo and lottery tickets. Then they

wonder and complain because their children go to school hungry. Seeking God's wisdom in providing for a family is setting your affection on things above.

In every aspect of our lives let us seek to do things the way God would have us do them. This is setting our affection on things above.

"For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God" (Colossians 3:3).

In baptism, we have died and have been buried, then risen again to a new life in Christ. "And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit" (Galatians 5:24).

Our source of Spiritual life is Christ through the new birth. God also has in mind that through Christ, our physical bodies will enter into life; "But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you. Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live" (Romans 8:11-13).

"When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory"(Colossians 3:4).

This is the appearing of Christ in His body, the church. "Beloved, now are we the children of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is"(I John 3:2). He desires to manifest Himself in us. "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren" (Romans 8:29). This manifestation of the sons of God is actually the manifestation of the Son of God in His people. When He appears in us, we also will appear in His glory. Glory means, "Resplendent spiritual beauty or magnificence," and His brethren will partake of His glory.

"Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry:" (Colossians 3:5).

These are things of the earth that we must die to. We read in Romans 8:11 that we should consider ourselves dead to sin. Here we are exhorted to put to death our members that act in a carnal, earthly way.

Fornication is sexual activity outside of marriage and should never be practiced by those who belong to the Lord. Inordinate affection is affection that is practiced outside of proper limits. There is a place for affection but we must keep it within proper bounds, otherwise it leads to lust and sin. Evil concupiscence is illicit sexual appetite. The covetous person is an idolater. He is worshipping and desiring other people’s possessions.

"For which things sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience:" (Colossians 3:6).

The works of the flesh are listed in Galatians 5:19-21. The things mentioned here all belong in this list. We are told there, "they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God" (Galatians 5:21). We are

being disobedient to the leading of the Spirit if we allow our hearts, minds, or bodies to entertain these ways.

"In the which ye also walked some time, when ye lived in them" (Colossians 3:7).

The Colossians, like most of us, walked in these evil ways. Many live to entertain the works of the flesh in their lives.

"But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him:" (Colossians 3:8-10).

The instruction to us as Christians is to do away in our lives of all these things mentioned here. I am sure we all know what anger is, and probably have been guilty many times. Wrath is extreme anger. Malice is the desire to inflict injury or suffering on another. Blasphemy is impious utterances concerning God. Many use God's name in vain, which is a form of blasphemy. A Christian should never use bad language. Some people, probably as much out of habit as anything, can't speak one sentence without using bad language. We must be careful of the jokes we tell and be sure they do not border on the unclean.

Do not lie to one another, because the old man has been buried, and we have risen again in newness of life. We are to put off the old man and his ways as we would put off a dirty garment. Then in a similar manner, put on the new man. This new man thinks differently than the old man, because he is being created in the image of Christ.

"And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God" (Romans 12:2). When we become Christians, our minds must be renewed. We change our thinking about almost everything. The carnal man thinks in the earthly way. The new man's thinking is transformed, and he thinks and acts in ways that are above.

"Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all" (Colossians 3:11).

Walking in the ways of the Lord should end racial intolerance completely. In the realm of the Spirit there is no difference between different peoples. Christ is the one that we see: not the difference in the colour of one another skin. "So stop evaluating Christians by what the world thinks about them or by what they seem to be like on the outside. Once I mistakenly thought of Christ that way, merely as a human being like myself. How differently I feel now! When someone becomes a Christian he becomes a brand new person inside. He is not the same anymore. A new life has begun!" (II Corinthians 5:16,17 Living Bible). We do not know one another after the flesh, so if someone is of another race or nationality, or a slave, or a free man, it should make no difference among Christians. Christ is all that matters and He lives in all that have come to Him.

"Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel

against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness" (Colossians 3:12).

Since we have been chosen by God, we are to clothe ourselves with those spiritual attributes. To us, bowels of mercy would mean tenderhearted mercy. Allow kindness, humility, meekness, and longsuffering to cover us as a garment. To forbear means to be patient. In another scripture, we are exhorted to forbear one another in love. If there are differences among us, it is important to forgive one another because Christ has forgiven us. Over all of these things, put on love, because love makes a perfect bond between us. Although it is Christ within us who makes the changes, we have a measure of responsibility in allowing Him to do this work.

"And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful" (Colossians 3:15).

Let the peace of God rule in your hearts. In other words, we must allow His peace to rule in our hearts. This is such an unpeaceful age that we live in, but we can have the peace of God within our hearts and lives. We are called to peace with one another as members of the body of Christ. Thankfulness should be the mark of the Christian.

"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord" (Colossians 3:16).

Think on the things that Jesus taught, and allow your lives to be molded by them. Those things are the wisdom of God, and we must let them fill our hearts and minds. Songs are a wonderful means of edification. Sing with gratitude and before the Lord.

"And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him" (Colossians 3:17).

We must give consideration concerning the things that we do, that we can do them in Jesus Name. In other words, our actions and speech should be as if He were speaking or acting. "Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt" (Colossians 4:6). Would we feel comfortable if He was present physically and watching and listening to us? The things that we do, are we able to say that it was Him who dwells within us who did them? Always let us give thanks to God in His Name for His help and grace.

"Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them. Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord" (Colossians 3:18-20).

So far in his letter, Paul has been dealing with our personal experience and relationship with Christ. Now he turns to the family. Wives are to submit to their own husbands as is fit in the Lord. I have heard of husbands who insisted that their wives go to the pub and drink with them. That wouldn't be fit in the Lord. To be fit in the Lord is to comply with the teachings of Jesus. Husbands are instructed to love their wives. Love makes it easy for the wife to submit. No sensible man would ever ask his wife to do anything that

wouldn't be pleasing to God. Sometimes the actions of a wife can make a man bitter against her. A man must be very careful not to allow bitterness to creep in, because bitterness destroys love.

For a child to please God, they must obey their parents. This is the best way for them to show their love to Him. Parents are responsible to make sure that their children do obey. Disobedient children are the cause of many of the earth's problems today. Disobedience in the home leads to disobedience in the school, which leads to disobedience to the law of the country.

Fathers should not make unreasonable demands of their children. Don't scold and yell at them so much that they become frustrated and discouraged in trying to please.

"Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God: And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men;" (Colossians 3:22,23).

Now Paul turns to the workplace. He could have been speaking of either slaves or those hired to perform service to their employer. The same instruction should be heeded in our day. Employees owe their employer an honest day’s work for a day’s pay. Work should also be done in the way that the employer has instructed. Some men will work hard when the employer is watching but as soon as he turns his back, the work stops. Don't work just to be seen of men, but work to please the Lord. Do your work with all your heart, as if working for the Lord, and not men.

"Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ" (Colossians 3:24).

Slaves had very little hope of a reward in this lifetime. If they worked diligently they had the hope of a reward from their Heavenly Father. We should always look at our work as something done for Christ. This attitude would help many people to be more content in their work. Always take the attitude that you are performing service for God.

"But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons" (Colossians 3:25).

The wrong doer will be disciplined by his employer and also judged by God, who treats every man alike. He doesn't deal with one in one way, and another a different way. He is just in all His dealings.

Chapter 4

"Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal; knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven" (Colossians 4:1).

Paul continues his letter with a word to masters, or employers. They are instructed to give employees what is right and fair. A man who has employees should always remember that he also has an Employer in heaven. "Behold, the hire of the labourers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by

fraud, crieth: and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of sabaoth" (James 5:4). It must have been a common thing for people to not be paid their wages. Even today it occasionally happens.

"Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving; Withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds: That I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak" (Colossians 4:2-4).

Paul exhorted the Colossians to watch that they prayed and were also filled with thanksgiving. It is an easy thing to be so taken up with today's responsibilities that prayer is forgotten. He especially asked for prayer for himself and the brethren with him. It would appear that this letter was written during the two years Paul was under house arrest in Rome. His great desire was that while he was in detention, he would be able to communicate the message of the kingdom of God to both the Jew and Gentile. "And Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him, Preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching those things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ, with all confidence, no man forbidding him" (Acts 28:30-31).

Paul wanted to make the kingdom message plain. He wanted to convey it not only with words but also in his walk.

"Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time. Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man" (Colossians 4:5,6).

There are many scriptures that talk about our walk. Paul also exhorted the Thessalonians concerning their walk: "That ye may walk honestly toward them that are without" (I Thessalonians 4:12). "Giving no offence in anything, that the ministry (our own personal ministry) be not blamed" (II Corinthians 6:3). Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders. Make the most of every opportunity. Let your speech be gracious, Paul said, as well as sensible, so that you may know how to give every man a fitting answer.

"All my state shall Tychicus declare unto you, who is a beloved brother, and a faithful minister and fellow servant in the Lord: Whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose, that he might know your estate, and comfort your hearts; With Onesimus, a faithful and beloved brother, who is one of you. They shall make known unto you all things which are done here" (Colossians 4:7-9).

Paul was sending Tychicus and Onesimus to the Colossians to tell them about his state and report to them concerning the activities being carried out in Rome. Tychicus was a messenger sent by Paul. The message he was sent with would bring great encouragement to the saints in the Colossian church. Today, we would call him a travelling deacon. This differentiates him from a local church deacon.

In our day, people of the local churches are delighted to hear what the apostolic ministries are doing and the results of their ministering. Paul also wanted Tychicus and Onesimus to find out all about the Colossians and their growth in Christ.

"Aristarchus my fellow prisoner saluteth you, and Marcus, sister's son to Barnabas, (touching whom ye received commandments: if he come unto you, receive him)" (Colossians 4:10).

Aristarchus was apparently imprisoned with Paul. Marcus, a nephew of Barnabas, was also there, but apparently not in prison.

When Paul and Barnabas were in Salamis ministering in the Jewish synagogues, Mark was with them. When they planned to go on to Pergos, Mark got the urge to go home and returned to Jerusalem. Because of this, on their next trip, Paul wouldn't take Mark but took Silas instead. Timothy was instructed to bring Mark to Paul because he would be a help to him in his ministry in Rome. We are thankful for the apparent reconciliation. Paul told the Colossians that if Mark came to their church, they were to receive him.

"And Jesus, which is called Justus, who are of the circumcision. These only are my fellow workers unto the kingdom of God, which have been a comfort unto me" (Colossians 4:11).

In the next few verses, Paul mentions the names of a number of brethren who were labouring with him in teaching the message of the Kingdom of God in Rome. They not only helped him, but were a comfort to him in his bonds.

"Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always labouring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God. For I bear him record, that he hath a great zeal for you, and them that are in Laodicea, and them in Hierapolis" (Colossians 4:12,13).

Paul especially speaks of Epaphras, saying that he was one of them. I don't know whether he originally came from Colosse or if Paul meant he was one of them because they and also Epaphras were one in Christ in the new birth. Epaphras spent much time in prayer for them asking God to make them strong and perfect, knowing His will in all things. There were three local churches that Epaphras had a great burden for; Colosse, Laodicea, and Hierapolis.

"Luke, the beloved physician, and Demas, greet you" (Colossians 4:14).

There is a sad note concerning Demus in II Timothy 4:10 "For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica."

"Salute the brethren which are in Laodicea, and Nymphas, and the church which is in his house" (Colossians 4:15).

Paul sent his greeting to the church in Laodicea. He particularly mentioned Nymphas, who could have been one of the elders there. Apparently the church met in his house.

"And when this epistle is read among you, cause that it be read also in the church of the Laodiceans; and that ye likewise read the epistle from Laodicea" (Colossians 4:16).

This was a letter sent jointly to the two churches. They were to get the letter that went to Laodicea and read it too in their church. For some reason, the Lord hasn't chosen to preserve the letter to Laodicea.

"And say to Archippus, Take heed to the ministry which thou hast received in the Lord, that thou fulfil it" (Colossians 4:17).

It would appear that Archippus was in special need of encouragement in the fulfilling of his ministry. We must all take heed to the ministry that God has given us and encourage one another.

"The salutation by the hand of me Paul. Remember my bonds. Grace be with you. Amen" (Colossians 4:18).

The letter was signed by Paul. There were those who were writing letters and signing Paul's name. This was the enemy's way of bringing confusion to the church. He desired their prayers for him while he was confined to prison.

COMMITMENT

Commitment is what
Transforms a promise into reality.
It is the words that speak
Boldly of your intentions.
And the actions that speak
Louder than words.
It is making the time
When there is none.
Coming through time
After time after time,
Year after year after year.
Commitment is the stuff
Character is made of;
The power to change
The face of things.
It is the daily triumph
Of integrity over skepticism.

THE COVERING OF THE LORD

"The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them" (Psalms 34:7). David writes the above quotation in regard to his experience concerning the sheltering wing of our Heavenly Father. Every man who has even walked with God has known, if not at the time, later on, that God's hand has been outstretched to cover him from all sorts of fiery darts and spiritual wickedness in high places. You'll remember how Satan spoke when he accused Job: "Hast thou not made an hedge about him, and about his house, and about all that he hath on every side? 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" (Job 1:10-11).
Remember also when our Older Brother was tempted of Satan when He fasted in the wilderness that the angels came and ministered unto Him. God has protected us all, or we would long ago have been swept away by the cunning devices of the evil one.

Many of us, in our immature state, think of this covering as something to shelter us from all sorts of natural calamities. We think of it as sheltering us from floods, earthquakes, shells, bombs, and tribulations of every kind. But Paul, as he visited the churches of Asia after he had been stoned and drawn out of the city as dead at Lystra, spoke to the churches, "Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the Kingdom of God" (Acts 14:22).

I am not saying that God cannot protect His people from these things. He can if He wishes to, and He often does, but He also finds His purpose accomplished by allowing many of these things to happen to us. "Taken in the right spirit, these very things (trials and troubles) will give us patient endurance; this in turn will develop a mature character, and a character of this sort produces a steady hope, a hope that will never disappoint us" (Romans 5:3-5, Phillips).

I remember when I was a boy watching my Dad temper steel in his blacksmith shop. He would heat the steel in the forge to a certain red rosy glow, and then dip it in water. This quick cooling hardened the steel. The regulating of the temperature of the metal, and the speed at which it was cooled, regulated the degree of hardness. You could, by heating the metal too quickly, cause it to break into pieces. God in His wisdom knows exactly how hot to heat the metal before He puts it in cold water to temper it, thus producing exactly what He wants. "No temptation had come your way that is too hard for flesh and blood to bear. But God can be trusted not to allow you to suffer any temptation beyond your powers of endurance. He will see to it that every temptation has a way out, so that it will never be impossible for you to bear it" (I Corinthians 10:13, Phillips).

Neither am I advocating that we go looking for tribulation. All that God wants you to have will catch up with you. The kind that people seek after or bring upon themselves never does them any good. All it does is produce pride.

The covering that I am speaking of is in the realm of the Spirit. "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places" (Ephesians 6:12). The battle that Job fought over many long days was not in

what we call the natural real. As far as this realm was concerned, the battle was lost. His children, his house, his possessions, were all swept away, and even his wife, who was supposed to be his helper, advised him to curse God and die.

Job was the victor though, in all this, for his warfare was in the realm of the Spirit. He said at the close of his great test, "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes" (Job 42:5,6). Also, God revealed this to him: "For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed with me" (Job 19:25-27).

Even the life and ministry of Christ here on earth seemed to the natural eye to end in defeat. The Jews thought He was defeated, the Romans thought He was defeated, and even most of His disciples thought everything was finished. But, praise God, His warfare was in a higher realm. His purpose was, by what seemed a catastrophe, to redeem all the creation to Himself. "Who being the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the majesty on high" (Hebrews 1:3).

Seeing that our warfare is Spiritual and that it is in this realm that we require the covering of the Lord I would like to write expressly concerning this covering. This covering is in many ways hard to define because it takes in so much, however, I will endeavour to point out some of its main points.

The covering is the order God has revealed by His Spirit; the covering is the anointing; the covering is the blessing of a father upon his children as Jacob blessed his sons and Abraham blessed Lot; the covering is the ministry God has set over us in the body of Christ; the covering is the authority of that ministry.

The order God has established has brought rest to the whole Body. It has also provided a covering. God has planned the order that the family finds a covering in the ministry of the father of the home. God has provided a canopy that shelters every member of the family from the fiery darts of the wicked one as long as they dwell beneath that covering.

A child's responsibility is to obey their parents and God requires very little more from them. A young person's responsibility is to walk in the ways father and mother have taught him. A wife's responsibility is to, love, honour and submit to her husband. The father's responsibility is to wait upon his ministry as a father and love his wife and family that an adequate covering shall be over them all. If we walk in these ways, a shelter will so envelope the family that no device of evil shall ever enter there. What a realm of safety, peace, and rest.

It is only rebellion that can destroy this shelter. If you as parents see your children walking in ways that please you not, bring them back into the shelter of that covering. By the anointing and your example, teach them the way of God. By the grace of God, let us walk in His way, that His provision for us all be not destroyed.

As long as our children walk according to the order of the home, this covering will shelter them wherever they go in the earth. You remember how the covering of Abraham sheltered Lot throughout his life. Abraham was actually Lot's uncle, but he more or less adopted him when he was a boy. When Lot settled in Sodom, this covering still sheltered him. In fact, God so honoured this covering that He wouldn't destroy Sodom without first consulting Abraham.

As the father's ministry, authority, and blessing shelters the home, so the ministry, authority, and blessing of the elders shelter the local church. The protection of the people is in the elders. They will not be deceived while walking in the way taught by the elders.

To the elders at Ephesus, Paul said, "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with His own blood" (Act 20:28). The elder's responsibility to the local church in providing an adequate covering is much the same as the father's in the home. His faithfulness in his ministry sees that the people are sheltered and cared for.

We sometimes fail to honour the ministry of an elder as it should be, or, should I say, as God does. God so honours the elder's ministry that He does not reach beneath the covering of the church to discipline a member. Remember the man whom Paul instructed the Corinthian church to put out from among their number? As long as he was in the church, God would not touch him. In there, his judgment was the responsibility of the elders. When the man wouldn't respond to their judgment, he was placed outside the covering where God could feel free to judge him: "For what have I to do to judge them also that are without? Do not ye judge them that are within? But them that are without God judges" (I Corinthians 5:12,13). It is wonderful thing to me, how God respects and honours every member of the Body of Christ.

We are walking in a day when, as Jesus said, "[T]here shall arise false Christs, and false prophets and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. Behold I have told you before. Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, He is in the desert; go not forth: behold, He is in the secret chambers; believe it not" (Matthew 24:24-26). In the face of such odds, we need a covering, or we would all be deceived. In fact, if it were not for this covering, we would all have by now gone far astray. People of the churches, lean upon your elders in whom you find your shelter; and elders, take heed to the flock over which God has you overseers.

The covering of the universal church is found in the ministry, authority, blessing, and anointing of the general elders or traveling ministries. The elders of the local churches find their protection in these universal elders. Some elders have been deceived because they have stepped from under the covering God has given them, namely that of the general elders, thus bringing havoc and confusion among their people. As long as the elders walk under the covering that God has given them, they will be protected from deception, and the church will be blessed by a maturity that comes from God. I believe it would be well for every elder to read Paul's instruction to the Ephesian elders in Acts 20, just to refresh their minds of the charge God has placed in their hands and remind them of the sheltering wing God has placed over them.

Then there is the great covering over all the church, which is God, Himself. The general elders must walk in submission to Him and to one another to remain under this covering. It is a walk inspired by the anointing and not by self-effort or ambition.

Many times, as I have thought of these coverings I have mentioned, I have thought of the several coverings of the tabernacle in the wilderness. As God provided coverings for that natural tent which in He dwelt in Israel, He also has provided the coverings for that spiritual temple in which He dwells today. And anyone who walks according to the order God has revealed will find himself under this covering. It covers us as a great canopy of anointing and blessing.

We have had instances where a child will rebel against his parents and remove itself from that parental covering but still want to stay in the church. This is an impossible thing; for as soon as the child is removed from this covering, he has removed himself from all the covering God can give him. A man may rebel against the elders of the local church and still want to come to the camp meeting and be a member of the Body. This too is as impossible as the case of the rebellious child. The same is true concerning the elders of the local church and the elders to the universal church. To remove oneself from the covering directly over them removes them from all the covering of God and lays oneself open to deception and darkness.

Let us often thank our Heavenly Father for the order of the church. It is peace and rest and joy and righteousness to those who walk in it. "Discretion shall preserve thee, understanding shall keep thee: To deliver thee from the way of the evil man, from the man that speaketh forward things: Who leave the paths of uprightness to walk in the ways of darkness" (Proverbs 2:11-13).

David wrote many wonderful things concerning this covering in Psalms 91. "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in Him will I trust. Surely He shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from noisesome pestilence. He shall cover thee with His feathers, and under His wings shalt thou trust: His truth shall be thy shield and buckler. Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flieth by day; Nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness; nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday. A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee. Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold and see the reward of the wicked. Because thou hast made the Lord, which is my refuge, even the most High, thy habitation; there shall no evil befall thee, neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling. For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone. Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder; the young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet. Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him: I will set him on high, because he hath known my name. He shall call upon me, and I will answer him: I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him, and honour him. With long life will I satisfy him, and show him my salvation."

May you all rest under that covering which is God in the ministries He has placed in the Body of Christ for that purpose.

THE CROSS

I would like us to consider some of the tremendous benefits that have come to the believer through the death of Christ on the cross. Through the cross, every spiritual need of man has been met. The substitutionary death of Christ on the cross has made available to mankind all spiritual blessings. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children (sons) by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will" (Ephesians 1:3-5).

Firstly, I would like to give you the meaning given in the dictionary of some of the words found in the scriptures that will be quoted.

Righteousness: Being morally right.
When the scriptures use the word "righteousness," it is speaking of being right according to God's standards. God's standards are absolute and do not change. Man's concept of what is right changes according to his carnal desire.

Impute: To attribute to another.
As we will see from the scriptures, God attributes His righteousness to us through our belief in the accomplishment of Christ on the cross.

Justification: To be made free from blame or guilt.
One has said that to be justified before God is to be just as if you had never sinned.

Grace: The love and favour of God or the free mercy of God.

Propitiation: To win the good will of or to appease.
Christ has won the good will of God by taking our place on the cross. God's requirement for righteousness is satisfied by Christ's sacrifice.

Our sins have been nailed to the cross with Christ. "And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross;" (Colossians 2:13). We were burdened and condemned by sin. In fact, our whole nature was blighted by sin, and we were partakers of the sentence of death. The law contained many ordinances. One was the law concerning sacrifices for sin. Another was circumcision, which was a cutting away of the flesh typifying the crucifying of the carnal man. These ordinances had to be satisfied and they were fulfilled in Christ. Our sin was laid upon Him and nailed with Him to the cross. He also gave the deathblow to the carnal man. "In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ" (Colossians 2:11).

"Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin" (Romans 6:6). If we can believe it, this has been accomplished. It would seem that no one has yet entered into this experience.

The laying of our sin upon Christ is clearly typified by the two goats that Israel brought to Aaron (Leviticus 16). The one was killed as a sin offering, and his blood was brought within the veil of the tabernacle and sprinkled upon the mercy seat for atonement for the sin and transgression of Israel. Then Aaron was to take the live goat and lay his hands upon his head and confess over him all the iniquities, transgression and sin of the children of Israel. A man was sent with the goat into the wilderness where the goat was let go. "And the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited: and he shall let go the goat in the wilderness" (Leviticus 16:22). Then Aaron and the man who took the goat into the wilderness were to wash their flesh, thus signifying a cleansing from every trace of contamination by sin.

As the goat carried the sin of Israel into the wilderness and was never seen again, so Christ has carried our sin and transgression so it also will never be remembered against us anymore. "Thou hast in love to my soul delivered it from the pit of corruption: for thou hast cast all my sins behind thy back" (Isaiah 38:17). "He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea" (Micah 7:19). "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (I John 1:9). We may have the blessing of being cleansed from the guilt of sin by simply confessing our sin and believing that they went to the cross and were laid upon Christ.

Through the cross we have been delivered from sins wrath and punishment. "For from you sounded out the word of the Lord not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith to God-ward is spread abroad; so that we need not to speak anything. For they themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come" (I Thessalonians 1:8-10). "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him" (Romans 5:8-9). The judgement of God upon sin is very real as seen in the above scriptures. There are many scriptures in the book of Romans dealing with the judgements of God. When considering their life style, many people do not take into account that God's judgement for sin is very severe.

Many examples of how God deals with sin are found in the scriptures. In the days of Noah, God saw the wickedness of man and how his thoughts and imaginations were continually evil. He was sorry that He had made man. Noah was a just and perfect man who walked with God. God told Noah that He was going to destroy the earth with a flood and that he was to build a large boat in which he would be able to save his family and a male and female of the different species of animals. Because of the violence and corruption in the earth, God said He would destroy every living substance that He had made. This was a demonstration of God's hatred of sin. Sin must be dealt with; and we can either accept the shedding of Christ's blood as a sacrifice for sin or face God by ourselves in our state of unforgiven sin. We need to follow Noah's example and believe God concerning the salvation He has provided for us through the shedding of Christ's blood. "By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the

saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith" (Hebrews 11:7).

When Israel was in the wilderness between Egypt and Caanan, Miriam and Aaron spoke against their brother Moses and were critical of him. God was very angry with them, and Miriam became leprous. Aaron confessed their sin to Moses, who prayed for her and she was healed (Numbers 12). This is an illustration to us of the severity of God's judgement.

In Acts 5, we have the account of God's judgement upon the sin of Ananias and his wife Sapphira. They had sold land and pretended to have given all that they had received to the church. Because of their lie they both died.

In Acts 13, we are told how Elymus tried to turn the deputy, Sergius Paulus, from believing the message of the cross that was brought by Paul. Through Paul's prayer he became blind.

These are all instances of very severe judgement, but they show us that God does not countenance sin. There are also hundreds of references in the scripture concerning those who have believed and have been delivered from the wrath to come. Many, many living today know by the promise of God that they will not be judged by God's wrath, but through accepting Christ as their Saviour they have been cleansed from the guilt of sin.

God has given His righteousness to us through the cross: "For he hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made (become) the righteousness of God in him" (II Corinthians 5:21) Christ not only bore our sin and its condemnation, but He was made sin for us. Because He was not only the bearer of our sin but He became sin for us, God has made us His righteousness in Christ. What a tremendously humbling position to stand in.

"Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift (righteousness) came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous" (Romans 5:18-19). The obedience of Christ has made righteousness available to us. Rather than being naked in our sin, we are clothed in the very righteousness of God.

John writes in Revelation 19:7-8, "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints." The glory of the bride is manifested in her raiment, even her righteousness. It is the righteousness of God, which has been imputed unto her as a result of her believing heart. We rejoice that the privilege of being a part of that glorious company has been offered to us, and that Christ has opened the door before us. All we have to do is believe and enter in.

"By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith" (Hebrews 11:7). Phillips translation says, "Noah's action of faith condemned the rest of the world,

and won for Noah the righteousness before God which follows such a faith." What a reward for faith; to be found righteous. I believe the cry of the dedicated Christian, more than anything else, is to be found righteous: clothed in God's righteousness and walking in the image of His Son.

"For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: That no flesh should glory in his presence. But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord" (I Corinthians 1:26-31). We cannot glory in any righteousness that we have attained ourselves. If we have attained anything we can glory in, it will stink in the nostrils of the Lord. Any righteousness we may have comes through the cross of Christ. Christ has been made our righteousness.

"What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found? For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God. For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt" (Romans 4:1-4) If Abraham could have been made righteous by his own works, God would have been indebted to him. It would not have been an extension of God's grace. Abraham could have gloried in his accomplishment, but he had nothing to glory in and neither do we.

"But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works" (Romans 4:5-6). It is impossible to become righteous by works. Righteousness comes by believing on Him who justifies the ungodly. To be godly means to be like God and ungodly means the opposite.

In verse 6, King David speaks of the man to whom God imputeth righteousness. To impute means to attribute to another. God takes His own righteousness and clothes those who have faith and believe in that righteousness. These things were written of Abraham, but do not apply to him only. "He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; and being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform. And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness. Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him; But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification" (Romans 4:20-25).

Righteousness is a gift from God. "For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ" (Romans 5:17). By being a partaker of the grace of God and His gift of righteousness His people will be privileged to reign in life. Phillips translates "to reign in life" as "living like Kings." Paul is talking of entering into life, or as he longed to do, becoming a partaker of the resurrection. To enter into life and walk in it will be a great victory for God's people. They will be reigning over death and walking in the abundant life that has come to them by believing and partaking of the work of the cross.

There is a place for works though: "What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? Can faith save him...? Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works... For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also" (James 2:14,17-18, &26). You might say that works are the evidence of faith. "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them" (Ephesians 2:10). Paul writes in Titus 3:8 that those who believe in God should be careful to maintain good works.

Justification comes through the cross. "Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness" (Romans 4:4). When a person considers his past life, how wonderful it is to be free from the blame or guilt of sin. Some people spend a lot of time worrying about their past life, but by believing on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. The past is gone. The cross has taken care of that. What a glorious liberty is ours in Christ Jesus. "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus" (Romans 3:23-26).

To propitiate means to win the good will of someone or to appease. In this case, the propitiatory sacrifice was Christ Jesus. Because of His sacrifice, we are justified in the sight of our heavenly Father. "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world" (I John 2:1-2). An advocate is one who speaks on our behalf. Christ, who is seated on the right hand of His Father, speaks on our behalf when we confess our sin and ask forgiveness. Because we have faith in Christ's sacrifice on the cross He becomes our propitiation, and we are justified in the sight of God.

God extends His grace toward us because of the cross. The word grace means, "the love and favour of God, or "the free mercy of God." "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast" (Ephesians 2:8-9).

Our justification comes because of the love and favour of God. "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life" (Titus 3:5-8).

We are privileged to have forgiveness of sin because of the grace of God. "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace" (Ephesians 1:7). To redeem means to buy back, recover, to set free or rescue. Christ has done all these things for us. We had become the slaves of Satan and sin, but Jesus has redeemed us by the shedding of His blood and forgiven our sins according to the riches of His grace.

The Christian is called according to God's purpose and it is because of His grace that that calling is made. "Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began" (II Timothy 1:9). God's grace is abundant. His mercies are without fail.

"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?" (Romans 6:1). Carnal reasoning would say, "Let us continue in sin that God might be able to show more of His grace." God forbid that any such thought would enter our mind. Our sinful nature was nailed to the cross with Him. When we become a believer and are baptized, our old nature is buried in death with Christ.

We must take close heed to what the writer of Hebrews says, "For if we sin willfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace? For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God" (Hebrews 10:26-31).

Because of the grace of God, we are justified and can stand before Him clothed in His righteousness. We cannot work to earn that covering, but because of His love for us, He makes us His children and puts His righteousness upon us. We are born into the family of God with the potential of growing into a full-fledged son. Happy is the man who believes in Christ and is accounted a recipient of God's own life and righteousness. He can stand before God as one who has never sinned. "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons (children) of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons (children) of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure" (I John 3:1-3).

DEATH AND LIFE

May 1988

After Jesus had raised Lazarus from the dead, His fame spread throughout the whole land. Many of the Jews believed on Him (John 11:45), and sought Him out. Others were curiosity seekers and only looked for Him because they had heard of the miracle He had performed. The Pharisees and chief priests looked for Him in order that they might put Him to death, even commanding the people that, if anyone knew where He was, they should tell them. There was a group, not even of the nation of Israel, who had come to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover. They came to Philip and spoke to him seeking an audience with Jesus. They had heard of Jesus, and something had stirred in their hearts. A longing for Him had come alive and they said to Philip, "Sir, we would see Jesus" (John 12:21).

Jesus then taught the Greeks a principle of Spiritual growth that many Christians today do not even understand. He talked of the sowing of the grain. If the grain is not sown in the earth, it abides alone. He speaks of this sowing as a death. If it is not sown, there is never any increase. The corn of wheat remains only one corn of wheat, and it is alone.

We have read of grain that was stored in ancient tombs. When the tomb was discovered in recent times, the grain was taken out and some of it planted. It grew and produced, but as long as it was not sown in the earth, there was no way it could bring forth fruit. In a sense, thousands of years had been wasted.

Jesus refers to this planting in the earth as a death. That is what it is. You never see the grain that was planted again. It gives itself so a new crop might be produced. The life of the grain that was planted flows into the new plant that grows so many more kernels of wheat might be produced.

Jesus then compares the sowing of seed, and producing the fruit of the seed, to our lives. "He that loveth his life shall lose it" (John 12:25). He is speaking here of the person who is selfish of his life and never gives of himself for another. He will be like the seed that is never planted in the earth. He will abide alone. Like the seed that is planted in the ground and never seen again, it is the mind of the Lord that anything we give of ourselves should not bring prominence to the individual. What God desires is that we should not be seen; the fruit is all that should be visible.

Jesus continues, "He that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal." When He speaks of hating our life, He is talking about hating the carnal, Adamic nature with which we were born. That nature is elfish and lives only for self. That nature must be crucified. "And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts" (Galatians 5:24). We must die to ourselves and our inborn selfish spirit. By dying to our desires and the giving of ourselves, we shall bring forth much fruit in this world and our lives shall be kept "unto life eternal."

"Then Jesus said to His disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it. For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Matthew 16:24-26).

Again said Jesus: "If any man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall my servant be" (John 12:26). Jesus was talking about us following Him right into the eternal realm.

If we are going to walk in the Spirit, we must die to the carnal, and the new man will arise to walk in newness of life. Entering into sonship entails the death of the old man and the growth of the new man: "...grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ" (Ephesians 4:15). What a wonderful desire, to follow Him right into the realm of the Spirit.

"...If any man serve me, him will my Father honour" (John 12:26). If a man is worthy of honour, God will see that he is honoured. We do not have to seek honour. All we have to do is fall into the ground and die, so that the life of that incorruptible seed that has been planted within, may spring forth.

The ministry that has been given us is not always an easy way. Our calling is not always to do the things we delight in. To die is very hard for most of us, and is impossible without the help of the Lord. We have one who has gone before us who was tempted in every way as we are, yet without sin.

In John 12:27, Jesus says, "Now is my soul troubled." The thing He was being asked to do was very hard for Him. The weight of the cross was already upon Him. He was weighing in His mind whether He wanted to go ahead and do what He had been sent to do. We likewise often find ourselves in the same place. Do I want to do what God is asking me to do? Do I want to fall into the ground and die? Is it worth the suffering and discomfort it brings to the fleshly man or would I rather save my life for myself?

Jesus said, "Father save me from this hour" (John 12:27). He repeated the words again in Gethsemane: "Oh my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me" (Matthew 26:39). Many times, we have found ourselves in the same place where we feel that what God is asking is too hard for us. We say, "Please don't ask me to do this or that" or "Please do not send me there." Without His death on the cross, Jesus would have lost everything.

"Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who being in the form of God, Thought it not robbery (a thing to grasped after) to be equal with God: But made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a Name which is above every Name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Philippians 2:5-11). The result of Christ's obedience is clearly outlined here.

The redemption of the whole creation was paid for in His act of obedience. Glory to God!

If we do not yield to God's mind and purpose, if we keep our lives for our own selfish use, we will lose, and many others who are of that groaning creation will lose also. Without the sowing of the seed and death, life cannot come forth. "But for this cause came I unto this hour" (John 12:27). His mind was upon the cross, and the terror of it gripped Him. But that was the purpose He had come for.

"Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God" (Hebrews 12:2). The joy of the redemption of the whole creation that would be purchased through the shedding of His blood was what spurred Him on.

You and I have been born into the world at this time to accomplish the purpose of God: "For this cause came we to this hour." That is why we, as members of Christ's body, have all been given a ministry and a calling. That is why God sent the present move of the Spirit at this time, so it might play its part in His great purpose of redemption.

Then Jesus said, "Father glorify thy Name" (John 12:28). His spirit had yielded to the will of His Father. He would accomplish His Father's purpose. "Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again" (John 12:28). I am so glad for this statement. His Name was glorified in "the Son" and it will be glorified again in the many sons, the members of the body of Christ. This statement is prophetic of the yielding of the body of Christ to the Fathers will and purpose.

WHAT IS A DENOMINATION?

What is a denomination? We have been asked this question, so, by the help of the Lord, will endeavour to answer it.
The dictionary gives the meaning of the word as this: a name, or a class, or kind, having a specific name or value. Thus, in the world, we have Christians divided into many divisions by their names and beliefs.

We have become accustomed to thinking that a denomination is a church. There is only one church, and that is the Body of Christ.

The very thought of these divisions is condemned throughout the scriptures. Let us read I Corinthians 3:1-3. "And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto you were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?"
Strife and divisions among Christians is all too evident in this day. This is produced by a denominational, or sectarian spirit used, by the enemy of our souls, to divide God's people and keep them apart. Thus, the church as a whole is made weak in the earth, and we as members are weak and sickly and many sleep or have died. We pay a tremendous price for the indulging of our carnal or fleshly desires and ambitions in this matter.

"For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal? Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man?" (I Corinthians 3:4-5). The practice of following men is condemned here. Many denominations had their beginning in this manner. In Ephesians 2:19-22, we are taught that we must be built upon the foundation of the Apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone, in order that we might become God's habitation through the Spirit. One man can never establish the Church upon the foundation of Jesus Christ. This is the work of Apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers; and, if done by the leading of the Holy Spirit, it does not produce sects, but brings the Body of Christ together in the unity of the faith and of the Spirit unto the measure of the fullness of the stature of Christ.

"So then neither is he that planteth anything, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase. Now he that planteth and he that watereth are ONE: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour. For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building" (I Corinthians 3:7-9).

Thus we see that denominations are merely sects or divisions in the church, implemented by the carnality of men to keep God's people apart, and to keep the church weak in the earth. Their names merely signify that they hold to such and such a belief.
As we have seen in Paul's writing to the Corinthian church, denominational names are a testimony of the carnal state of the present day church. It is often argued that we must have some name by which to identify ourselves. We must never so identify ourselves as to be distinct from other believers. That will defeat God's purpose in the bringing together of the Body of Christ. It should be enough for any man to be known as a child of God or as a Christian.

Another thing that happens when people become denominationally minded is that they write up their code of beliefs and number them one to ten or whatever, and it is impossible for the Holy Spirit to add any more in revelation to them. The church is a growing organism, and if you fence it in with denominational barriers, it will die. We must leave room for the Holy Spirit to add to us.

In the days of Samuel the prophet, Israel wanted a king so they could be like the surrounding nations. It is amazing how Christians fall into this trap. They want to organize and form denominations so they can be like the other denominations. The words that God spoke to Samuel still apply today: "They have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them" (I Samuel 8:7).

We pray that God will break down the denominational spirit in His called out ones, that they might be joined together as members of the Body of Christ with no other tie than that of the Holy Spirit.

DESIRE

To desire means to have a deep longing for, or to wish for. Desire can be for the carnal fleshly things of this life, for material things, or for the things of the Spiritual realm.

In Luke 22:15-16, Jesus said to his disciples, "With desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer: For I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God." He wanted the fellowship of that Passover meal with the twelve He had walked with and taught throughout the years of His ministry.

At the end of the meal, He took the loaf of bread, broke it, and divided it among them saying, "This is my body which is given for you" (Luke 22:19). He then blessed the cup, saying it was the new covenant in His blood shed for them. By eating of the one loaf and drinking of one cup they were establishing the unity He desired among them. His instruction was that they should drink all of it, probably conveying a typical meaning concerning the cross that they would bear in the days ahead.

Jesus spoke of the desire of many who had gone before as He ministered to the crowd who followed Him to the seashore: "But blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear. For verily I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous men have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not

seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them" (Matthew 13:16-17). What a privilege those followers had, and what a privilege we have today. There was a hunger in the hearts of those prophets and righteous men that at the time could not be satisfied; but it is being satisfied today in us by the moving of the Spirit of God. Our eyes are seeing and our ears are hearing the marvellous things of the kingdom of God.

In Hosea 6:6, God speaks to Israel, saying, "For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings." They were so intent on keeping the letter of the law that they paid no attention to the spirit of it. These words were the longing in the heart of God for His people. This scripture tells us what is in the heart of God, and what He desires to see in His people. "The LORD is gracious, and full of compassion; slow to anger, and of great mercy. The LORD is good to all: and his tender mercies are over all his works" (Psalms 145:8-9).

The book of proverbs describes how desire can be improperly directed. "The soul of the wicked desireth evil: his neighbour findeth no favour in his eyes" (Proverbs 21:10). Jesus taught us what our desires and relationship to our heavenly Father and neighbour should be; "Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets" (Matthew 22:37-40).

Proverbs 13:4 describes a very common malady in our day: "The soul of the sluggard (lazy person) desireth, and hath nothing: but the soul of the diligent shall be made fat." Diligence and hard work will pay off. There may be hardships and setbacks, but God's promise will eventually come to pass. Paul deals with the sluggard in his letter to the Thessalonians. "For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat. For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies. Now them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread" (II Thessalonians 3:10-12). "Seest thou a man diligent in his business? He shall stand before kings; he shall not stand before mean men" (Proverbs 22:29).

The flesh has many desires, all of which must be overcome if we are to enter the Kingdom of God. "And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts" (Galatians 5:24). The glorious thing is that we can have the victory through Christ. "And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)" (Ephesians 2:1-5).

Don't forget, we are going to have a battle. Jesus gave this warning to Simon Peter after He had told him and His other disciples of His appointment of them to His kingdom and the place in which they would serve in that kingdom: "And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may

sift you as wheat: But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren" (Luke 22:31). Thank God for His faithfulness to us.

We can help ourselves a great deal. We read in Proverbs 23:1, "When thou sittest to eat with a ruler, consider diligently what is before thee: And put a knife to thy throat, if thou be a man given to appetite. Be not desirous of his dainties: for they are deceitful meat." Daniel and the three other Hebrews who were taken captive to Babylon purposed in their hearts that they would not defile themselves with the dainties from the king's table: "But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank: therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself" (Daniel 1:8).

We must heed the instruction of the apostle Paul in Galatians 5:25-26, "If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another." The same scripture from the Living Bible is this: "If we are living now by the Holy Spirit's power, let us follow the Holy Spirit's leading in every part of our lives. Then we won't need to look for honours and popularity, which lead to jealousy and hard feelings." He says this in Romans: "Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good" (Romans 12:21).

There were those in Paul's day, of whom he warns Timothy, who did a lot of talking yet didn't understand what they are talking about. "Now the end (goal) of the commandment is charity (love) out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned: From which some having swerved have turned aside unto vain jangling; Desiring to be teachers of the law; understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm" (I Timothy 1:5). Sad to say, there are many men like this today of which the church needs to be careful.

The Holy Spirit divides the gifts of the Spirit for the benefit of all the members of the body of Christ, and in fact, for the population of the whole earth. For the purpose of accomplishing God's purpose, we are instructed in I Corinthians 14:1, "Follow after charity (love), and desire spiritual gifts, but rather that ye may prophesy." If the person operating the gift does so to demonstrate their spirituality, it will be as a tinkling symbol or sounding brass. We must seek and desire spiritual gifts in order to minister edification to the church and to the world.

In Paul's instruction concerning elders we read this: "This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop (overseer or elder), he desireth a good work" (I Timothy 3:1). If a man's desire for eldership is a carnal desire, where his ambition is to be a lord over the church, it is wrong. A man's desire should grow out of a spiritual father's concern for the people of God. "Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock" (I Peter 5:2-3).

God desires truth and wisdom in His people. "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me. Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom. Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow" (Psalms 51:5-7).

Isaiah wrote of the longing of his heart. It was something that stayed with him day and night. "With my soul have I desired thee in the night; yea, with my spirit within me will I seek thee early: for when thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness" (Isaiah 26:9).

"There is treasure to be desired and oil in the dwelling of the wise; but a foolish man spendeth it up" (Proverbs 21:20). We think of the oil as the anointing of the Lord, who in His graciousness has poured out His Holy Spirit upon us. "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked" (II Corinthians 5:1-3). We must make sure that we have enough in the heavenly realm to clothe ourselves. It would be a shame if when the Lord attempts to clothe us with that heavenly house, we don't have enough material to cover ourselves. I am sure that Paul added this last verse as a caution to us. The wonderful thing is that we have this hope of putting on that eternal house.

"Trust in the LORD, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed. Delight thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart. Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass" (Psalms 37:3-5).

THE OPEN DOOR

"And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth; I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name" (Revelation 3:7-8).

One of the first prophecies in the Move of the Spirit contained a part of this scripture. God was speaking to us about an open door; and that door was the way into our gifts and ministries. It was such a wonderful thing to be able to see an open door after such a prolonged time of spiritual drought. Going through that door has proven to be a tremendous experience, and we have learned not only to appreciate our own gift and ministry, but the gifts and ministries of all the other members of the body of Christ.

A person always needs an open door before them. Life, in the natural, needs a goal to press toward, and it is the same in our spiritual life. The apostle Paul tells us that he was pressing forward to enter an open door: "I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded..." (Philippians 3:14-15).

That prize was not found in earthly carnal things that bolstered the flesh. He tells what the prize was he was seeking in Philippians 3:10-11, "That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead." Looking through that same open door causes us to press on with diligence.

We will always find in our spiritual walk that as soon as we have entered one open door, another is before us. God has taught us, in this Move of the Spirit, that we don't have all the answers to every question, but that the truth of God is an unfolding revelation. No matter what stage of growth you have attained as a Christian, there is always another to go on to; there is another open door.

We are given warning though, about in what we should walk. Paul instructs us concerning this in Titus 1:7-11, "For a bishop (an elder) must be blameless, as the steward of God; not selfwilled, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre; But a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate; Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers. For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision: Whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake." May God help us to always give heed to the leading of the Spirit of God in these matters so that we not be taken in as some have been, and find our faith in what God has established has been destroyed.

When God spoke to us through prophecy concerning that open door into our gifts and ministries, we rejoiced. One song that we sang still rings in my ears. We sang it while thinking of the open door that God had put before us.
"He the pearly gates will open,
So that I may enter in.
For He purchased my redemption,
And forgave me all my sin."
In Proverbs 29:18 we read, "Where there is no vision, the people perish." Another translator of the scripture says, "Where there is no revelation, the people perish." God has taught us that the revelation concerning Himself and the kingdom He is establishing is an unfolding revelation.

None of us, by any means, know all there is to know. Many things lay hidden in His word, waiting for the Holy Spirit to shine upon them and bring them to our attention. We need a vision to live by. We need a revelation to light our way. We need a goal to press toward. This is necessary in the natural realm, and it is also very important in Spiritual things. As the writer of the proverb said, "Without a vision (or a goal), the people perish." They will become discouraged and give up.

Abraham lived by a vision. "By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God" (Hebrews 11:8-10). That vision he had of the city with foundations God was building kept him pressing toward it. We also look for the same city. It is described in Ephesians 2:19: "Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit."

We mustn't get the idea that Abraham was some type of visionary. He lived a very practical type of life. He acquired great herds of livestock and many servants to look after them. As the saying goes, he wasn't so heavenly minded he was no earthly good. His life was committed to God, and God blessed him. His ear was attentive to the voice of the Lord.

The apostle Paul said, "But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3:7-14).
He had a mark before him that he was reaching out for. His desire was to take hold of what God had in mind for him when He took him captive that day on the road to Damascus. His life was spent getting to know God and seeking the power of the resurrection in his life. This was the open door he sought.

Without a vision of the next open door, we will become discouraged and enter a stalemate. When Peter wrote of the Christian graces in II Peter 1:5-8 ("And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ"), he was speaking of growing in our experience. He speaks of adding these fruits and having them abound in our life. The result will be that we do not become barren or unfruitful, but the vision God gives will cause us to bear much fruit. An unfruitful tree has entered a stalemate in its life, and the same is true of us. Peter felt it was his responsibility to remind us of the necessity of them adding to our experience.

We read of the first open door we encounter in John 10:9. Jesus said, "I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture." Jesus is the one and only entrance into the kingdom of God. From this entrance we go on to one experience after another, our goal being to partake of the fullness of Christ.

"Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ: That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ" (Ephesians 4:13-15).

It is very important that the church keep this open door visible to the unbeliever. It is God's mind that all men should accept Christ and be saved. "For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour; Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God, and

one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time" (I Timothy 2:3-6). That is a responsibility given to the church by Jesus before His ascension: "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15).

The apostle Paul also speaks of the churches responsibility in this matter in II Corinthians 5:18-19, "And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation."

In Philippians 2:10-11, Paul speaks of the day when "...at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." This will come to pass through the ministry of the church, as each member of the body of Christ functions in the ministry and by the gift given to them by the Holy Spirit. The church must not procrastinate in the acceptance of this responsibility. "For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation" (II Corinthians 6:2).

One night, as described in John 3:1-7, a man of the Pharisees entered that door which Jesus opened to him. Jesus said to him, John 3:3, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Nicodemus, as witnessed by his concern in the previous verse, was anxious to know about the manifestations of the kingdom of God he had been seeing. Jesus made it plain to him that you cannot see the kingdom of God with natural, physical eyes. This realm is only seen by the Spirit. In the physical, you cannot see until you are born; to be able to see Spiritual things, you must be born of the Spirit. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again" (John 3:6).

In Luke 18:17, we read, "Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child shall in no wise enter therein." Many have told us that Jesus is referring to us having a childlike faith to be able to enter the kingdom. That is probably true, but I believe He was really reinforcing His teaching about having to be born of the Spirit to partake of that Spiritual kingdom. You are always a child after you are born, and as it is in the natural, so it is in the realm of the Spiritual. There is no other way to enter the kingdom of God except by being born into it; and that necessitates you becoming a spiritual child. After the birth, God desires a healthy growth in His children in the same way as a natural parent looks for growth in their natural children.

ELDERS

I would like to talk to you about the ministry of elders. There are actually three levels of elder spoken of in the scripture. Firstly, there are the elders to the universal church or the church in the whole world. They are the five apostolic ministries spoken of in Ephesians 4:11, "And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets;

and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers." There are approximately seventy of these ministries mentioned in the New Testament. They are Christ's gift to mankind for the oversight of the whole church.

The purpose of their ministry is given to us in Ephesians 4:12-16: "For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ: That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love."

Peter was an apostle, yet he speaks of himself as an elder in I Peter 5:1, "The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed." He was an elder to the whole church along with the other apostles.

The apostles had deacons that helped them in their work. Paul, the apostle, had the help of Timothy and Titus, just to name two. "As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine, Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith: so do" (I Timothy 1:3-4). "For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee:" (Titus 1:5). The deacons acted under the guidance of the apostles.

Today, God has restored the ministry of the apostolic elders to the church, and has established the ministry of deacons, given them of God to be their helpers.

It is very important that there be a plurality of apostolic ministries. We have seen many men in our day who have made shipwreck of their ministries because they tried to operate alone. They had no one to balance them and help them stay on the right path. Thank God for a plurality in the apostolic ministry.

Then we have the office of the elder or overseer of the local church. Nowhere in scripture can you find a pastor of a local church mentioned. Elders, who are self-supporting local men, take the oversight of the local church by the appointment of the apostolic ministries or their deacons. When speaking of elders, the scripture always uses the word in the plural. There was always more than one elder, and there should be more than one elder in the local church of our day. This gives balance to the ministry in the church and assures that the people will be fed a balanced diet of spiritual food.

The elder’s qualifications are given in I Timothy 3:1-7, "This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop (the word bishop means an elder or overseer), he desireth a good work. A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach; Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous; One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; (For if a man know not

how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?) Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil."

Similar qualifications are outlined in Titus 1:6-9, "If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly. For a bishop (elder) must be blameless, as the steward of God; not self-willed, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre; But a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate; Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers."

These qualifications are very important, and should be strictly adhered to in order to protect the testimony and reputation of the church in the community. An elder who has these qualifications will also be respected and looked up to by the people of the church.

The apostle Paul called the elders of the Ephesian church to meet him in Miletus, where he outlined to them their responsibilities toward the people of their local church: "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears" (Acts 20:28-31).

Deacons are ordained of God to help the elders. The word deacon means "one who serves." A deacon can do anything an elder can do, but he must function under the direction of his elders. He must not take things into his own hands.

Deacon's qualifications are found in 1 Timothy 3:8-13. They are similar to those required of elders. "Likewise must the deacons be grave, not doubletongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre; Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience. And let these also first be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon, being found blameless. Even so must their wives be grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things. Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well. For they that have used the office of a deacon well purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus."

The third level of elder is the husband and father in the home. God has ordained that the husband be the head of his wife, even as Christ is the head of the church. "For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body" (Ephesians 5:23). With this headship goes the responsibility of a man loving his wife as Christ loved the church and giving himself for her and his family. "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it" (Ephesians 5:25). Christ died on the cross for the church and shed His blood that we might have redemption from sin. When a man takes a wife, he must be willing to give her that type of covering and protection.

Christ gave Himself that he might sanctify and cleanse the church. A man can't take away the sin of his wife and family; only the blood of Jesus can do that. But he must be a spiritual leader in his home, and his object should be that his wife and children walk with God. Many men abdicate their place of headship both

in material and spiritual things. Often the wife is only too anxious to usurp the authority that should be in the hands of her husband. These things ought not to be. God desires that all of our homes be in the proper order.

As the apostles have deacons to help them in their ministry, and the local church elders have deacons to help them, so God has given a man a wife to help him. "And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet (fitting, suitable, appropriate) for him" (Genesis 2:18). There is nothing like a good wife to help a man in his family responsibilities. Many times she acts as an adviser and gives invaluable advice. She helps in teaching the children the ways of the Lord, and if the home is in proper order, she stays at home and gives the children their day-to-day care and attention.

Unity is of utmost importance in all levels of eldership, not only among the elders, but also between the elders and deacons. If there is a difference among them, they should not achieve unity by compromise, but should seek God until they are of one mind or think alike. "Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous: Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing" (I Peter 3:8). The apostle Paul, in speaking to two men, who we assume were elders, said, "I beseech Euodias, and beseech Syntyche, that they be of the same mind in the Lord" (Philippians 4:2).

Unity in the home is also an absolute necessity. If there is disunity, the children will grow up disillusioned and will probably not walk in the ways of the Lord. "Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge
(Weymouth says, "With a clear recognition of the fact that they are weaker than you"), giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered." Where there is disunity, your ability to pray and receive answers is hindered.

This is a wonderful plan God has devised. If we will follow the pattern He has given, we will find that it will work exceptionally well. Let us continually pray for and seek unity.

COMMENTS ON PAUL'S LETTER TO THE EPHESIANS

Ephesus was located on the western end of present day Turkey. It was a commercial centre. It was also a centre of idol worship and the manufacture of idols (Acts 19:23-28).

Paul's letter to the Ephesians was written in about A.D. 65, from his prison cell in Rome. It was delivered by Tychicus, who also delivered the epistle to the Colossians. Paul had paid the city of Ephesus a short visit on his way to Jerusalem to a feast (Acts 18:19-21). Priscilla and Aquila accompanied him. He spent some time in the synagogue reasoning with the Jews, but soon left with a promise to return. Priscilla and Aquila remained. In the meantime Apollos came to Ephesus. Apollos only knew of the baptism of John, but Priscilla and Aquila instructed him in the truth concerning Christ. Afterward, he convinced the Jews that Jesus was the Christ.

In Acts 19 we read of Paul's return to Ephesus. He found disciples who had been baptized according to John's baptism. This was a result of Apollos' ministry to them. Under Paul's instruction and teaching, the people believed in Christ and were baptized in His name. Paul then laid his hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit. Paul spent three months in the synagogue teaching and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God. When opposition arose, they moved the meetings to a school where he continued for two years.

During this time, miracles were performed by the laying on of Paul's hands. Handkerchiefs and aprons were also taken to the sick and they recovered. Many evil spirits were cast out in this manner.

There were those, that the scripture calls vagabond Jews, who tried to imitate Paul's ministry. On one occasion, the seven sons of the chief of the Jewish priests, who was called Sceva, tried to cast out a demon with disastrous results. "Then certain of the vagabond Jews, exorcists, took upon them to call over them which had evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth. And there were seven sons of one Sceva, a Jew, and chief of the priests, which did so. And the evil spirit answered and said, Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye? And the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, and overcame them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded" (Acts 19:13).

It was approximately ten years from this visit of Paul's until the writing of his epistle to the Ephesian church from the prison in Rome.

The Ephesian church was one of the seven churches addressed in the first three chapters of the book of Revelation. By the time John wrote the Revelation, it was a little over forty years since the church had been established. They had lost their first love.

We will note, as we go through the letter to the Ephesians, that the first three chapters contain teaching concerning the wonderful and glorious experiences that belong to the church in Christ. Ephesians 4:1 is kind of the centre point of the letter, and the following three chapters are intended to be the practical application of the first three.

Chapter 1

"Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus..." (Ephesians 1:1).

This letter is addressed to the saints at Ephesus. That was just another way of addressing the Christians at Ephesus. The letter was to be shared by all who were faithful followers of Christ.

Paul refers to himself as an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God. Apostleship is not a self appointed ministry. It is the gift of Christ to the church (Ephesians 4:11), and is a divine appointment. As we will see

later in the letter, apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers, were given by Christ to the church "for the perfecting of the saints for the work of the ministry" (Ephesians 4:12).

"Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ" (Ephesians 1:2).

What a wonderful thing to know the grace and peace of God. Grace embodies the love, compassion, benevolence, kindness, love, mercy, and favour of God. When we are at peace with God, sin has been dealt with through the sacrifice of Christ, and we are no longer His enemies. "For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement" (Romans 5:10-11).

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:" (Ephesians 1:3).

When we become Christians, we enter the door of those heavenly places in Christ. Those heavenly places are the realm of the Spirit. We are no longer just carnal, earthly people, but we have also taken on a spiritual nature. The door to the realm of the Spirit is open to us, and we can either walk in the flesh or in the Spirit. As a child of God, spiritual blessings or benefits in heavenly places are ours if we will enter into them.

"And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him" (Genesis 5:24). Here was a man who many dispensations and thousands of years ago entered into the resurrection. We pray that God will give us the ability to walk with Him, and as Enoch did, and enter into those heavenly places.

"According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will," (Ephesians 1:4-5).

It is hard for us to realize that God's purposes were accomplished in His mind before He ever created anything. He had a plan. We were chosen in Him to be holy and blameless in His sight before He even laid the foundation of the earth. In His love, He predestinated or foreordained us. To what? The adoption of children through Jesus Christ. In this scripture, the Greek word for adoption, "huiothesia," literally means, "the placing of a son." It doesn't refer to taking an orphan into your home and making him a member of your family, but it speaks of a father taking a mature and tried son and placing him in a place of responsibility. The Greek word translated "children" here is "huios" which indicates maturity. Wherever Jesus is spoken of as the Son of God, this is the word used. God's plan and purpose through Jesus Christ is that we may grow up into Him in all things, which is the Head, even Christ, and to place us as mature, full grown sons in His kingdom. This is God's good pleasure and will.

"To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved" (Ephesians 1:6).

This action on God's part is in praise of His grace, which is freely given us in Christ.

"In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace; Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence;" (Ephesians 1:7,8).

Redeem means to buy back. In the New International Version, we read in Romans 7:14, "We know that the law is spiritual; but I am unspiritual, sold as a slave to sin." Because of Adam's transgression we all have partaken of his sinful nature and become slaves to sin. Jesus shed His blood as a ransom for us, and purchased our redemption with His life. Because of the richness and abundance of God's grace, He not only sets us free from the slavery of sin, but in His wisdom and understanding we can have forgiveness for our sin through Christ. All that is required is to believe and accept.

"Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: That in the dispensation of the fullness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him:" (Ephesians 1:9).

Through the revelation given to the apostle, God has made known to us what His will is concerning the ages to come. This, which was a mystery, God has allowed us to know. It has been planned in and through Christ. His plan is that, in the ages to come, He will gather together and make one all things both earthly and heavenly. All things will find their perfection and fulfilment in Christ. Everything at the present time is divided, and most things prey upon one another. This is true in the human kingdom, the plant kingdom and the animal kingdom. What a glorious day when all things will be joined together in Christ and the "Rest" of God dominates the whole creation.

"In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ" (Ephesians 1:11).

We will also share in Christ, the inheritance of the whole creation. The church has been predestinated in God's plan and purpose to partake of this glorious realm of perfection. We can have confidence in this because it is His will, and He always performs that which is His will.

"In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory" (Ephesians 1:13).

After hearing the message of the gospel of salvation, we were sealed with the Holy Spirit. Paul calls Him the Holy Spirit of promise because He fills our hearts with the hope of all the glorious things God has planned for His called-out ones. The Holy Spirit is the down payment on our inheritance. He is the deposit guaranteeing our inheritance in Christ, until the day of the full redemption of those who are God's possession.

"Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers;" (Ephesians 1:15).

Paul was thankful to God for the Ephesians' faith in Christ, and the love that flowed among them. He prayed for them, as we should do for one another.

"That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him:" (Ephesians 1:17).

This is Paul's prayer for the Ephesians, and it is a prayer that we should continually pray for one another. The only way that we can know God is if He reveals Himself to us. He is not one who can be figured out by the natural mind. If we are to receive knowledge of Him, He must give us the spirit of wisdom and revelation. Otherwise, He is a closed book. I just read an article written by an unbeliever about God, and he missed the mark by miles. Thank God for the Holy Spirit by which God reveals Himself.

"The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints," (Ephesians 1:18).

Paul continues his prayer that our eyes will be opened, and that we may receive understanding and enlightenment concerning God's calling to us. Not only do we need understanding regarding our inheritance through Christ, but Paul also desires that we may understand that God has inherited us as His children. Praise God; we are part of God's inheritance.

"And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come:" (Ephesians 1:19-21).

Paul also prayed that the church could understand and receive a revelation of the power that God exhibited when He raised Christ from the dead, and sat Him at His right hand in heavenly places. That is the same realm that was mentioned in verse 3 that God is enabling us to enter. The place in which Christ is seated is far above any power in this age, and any age to come.

"And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all" (Ephesians 1:22).

God has placed everything under Christ's feet. He has made Him the Head of the church in all things. He is the Head and the church is His body. The church is His fullness or compliment, or we might say that which completes Him. In that body dwells the Christ who fills the whole universe with Himself.

Chapter 2

"And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:" (Ephesians 2:1-2).

Paul continues in this chapter talking about the glories of the experience that we have been privileged to enter into. We were spiritually dead because of the manner in which we lived and walked. This manner of life was inherited, as we are told in Romans 5:15: "For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many." We were carried along by the world's ideas of living, and obeyed the unseen ruler of this age. This same spirit continues to work in those who disobey God and holds them in the bonds of death. We praise God that when we were bound and dead that Christ freed us and made us alive. What a wonderful redemption!

"Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others" (Ephesians 2:3).

As Paul says here, we were the same as others. The word "conversation," as it is used here, means "manner of life." All walked in the same way in the past. We, by nature, seek the lusts of the flesh and every imaginable thing that the fleshly mind can think up. In this state, we were the objects of the wrath and judgement of God. "As it is written, there is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one" (Romans 3:10).

"But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)" (Ephesians 2:4).

Firstly, God is very merciful. Secondly, He loved us with a great love. He loved us, as Paul says, when we were spiritually dead in sins. A person who is physically dead is insensitive to everything around him; a person who is spiritually dead is insensitive to things of the Spirit of God.

When we were in this state of spiritual death, God quickened us. That is the Old English way of saying that God made us alive and able to hear the voice of God by the Holy Spirit. We have been given life together with Christ. Christ was raised from death, and we have been raised from spiritual death. To be raised from physical death, as the scriptures have promised, is still to come.

He says by grace (God's compassion, favour, love, forgiveness, kindness), we are saved from that awful calamity of death.

"And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:" (Ephesians 2:6).

What a privilege and blessing to be raised together with Christ. We are seated together in heavenly places. When Paul speaks of heavenly places, he is speaking of the realm of the Spirit. Physically, we are still in this natural realm but spiritually we have been raised up and are seated with Christ in the spiritual realm.
"That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus" (Ephesians 2:7).

By raising us, God has shown how exceedingly gracious He is. It was at tremendous cost that He sent His Son to be our Redeemer.

"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:" (Ephesians 2:8).

Our salvation requires God's grace and our faith. Faith is imparted to us by God so that we may believe. Neither the grace nor the faith is our own, but is a gift from Him.

"Not of works, lest any man should boast" (Ephesians 2:9).

We cannot work for our salvation; we must believe for it. It is a free gift from God. It was purchased by the death of His Son on the cross.

Abraham found that he couldn't work for his salvation, otherwise God would have been indebted to him. "For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God. For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness" (Romans 4:2).

"Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? Nay: but by the law of faith. Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law" (Romans 3:27-28).

"For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them" (Ephesians 2:10).

Our new birth in Christ is the result of God's workmanship. This new creation has been brought into being and ordained for the purpose of good works. We become an operating member of the body of Christ with a ministry to function in.

"Wherefore remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands;" (Ephesians 2:11).

There are a lot of things we have to remember. It helps us to appreciate the work of God on our behalf if we remember that God has changed us from the fleshly ways of our unsaved past. "He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my foot upon a rock, and established my goings" (Psalms 40:2). The Gentiles were called the Uncircumcision. Circumcision was a cutting away of the flesh done by the hands of men. The Christian has experienced a spiritual circumcision in Christ: "In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ" (Colossians 2:11). The carnal, fleshly part of us is cut away in Christ.

"That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world; But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ" (Ephesians 2:12-13).

We are to remember the time when we were without Christ. We, as Gentiles, were excluded from citizenship in Israel and were foreigners to the promises of God. There was no hope for us. We were far from God and

outsiders, so to speak; but now we have been taken into the family of God through the sacrifice and the shedding of the blood of Christ.

"For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby:" (Ephesians 2:14-16).

Through Christ, as far as God is concerned, there is now peace between the Jew and Gentile. Generally speaking, Israel doesn't recognize this peace. God has broken down the wall that separates. Through His death and sacrifice, Christ has taken away everything that divided Israel from the believing Gentile, even the commandments concerning the ordinances given with the law. These ordinances brought a division. The sacrifices, the different washings, and circumcision, were all ordinances that were fulfilled in Christ. Christ was our sacrifice. We are circumcised by the cutting away of our flesh in Christ. We are washed and cleansed by His blood (Revelations 1:5; I Corinthians 6:11) Christ abolished everything that brought about the enmity between the two, and has made them one in Him. The division is finished and peace reigns.

Through the cross, Christ has reconciled both the Israelite and the Gentile to God and made them members of one body; the body of Christ. Previous to our experience at the cross, all men were enemies of God; but that enmity has been destroyed through the cleansing of the blood of Christ.

"And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh" (Ephesians 2:17).

The one that was far off was the Gentile, and the one that was nigh was the Israelite to whom God had made all the promises. Even to this day, the promises God made to Israel are the primary reason Jews are persecuted the world over. It could be the jealousy of the carnal mind. Christ preached peace and removed any reason for division. Every Gentile can become heir to the promises of God by accepting the sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ.

"For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father" (Ephesians 2:18).

Through our experience with Christ both the Jew and the Gentile have access to God, our heavenly Father, through the Holy Spirit that has been given us.

"Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God;" (Ephesians 2:19).

Because of this, the Ephesian Gentile was no longer a stranger and foreigner to the promises of God. All who accept and believe in the sacrificial work of Christ are fellow citizens of God's household.

"And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone;" (Ephesians 2:20).

Besides all these wonderful things that are ours in Christ, we are built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets. Jesus Christ is the chief cornerstone of that foundation.

"In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord:" (Ephesians 2:21).

Paul speaks here of the building that is constructed on that foundation. All the pieces are made to fit together. He says that this building grows, which is something that a natural building cannot do. He says it is a holy temple consecrated to God.

"In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit" (Ephesians 2:22).

We are a part of that building which is a place where God dwells by the Holy Spirit. In his message to the Corinthian Christians, Paul says, "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" (I Corinthians 3:16).

What a glorious privilege!

Chapter 3

"For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward:" (Ephesians 3:1,2).

Paul considered himself a prisoner of Christ. The call of God was so great in his life that he gave himself completely and absolutely to that call. The love of God compelled him to give himself to the ministry for which God had chosen him: the salvation of the Gentiles.

The word dispensation speaks of distributing. In this case, it was the giving to Paul of the revelation of the grace of God he was to minister to the Gentiles. Likewise, God distributes to every member of the body of Christ the ministry and gifts of the Spirit of His choosing. "But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him" (I Corinthians 12:18).

"How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ)" (Ephesians 3:3,4).

The only way a man can understand the things of God is by revelation, which is a disclosure. This was the disclosure of a mystery, or something that is not understood. The coming, the life, the death and the resurrection of Christ was a mystery to these people, and is a mystery yet today to all who have not accepted Him as their Saviour. Paul told them that as they read his epistle, they would understand this mystery.

"Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit;" (Ephesians 3:5).

Previously, God had never revealed what He was now making known to His apostles and prophets by the revelation of the Holy Spirit.

"That the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel:" (Ephesians 3:6).

The mystery was that the Gentiles, who had always been excluded from the promises of God, were now in Christ complete partakers and heirs together with Israel. The believing Jew and the believing Gentile were now members of the same body, the body of Christ.

"Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power" (Ephesians 3:7).

God made Paul His servant to minister this message. It was by His grace (favour) that Paul was given this responsibility. Any ministry God shares with any of His people is an expression of His grace. Just think: God has made you a worker together with Himself. This ministry was an expression of the power of God working in and through His servant.

"Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ;" (Ephesians 3:8).

Like Paul, we must all take a humble position concerning the ministry God has given us. By the grace of our heavenly Father, He shares a ministry with anyone. Paul's ministry was to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ (Hallelujah!) among the Gentiles.

"And to make all men see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ:" (Ephesians 3:9)

Paul's responsibility was to share the mystery of this fellowship, the uniting of Israel with the Gentiles, with all men. God had never shared this with anyone before. Through Christ He had created all things (Hebrews 1:2), and this body was also to be created through Him.

"To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God," (Ephesians 3:10).

There are unseen powers in the spiritual realm. It is God's purpose to demonstrate to them His wisdom through the church, His called-out ones. He manifests His complex wisdom in many, many ways, not only to us as His children, but also to the principalities and powers who inhabit the spiritual realm. His purpose is being worked out through the church.

"According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord:" (Ephesians 3:11).

God's purpose in all this was worked out before He ever created anything. It is described as an eternal purpose, or a purpose that has always been. It is a marvellous thing to think that we were made part of that purpose. It was in His mind to accomplish this whole thing through Jesus Christ and ultimately through the

church. How thankful we should be that Christ didn't fail when tempted by Satan after His baptism, or when He agonized in prayer in Gethsemane.

"In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the faith of him" (Ephesians 3:12).

Through Christ, we now have boldness to confidently enter into the presence of God. Through the faith He imparts to us, we can do this.

"Wherefore I desire that ye faint not at my tribulations for you, which is your glory" (Ephesians 3:13).

Paul didn't want them to give up because they were aware of the tribulation that he was suffering. He felt that he was suffering for them and that they should feel honoured.

"For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named," (Ephesians 3:14,15).

Paul was praying, as he says, to Jesus' Father so they would not become discouraged. When he speaks of family, he is speaking of the family of God. That family has taken on His family name. Some family members are already in heaven with Him, and some are still on the earth.

"That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man;" (Ephesians 3:16).
Paul's prayer was that God would give them strength in their inner man by the Holy Spirit. This inner reinforcement would come from God's great storehouse.

"That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God" (Ephesians 3:17-19).

Paul's prayer is that Christ would dwell within them by faith. Christ dwelling in His body bears with it the hope of all the glorious things to come, and is the hope of the present, too. He prayed they would be rooted and grounded in love. The fruit of our experience grows out of love's soil. With the comprehension of the love of Christ comes an understanding of the dimensions of the purpose of God in Christ. The love of Christ is beyond the scope of all human knowledge. By knowing and understanding this love, we can be filled with fullness or the completeness of God.

"Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen" (Ephesians 3:20-21).

We are unable to imagine being filled with all the fullness of God, but Paul says at the end of his prayer that God can do in us far beyond what we can ask or even think by the power of the Christ who dwells within us. May He be given glory throughout all ages for His master plan through Christ Jesus.

Chapter 4

"I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called," (Ephesians 4:1).

This verse is the focal point of the whole epistle to the Ephesians. Chapters one, two, and three speak about the glories of the calling of God. We are now exhorted to walk worthy of that calling. Chapters four, five and six speak of the way in which we should walk in a practical way to be worthy of that calling.

"With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love;" (Ephesians 4:2).

Lowliness speaks of being humble and meek. To be longsuffering means to patiently endure. To forebear has to do with self-restraint. We are instructed to restrain our opinions, and ourselves, and patiently accept others in love. Be patient with each other, making allowance for each other's faults because of your love.

"Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Ephesians 4:3).

We must try with all our hearts to keep the unity of the Spirit. We must forego being argumentative for the sake of peace. There are much better ways to make corrections than arguing. If someone is argumentative, the best thing to do is to walk away and let him talk to the wind. We must learn to be led by the Spirit and so be at peace with one another.

"There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all" (Ephesians 4:4-6).

Unity among God's people is one of the most important things, if not the most important. Jesus said in John 17:21, "That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me."

There is only one body of Christ, not many. Therefore no particular people can lay claim to that status. There is only one Holy Spirit, although there are many degrees by which people have accepted and taken advantage of His moving in their lives. We all have the same calling, which is to believe in the redemptive work of Christ on the cross and to enter into the kingdom of God. Our "hope" is the kingdom of God. There is only one Lord; there is only one faith by which we can be saved. Paul speaks of one baptism, and I believe he is talking of that baptism he mentions in I Corinthians 12:13, "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit."

Believe that the Holy Spirit places us or baptizes us into the body of Christ according to the mind of our heavenly Father. As believers, we all drink of the same Holy Spirit. Nationality or status in life has nothing to do with our place in Christ's body, but the mind of our heavenly Father does.

These people were used to worshipping many gods, but they are instructed here that there is one God, who is the Father of all of us. He is superior to all other dignities. He lives in us and through us.
"But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ" (Ephesians 4:7).

As members of His body, Christ divides to us the special abilities that He wants us to have. This is a manifestation of the wonderful grace of God to share with us the abilities that come from Him by the Spirit. This grace is immeasurable.

"Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men" (Ephesians 4:8).

This was prophesied in Psalms 68:18: "Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive: thou hast received gifts for men; yea, for the rebellious also, that the LORD God might dwell among them."

Peter writes of this in I Peter 3:18-20. In the Spirit, Jesus went and ministered to those who were imprisoned for disobedience to God in the days of Noah. This was presumably during the time that His body was in the tomb. We are told He led the captives forth. At the time of His death and resurrection this took place (Matthew 27:51-53). The graves were opened and many of the saints who were dead arose and were seen of the people in the city. When He ascended, He led this company with Him.

"(Now that he ascended, what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.)" (Ephesians 4:9).

These verses speak of the love of Christ for people. He left His heavenly abode and descended to the lower parts of the earth. I don't know whether Paul is speaking of Him descending to earth, or to the place where disobedient souls were imprisoned. He did both.

When Paul speaks of heavens here the Greek indicates that he is speaking of the skies. The heavens to which He ascended are far above any realm that we can see with our natural eyes. Not only does He dwell in our hearts and the heavenly realm, but in all the earth. His presence is even in hell. "If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there" (Psalms 139:8). He fills the whole wide universe with Himself.

"And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers;" (Ephesians 4:11).

Going back to verse eight, we read that He gave gifts unto men. The word "gift" used in verse eight is translated from the Greek word "doma." This word indicates a gift as when you give someone a present. The wise men brought gifts (Greek, "doron") to Christ; parents give good gifts (Greek, "doma") to their children, (Matthew 7:9-11). We are told that Christ has given gifts to mankind just as parents give gifts to their children. These gifts are different than the spiritual gifts (Greek, "pneumatika;" literally, "spirituals")

described in I Corinthians 12. Those gifts are spiritual abilities given to different people as the Spirit of God wills for the purpose of ministering to the body of Christ.

The gifts in verses 8 and 11 of Ephesians are the gifts that Christ has given to the men. In Ephesians 4:11, the gifts are men who have been given to the world by Christ. The Holy Spirit has already given them the spiritual abilities mentioned in I Corinthians 12.

It should be noted that the gifts of Ephesians 4:11 were given by Christ when He ascended. The spiritual ("pneumatika") gifts given by the Holy Spirit were given ten days later on the day of Pentecost when the one hundred twenty were assembled in the upper room. Many wonders and signs were subsequently done by the apostles (Acts 2:43).

We are privileged to receive the gifts of the Spirit as divided by the Holy Spirit by the laying on of hands and prophecy by a presbytery. Our experience is similar to Timothy's: "Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery" (I Timothy 4:14).

"For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:" (Ephesians 4:12).

The purpose and responsibility of the gifts (apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers), is to perfect and edify the body of Christ for the work of the ministry.

The people of the church are intended by God to do the work of the ministry, not as is predominantly practiced today where the church hires someone to do the ministering. To perfect the church means to bring its members to maturity so they can minister by the Spirit to the rest of the church and world.

"Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ:" (Ephesians 4:13).

Ministering to the church by the gift that has been given us brings maturity, which in turn brings unity. Division is evidence of childishness. The unity of the church will convince the world. At present the world is confused because there are so many different beliefs among God's people. These gifts of Christ to the church, by ministering to the church, will bring unity of faith and knowledge concerning God's Son and His purpose for the redemption of the whole creation. When Paul speaks of a perfect man, he is speaking of the body of Christ where every member has come to full maturity. His body will come to the same spiritual stature as is found in Christ Himself. It is the longing and hope of all His children that we might come to the measure of the fullness of Christ. We can measure our physical stature, but we must leave our spiritual stature for God to measure. It would be impossible for us to measure the spiritual stature of Christ.

"That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;" (Ephesians 4:14).

Many people run to hear every preacher who comes to town and listen to every religious broadcast on T.V. No wonder they are confused, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine. Many

cunningly present their wares to deceive the people who listen to them. Often what is behind their message is monetary gain. The exhortation of the apostolic ministry is that the people of the church would grow up spiritually so they will not be deceived. This is part of their responsibility as they circulate through the churches.

"But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:" (Ephesians 4:15).

The truth is what will cause us to grow. Jesus said we should know the truth and that the truth would set us free. He also said He was the Truth. As we partake of the truth as He is ministered to us by the many members of the body of Christ, we will grow up into union with Him who is the Head of His body, the church.

"From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love" (Ephesians 4:16).

The whole body is joined together in Christ. It is compacted or pressed together by what every part of the body supplies. One translator puts it this way. It is compacted by the supply of every contributory ligament. This joining together of Christ's body depends on the proper working and function of every part of the body. If one member fails to minister, it affects the whole body, just as we have trouble in the human body when one member fails. As the members of the body minister to one another, they are built up and strengthened in the love of Christ. When Paul speaks of the body making increase of itself, I believe he is speaking of the growth of Christians and the adding of people to the church.

"This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart:" (Ephesians 4:17-18).

The rest of this chapter speaks about the change that comes to a person's life when they accept Christ as their Saviour, and is also about the change God expects in our relationship with one another. Paul said these things as if he was speaking for the Lord.

There is to be a difference between those who were saved and those who weren't. The unsaved are blinded and confused by their sin and their manner of life. The unsaved heart is blinded by their sin, and they can't understand the way of the Lord. They are ignorant of the ways of God and are aliens to the kingdom of God. God expects the same separate walk today as in Paul's day.

"Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness" (Ephesians 4:19).

An unsaved person can lose all sensitivity to the presence of God and the conviction of the Holy Spirit. Their conscience no longer is troubled by sin and they give themselves to impurity and sensuality,

continually lusting for more of the same. People get so they don't care about right and wrong and will stop at nothing, being driven by their lusts.

"But ye have not so learned Christ; If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus:" (Ephesians 4:20,21).

We have never been taught those sinful ways by the Lord, nor have we been led into them by the Holy Spirit. We must have an ear for the Spirit of God and be willing to be led of Him. Jesus said, "Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32).

"That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts;" (Ephesians 4:22).

Former conversation speaks of our old unsaved way of life. We are, when we accept Christ into our lives, instructed to put off the old way of life. "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (II Corinthians 5:17). We must allow the new life to grow. The old way of life is corrupt and it deceives us into following the former lustful ways.

"And be renewed in the spirit of your mind;" (Ephesians 4:23).

What a glorious change takes place in our way of thinking when Jesus comes into our heart and we begin to seek to be submissive to the leading of the Spirit of God! In our old way of life, there was a spirit that controlled our mind. In our new life, we are led by the Holy Spirit. "And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God" (Romans 12:2).

"And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness" (Ephesians 4:24).

In verse 22, we were instructed to put off the former way of life. We are to put that way of life off just as we would put off soiled clothing. The mind of the Lord is that we put on the new man just we would put on clean fresh clothing. Since the born-again person is a new creation, God expects us to put on the new self and be like God in righteousness and holiness.

"Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another" (Ephesians 4:25).

When we become Christians that should be the end of lying to one another. Paul uses the word neighbour here, talking about our Christian brother. But, of course we should not lie to anyone. As he says, we are members of one another and intimately related to each other. By lying we hurt ourselves.

"Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath:" (Ephesians 4:26).

Never be angry because of a bad temper or wounded pride. Always settle anything that has made you angry before the end of the day. Don't nurse a grudge.

"Neither give place to the devil" (Ephesians 4:27).

The devil is always looking for place to get a foothold in our life. Don't give him an opportunity to get in either by anger, or lying, or stealing, or any of the works of the flesh (Galatians 5:19-21).

"Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth" (Ephesians 4:28).

Never should a Christian be accused of stealing. Thou shalt not steal was part of the law, and it still applies in our day. Paul's cure for the thief was to work with his hands so he would have something to give to those in need. He would learn by working to appreciate how hard other people work to obtain their goods and wouldn't be tempted to steal. A thief should stop stealing and start giving.

"Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers" (Ephesians 4:29).

Bad language is also not for the child of God. I even hate to hear a Christian using slang. There are more than enough good words to use without the bad ones. Off colour jokes are not for God's people either. Endeavour to speak those things that will build up your brother and sister in their walk with God. As Paul says, speak those things that will minister grace to those that hear.

"And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption" (Ephesians 4:30).

By walking in the carnal ways described in the last few verses, we will grieve the Holy Spirit. He desires to lead us in the ways of righteousness, and sin is troubling to God, who has redeemed us by the blood of His Son. God has put His mark on us and He expects us to walk accordingly.

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

These things are like weeds in a beautiful garden. It is so easy to let bitterness toward people or circumstances creep into our life. Bitterness will sour our whole experience. Wrath is extreme anger. If troubled in this way, we should diligently seek the help of the Lord to control it. To clamour is to make noisy demands or complaints. Malice is a desire to do harm to others. God wants to see us put all these things away from us and is willing to help us.

"And be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you" (Ephesians 4:32).

This is a requirement for unity, and something we should give a lot of thought to and prayer about. Let us always be kind to our brothers and sisters in the Lord. We must never let our hearts become hardened or unforgiving to one another. We must always remember that through our Lord Jesus Christ God has forgiven us and we should be forgiving to one another.

Chapter 5

"Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children;" (Ephesians 5:1).

Children are followers. They imitate their parents in all that they do. May we follow our heavenly Father in all that we do.

"And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savour" (Ephesians 5:2).

John says in his epistle that God is love. Christ so loved us that He gave Himself as a sin offering for us. The exhortation to us is that we follow as children the example of love that is set before us. Our love should be extended to the members of Christ's body. Christ's sacrifice smelled sweet in the nostrils of God. Our walk should have the same sweet smell.

"But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints;" (Ephesians 5:3).

Sexual immorality should never be found among Christians. That includes extramarital sex and premarital sex. God's people should not harbour in their lives any form of impurity. "Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate (excessive or immoderate) affection, evil concupiscence (a strong sexual desire or lust), and covetousness, which is idolatry" (Colossians 3:5). Christians should have a good testimony in the earth. A Christian's walk should be a becoming testimony of their relationship to their heavenly Father.

"Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks" (Ephesians 5:4).

Obscenity doesn't belong in the Christians vocabulary. Do not engage in foolish talk, or in telling off colour jokes. These things are out of place in the lives of God's people. It is far better to engage in thankfulness.

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

People who practice these things will have no inheritance in God's kingdom. "Whoremonger" is another word for a prostitute or one who sells sex. When Paul speaks of the unclean person he is not talking about the person who gets dirty at his work, but the person whose thoughts and actions are unclean. A covetous man is described as an idolater. He is a person who worships material things to the extent that he desires to own other people’s property. This type of person has missed their inheritance in Christ's kingdom.

"Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience. Be not ye therefore partakers with them" (Ephesians 5:6,7).

Don't let anybody by deception cause you to enter into any of these impure and unholy things. His words are useless as far as the kingdom is concerned. Those who are disobedient in these matters will be judged by God. Never be a partaker of these things along with evil men. How thankful I am that we can repent and receive forgiveness for our evil walk through Jesus Christ.

"For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light:" (Ephesians 5:8).

Many of us can remember the days when we walked in the evil ways of the world. We were in spiritual darkness. God has caused His light to shine upon us and Jesus said, "Ye are the light of the world." Christians have a responsibility to let that light shine and that it not be clouded over by evil.

"(For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth) Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord" (Ephesians 5:9,10).

This light produces the fruit of the Spirit. The fruit of the Spirit is found in goodness and righteousness and truth. This fruit is acceptable to the Lord. See Galatians 5:22-23.

"And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them" (Ephesians 5:11).

Rather than having fellowship with evil, John exhorts us to have fellowship with the apostles, with our heavenly Father and with His Son Jesus: "That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ" (I John 1:3). Our reaction to evil should be to reprove it. Never have fellowship in that which is evil and wrong.

"For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret" (Ephesians 5:12).

Don't talk about the evil that disobedient men practice in their secret lives. Those things are evil and shameful, and it is shameful even to talk about them.

"But all things that are reproved are made manifest by the light: for whatsoever doth make manifest is light" (Ephesians 5:13).

The light of God shines upon evil and makes it very apparent to our eyes in order that we might avoid it. We really have no excuse for partaking of the evil ways mentioned here.

"Wherefore he saith, Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light" (Ephesians 5:14).

People who are spiritually asleep may not be conscious of the evil that surrounds them. They are exhorted to awaken, and Christ will cause His light to shine so they can see and understand good and evil.

"See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, Redeeming the time, because the days are evil" (Ephesians 5:15,16).

We are instructed to walk with caution and discretion. Fools avoid caution, but wise people always are discrete in their ways. We must make the best use of our time in these evil days.

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

We have the instruction of the apostle James in James 1:5, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him." In this passage of Paul's writing, God has been teaching us what His ways are. Don't walk in the ways of the unwise. We have been well instructed here what the will of the Lord is concerning the worldly way of life.

"And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;" (Ephesians 5:18).

Drunkenness is the result of the excessive use of alcohol. Rather than using alcohol, seek to be filled with the Spirit of God. The Phillips translation puts Ephesians 5:18 this way: "Don't get your stimulus from wine for there is always the danger of excessive drinking, but let the Spirit stimulate your souls." Wonderful advice!

"Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord;" (Ephesians 5:19).

If we are stimulated and filled by the Spirit of God we will find ourselves singing in our hearts to the Lord. "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost" (Romans 15:13). The fruit of the Spirit is love "joy" and peace.

"Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ;" (Ephesians 5:20).

The scriptures teach us to always be thankful in all circumstances. "Sing unto the LORD with thanksgiving; sing praise upon the harp unto our God:" (Psalms 147:7).

"Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God" (Ephesians 5:21).

Unity in the body of Christ is very important to God. We must submit ourselves to one another. If our brother or sister prophecies in the meeting, we should submit ourselves to what God has said. If someone wants to minister to us in a material way, we shouldn't feel so independent that we will not accept help. We must respect the ministry of other people. That is showing reverence to God because it is Him that has given the ministry.

"Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord" (Ephesians 5:22).

For the home to operate properly, this is a necessity. No government can have two heads and neither can the government of the home have two heads. God has planned things this way, and I am sure that we cannot improve on His plan or the order that He has established. A woman must first of all submit her life to the Lord, and then in the same way submit to her husband's leadership.

"For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body" (Ephesians 5:23).

A man has been given by God the place of headship and responsibility over his wife. His relationship to his wife is similar to the headship of Christ over the church. Christ gave His life and shed His blood to be the Saviour of the church.

"Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything" (Ephesians 5:24).

We all believe the church should be subject to and in submission to Christ. I am sure that all sincere Christians pray daily to be led by the Spirit of God according to the mind of Christ. For a home to work properly wives must be in submission to their husbands in the same way as the church is to Christ. Notice that Paul says "their own husbands."

"Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;" (Ephesians 5:25).

This isn't a one sided situation, where the wife has the responsibility of submitting, and the man is just the boss. A man is to love his wife as Christ loved the church. Christ gave His life for the church, and a good husband and father will give his life for his wife and family. He probably won't be called upon to die for them, but he should give himself in caring and providing for them.

"That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word," (Ephesians 5:26).

Christ's desire for the church is that it would be cleansed. The word of God has a washing and cleansing effect. "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto according to thy word" (Psalms 119:9). We must allow Him to speak to us and cleanse us through the word of God. Taking heed to the word will set us apart or sanctify us for the Lord.

"That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish" (Ephesians 5:27).

Christ's desire is that His bride should be perfect. We pray that as members or parts of that bride we will be a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing. "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready. And to her was

granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints" (Revelation 19:7-8).

A man's desire for his wife should be the same as Christ's for the church. Her spiritual walk is part of the husband's responsibility for her.

"So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself" (Ephesians 5:28).

In most cases, if a man loves His wife and cares for her properly, in both material and spiritual things, she will have no trouble being in submission to him. There has to be in him qualities of character and spirituality so she has something to submit to. Some men are lovers of themselves only. The instruction is to recognize the wife as a part of his own body and love her accordingly.

"For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church:" (Ephesians 5:29).

Did you ever see anyone in his right mind purposely damage or destroy his own body? That desire for preservation of his own body should extend to and take in his wife. We have an example to follow in the Lords care for the church.

"For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones" (Ephesians 5:30).

The reason the Lord cares for us as He does is because we have become joined to Him. We are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. Paul is still talking of the marriage relationship and using the Lord and the church as an example for man and wife.

"For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh" (Ephesians 5:31).

This is a great necessity for a happy marriage. Some men remain tied to their mother's apron strings all their lives. In marriage there is a joining together of the bride and groom, and the severance of the old relationship of childhood to father and mother. That doesn't mean that a man will disrespect his parents, but that he will honour them. A man and his wife cannot become one if he still maintains the relationship of childhood with his parents. There is not room for more than two people in a marriage. Through the marriage relationship a couple become one and are recognized as one by God. We may see two people, but God only sees one.

"This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church" (Ephesians 5:32).

Paul says that the marriage relationship and two people becoming one is a mystery. We don't understand how we can see two people, but God says they are one and recognizes them as one. He is using this unity in marriage as an illustration of the unity between Christ and the church.

"Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband" (Ephesians 5:33).

Paul has been writing concerning Christ and the church. The same unity should be in marriage. A Man should love his wife as much as he loves himself, or even as Christ loves the church. A wife is instructed to reverence her husband in the same way as the church reverences Christ. What a glorious unity God has planned for the church and for married couples.

Chapter 6

"Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right" (Ephesians 6:1).

Paul instructs the whole family in their relationships. Wives submit to their husbands, husbands are to love their wives and children are to obey their parents. He says that the obedience of children is right. In a day when the line between right and wrong is so blurred, it is doubly important that children obey their parents. In most cases, obedience will keep the children out of that which is wrong and will save them from a lot of grief. It is also important that parents see that children do obey.

"Honour thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise; that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth" (Ephesians 6:2,3).

This instruction was part of the Ten Commandments God gave to Moses, "Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee" (Exodus 20:12). One way to honour parents is by obedience. It is important that children hold their parents and their instruction in high esteem.

This commandment contained a promise; in fact two promises. Firstly, that it may be well with thee, in other words, that your life might be filled in all details with the blessing of God. Disobedience removes God's blessing. Secondly, if we obey our parents, we will have a long life.

God's promise to Israel when they came out of Egypt was, "...I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live: That thou mayest love the LORD thy God, and that thou mayest obey his voice, and that thou mayest cleave unto him: for he is thy life, and the length of thy days: that thou mayest dwell in the land which the LORD sware unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them" (Deuteronomy 30:19-20). The same promise applies to us today.

"And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:4).

This scripture is translated in a variety of ways. The Living Bible says, "Don't keep scolding and nagging your children, making them angry and resentful." Phillips says, "Fathers, don't overcorrect your children or make it difficult for them to obey the commandment." The NIV puts it this way: "Fathers do not exasperate

your children; instead bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord." Some parents will scold and nag their children, making the direst threats if they do not obey. Then, when they are disobedient, they will do nothing about it. Most times, in cases of correction, the fewer the words the better. Then the words should be backed up by action.

"Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ;" (Ephesians 6:5).

In the next few verses, Paul deals with the whole labour relations situation. His instruction is of a spiritual nature and is for employees and employers. Observance of these things by both sides would settle all labour problems. Our King James translation uses the word servants, but other translators address them as slaves. Their masters were masters of their flesh. Their spirit was free to enter into spiritual realms. They were to be obedient to their fleshly masters in the same way they would to Christ. They should carry a sense of responsibility and respect for them. In our present day, all employees should carry the same attitude toward their employers.

"Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart;" (Ephesians 6:6).

The employee shouldn't obey just to be seen when their boss is looking but be obedient at all times like they were working for Christ who is always watching. That is the will of God and performance should be from the heart when at work.

"With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men:" (Ephesians 6:7).

Service should be willing, just like a spiritual man serving the Lord. Don't think of your work as service to men, but think of it as service to God.

"Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free" (Ephesians 6:8).

The Lord will treat us in exactly the same way as we treat our employer. The good we do will be rewarded of the Lord. A good attitude toward our employer and our work will result in rewards both natural and Spiritual.

"And, ye masters, do the same things unto them, forbearing threatening: knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with him" (Ephesians 6:9).

Paul here is speaking to slave owners. The same message is fitting for the employers of our day. The employers should treat their employees with the same respect that they look for from them. Employers should always remember that they have an employer in heaven, and He doesn't respect one person above another.

"Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might" (Ephesians 6:10).

To sum up his letter, Paul exhorts the Ephesians to strong in the Lord, not in themselves. Likewise, we must make use of the power that comes from Him. Our strength lies in God, and He will make it available to us.

"Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil" (Ephesians 6:11).

God provides armour for us for the battle we have against the devil. The devil is very tricky and has many schemes to deceive and entrap us. By putting on the armour God supplies, and Paul describes, we can stand against all that will come against us.

"For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places" (Ephesians 6:12).

We may be able to win in a wrestling match in the natural, but the battle we are engaged in are against spiritual wickedness in heavenly places, not natural physical powers. It being spiritual wickedness makes it a lot harder to contend with, and our natural abilities are no match for it. There is a mighty army arrayed against us. All the evil powers of the unseen dark world are employed of Satan against us.

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

The advice to us is to make use of all the armour God has provided for us. That is our only defence in the warfare in which we are engaged. Only with His help will we be able to stand our ground, and having fought to the end, remain victors on the field.

"Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness;" (Ephesians 6:14).

The word "girt" refers to the belt they wore around their waist. We must always surround ourselves with truth. Jesus said He was the way and the Truth. "But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof" (Romans 13:14). Righteousness speaks of that which is right. One of the most vulnerable parts of our body is the breast where the heart is located. Keep it covered with righteousness. "For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: These are the things which defile a man" (Matthew 15:19).

"And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;" (Ephesians 6:15).

Wherever you walk, sow peace. Some people have the ability to sow strife wherever they go, but we must sow peace. Let your spiritual footwear speed you on to bring the gospel of peace to those who walk in turmoil.

"Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked" (Ephesians 6:16).

Faith is one of the most effective parts of our armament. Our faith in the Lord will turn away the most bitter attacks of the enemy. Satan's arrows are fiery, and not only do they wound, but also they will burn. Faith will extinguish them.

Here is a poem about faith:

"Spring up thou faith within my heart,
All doubt and fear erase;
Let now my confidence be strong
In Thy eternal grace.

The debt is paid, the deed is done,
The blood was shed for me;
Death need no longer conquer,
Since His death upon the tree.

On every little flame of hope
Blow strong, Oh breath of God,
Till expectancy is kindled bright,
Where once despair has trod.

And when the enemy surrounds,
And faith begins to flee,
Then open Thou my eyes, oh Lord,
Thy chariots to see.

Spring up oh faith within my heart,
Oh confidence be strong;
Rest soul in His redeeming grace,
Deliverance, be my song."

Edith H.

"And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: (Ephesians 6:17).

The helmet covers the head; in other words, our thinking. It is called the helmet of salvation. Salvation changes the way people think. "And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God" (Romans 12:2).

The word of God is the sword of the Spirit. When Jesus contended with Satan in the wilderness after His water baptism, it was the word of God that He used to defeat the temptation (Luke 4:1-13). "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto according to thy word" (Psalms 119:9). "For the word of God is quick (alive), and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the

dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart" (Hebrews 4:12).

"Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;" (Ephesians 6:18).

Prayer is the Christians resource of strength. Paul emphasizes the importance of praying in the Spirit. "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God" (Romans 8:26-27). Paul said in I Corinthians 14:15, "What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also." It is important to persevere in prayer and to make supplication for all of God's people. Sometimes we have a tendency to just pray about our own needs.

"And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel," (Ephesians 6:19).

Paul requests prayer for himself also, that he might be able to boldly speak the message of the revelation that God had given. The same request goes out from the apostolic ministries of our day. Without the anointing the message is dead.

"For which I am an ambassador in bonds: that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak" (Ephesians 6:20).

Because of the message God had given him, Paul was in prison when he wrote this letter. He was an ambassador, or one who was sent to perform a specific task. He didn't want his imprisonment to impede the message. He needed the support of the Ephesian church and all saints in his ministry. That was true in his day and is still true today.

"But that ye also may know my affairs, and how I do, Tychicus, a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, shall make known to you all things: Whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose, that ye might know our affairs, and that he might comfort your hearts" (Ephesians 6:21,22).

In ending his letter, Paul tells them that he is sending Tychicus to them to tell them how he is faring while in prison. They were apparently very concerned about him, and Paul wanted Tychicus to bring them a message of comfort and encouragement.

"Peace be to the brethren, and love with faith, from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ" (Ephesians 6:23).

Being in the situation he was in, Paul could have ministered strife and contention. He prayed that his brethren would know peace. He wanted them to experience the love of God manifested in Christ.

"Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen" (Ephesians 6:24).

Grace speaks of the love and mercy of God. Paul had been troubled with insincere Christians. His blessing was to all who sincerely loved the Lord.

THE LIGHT OF EXAMPLE

The Apostle Paul wrote the following to Timothy, in his day, and the same thing applies today, only in a much greater way. He said, "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come" (II Timothy 3:1). We live in perilous times in the natural realm. All men would have to do is press a button and they could destroy practically everything on the earth. When you drive your car out on to the street, you never know whether you will drive it back again or not.

Paul wasn't speaking of this realm of peril though. He was talking of the peril that exists in the realm of the Spirit. In II Timothy 3:2-8, Paul describes the attitudes and works of the man controlled by the spirit of this age: "For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy...." Because these things are all around us and, because they are not just elements of a natural realm, we must walk very close to God, depending very much on His anointing to lead and direct our path. None of us can cope with the unseen ruler of this age ourselves.

We even have a lot of difficulty with the help of God because of our lack of ability to yield to the leading of His Spirit.

In the epistle to the Ephesians we read about our state before we received Christ as our Saviour: "To you, who were Spiritually dead all the time that you drifted along on the stream of this world's ideas of living, and obeyed its unseen ruler (who is still operating in those who do not respond to the truth of God) to you Christ has given life! We all lived like that in the past, and followed the impulses and imaginations of our evil nature, being in fact under the wrath of God by nature, like everyone else" (Ephesians 2:1-3 Phillips).It is necessary for us to walk carefully or we will find ourselves back in our old state, drifting along on this worlds ideas of living and obeying its unseen ruler.

We are told in Romans 12 not to let the world around us squeeze us into its mould, but to let God remould our minds from within, so that you may prove in practice that the plan of God for you is good, meets all His demands and moves toward the goal of true maturity.

From these scriptures, we can see where the realm of peril lies. "Be strong, not in yourselves but in the Lord, in the power of His boundless resource. Put on God's complete armour so that you can successfully resist all the devils methods of attack our fight is not against any physical enemy: it is against organizations and powers that are spiritual. We are up against the unseen power that controls this dark world, and spiritual agents from the very headquarters of evil" (Ephesians 6:10-12 Phillips).

Many people have expressed their concern for their children in this age. In the heavily populated areas, vice has become so prevalent in the schools that you can't blame them for being greatly concerned. I don't know whether it makes much difference where you live; the same spirit prevails everywhere. The only answer to this problem is to have a very strong home where the anointing of God rests-a home where the life and walk of mother and dad is an example for the children to follow.

Quoting, again, from Phillips' translation of Paul to the Ephesians 4:17-18: "This is my instruction, then, which I give you from God. Do not live any longer as the Gentiles live...." Paul's epistle to the Ephesians has been about God's great accomplishment in making one body in Jesus Christ from both Jew and Gentile. This made it so they were neither Jew, nor Gentile, but a part of the household of Faith, or a member of Spiritual Israel. So he instructs them not to live as the Gentiles live because they are members of a different nation, a spiritual nation. "...For they live blindfolded in a world of illusion, and are cut off from the life of God through ignorance and insensitiveness." The word "illusion" means, "an appearance and nothing more; a false show; mockery." The ways of this age are an illusion. People think they have something; then, it fades away, mocking them as it disappears. Every day, we see lives wrecked by the illusions of this world. There are homes broken by infidelity; there are lives wrecked by alcohol and drugs; there are people dying with lung cancer because of the use of tobacco; there are people going to jail because of their greed and dishonesty, and many other things, far too numerous to mention. Paul's instruction is not to live this way. We are to live according to the principles of the Kingdom of God, into which God will lead us by His Spirit.

Paul continues, "They have stifled their consciences and then surrendered themselves to sensuality, practicing any form of impurity which lust can suggest. But you have learned nothing like that from Christ, if you have really heard His voice and understood the truth that He taught you. No, what you have learned was to fling off the dirty clothes of the old way of living, which were rotted through and through with lust's illusions, and, with yourselves mentally and spiritually remade, to put on the clean fresh clothes of the new life which was made by God's design for righteousness and the holiness which is no illusion" (Ephesians 4:19-24 Phillips). He says we are mentally and spiritually remade. We think differently than the ordinary person. God is bringing our thoughts to the level of His Kingdom, where they will produce righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. In the realm of the spirit, God is bringing us, by His anointing, to His image and likeness.

Peter tells us, in his epistle, that we are being made partakers of the divine nature. That divine nature is God's nature, and everything that is good and holy belongs to His nature. Love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, temperance, light, wisdom, knowledge, understanding, justice, and so on, are all a part of God's nature. By the anointing, we are being made a partaker of His nature; or, in other words, we are being spiritually remade. By God's grace, we are being changed from the control of the spirit that controls this Dark Age to the control of the Spirit of God.

God's design for righteousness and holiness is no illusion. They are only two of the principles of His Kingdom, which is a kingdom that will never pass away, but will continue to grow and grow as the ages pass. The things of this age may be illusive, but the kingdom of God becomes stronger and steadier every day. Everything, that is a part of His Kingdom, is concrete and dependable. It is a help in our everyday lives

to build strong homes, healthy family relationships, good churches, good businesses, proper relationships between employer and employee, and righteous social order in the earth.

Read carefully the rest of chapter 4 of Ephesians, and we will begin to quote again from Chapter 5. "As children copy their fathers, you, as God's Children, are to copy Him" (Ephesians 5:1 Phillips). We all know how children will copy their parents. Whenever we see a little boy with his father, we don't have to watch them long to see the little fellow doing something just the way dad does it. With all our hearts, let us walk in God's ways: the ways in which the Spirit of God leads us.

Speaking of children copying their parents-as it is children I am most concerned about in writing this article-let us, as parents, give them the proper example and create the right atmosphere in our homes. It is a very perilous time for all of us in the realm of the Spirit, but it is especially so for our children.

If we place the things of God in a place of high esteem in our homes, our children can't help but partake of it. Teach them to respect the office and authority of the elders and traveling ministries, as well as every other ministry of the Body. This lesson can best be taught by having this respect ourselves. Let our conversation along these lines always be of the highest order.

Make your ministry the most important thing in your life, and your children will very likely do the same. I don't mean, and God never intended it this way, that your ministry should cause you to neglect your family or any other responsibility. A true ministry will help a man to meet his responsibilities. If you are conscientious in these ways, you will find, as your children grow up, they will adapt the same attitudes.

Don't be afraid to correct your children. If you see them making mistakes, or showing tendencies to the wrong way, correct them. It is possible to overcorrect, but the situation leans far too much the other way in most cases in our day. A child needs the security that comes with correction. It gives him guidelines for his life. I have said it, and I will say it again, a good spanking administered in the right way will give a child more security than anything else. What better way to show him that mother and dad are concerned and really care? I don't know what it is that God has put in a child's heart, but you will usually find that in a very short time after even the severest correction a child is up on your knee.

Children need to learn how to take correction when they are Young. What is worse than an adult who has never learned to take correction? You find them every once in a while. Because of their attitudes, in this respect, it is almost impossible for them to get along with others. In our walk with God, we always need to be prepared to take correction. God Himself corrects us. Sometimes it is with the gentle urge of the Spirit, and sometimes it will be with severe chastening. We all have to be prepared to take correction from the traveling ministries and the elders. Here is another place where we can be a good example to our children. If they hear and see us rebelling, the spirit of rebellion will be born in their own hearts. If we take correction and act upon it, they will learn to do the same thing.

"Live your lives in love-the same sort of love which Christ gives us and which He perfectly expressed when He gave Himself up for us in sacrifice to God. But as for sexual immorality in all its forms, and the itch to get your hands on what belongs to other people-don't even think about such things; they are no fit subjects for Christians to talk about. The keynote of your conversation should not be nastiness or silliness or

flippancy-which are quite out of place, but a sense of all that we owe to God" (Ephesians 5:2-4 Phillips). Paul gives us a great contrast in these few words. It is a contrast between the security and righteousness of the Kingdom of God, and the peril and immorality of the earth. In our day, Paul's instruction is very valuable. That which is immoral is all that many people can talk about. They have talked about and practiced immorality for so long that they no longer have any sense of good and evil. Don't talk about these things before your children, except to warn them of the evil and danger. If we treat immorality lightly, they will almost be sure to enter into it. Treat it for what it is and they will be greatly helped to turn away from it. True love will not practice that which is immoral; neither will it steal from other people.

There is such a breakdown of the standards of right and wrong in the world today that it puts us all in a very dangerous place, especially our children. We must all ask God continually to help us reassess our position and to guide us in the paths of righteousness rather than to let ourselves be controlled by the spirit of this age.

"For of this much you can be quite certain: that neither the immoral nor the dirty minded nor the covetous man (which latter is, in effect, worshipping a false God) has any inheritance in the Kingdom of Christ and of God. Don't let anyone fool you on this point, however plausible his argument. It is these very things which bring down the wrath of God upon the disobedient" (Ephesians 5:5-6 Phillips).

I have had many people ask me what is wrong with this or that or the other thing. If anything is master over you, it is wrong. The reason for this is that God wants you to learn to rule yourself. If we cannot rule ourselves, we cannot rule in His Kingdom. If say, for instance, a man cannot control his temper and rule himself in this way, he cannot rule in the Kingdom of God. The same is true concerning covetousness, immorality, drunkenness, or any other habit that can bring a person under its control. Men may argue about how outdated and Puritanical your views are, and that you should adopt freedom and the "new morality," but don't listen to them for a minute. All their arguments will do is bring you shame and disappointment now and cause you to miss the Kingdom.

"Have nothing to do with men like that-once you were darkness, but now you are light. Live then as children of Light. The Light produces in men quite the opposite of sins like these-everything that is good and wholesome and true. Let your lives be living proofs of the things that please God. Steer clear of the activities of darkness; let your lives show by contrast how dreary and futile these things are. (You know the sort of things I mean-to detail their secret doings is really too shameful.)" (Ephesians 5:7-12 Phillips).

What a glorious privilege God has given us to be changed from darkness into light. We want the Light to produce in us all the things that are good and holy and belong to God and His Kingdom. People who walk in sin often think that those who walk with God are missing a lot, but, really, the opposite is true. As Paul points out there, the way in which the spirit of this world will lead you is dreary and futile. This way really has no purpose before it, and there is no objective to be gained. What help and strength can a person gain for his everyday life from the spirit of the age that we live in? All it contributes is a breaking down and tearing apart of all that is good and right and holy. Darkness produces more and greater darkness. Don't live in darkness, neither let it be a part of your lives; both for your own sake, and for those who will and are looking to you to see a glimmer of the light that comes from God.

Now let us see what light can do. "For Light is capable of 'showing up' everything for what it really is. It is even possible (after all, it happened to you) for light to turn the thing it shines upon into light also. Thus God speaks through the scriptures: Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall shine upon thee" (Ephesians 5:13-14 Phillips) As Jesus sat on a mountainside one day He said, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father Which is in Heaven" (Matthew 5:16). This is an example of light changing the thing it shines upon into light also. The light of God should shine from us, first of all, in our homes, that those who dwell there may have the benefit of the light. Children will absorb the light from their parents, and follow and walk in their example. The unbelieving husband or wife will partake of the light and that which the light shines upon will be turned into light also.

Because the darkness is becoming greater, and the spirit of darkness seems to be becoming stronger, we need more and more of the Spirit of Light that is from God. Just because we live in a perilous time, there is no need to be shaken or despondent. The victory belongs to those who walk with God and share in His anointing.

I would like to close with the words of Paul in Ephesians 5:15, as translated by Phillips: "Live life, then, with a due sense of responsibility, not as men who do not know the meaning and purpose of life but as THOSE WHO DO."

THE FAMILY ALTER

In this article, I would like to very strongly emphasize the importance of parents teaching their children in spiritual matters in the home. Regardless of what programs are in our churches for teaching children, the main responsibility still rests upon the parents. Teaching programs in the church, if properly conducted by the right ministry, can be a good supplement to home teaching, but will never replace it. The fact has been established that children taught in any subject by their parents are better equipped in that subject.

But this is a day of irresponsibility. There are many who do not want to bear the responsibility of anything. People don't even want to be responsible for their own actions, much less their children. They want the school or the church to teach their children; and, if they don't turn out right, then it is someone else's fault.

In our city, at the present time, we have a big argument going on about "sex education" in our schools. The school is no place for sex education. It should be taught reverently in the home. When I was a boy, my greatest protection in these matters was ignorance. But, in a day when it is almost impossible for a child to be ignorant along these lines, parents must accept the responsibility for their own children, rather than leave the teaching to some ungodly person, who, because of their ungodliness, will present the whole thing in the wrong light.

In a day when pre-marital sex and extra marital relationships are very common and, you might say, accepted by a large portion of our society, we must teach our children the ways of God. Under the Old Testament

law, God instructed His people to stone those who indulged in these acts, and Jesus told the adulterous woman to go and sin no more (John 8:11). If a person walks in these ways, they cannot help but reap what they sow. Sex is for marriage, and God will bless it then. "Marriage is honourable in all and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge" (Hebrews 13:4). We are responsible for our children, not only for themselves, but also for the sake of our own ministry.
The way our ever children act has a direct bearing upon the effectiveness of our own ministry and, in some cases, can even disqualify us for an office in the church. I Timothy 3:4,5 says that an elder must be "One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity (seriousness); (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?)" Our children must take seriously the things of God.

Some will ask how you go about teaching children. I will try to outline some things the scriptures tell us and also some things that have worked in my own family and in families of others.

The time to start is immediately after a couple is married. A man should not delay in setting up a family altar. He is the head of the home. He is the priest of the household and, as such, is responsible for the spiritual welfare of his wife and children.

There are statistics that tell us that at the present time, nationally, one out of three marriages end in divorce. Among couples that have or have had a family altar, the divorce rate is less than one in a thousand. This speaks very strongly in favour of a strong spiritual atmosphere in the home.

I heard in a recent documentary that in a large survey among young people, the delinquency and drug-user rates were much lower in families who believed in strong church ties. Let us diligently pray that parents will get right with God and will also teach their children in these ways.

Hear what God told Israel concerning teaching their children as they were about to enter the land of Promise: "And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates" (Deuteronomy 6:6-9).

These words about binding God's words upon their hands and having them between their eyes mean more to us than the mere wearing of phylacteries. To have God's word bound upon our hands is to DO that which is pleasing to God in the sight of our children. You can make a similar application concerning the frontlets between their eyes. Please read Deuteronomy 6 in its entirety.

Concerning the things which we as parents do, I would like to quote Numbers 14:18. "The Lord is longsuffering, and of great mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression, and by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation." What do we want our children to inherit from us? Do we want them to inherit our rebelliousness toward God? And they will if we live that way. Or, do we want them to inherit a love for God and His righteousness? The only way the

trend of heredity in this matter can be broken is through the blood of Christ. If a person's parents were ungodly, that inheritance can be annulled at the cross.
Let us read Deuteronomy 4, now. "Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life: but teach them to thy sons, and thy sons' sons. Specially the day that thou stoodest before the Lord thy God in Horeb, when the Lord said unto me, Gather me the people together, and I will make them hear my words, that they may learn to fear me all the days that the live upon the earth, and that they may teach their children" (Deuteronomy 4:9-10). Israel was to teach their children all the things they had seen God do in their deliverance from Egypt, their forty years in the wilderness, and their preparation to enter the land of Canaan.

Turning to the New Testament, we are again instructed to teach our young. Titus 2:4-5 tells mothers what to teach their daughters: "That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed." In Titus 2:6-8, we are told what parents should teach their sons: "Young men likewise exhort to be sober minded. In all things showing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine showing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, Sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you." How much happier families would be if these things were taught and upheld in every home?

Not only should children be taught in conversation around the table, while the family is at work or entertaining themselves, but there should be a special time set aside every day for the Word of God and prayer.

I'm not trying to establish a law, but the best time for this is in the morning. I will explain why. Not long ago a brother told me that it was almost impossible to get his family together in the evening. And I found this true with our own family when they became teenagers. One would have some activity that they had to go to at school, another had a part time job in the evenings, and another had to baby-sit for the neighbour. As soon as the evening meal was over, they would all be gone and there would be no opportunity to have family altar.

To have it in the morning may mean getting up a little earlier (and I can hear all the teenagers groan), but that way you will be able to fit it better into your day. If you start this when your children are small; or, better still, before you have any children; when they are older, they will have grown up to expect to have family altar in the morning.
This is a very good time to teach your children the things of the Word of God. You will have to adapt your time together as a family to your families' needs and ages, and of course to the ministries of the parents.

In our family, immediately after breakfast, we always have read a portion of scripture and talked about anything in it that the Spirit of God seemed to impress upon us. The Children were always free to ask questions. Then we would kneel and spend a time in prayer. Each morning, one member of the family would lead in prayer. When they were still so young they needed help to pray, they had their turn. In this way, each child gained the confidence that his prayer was important for the welfare of the family for that day. There are no "child's prayers" and "mother's and dad's prayers." There were just prayers. A four-year-

old's prayer was as important as anyone else's and carried as much weight in the courts of heaven. A child must have a sense of the important place he fills in the spiritual welfare of the family.

I would that all men everywhere could teach their children the ways of the Lord; especially those to whom God is revealing Himself in these days. We have a responsibility given us of the Lord; let us fulfill it. Let the ways of the Lord be written upon our children's hearts, beginning at a very early age and continuing as they are in our homes.

"The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and His righteousness unto children's children. To such as keep His covenant, and to those that remember His commandments to do them" (Psalms 103:17,18).

FASTING AND PRAYER

It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and all the brethren to call the church to a special time of prayer and fasting from March 29 to April 4, 1992. There is a great need in the church at the present time. Some have great spiritual need and are having difficulty in their walk with God. Some are having trouble to walk in the revelation that has come from God by the Holy Spirit. Some have physical needs and all of our hearts cry out to our heavenly Father on their behalf. We all need a greater anointing of the Holy Spirit that we might walk wisely in this present evil world. This call to fasting and prayer has gone out to the church throughout the earth.

The church, the body of Christ, is being formed in the earth, and the hearts of the members of that body cry out, along with the rest of creation, for the manifestation of the sons of God, and the deliverance of every created thing from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the children of God. Let us pray for the groaning creation, ourselves included.

The members of that body are being set in their place through the laying on of hands and prophecy. Every member needs a mighty anointing of the Spirit of God in order for the church to be able to accomplish God's purpose in the earth. The apostle Paul described this purpose in Philippians 2:10-11, "That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus
Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." Men and women need to accept Christ as their Saviour; they need to be filled with the Holy Ghost; they need to find their place in the body of Christ; they need gifts of the Spirit, and we all need a burden on our hearts to see the work of God accomplished. We must all help to carry this load before the Lord. In the meantime let us all prepare our hearts for this week of fasting and prayer, and then, let us as one man wait upon the Lord. If you are unable to fast because of age or sickness, be wise in what you do. Your prayers alone will avail much, and God understands your situation.

The fullness of the kingdom is before us. As we prepare to enter this new dispensation we need divine guidance and wisdom. There are many voices calling people to follow them.

Let the church especially pray for the apostolic ministries, and the elders and the deacons of the local churches that they might give guidance and leadership to the people after the council of the Lord. Pray for the people that they will have confidence in the leadership God has established that all may walk together as one in Him. It is the Spirit of God that has joined us together. There is no other tie, because no other could make us one. We continually need a mighty infusion of His anointing to maintain this unity. Let us depend on Him rather than on human program or effort. Pray and seek God for a spirit yielded to Him rather than seeking a program consisting of our own works. Pray that God will meet us and cause His resurrection life to flow.

There are many examples of fasting given in the scriptures. Moses fasted for forty days on Mount Sinai. Israel was preparing to enter the Promised Land, and God was very anxious that they should continue to be a separate people. It was of utmost importance to God that His people would not worship the gods of the inhabitants of the land they were inheriting, nor did He want them to intermarry with them. God gave this message to Moses during the time of his fast. Moses was also given the pattern for the tabernacle at this time. These things bring to mind some of the things God wishes to impress on us during our time of fasting and prayer.

We are at the threshold of the entrance into the kingdom of God, and God is calling a holy and separated people. He doesn't want us married to the corrupt age in which we live, but He wants us joined to Him walking in righteousness and holiness. God is building a temple of living stones and is giving the church the pattern for that structure. May we pray that we build according to the pattern He has given. "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? Or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? For ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.

Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God" (II Corinthians 6:14-7:1).

After Jesus had been baptized by John in the river Jordan, He was led of the Spirit into the wilderness where He fasted. I am sure this time of fasting was the fortification He needed when the tempter came to him, tempting Him in every way common to man. The apostle John writes of these temptations that Jesus had and which we all have; "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. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever" (I John 2:15).

I suppose that all temptation could be placed in the three categories that John mentions: lusts of the flesh, lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. When Jesus was hungry, He was tempted to turn the stones into bread to satisfy the desire of His flesh. He was tempted to jump from the pinnacle of the temple and have the

angels catch Him to satisfy His pride. We do a lot of things to satisfy our pride, and expect God to bless it and get us out of the trouble we get ourselves into.

Many of the temptations we have come through the eye. Jesus was shown and promised all the kingdoms of the world if He would worship Satan. His eye could have lusted after these kingdoms, as our eye desires many of the illegitimate things that we see.

Jesus had the spiritual strength to reject Satan and his temptations. His time of fasting had contributed to this. His flesh was weak, but His Spirit was strong. The denying of our flesh will bring great strength to our spirit.

As you fast, open your heart to the Lord and allow His Spirit to move upon you. It will probably be a time of physical discomfort, but time spent in fasting and prayer will build up the inner man. Seek God concerning your own spiritual needs, the need of the church and the need of the whole earth. Allow God to move upon you, that your ministry in the body of Christ will be strengthened and be made better able to function as His Spirit moves upon you. You will probably find that the benefit of your time of fasting and prayer will become more apparent after the fast is over. Don't allow yourself to become discouraged during your fast.

There are some practical measures we should observe when we are fasting. It is necessary to drink lots of warm water to keep our bodies functioning. You will probably feel cold, so a sweater will add to your comfort. When you break your fast, it should take you as long to get back to normal eating as the length of time you fasted. Begin to break your fast by taking a little fruit juice, then gradually go on to very light foods, and then cautiously proceed to your normal diet.
May God bless you as we all wait together before Him.

FEED MY FLOCK

There is something that has been on my heart for some time that I would like to bring to the attention of all parents and elders. There are many children growing up in our churches and, here and there, new people are being added. Those of us, who have been in the Move of the Spirit, since the beginning, sometimes forget that these whom I have mentioned have not had the privilege of receiving the glorious flow of revelation as it has been given by the Lord, a little at a time, over the last eighteen years.

Some will say that, if we teach all these things, we will be going back. Some will say that we will be partaking of milk when we should be partaking of meat. When the writer of Hebrews said: "[Ye] are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat" (Hebrews 5:12), he was writing of an altogether different circumstance. These people should have been able to partake of strong meat, but because they never had their senses exercised to discern both good and evil, this was impossible. They had failed to grow up in the Spirit, or reach any degree of maturity.

What I wish to write about is the need of those in our midst who have never had the opportunity to receive all the revelation as we have had. I am not advocating what we did years ago. We would teach the same thing, week after week, and year after year, and never give God an opportunity to give us any further revelation. People who are children in the Spirit seemed to enjoy that kind of thing. They put me in mind of my children when they were small and I would bounce them on my knee. It didn't matter how many times I did it, they would always say, "Daddy, do it again." A child is entertained by repetition, but an adult soon tires of it and longs to go on to something else. What God desires, and what we wish to do, is to give our children and assemblies a balanced Spiritual diet.

It is the longing of our heart that everyone may grow up to full maturity in Him, fully equipped by the anointing to minister in His Body as would please Him. This is a day of restitution that we have entered into, and our hearts cry out for the time when all the earth and every inhabitant thereof shall be restored to find his head in Christ. In view of this, we must prepare our own hearts, as well as doing our part in preparing those over whom God has given us charge.

Over the last couple of years, God has been telling us that He intends to bring new people into our midst. If He does this, and He has been in a measure, we have to know how to care for the new ones. Yes, and how much greater our responsibility will be when God begins to draw all the earth unto Himself.

Sometimes I think we are like a mother, who prepares a delicious meal for her husband and older children, but forgets to give the baby its bottle. A baby, when it is small, cannot live on meat, but requires milk. If it is fed nothing but milk after it is a few months old, it will become unhealthy and finally die. Likewise, a man cannot live on a diet of milk, but a little milk in his diet is a good thing. May it be that the Lord will always help us by His Spirit to feed His lambs and His sheep according to the requirements of their inner man.

One thing that God has always emphasized in the Move of the Spirit is balance. You know what happens when one of your automobile wheels is out of balance. As you travel along the road, your whole car will vibrate; and, if it is not corrected, serious trouble will eventually develop. Exactly the same thing applies in our Spiritual walk. If we get out of balance, we must correct it, or we will not be able to walk, as He would desire us to. God has a balance for the feeding of His flock, and it is very, very important to Him, and also to us, as members of the Body of Christ. God has built into the human body a sense of balance. This is something that is developed as a child grows. As a Spiritual Body, may we develop a true sense of balance operated by the Spirit of God.

In view of this, I would like to mention a few things about leading His people, especially those who are young or new in the Move of the Spirit. In doing this, I will mention some of those things which the writer of Hebrews refers to as "the principles of the doctrines of Christ," or the "Foundation." That these things are the foundation and beginning of our experience, we must emphasize and always remember.

The first thing he mentions is "repentance from dead works." What is repentance? It is simply a change to the opposite direction. And what is dead works? They are works that bring absolutely no profit to God or yourself, or anyone else. In fact, in actual practice, they bring a lot of harm to yourself and everyone else concerned.

In Matthew 7:13,14, Jesus describes two ways: "Enter ye in at the straight gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." The first way, which leads to destruction, is the way every unrepentant man is going. Repentance brings about a change of direction, and he who repents enters in at the straight gate.

What brings about repentance? True repentance is always caused by the moving of the Spirit of God upon an individual, and nothing else. God, by His Spirit, makes a man see and feel his need of a change in his life and experience. Most often, there is a great struggle in this process. In the natural, every birth is accompanied by travail; the same is true in the Spirit. Many of you who read this have gone on from one level of experience to another, many times, and every step required another measure of repentance, so you will know exactly what I am talking about.

Attending our meetings are people and children, who have never experienced that first measure of repentance; and it is they, who I am anxious to see parents and elders minister to. As I have pointed out, repentance is preceded by conviction, and without the Spirit of God drawing, it is impossible for a man to feel his need of repentance.

How is this first measure of repentance enacted? To answer this, I will refer to the story of Paul, Silas and the keeper of the prison in Philippi. He came trembling to Paul and Silas, saying: "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" They said: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved and thy house" (Acts 16:31).

The only one who can bring about repentance and cleansing in a person’s life is Christ; and, by believing that He gave Himself as a sacrifice for you on the cross at Calvary, the ability to repent will come to you. You will have begun your way to the experience of which Paul writes in II Corinthians 5:17. "Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold all things are become new."

Paul spoke to the Jews and to the Gentiles "that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance" (Acts 26:20). Really, if there is no change in works, there has been no true repentance. Many times, we have seen people make a claim of believing and repenting, but the works or actions of repentance did not accompany the experience. Many things could have happened. First, they may have done what they did because of the persuasion of man and not the Spirit of God; or it may have been for one of the reasons Jesus outlined in the parable of the Sower and the Seed.

Make sure that, by the Spirit of God, you lead those whom God has put in your charge to know Christ and the way of repentance. Availing ourselves of His sacrifice is the one and only way anyone can begin to enter into the realm of the Spirit. Do not assume that, because you attend the meetings and your children attend with you, they will just somehow kind of grow into an experience with God. Do your part to teach them the way of salvation, and look to God that His Spirit will deal with them and draw them to Himself. Do not leave these things to chance.

The next principle or foundation spoken of here is faith toward God. Here is something we all stand in need of, especially those whose acquaintance with God is limited.

I suppose faith toward God is one of the most misunderstood things of which I know. Many people think of faith as a medium of exchange by which they can obtain things from God. If you had all the faith in heaven and earth, it would not necessarily mean you would obtain that which you desired.

Faith is simply confidence in God, confidence that He, who made all things in His creation, including us, knows what He is doing. It is such confidence that, regardless of what the natural circumstance may be, you abide in rest and peace in Him.

In our family worship, a week or so ago, we were reading the story of Saul's pursuit of David in the wilderness. Twice David could have killed Saul, but both times he refused to lift his hand against God's anointed. Rather than deal with the situation as he was able, he felt that he should let God deal with Saul, saying, "As the Lord liveth, the Lord shall smite him; or his day shall come to die; or he shall descend into battle, and perish. The Lord forbid that I should stretch forth mine hand against the Lord's anointed" (I Samuel 26:10-11). This was confidence in God, or faith toward God.

A few days after this, we were visiting in a home in one of the churches, and the sister told us of an experience she had when she was a girl in high school. She had never had trouble with any of the teachers all through school, but she just couldn't get along with the one she had this particular year. Her nature being as it is, this had a great effect on her, even to the extent that she became so sick, she couldn't go to school. She and her mother decided to take the matter to God; so, they prayed asking God to allow one of three things. First, that our sister would be moved to a different room in the school; second, that they would somehow learn to get along; and third, that God would remove the teacher. In about a week's time, the teacher became ill and never returned during that year; as far as school was concerned our sister's troubles were over.

Too often, we try to deal with situations of this nature ourselves. How much better to commit our whole way unto Him, having confidence that He knows all about it and will direct circumstances and events for our ultimate good. This is faith.

Our confidence in God is greatly affected by our walk. Let us read I John 3:16-21. "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because He laid down His life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and truth. And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before Him. For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things. Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God."

Different elders have told me of people who weren't walking right, and the immediate affect was that they ceased to minister. Their Confidence in God was shaken because of their walk; hence, the ability to minister left them. One of our greatest needs today, when everything around us is shaking, is faith or confidence

toward God. Let us walk so this confidence may be maintained, and let us teach faith by word and example until all men shall be able to say, "Not my will but Thine be done."

May I exhort, also, teaching concerning the doctrine of baptisms. God has given us some very good teaching along this line, and, also, a wonderful experience. As we teach the people about the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, a hunger will come to them for the experience. I remember in my own life that, as long as I didn't know there was such an experience, I had no longing for it; but, as soon as I learned of it and it was held out before me, I desired with all my heart to enter into it.

In the record of Paul's visit to Ephesus, we are told that he found disciples there and asked them if they had received the Holy Ghost since they believed. They hadn't even heard that there was a Holy Ghost. Paul taught them of the experience, and, when he had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied. If we teach these things, God will honour us by placing the desire to receive in people's hearts; and, not only that, He will also cause them to enter into it. The laying on of hands is used by God in many ways. As I have mentioned, the baptism of the Holy Spirit is received by the laying on of hands. Healing is received by the laying on of hands. Blessings are imparted by the laying on of hands, and Spiritual Gifts are received by the laying on of hands.

It must be pointed out and made very clear that the laying on of hands is not to be done promiscuously. Not everyone has the authority to lay hands on everybody else. Elders lay hands on the sick when they pray for their healing. If an elder is not present, a father may lay his hands on his wife or a child, when they are sick, and pray for their healing; or he may lay hands on them with the elders, when they are praying. A mother may lay hands on a sick child when the father is absent.

Concerning the impartation of blessings, this is done by the father laying his hands on his children. This is something we seldom ever hear of, but, as we read the scriptures, we see that God honours the blessing of the father upon his children. He so honours it that, when Isaac blessed Jacob instead of Esau, it was impossible to change it. It was so important that, when Jacob blessed the sons of Joseph, he crossed his hands, so the right blessing would rest upon the right boy. This God led him to do because he was blind.

A father should not lay his hands upon his children without much thought and waiting on God, neither should he bless their waywardness. The blessing of a father is something to be greatly coveted and sought after.

The laying on of hands for the receiving of Spiritual Gifts is one of the great blessings of the Move of the Spirit. For years before, we had sought after Spiritual Gifts, but saw very little evidence of them. I suppose this was mainly because we didn't know how to receive or operate them.

It is a presbytery of apostles and prophets who lay on hands for the receiving of gifts of the Spirit. Many people, who have had no authority from God to do so, have run all over the country laying on hands; and, by so doing, have caused a lot of confusion and hardship.

What I wish to emphasize, concerning the laying on of hands for the receiving of gifts, is that we teach our young people and new members about it, so they may begin to look to God concerning gifts and a ministry

in the Body of Christ. What their place is in the Body should be the thing uppermost on the mind of every young person. Today, we see many young people earnestly trying to discover what their natural vocation in life should be; this is right and important. I feel, with all my heart, though, that the Spiritual calling still comes first. There is a place of particular membership for each one in the Body; and we want to find that place, and minister in it, with all the ability God gives us. I would that everyone, whether young or old, who has not found this place in the Body and does not know what their ministry is, would begin earnestly looking to God concerning this. You will find that He will begin dropping many things into your heart, and, when the day comes when instruction is received from the Holy Ghost to separate you for the work whereunto you were called, you will be to ready to hear and receive. When hands are laid on you, and you receive gifts, and begin in a Spiritual ministry, the knowledge of knowing where you fit into His Body will bring a tremendous amount of peace, joy, rest and satisfaction.

Teach, exhort and live these things, and all other principles of the revelation God has given us, and He will lead us on together in to the glorious realm of maturity in Him. Referring to the principle of the resurrection of the dead, I would like to quote John 12:23-24: "And Jesus answered them saying, the hour is come that the Son of man should be glorified. Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit." Jesus spoke this of Himself primarily. He knew, as we know, that, if we keep our seed wheat, we'll never grow anything; but, if we seed it in the ground, it will bring forth many times the amount we sow. This is the resurrection of which I wish to write.

We know that Jesus came in the flesh two thousand years ago, or I should say that He was God manifest in the flesh (I Timothy 3:16), and we know that He died and was resurrected, for which we shall eternally praise Him; but the resurrection of which I write is going on to-day, and shall go on, until His Body has all its members added to it, coming to a place of mature sonship in Him.

In I Peter 1:23, Peter tells us that we are born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God which liveth and abideth forever. This seed is Christ, and the seed by which our life in Him is conceived. This seed is the corn of wheat, which fell into the ground and died, and which will bring forth much fruit, by His life abiding within, and as His anointing moves upon us.

When you plant a kernel of wheat in the ground, it grows and comes to maturity. Conditions being right, you will then harvest many kernels that are exactly like the one that was planted. Jesus was that one kernel of wheat that was planted, and the harvest will be many exactly like Him. "Those whom He has foreknown, He has also predestined to share the likeness of His Son, that He might be the eldest in a vast company of brothers" (Romans 8:29, Weymouth). When harvest time arrives, the only difference between Him, and those whom He has called, will be that He is just a little older. What a glorious resurrection! What a hope! What a mark to press toward!

If this resurrection is taking place within you, let me quote to you the words of Paul in Colossians 3:1-4 (Phillips). "If you are then raised up with Christ, reach out for the highest gifts of Heaven, where your Master reigns in power. Give your heart to the heavenly things, not to the passing things of earth. For, as far as this age is concerned, you are already dead, and your true life is a hidden one in Christ. One day, Christ, the secret centre of our lives, will show Himself openly, and you will all share in that magnificent denouement (untying, loosing, setting free)."

To some, Jesus Christ came in the flesh two thousand years ago, and this is true. The scriptures speak of His flesh, bones, and blood. Though this was glorious, it was a very limited expression of Christ. To those to whom the Spirit God has revealed it, His coming is far more extensive than the events that took place that time. Actually, His appearing then was God being manifest in the flesh, as we have already quoted from I Timothy 3:16.

Let us read also what Paul said in Colossians 1:15-19 (Phillips), "Now Christ is the visible expression of the invisible God. He existed before creation began, for it was through Him that everything was made, whether Spiritual or material, seen or unseen.... It was in Him that the full nature of God chose to live, and through Him God planned to reconcile to His own person, as it were, everything in earth and everything in Heaven, by virtue of the sacrifice of the cross."

The greater appearing Christ is His expression Himself in His Body which the resurrection He is preparing today. This is the glorious revelation, or unveiling of Jesus Christ, that is about to take place. "Yes, CHRIST IN YOU bringing with Him the hope of all the glorious things to come" Colossians 1:27 (Phillips).

The last of the principles of the doctrine of Christ mentioned here is eternal judgment. This, being translated correctly, is age-lasting judgment. Some seem to feel that we have done away with God's judgments entirely, but this is not true. God has revealed a purpose in His judgments, and this purpose is always to correct and bring to a higher level. There is nothing accomplished by punishing a man, age after age. There is only one place in the Scriptures where the word "eternal" denotes continuity, and that is where it speaks in Romans 1:20 of God's eternal power and Godhead. When speaking, then, of eternal judgment, it is actually age-lasting judgment.

God's judgments are, in certain respects, similar to the way my mother dealt with me when I was a small boy. If my behaviour was such that it needed correcting, she would put me in the clothes-closet, and shut the door. After a few minutes, she would open the door and ask if I was ready to come out. If I was, I could come out; but, if she could see my attitude hadn't changed, she would close the door again for a while. God deals with people in this way when He causes His judgments to come upon them. It would be well for elders to deal in the same way with those whom the church has had to discipline.

People have told me that we don't believe in hell; but, I want to tell you, we believe in a worse hell than most of us ever thought possible a few years ago. Although we don't know too much about hell, we know as David has said, it is a place where God's presence is. What could possibly be worse than God's presence when you are not walking with Him? Remember before you were saved, and God convicted you of sin? I'm thankful for the experience, but I don't want it again. God, by His Spirit, has a way of burning, the heat of which exceeds the heat of any fire man has ever made.

We are thankful for God's judgments, and also thankful that there is a purpose in them. When we know that, in Adam, all have died, and it brings great joy to our heart to know that, in Christ, shall all be made alive.

FEED THE FLOCK OF GOD

To feed God's people is a great responsibility that rests upon the elders of the church. We all need to be fed upon that Spiritual manna sent down from heaven. There are many who hunger and thirst after righteousness and are longing to be fed.

As we will see from the scriptures, there are different categories of eldership that share this responsibility. First of all, there is the elder of the home; then we have the elders or fathers of the local church; and then the apostolic ministry who are elders or fathers to the whole church.

It is wonderful when the husband and father takes his place as priest or elder of his home and ministers to the spiritual as well as the physical and material needs of his family. God was very particular that Israel would look after the spiritual life of their children. "And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes" (Deuteronomy 6:6-8). When God speaks of a sign upon our hand He is speaking of the things we do with our hands. Every action of our hands is a sign to our children. The frontlets between our eyes speak of the things we watch. This is especially important when it comes to television. There is much that is not edifying for adults to watch, much less children.

God reaffirms His stand on these things in the following scriptures:
"Therefore shall ye lay up these my words in your heart and in your soul, and bind them for a sign upon your hand, that they may be as frontlets between your eyes. And ye shall teach them your children, speaking of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt write them upon the door posts of thine house, and upon thy gates: That your days may be multiplied, and the days of your children, in the land which the LORD sware unto your fathers to give them, as the days of heaven upon the earth" (Deuteronomy 11:18-21).
"For he established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children: That the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born; who should arise and declare them to their children: That they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments" (Psalms 78:5-7).

There are several New Testament scriptures that emphasize the teaching of children. "Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honour thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise; that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth. And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Ephesians 6:1-4). "Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord. Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged" (Colossians 3:20-21). The Living Bible translates that scripture this way: "You children must always obey your fathers and mothers, for that pleases the Lord. Fathers don't scold your children so much that they become discouraged and give up trying."

The family altar is a must in this day and age when rebellion against God and the prevalence of sin is a stumbling block to all of us. A regular time should be set aside each day for the family as a unit to meet together in the presence of God. The Word of God should be read and taught; each family member should learn to pray and bring his or her concerns before the Lord. To see that this happens is the responsibility of the father or elder of the home. It is our prayer that there will be unity in this matter between the father and mother. Children become partakers of spiritual principles that will remain with them all of their lives.

When Paul and Barnabas traveled throughout Asia establishing churches, they appointed elders to be responsible for the spiritual welfare of the people. "And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed" (Acts 14:23). A local church elder is a spiritual father who cares for the spiritual wellbeing of the people of the church of which he is an elder. Likewise, in the Move of the Spirit, elders are ordained in each local church to take the spiritual oversight of the people. They are local, self-supporting men, who are indicated for the office of eldership by the Holy Spirit. They take the oversight of the church and are responsible for the spiritual food, growth, and maturity of the people of the congregation. It is also important that they keep a close eye upon the newborn.

On Paul's last trip back to Jerusalem he a desired to meet with the elders from the church at Ephesus. He sent word for them to meet him in Miletus. The main part of his message to them is found in Acts 20:28-31: "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears." Their responsibility was to feed the church. Thinking back to my days on the farm, I remember that a well-fed animal is a contented animal. The same is true of people in the church. Elders, if your people are wandering looking for food it may be time to increase their food intake in your church. Don't just decide to have more meetings, but look to God for a greater measure of the anointing of the Holy Spirit. More spiritual food comes with more of the anointing. I always enjoy, while driving along the road, when I see a lush green pasture with cattle lying down in the grass. They are content with lots to eat. Take heed to feed the church of God which He hath purchased with His own blood.

Jesus gave Peter special instructions on caring for His flock: "So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs. He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep. He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep" (John 21:15-17). It would appear that Peter's love for his Lord was to be shown by feeding Jesus' followers. First of all, Jesus told him to feed His lambs. The Greek word that is translated "feed" here is "bosco," which means to "pasture."

It makes me think of when I was a farm boy in the '30's. It was so dry that our pasture was almost as bare as the street in front of our house today. The cattle would walk along the fence looking for a way out to

hunt for something to eat. There was nothing anywhere for them to feed on, but they still looked. There are many Christians today who hunger and thirst but can find nothing to satisfy them. Jesus instruction to Peter was to feed them.

In verse 16 Jesus says, "feed my sheep." The Greek word that is translated "feed" here is "poimaino," which means to tend as a shepherd. In caring for livestock, we learned the meaning of this word, which not only refers to feeding, but also includes the complete care of the animals. The shepherd has to look for and find the animals that have strayed. "For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost. How think ye? if a man have an hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine, and goeth into the mountains, and seeketh that which is gone astray? And if so be that he find it, verily I say unto you, he rejoiceth more of that sheep, than of the ninety and nine which went not astray. Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish" (Matthew 18:11-14).

The shepherd has to look after the sick; he has to care for the newborn; he has to care for any wounds the flock might suffer, besides seeing that they are fed. There are many people who are spiritually sick and need the shepherds care. The newborn need special care and attention. In our lives, many suffer injury and need healing: not only physically but also spiritually. There is no end to his duties in caring for his animals. Jesus was talking about the apostles caring for His flock. They must tend the flock as a shepherd cares for his flock. The apostles have this responsibility along with the elders, who are the local shepherds.

In verse 21, the Greek word "bosco" is used again, emphasizing the importance of feeding or giving nourishment.

A great responsibility is given the entire eldership concerning the feeding of God's people. The fathers in the home, the elders of the local church and the apostolic ministry all bear the weight of the people's need. As everyone takes this burden upon himself, I am sure that the church will grow and mature coming into the fullness of the image and likeness of Christ. May God bless you.

FELLOWSHIP

God didn't create man just to save him and take him to heaven. God had a purpose, far more important than that, to Him. His desire was that He might fellowship with man. True, salvation is the only door that leads to fellowship with God, but God, I am sure, was looking at His finished work. The word "fellowship" means "companionship" or "a mutual sharing," and this is what God had in mind when He brought into being His creation.

God's instruction to Israel in Exodus 25:8 was, "And let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them." God wanted to be in the midst of His people, and He designed the tent or tabernacle so He could dwell with them. He had the tents of the twelve tribes of Israel arranged so there were three on each side of the tabernacle, and God's presence in the midst.

There were certain things Israel had to do to be able to enjoy God's presence, and for God to enjoy their fellowship. In Exodus 25:9, God tells them there was a pattern after which the tabernacle was to be built. "According to all that I show thee, after the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all the instruments thereof, even so shall ye make it." There was also a pattern of worship for their walk, and for their relationship to one another, as is laid out in the books of Pentateuch. These things all affected Israel's fellowship with God and His ability to fellowship with Israel.

We find that, when Solomon built His temple, God's presence inhabited it; "...the cloud filled the house of the Lord, So that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud: for the glory of the Lord had filled the house of the Lord" (I Kings 8:10-11). Here again, the presence of God dwelt in this beautiful structure Solomon had built, that He might have close communion with His people. Because of Israel's sin, the presence of God departed from their temple, and their nation; but God seemed very reluctant to leave, as evidenced in Ezekiel, chapters ten and eleven. God is long suffering, and very patient with His people. "Although I have cast them far off among the heathen, and although I have scattered them among the countries, yet will I be to them as a little sanctuary in the countries where they shall come" (Ezekiel 11:16). There is a longing in God's heart after His people, and for their fellowship; but it must be on the basis He has laid down.

Through the apostle Paul, God spoke to the church at Corinth. They had had trouble with sin, divisions, idol worship, etc. In II Corinthians 6:14-18, God lays down the basis of their fellowship, and gives the promise of His presence with them. "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? Or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? For ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord almighty."

Many people think of God as a very severe judge, standing over them, just waiting to condemn them at every turn. I believe being a natural father has helped me to understand our Heavenly Father. A good natural father desires the very best for his children. He corrects them, when correction is necessary, and chastises them, when it will be for their benefit. I have never seen a good natural father who enjoys correcting and chastising his children. He does it because it is a responsibility given him of God.

The times parents enjoy with their children most are times when they are fellowshipping, or doing things together with them. When you play with a baby, and it smiles and 'goos,' that is a form of fellowship enjoyable to all. As a child develops, the form of fellowship changes through different stages of play and learning, until, at maturity, fellowship is in what can be done together, or what one can add to the other. Fellowship is a time of joy and sharing with one another.

Likewise, God doesn't enjoy chastising or bringing judgment upon His people. The thing He enjoys is their fellowship. Many people can't understand God enjoying Himself. Joy is one of the fruits of the Spirit; hence, it is a part of the nature of God. Paul speaks of us being workers together with Him, and work is a form of

fellowship. Paul also speaks of God's inheritance in the saints, which tells us that, in our fellowship, we can add to or contribute to God.

I must add here the fact that, because God doesn't enjoy bringing judgment upon His people, doesn't mean that He doesn't do it. "For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; how shall we escape, if we neglect so great a salvation" (Hebrews 2:2-3)?

The judgments of God are designed to restore fellowship. The purpose of God's judgment of Israel is that He might restore them. His purpose, in chastising and judging us, is to restore us to fellowship, or bring us to a more mature state of fellowship, as He did in the case of Job. Did you ever notice that the time, when a child fears to meet his parents, is when he has done something wrong? The same was true in the Garden of Eden with Adam and Eve. The fellowship is destroyed by wrongdoing. Correction, judgment and chastisement restore the fellowship. Notice that before chastisement has been administered, the child doesn't want to meet his parents; but once the nasty job has been completed, they become very loving and want to sit on your knee, etc. Fellowship has been restored.

Peter, in I Peter 2:4-5, speaks of Christ as a living stone which became the chief stone in the temple God is building today. The Church, or the members of the Body of Christ, is living stones that are being built into a spiritual house, or temple, in which God dwells.

Paul writes of the same temple in Ephesians 2:19-22. "Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit."

This relationship should exist in our whole life, and not only in our times of prayer and worship. God wants to be a portion in our work, and in our business. We are workers together with Him. If we face obstacles in these things, all our Father's knowledge and wisdom is at our disposal. We often "have not because we ask not," (James 4:2); but, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him" (James 1:5).

We are often afraid to go to our Father for help because we fear what we are doing doesn't meet His approval. This is sometimes a false feeling we have picked up through the traditions of men. Other times, we need to be more careful of our activities. We must learn to be led by the Spirit of God. If we are honest with Him, God will lead us in the right ways, where our fellowship with Him will become richer and richer.

Let us read from I John 1:3. "That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us..." We desire to share the knowledge of Jesus Christ, that we may have fellowship with all men. How we long that all may know Him. "...and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ." John had learned the secret of fellowshipping with God. It takes a certain degree of maturity to learn this secret. In the natural, a child reaches a stage where they like to do things, without consulting their parents. When this happens, it is usually because they think their parents will disagree with

what they have in mind. As they become more mature, and enter into the place where they don't need parental guidance, they seem to like to talk things over with their parents. We find the same thing in our relationship with our Heavenly Father; the more mature we are the more we like to converse with Him.

Earlier, I quoted II Corinthians 6:16, where Paul writes the words of God to the Corinthians, telling them they are the temple of the living God, and that God will dwell in them, and walk in them. God said He would be a Father to them, and they would be His sons and daughters. These scriptures picture God dwelling right in His people; right in the temple He is building today. He longs to dwell with His people and have fellowship with them. He has made us for this purpose; so, let us enter into this relationship with our Father, where we are not trying to see how close we can walk to ways of this age; but where we desire His fellowship and He desires ours.

"And these things write we unto you that your joy may be full" (I John 1:4). We sing a song that speaks of His presence bringing fullness of joy. John writes here of our joy being full because of our fellowship with our Father and His Son, Jesus Christ. There is a great lack of joy in the earth, even among Christians. Our joy should be full. When something is full, there isn't room for anymore. We pray that you may experience joy in your walk and fellowship with God to this extent.

"This then is the message which we have heard of Him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all. If we say we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth" (I John 3:5-6). Darkness is sin and rebellion against God. If we walk in the ways of darkness, our fellowship is broken. We must be careful of the truth in that we do not pretend to walk in light when all the time we are walking in darkness. God is a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our pathway.

"But 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 3:5). Light is purity and holiness. The way of light is a way in which we walk in the ways of God; where we can talk and fellowship with Him, with nothing to bring any barriers between us and our Father. This place is easier to enter into than most of us think. The traditions of men have taught us to be afraid of God, but why should we be afraid of Him when the blood of Jesus Christ has cleansed us from all sin. It may take a little surrender and bending of our own will, but, certainly, nothing that will do us any harm. God wants the very best for you. He wants to fellowship with you and commune with you. He wants to talk to you as He did with Moses and Abraham. Thank God for the privilege that is ours.

FOOT WASHING 1

When Israel set up the tabernacle in the wilderness, the whole tabernacle and their procedure of worship was typical of our New Testament experience. Hebrews 9:24 tells us that tabernacle was a figure of the true

tabernacle which Christ entered after His death on Calvary. He entered with a better sacrifice than the blood of bulls and goats.

The earthly tabernacle was constructed with three divisions. The first one you approached was the outer court. In this outer court was found the brazen altar on which sacrifices were offered for sin. Christ offered Himself as atonement for our sin. The brazen altar is a representative of the sacrifice of Christ on the cross.

The only way to enter the tabernacle was past the altar of sacrifice. To enter an experience with God and receive forgiveness of sin, we must enter past the cross where Jesus offered himself as a sacrifice for us. This altar was set before the door of the tabernacle (Exodus 40:6). The next thing one came to when entering the tabernacle was the laver. This was a large brass bowl or basin filled with water in which the priests were completely washed when they entered the priesthood. "And Aaron and his sons thou shalt bring unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and shalt wash them with water" (Exodus 29:4). This is a type of water baptism as taught in the New Testament. This washing was for the cleansing of the flesh, as is water baptism in the New Testament. It is truly a cleansing of the flesh (carnal nature) by burial and resurrection.

"Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; And having an high priest over the house of God; Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water" (Hebrews 10:19-22).

On subsequent occasions, when the priests entered the tabernacle to minister, they were instructed to wash their hands and their feet in the Laver. "For Aaron and his sons shall wash their hands and their feet thereat: When they go into the tabernacle of the congregation, they shall wash with water, that they die not; or when they come near to the altar to minister, to burn offering made by fire unto the LORD: So they shall wash their hands and their feet, that they die not: and it shall be a statute for ever to them, even to him and to his seed throughout their generations" (Exodus 30:19-). A complete washing was no longer necessary. They just had to wash their hands and their feet. This was a representation of our practice of foot washing.

In our New Testament experience, the scripture teaches us that we are kings and priests in the presence of God. "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal PRIESTHOOD, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light" (I Peter 2:9). "And hast made us unto our God kings and PRIESTS: and we shall reign on the earth" (Revelation 5:10). As members of that priesthood we are completely washed in water baptism. From time to time we must have our feet washed. As one of the brethren once said, we get our feet dirty walking in the world. We are so surrounded by sin and corruption that some of it contaminates our feet. It should be washed away.

In John 13:4-9 we have the account of Jesus washing His disciples' feet. One of them, because of the greediness of the world he had partaken of, had just left to betray Him. Jesus got up from supper, took off his coat, wrapped a towel around Himself, poured water into a basin, and proceeded to wash and dry His disciple’s feet. "Then cometh he to Simon Peter: and Peter saith unto him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet? Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter" (John

13:6-7). Not understanding what was taking place, Peter wasn't going to allow Jesus to wash his feet. Jesus insisted saying, "If I wash thee not thou hast no part with me" (John 13:8). Somehow in that short space of time Peter understood what Jesus was doing and asked that not only his feet but also his hands and his head be washed.

Jesus then told him that all he needed to have washed was his feet. The same is true of us. We have been washed in water baptism and are clean except that from time to time we need our feet washed. Many people, like Peter, feel they need a complete washing when all that is required is that one of their brethren wash their feet and impart His cleansing. By walking in this age it seems to be difficult to resist its contamination. Try as we may to keep from being squeezed into its mould, it sometimes leaves its mark on us.

Jesus then told them that they should wash one another's feet: "Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you" (John 13:13-15). God has revealed to us, and we have experienced that by the laying on of hands, the life and anointing that is in Him is transmitted from one person to another. Elders are instructed to anoint the sick with oil and pray over them for their healing (James 5:14). Timothy received the gift of the Spirit by the laying on of the hands of the presbytery (1 Timothy 4:14).

People receive the infilling of the Holy Spirit by the laying on of hands. When Peter and John went to Samaria, after many people were saved as a result of Philip's ministry among them, they laid hands upon the people in order to receive the Holy Spirit. "Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost: (For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.) Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost" (Acts 8:14-17).

So, by the touch of the person who washes your feet, the accumulated contamination of life can be washed away. This is what God had in mind when He established this practice in the church. It is a way in which we can minister to one another, and it helps us to realize our dependency on each other. It is Christ who dwells within, by whose authority we lay on hands or wash another's feet.

You may ask if the washing of feet works, or is it just a form or a ritual that we go through. We have seen many who have been touched by the elements of this age, cleansed and helped in their walk with God. We have seen people who have been at odds with one another wash one another's feet and have all that bitterness disappear. What God establishes always works.

To wash another person's feet may seem to be a humbling experience. It wasn't too lowly a task for the Son of God, so why should we hesitate? Allow the Holy Spirit to move upon you as you wash one another's feet and great things will be accomplished.

There are few guidelines we should give you in conducting your foot-washing service. The elders should watch their flock, and when they feel that a foot-washing service would be beneficial or necessary, they should have one. The elders are in charge of the meeting. All should wait much on the Lord in preparation.

Allow the Holy Spirit to move on all who take part. The deacons busy themselves with whatever help may be required. In some places where a foot-washing service is held, there is no water supply. An adequate water supply of water would be their responsibility, also the disposal of used water.

The men wash the men's feet and the women the women's feet. The men and women should always be separated. They should either be in separate rooms or be divided by a curtain or some type of barrier.

Everyone brings his or her own towel and basin for washing. People will choose as they are led by the Holy Spirit whose feet they feel they should wash. The person washing your feet will use your basin for water for washing your feet and your towel to dry them. Then they will change and you will wash the feet of the person who washed your feet using his basin and towel. This is for sanitary reasons. For the same reason, change water between washings.

You may only wash one person’s feet, or if the Spirit leads, wash two. There is no rule on this. Be led of the Spirit of God.

FOOT WASHING 2

We recently had a foot washing service in the local church here, and I would like to pass on to you some of the things that were ministered in that meeting.

Firstly, one of the brethren read from John 13:1-17. It would be good if you would read that passage before you go any further.

As Jesus washed his disciples feet, teaching them as He performed this act, He said, "What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter" (John 13:7). When Peter's turn came, he wasn't going to allow the Lord to wash his feet, but very shortly the Spirit of God revealed what he was to learn hereafter. In fact, Peter went far beyond what God had in mind. He not only wanted his feet washed, but also his hands and his head.

Many of God's people are like Peter was. We often condemn ourselves, feeling that we need to be entirely washed when it is only our feet that need His cleansing. By walking in this age it is difficult to keep from getting our feet dirty. Try as we may to keep from being squeezed into the mould of this age, it sometimes leaves its mark upon us. This is where foot washing comes in.

I would like to quote a few scriptures concerning our initial washing or cleansing which takes place by believing in Jesus Christ:

"Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh; And having an high priest over the house of God; Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water" (Hebrews 10:19-22).

"Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God" (I Corinthians 6:9-11).

"For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another. But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life" (Titus 3:3-7).

In connection with these scriptures let us read, John 13:10, "Jesus saith to him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all." The washing of regeneration makes us clean, so all we need is to wash our feet.

Jesus instructed His disciples that they were to wash one another's feet. "If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you" (John 13:14-15).

What is accomplished by washing one another's feet, and what did God have in mind when He established this practice among us? We have been taught that the anointing and power of God is transmitted by the laying on of hands. The apostles lay hands on people for receiving of gifts of the Spirit. Elders lay hands on people when they pray for their sicknesses. Parents lay hands on their children to bless them. There are also other instances in which God uses the laying on of hands.

Just as God has invested power in the laying on of hands, He has given us power to cleanse one another's feet by washing. By washing one another's feet, we are fulfilling a God-given privilege of washing away the everyday contamination of life. Some may feel that we are taking too much upon ourselves. In the laying on of hands, it is the presence of Christ, who dwells within, and by whose authority we lay on hands, who washes my feet.

The next question is, "Does it work?" If it doesn't work, we are wasting our time in performing this act. I want to tell you it does work. Many times we have seen people, who have been having trouble in their walk and have been touched in an adverse way by the elements of this age, cleansed and helped to walk with God. We have seen people who have been at odds with one another wash one another's feet and have all that bitterness disappear. Yes, the washing of one another's feet works toward the cleansing which we all need from the effects of our everyday walk in the age in which we live.

Christ washes us when we believe, and this is a wonderful experience. As we go through life and press toward maturity in the realm of the Spirit, He gives us the privilege of washing one another's feet.

FORGIVNESS AND UNITY

July 1988

God has been speaking to us a great deal concerning unity in the body of Christ. I am glad we have the words of Jesus recorded for our guide in this matter. In Luke 17:1-5, Jesus is talking to His disciples about forgiveness. This passage has been segmented and made to deal with many different situations, but as the Spirit of God enlightens your understanding, you will see that the whole passage deals with forgiveness and unity.

First of all, Jesus says that it is impossible but that offences will come (Luke 7:1). In other words, He was telling us we must be prepared to be offended. As long as we have carnal natures, we are going to offend one another. I am not making excuses for our carnality. It must die. But we must all recognize the fact that offences will come, and that we must not allow ourselves to be upset by them.

Next He says, "Woe unto him through whom they come" (Luke 7:1). If we are the one through whom offences come, we must deal with the situation or face the judgement of God. Our nature must be changed, or we will miss the kingdom of God. It is far better that we deal with that nature now with the help of the Holy Spirit, than to have God deal with it in the ages to come. God's judgements are very real and very severe.

Jesus speaks of offending little ones. I have wondered whom Jesus referred to as little ones. I think that we would all fit that category. "But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the children of God, even to them that believe on His Name" (John 1:12). "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God: and if children, then heirs" (Romans 8:16-17). He is speaking of offending one another as children of God. We are all little ones who are in His care.

In Luke 17:3 Jesus says, "Take heed to yourselves." In other words, do everything you can to keep an offence from destroying the body of Christ. Also, we must do all we can to stop any bitterness or divisive spirit from growing in us as the result of an offence.

If someone, as Jesus said, trespasses against us or offends us in some manner, we should go to him about the situation and try and get it straightened out. The word rebuke sounds very strong to us, but we can easily regulate the severity of our rebuke.

Then Jesus said, "If he repent forgive him" (Luke 17:4). If he repents, we are obliged to forgive. If he doesn't repent, there is no way we can forgive. We may be able to put it out of our mind and forget it, and we should, but the other person hasn't had the blessing of forgiveness. In dealing with a certain situation a man once said to me, "Is there no place for forgiveness?" In thinking about it, even God doesn't forgive without repentance. But if there is repentance, our instruction is to forgive.

Verse 4 is really hard for us to act on, and was a stumbling block for the disciples. Even if a person trespasses against us seven times in a day and seven times repents, or says "I'm sorry," Jesus said, "Thou shalt forgive him."

This was too much for the disciples. All they could say was, "Lord increase our faith." If we have trouble forgiving, we must pray the same prayer. So often we don't have faith that the offender will ever change. But we must forgive him anyway if he repents, and pray for a change.

Verse 6 deals with the root of our offences. It should never be our motive to get rid of the offender, but to get rid of the offence. Jesus said that if we had the faith of a grain of mustard seed, we could pick up the offence and all its roots of bitterness and cast them into the sea and they would obey us. The offence may be in the other person's heart, but the roots of bitterness are often in ours. By our faith, they will be cast out, and unity established. Praise the Lord.

Let us pray, "Lord increase our faith," that unity might prevail in the body of Christ.

THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

I was privileged to be at one of the elders and deacons meetings recently. The theme of the meeting is found in John 15:8,"Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples." Most of what was ministered by the different brethren was concerning the fruit of the Spirit.

In John 15:1-8, we find Jesus teaching concerning the importance of the fruit of the Spirit. Jesus is the true vine to which the branches that bear the fruit are attached. Without being joined to the vine it is impossible to bear the fruit of the Spirit. He said that His Father was the husbandman. The husbandman removes the branches not bearing fruit. They only sap life from the vine without producing anything of value. He also removes badly formed fruit.

In verse 5, Jesus informs us that He is the vine and we are the branches. That should take away any thought of trying to walk alone and produce fruit by our own effort. We need the life that flows from the vine to be able to produce anything worthwhile. "Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me" (John 15:4). From this passage of

Scripture we see what God wants, and that is "Fruit." "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples" (John 15:8). We must bear fruit to be a disciple of Jesus.

In John 15:16 we read, "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you." Another word for ordained is to destine. It is the mind and purpose of God that we, as His disciples, should go forth and bear fruit. The fruit should be of the quality that it will remain.

When Paul wrote to the Romans, his desire was to have fruit produced among them as it was produced among other believers. "Now I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that oftentimes I purposed to come unto you, (but was let hitherto,) that I might have some fruit among you also, even as among other Gentiles" (Romans 1:13). In Romans 6:21-23, we see that God is interested in what our lives produce. The apostle Paul writes, “What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death. But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life. For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Here Paul questions them: "What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed?" Obviously, there was no fruit of the Spirit in their lives and the things that were there only brought death. "But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, you have fruit unto holiness." The reward of this is everlasting life, in contrast with the reward of sin, which is death.

Our fruit is unto holiness. The word holiness means pure, clean and set apart for God. This is the criterion by which we judge the actions of our lives. God is interested in what our life produces.

In Romans 15:25-28, we read of the fruit of giving. Paul was on his way to Jerusalem bearing the gifts of the saints of Macedonia and Achaia, being sent for the poor Christians in Jerusalem. Here he outlines our responsibility to those who have ministered to us spiritual things when they are in need. We have no responsibility to give if there is no need. Giving is a fruit of the Spirit when it is practiced by the leading of the Spirit of God.

In James 5:7, James tells us how the husbandman has to patiently wait for the fruit to develop on the vine. Christ also waits patiently for fruit to grow in our lives. In verse 8, we are instructed to be patient and to establish our hearts. In other words, set our hearts on the eternal realm and wait patiently for the appearing of Christ. Patience is also a fruit of the Spirit.

"For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry. Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul" (Hebrews 10:36).

In James 3:14-18, we are told of the difference between the wisdom that is from above and earthly carnal wisdom. Envy and strife is from the carnal realm, but the wisdom that is from above "is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without

hypocrisy. And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace." Righteousness is a fruit of the Spirit. Peacemakers sow this fruit.

In His teaching concerning the sower and the seed, Jesus especially mentions the seed that fell on good ground. "But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience" (Luke 8:15). It is important that we fill our hearts and minds with the Word of God and walk accordingly. Patience is a very important factor here. The fruit doesn't appear immediately but grows as we patiently walk in the ways of the Lord. Stay close to Him, and He will make us a partaker of His nature.

"Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God. For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death. But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter" (Romans 7:4-6).

The product of our former marriage to the law was sin and death, but the product of our marriage to Christ is fruit unto God. We died to the law that was given to bring us to Christ.

In Matthew 7:15-20 Jesus warns us to beware of false prophets, telling us we will know them by their fruits. He asks, "Do we get grapes from thorns or figs from thistles." A good tree produces good fruit, but a bad tree evil fruit. My Dad was an avid horticulturist and had a garden filled with many kinds of fruit trees. The fruit of these trees was checked, and if the fruit was not to his liking the tree was removed and, as Jesus said, cast into the fire. One thing noticeable was that the fruit of a tree was consistent year after year. It wasn't good one year and bad the next. So it is with people. A good tree brings forth good fruit, but a corrupt tree brings forth evil fruit.

When Matthew wrote concerning the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to where John was baptizing, he warned them to repent and flee from God's judgement (Matthew 3:1-8). The evidence of repentance would be the fruit of their lives. He warned that every tree that didn't bring forth good fruit would be cut down.

One thing we notice about fruit trees is that the seed is in the fruit. Grapes have seeds in them; apples have seeds in them; you will find that every kind of fruit has seeds in it. It is the seed that enables the tree to reproduce itself. The seed of the kingdom of God is in the fruit of the Spirit, and it is that seed that causes the reproduction in the hearts and lives of the people of the earth. The fruit of the Spirit is absolutely necessary for the growth of the kingdom of God. It will be the planting of that seed that brings to pass the prophecy of Jeremiah 31:34, "And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more."

The walk and life of the Christian, or the seed of the kingdom that is produced in the fruit, will be planted in the hearts of others, having such an important part in the salvation of their neighbours and friends. Seek God that fruit may be produced in your life and walk, and with the fruit comes the seed.

Jude 8-12 speaks of those who refuse to submit to the ministries and elders that God has set in the church. They speak in an evil way of those placed by God. Michael the archangel didn't even speak in an evil way to the devil, but left him for God to deal with. So often people criticize things they know nothing about. This scripture speaks of those of the past who walked in this way. In verse 12, he speaks of these people as trees whose fruit withers. They are without fruit, dead and pulled out by the roots.

Jesus was teaching in the temple when the chief priests and the elders of the people came to Him questioning His authority to teach the things concerning the Kingdom of God (Matthew 21:23). Jesus compared them to the husbandmen to whom a vineyard had been let out. The owner sent his servants and even his son to collect the fruit of the vineyard. They despitefully used them even killing some, including his son. The owner of the vineyard will destroy those husbandmen and let out the vineyard to those who "will render him the fruits in their season" (Matthew 21:41). "Therefore say I unto you, The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof" (Matthew 21:43). The kingdom will be given to those who produce fruit.

There are nine fruits of the Spirit mentioned in Galatians 5:22-23: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law." I suppose there is an unlimited number of fruits of the Spirit, some of which we have already mentioned. These are all produced by living and walking according to the leading of the Spirit of God. "For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light: (For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth) Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord. And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them" (Ephesians 5:8-11). This scripture indicates where we find the fruit of the Spirit. It is in goodness, righteousness and truth.

"According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (II Peter 1:3-11).

In Colossians 1:9-14, Paul writes to the church concerning the bearing of fruit: "For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness; Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son:

In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins." The bearing of fruit is so important in the kingdom of God.

James writes, in James 3:13-16, of the wisdom that is earthly, sensual and devilish. This does not come from the Lord. "For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work" (James 3:16). He goes on to describe the wisdom that is from above: "But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy (James 3:17). The wisdom of the Lord bears good fruit.

By our own efforts, we are unable to bear and develop the fruit God wants. This fruit comes only by the work of the Holy Spirit within us. It is "the fruit of the Spirit." As Paul says, "Walk in the Spirit and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh" (Galatians 5:16).

Jesus told us in John 15:5, "I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing." The secret of bearing the fruit of the Spirit is abiding in Him. "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples" (John 5:8). To be His disciples, we must abide in Him and produce much fruit. "If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love" (John 15:10).

THE FRUIT OF LOVE

During the past number of years, we have been seeking God a great deal concerning the receiving and operation of spiritual gifts. We are thankful that many have received these Spiritual faculties and have stirred them up to operate for the glory of God. Many have found their place and ministry in the body of Christ. May we, as the apostle Paul, have the desire that he had: "That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead" (Philippians 3:10-11). May we, press toward the mark of the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

As we read I Corinthians 13, we must consider another view of the situation. God, through the apostle Paul, makes known to us the result of the lack of one of the fruits of the Spirit - LOVE. Without this fruit, the operation of the gift is useless and void of all power. Without the fruit of love, the man who speaks with tongues sounds like the clanging of a symbol. The gifts of prophecy, the word of wisdom, the word of knowledge and faith are as nothing. The lack of the fruit of love robs us of the power that God has planned to accompany the operation of these gifts. What, then, would be the result of the lack of all nine of the fruits of the Spirit?

"Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away" (I Corinthians 13:8). All the different translations of the New Testament I have speak of the passing away of the gift of prophecy as well as the gift of languages and the gift of the word of knowledge. When our King James Version speaks of prophecies failing, it is not speaking of the failure of the purpose of prophecy in the church. The gift of prophecy is a necessity at the present time in the edification of the church. "Failing" here is used in the old English sense that is still employed when we speak of a man failing when he dies. Prophecy is very important as a means of edification to the church, but the day will come when that will no longer be necessary.

"For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known" (I Corinthians 13:12). Eventually, all the church will have entered completely into the realm of the Spirit, and there will no longer be any need for building people up in the things of the Spirit. That day is still far in the future. For the same reason, there will no longer be the need for the other gifts mentioned here. But love shall never pass away.

The manifestation of the fruits of the Spirit is an indicator of our spiritual growth. If there is no fruit, there has been no growth. Seeking the growth and manifestation of the fruits of the Spirit in our lives is just as great a responsibility as seeking and stirring up Spiritual gifts.

Paul enumerates the nine fruits of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22-23: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law." Lack of these fruits is an indication that we are immature in the ways of the Lord. We may be able to get into heaven by the skin of our teeth, but, during this life, we will be of little use to the Lord. If God would give us gifts of the Spirit without the fruit of the Spirit, we would be a reproach and appear as hypocrites before the world. If we have been seeking the manifestation of gifts in our life and ministry with little or no result, let us start seeking the fruit of the Spirit and perhaps the Lord will endow us with both fruits and gifts.

The operation of spiritual gifts will result in the coming together of the body of Christ. They will be the faculties or the tools employed by the sons of God in the deliverance of the whole creation from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. It will be a wonderful day when the words of the prophet Jeremiah in 31:34 fully come to pass.

The writer of Hebrews quotes this prophecy in Hebrews 8:11-12, "And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more." To bring this to pass without the operation of spiritual gifts would be as impossible as it would be for tradesmen to build a sky scraper with no tools to do the job.

In Romans 8:16-17, we read, "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together." We are heirs of "sonship," and Christ thinks of us as His brethren. "For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren" (Hebrews 2:11). This places upon the church a great responsibility. If we are to grow

into manifested sons, His nature must be manifested through us before the world. This will be brought about by the Spirit of God bringing forth a mighty harvest of the fruits of the Spirit. "The Spirit, on the other hand, brings a harvest of love, joy, peace; forbearance, kindness, benevolence; good faith, meekness, self-restraint. Against such there is no law" (Galatians 5:22 Weymouth). Many of these fruits have been lacking in the Christian church. We must pray that when the world looks at the church, they will see Christ, the Son of God, manifested before them through the fruit that it bears. It is a shame when people who have never known a born-again experience show more of the Spirit of Christ than the professing Christian.

Pray that the works of the flesh, as listed by the apostle Paul, will be completely eliminated from the church. "Now the doings of the lower nature are familiar to you, namely, licentiousness, impurity, indecency, idol worship, magic, animosity, strife, jealousy, ill temper, intrigues, dissensions, factions, envy, drunkenness, carousing, and the like. I forewarn you, as I have already forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God" (Galatians 5:19 Weymouth). With this type of condition prevalent in the church in general, Spiritual gifts are powerless. The church is a reproach and its members appear as hypocrites in the eyes of many in the world.

The fruits of the Spirit are the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives. Whether or not we possess them rests with us. The first necessity is to allow the Holy Spirit to search our lives, as David did in Psalms 139:23-24, "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." Then we must lean on the urging of the Spirit of God, and allow that refining fire to do its work in us. "But who may abide the day of his coming? And who shall stand when he appeareth? For he is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap: And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the LORD an offering in righteousness" (Malachi 3:2-3).

In the natural production of fruit, the keeper of the orchard takes great care in weeding out the undesirable plants that would grow among the fruit trees and choke them out. The object of this is production of the greatest fruit possible. If we allow the Spirit of God to search our hearts, He will point out the weeds. It is then our responsibility, by the help of God, to crucify those things and allow them to be nailed to the cross with Christ.

As a natural fruit tree grows from year to year, it produces more and more fruit. The first year a tree bears fruit, it only produces a little. The next year, a little more until it reaches maturity, when it will bear an abundance of fruit. For this we pray in our life and ministry.

In the natural realm, conditions of climate have a great deal to do with the production of fruit. Drought will reduce both the quantity and quality of the fruit. In times of spiritual drought in our lives, the fruits of the Spirit are in little evidence. We must be well watered by the Spirit and the Word. Frost in the natural will also reduce or even completely eliminate the production of fruit. A spiritual frost will do the same thing. We cannot allow ourselves to become cold in our experience or the Spirit cannot bear fruit in us.

As we think about these fruits of the Spirit, we realize that the key to them is the last one mentioned: temperance, or self-control. The self-life must be controlled for us to be able to bear any of the other fruits. There is no way we can love others if we are intemperately taken up with envy and jealousy etc.

Probably the place where the greatest need for self-control is in the use of the tongue. Many of the works of the flesh are exercised through the tongue. "If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body. Behold, we put bits in the horses' mouths, that they may obey us; and we turn about their whole body. Behold also the ships, which though they be so great, and are driven of fierce winds, yet are they turned about with a very small helm, whithersoever the governor listeth. Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth! And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell" (James 3:2-6).

Shall we allow the Spirit of God to bring forth a harvest of fruit such as the church has never seen? Then will we see a manifestation of the power of the gifts of the Spirit. May God bless and lead you.

THE CHOICE OF GOOD AND EVIL

It is a wonderful thing to share in the glory that is in His temple. We read much about Jerusalem and the temple in the scriptures. The Jerusalem that God is interested in today is that New Jerusalem; and that temple that He is building is of "living stones." There are those that are interested in a temple that is built of blocks of limestone, but I don't think that God is too interested in that kind of a temple anymore. He is interested in those living stones that comprise the temple that He is building.

Let us read Acts 20:29-30. The apostle Paul had asked the elders of the Ephesian church to meet with him in Miletus when he was on his way to Jerusalem to be there on the day of Pentecost. "For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them." Sad to say, this very thing happens continually.

I recently received in the mail a writing that taught that we have no free will, but that everything that happens is after the will and purpose of God. It was based upon a scripture that was taken out of context that is found in II Corinthians 5:18, "And all things are of God." This was all that the teaching was based on. You must read the context to see what the Lord had in mind when this was penned.

We shall go back to it and read from The New International Version. You will find that most other translations say exactly the same thing. "For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. And He died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for Him who died for them and was raised again. So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! All this is from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation" (II Corinthians 5:14-18). In reading this, you find that it says something altogether different than it is purported to have said. All these glorious things that are ours through Jesus Christ is from God. We are made new creatures, and we

have a new relationship with one another. We have been given a ministry in the body of Christ. These are the things that are of God.

This teaching that says all things are of God gives a person license to do anything because all things are of God. I have heard statements made that would really scare the devoted Christian. I pray that God will give us the wisdom and understanding by the Spirit to see the truth of the scripture and avoid the pitfalls that come with this particular teaching.

An important part of spiritual growth is learning to make choices. The writer of Hebrews, while speaking here of Christ and the Melchisidec priesthood, discusses discernment. "Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing" (Hebrews 5:11). I have always felt bad that the writer hadn't been able to say more to these people in order that we might be able to benefit from that teaching. "For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk is unskillful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil" (Hebrews 5:12-14). When you are discerning good and evil, you are making choices between good and evil. You are making choices between that which is right and that which is wrong. If you are grown up in Christ you have the ability to discern the difference between good and evil.

"For thou, LORD, art high above all the earth: thou art exalted far above all gods. Ye that love the LORD, hate evil: he preserveth the souls of his saints; he delivereth them out of the hand of the wicked" (Psalms 97:9-10). You that love the Lord, hate evil. You do not try to blame the evil on God by saying that all things are of God. I pray that every one of you hate evil, and everything that goes along with it.

We read about the same thing in Amos. "Seek good, and not evil, that ye may live: and so the LORD, the God of hosts, shall be with you, as ye have spoken. Hate the evil, and love the good, and establish judgment in the gate: it may be that the LORD God of hosts will be gracious unto the remnant of Joseph" (Amos 5:14-15). We see that the mind of God is that we love what is righteous and hate the evil. There is absolutely no license given in the Word of God to partake of evil. We have a responsibility to choose what we do and what we say. It is always important that we make the right choices. If we read of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, we see that there was a responsibility put upon them to make a choice.

THE GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM

"And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom" (Matthew 4:23).

What is the gospel of the kingdom? It is the message concerning the whole plan and purpose of God and its fulfillment. Many of us are taken up with just one phase of the purpose of God and ignore all the rest. We are like a man who looks at a beautiful jewel and only lets his eye rest on one facet. But the gospel of

the kingdom includes all that God has planned from before the foundation of the world and reaches into the ages to come and the fulfillment of that which He has planned.

"In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judea, And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matthew 3:1-2). After exhorting them to repentance John said, "Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance" (Matthew 3:8). In other words, our repentance must be evidenced in our outward life.

It is recorded that Jesus brought the same message in Matthew 4:17; "Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." What did they mean when they said the kingdom of heaven is at hand? Anything that is at hand is close enough for you to reach out and take hold of. Their message was that anyone, who would repent, could reach out and embrace the kingdom of heaven. No, not in all its glorious fullness: but in that measure that God gives us faith and ability to receive at this present time. The fullness of the promise of God is reserved for a future age. Now, we, like Enoch, desire to reach out by faith and attain that which is reserved for future dispensations. "By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God" (Hebrews 11:5). Enoch reached forward in time from the dispensation of conscience to the resurrection and embraced it. How we long to reach out and attain the blessings of the kingdom. I am sure God will not disappoint us, if we faithfully seek and walk with Him; the measure of the kingdom that we enter into is up to us.

Not only did Jesus and John preach the gospel of the kingdom, but Jesus also sent His twelve disciples to preach the kingdom of God, and to heal the sick (Luke 9:2). Jesus also spoke to His disciples for forty days after His resurrection "of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God" (Acts 1:3). Philip "preach[ed] the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ," in Samaria (Acts 8:12). Paul, in Ephesus, "went into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God" (Acts 19:8).

What is the kingdom of God? In Mark 4:11, Jesus said, "Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God." The kingdom of God is a mystery that is not understood by the natural mind. It can only be understood by those who are being transformed by the renewing of their mind (Romans 12:2). I am sure our understanding of this mystery is in comparison to our yielding to the leading of the Spirit of God, allowing Him to transform or change our natural mind into the ways of the Spirit.

"Whereunto shall we liken the kingdom of God? Or with what comparison shall we compare it?" (Mark 4:30). Jesus goes on to say that in its beginning it is very, very small; just like a grain of mustard seed. When it is sown, it grows and becomes "greater than all herbs" (Mark 4:31-32). So it is with the kingdom of God. It will grow and surpass all earthly systems, so the people of the earth might rest in the shade of its branches and find peace there.

As was said earlier, the gospel of the kingdom includes the whole plan and purpose of God. To be able to avail ourselves of the benefit and blessing of this gospel, we must enter into His kingdom.

When Jesus was speaking to Nicodemus, He said, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3). I don't believe He was necessarily talking about seeing the kingdom of God with our natural eyes, but He was speaking about seeing that kingdom with spiritual eyes. As, when a person is born physically, they have natural eyes; so, when one is born of the Spirit, they are born with spiritual eyes. Since the kingdom of God is a spiritual kingdom, it can only be seen by spiritual eyes, and understood by the spiritual mind. In John 3:5, Jesus said, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God." Not only is a person not able to see God's kingdom, but he cannot enter it without a spiritual birth. Jesus plainly points out, in John 3:6, that there are two births. The first is a fleshly birth, by which we make our entrance into the world; the second is a spiritual birth, which opens to us the door to the kingdom of God. Our spiritual birth takes place when we repent of our sinful ways and believe in Jesus Christ as the one "Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness; by whose stripes ye were healed," (I Peter 2:24).

"That which is born of flesh is flesh; and that which is born of Spirit is spirit" (John 3:6). Peter, in writing about this birth says, "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth forever" (I Peter 1:23). When we are born after the flesh, we are born of a corruptible seed. We all inherit a carnal nature from Adam. David says, in Psalms 51:5, "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity (with a rebellious nature); and in sin did my mother conceive me." We also read the words of Paul in Romans 5:12, "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned."

When we are born of the Spirit, we are born of an incorruptible seed, by the Word of God. This "WORD" is the same that is spoken of in John 1:1, "in the beginning was the Word." When one is born of the Spirit of this incorruptible seed, which is Jesus Christ, a new nature is born, which will inherit the kingdom of God if we are faithful to Him by whom we are born.

There are similarities between a natural and a spiritual birth. There is always travail with a natural birth; and, if there is a genuine birth in the Spirit, there will also be travail. This travail takes the form of conviction for sin and the struggle between the new man who wants to be born and the old carnal man who wants to continue in sin.

In John 16:8, Jesus spoke of the coming of the Holy Spirit, and how He would convict or reprove the world of sin. If there is no conviction for sin, I doubt very much if there can be a true birth.

Both Jesus and John the Baptist taught the people to repent. To repent not only means to be sorry for our sin, but also to turn our lives around and go on in a different direction. Jesus talked about the broad way that leads to destruction and the narrow way that leads to life. Repentance means to turn around on that broad way with all its sin and shame, and then walk in the opposite direction on the narrow way that leads to life. The message of the kingdom reverses the power of sin.

As we read in Romans 4:1-8, this is accomplished by faith. Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness. God imputes His righteousness to us when we believe. To "impute" means to attribute to another, and God attributes His righteousness to us through our faith in Jesus Christ; He sees us as just and holy through Christ.

But God wants to impart His righteousness to us. He wants His righteousness to become a part of us. That is why repentance is so important. We must begin to walk in a new life. The Scriptures talk much about us being changed. "For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son" (Romans 8:29). "And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind (repentance), that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God" (Romans 12:2). "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord" (II Corinthians 3:18).
In different places, the Scripture speaks of the sin of the fathers being visited upon the children to the third and fourth generation. "The Lord is longsuffering, and of great mercy, forgiving iniquity and transgression, and by no means clearing the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation" (Numbers 14:18). We see this happening all around us all the time. Children walk in the sins of their parents. There seems to be a chain reaction that continues from generation to generation. There is only one thing that can break that chain, and that is a genuine repentance from sin, allowing the blood of Jesus Christ to cleanse both the parents and children from sin.

Through the gospel of grace, we are "justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (Romans 3:24). The gospel of the kingdom includes the whole purpose of God; and, if we wish to inherit the kingdom, we must embrace the whole purpose of God. We have known many people who have accepted Jesus Christ, and they are quite satisfied with that level of experience. They get saved, live a few years, die and go to heaven. Heaven is a wonderful hope, but God wants us to enter into all that He has for us.

Others have learned what it is to consecrate their lives to God and desire to serve Him with all their hearts. Others desire a holy life that is set apart for God. Others seek to be filled with the Spirit of God, and desire to be led by the Holy Spirit. Others long to receive Spiritual gifts and enter into a spiritual ministry. And, still, others desire to go on and become manifested sons. They long to overcome and sit with Christ in His throne (Revelations 3:20-21), not because they want authority; but because there is a desire to minister to the need of the whole creation of God.

We have the record of the revelation of God's purpose in Ephesians 1:9-10. "Having made known unto us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He hath purposed in Himself: That in the dispensation of the fullness of times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in Him." This is the purpose of the gospel of the Kingdom. We can share in this inheritance, if we will enter into it.

We have a further explanation of God's purpose in I Corinthians 15:22-28: "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at His coming. Then cometh the end, when He shall have delivered up the kingdom of God, even the Father; when He shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign till He hath put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death. For He hath put all things under His feet. But when He saith all things are put under Him, it is manifest that He is excepted, which did put all things under Him. And when all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, that God may be all in all."

God is calling out a body for Jesus Christ, through which He will accomplish His purpose. God usually works through the ministries He gives to man. You will notice that, in the Scripture we just quoted, it says, "He hath put all things under His feet." The feet are a part of the body. The calling out and bringing together of a body for Jesus Christ is also a part of the gospel of the Kingdom. In Colossians 1:9-14, Paul relates the essence of his prayers for the Colossian church. He tells how God has "translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son" (Colossians 1:13). Then he speaks of Christ, who "is the head of the body, the church; who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things He might have the preeminence. For it pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell" (Colossians 1:18-19).

Christ is the head of the body. He is the One who is pre-eminent or first. It is in Him that all fullness dwells. In Colossians 2:9, we read "For in Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily." When Christ ministered on earth, every ministry that is now found in the church was manifest in Christ. He was an apostle; He was a prophet; He was the bearer of good tidings. He was the teacher; He was the good shepherd; He was the intercessor; He was the healer, and every other spiritual ministry was found in Him. The body of Christ was broken, and He has divided Himself among the members of His body. He is drawing those members together by the Holy Spirit. "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit" (I Corinthians 12:13). It is God's mind that all those members should function together in harmony and unity in the same way as the members of a healthy human body work together. "But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased Him" (I Corinthians 12:18).

When Jesus began His ministry, He read in the synagogue, one Sabbath day, from the prophet Isaiah, concerning His own ministry and purpose. We have this recorded in Luke 4:16-20. "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; He hath sent me to heal the broken hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord" (Luke 4:18-19). The acceptable year of the Lord is the Kingdom of God. Nothing else will be acceptable unto Him except that age of righteousness, peace, justice, and equity, when the knowledge of the Lord covers the earth as the waters cover the sea. Jesus began the things He came to do, as Luke says in Acts 1:1, "The former treatise have I made (the gospel according to Luke), O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach." Now He is calling together a body who will continue this work.

In order for this to be accomplished, the members of His body must be joined together in one spirit. "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit" (I Corinthians 12:12,13). Here the apostle Paul describes the human body and how all the members are joined together to make one body. So also it should be with Christ's body.

This was upon the heart of Jesus as He prayed, "Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one as we are.... Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.... that they may be one, even as we are one: I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one;" (John 17:11,20-23).

God calls for unity among those who are His. Here, Jesus speaks of the unity between Himself and His Father. In Ephesians 5:31-32, Paul speaks of the unity between husband and wife: "For this cause shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. This is a great mystery..." It is a mystery how two people can become one; but, as they walk together, especially if they walk in the Spirit, they harmonize and become of one mind. It is also a mystery how the church can become one. Many people say it will never happen, but I thank God that we see it happening. People are being drawn together by the Spirit, under the Headship of Christ, and are being established upon the foundation of apostles and prophets in their place in the Body of Christ. As it is necessary in bringing unity in the church that we recognize our Head, Jesus Christ; so it is necessary in marriage, if there is to be unity, for the wife to recognize the headship of her husband. Peter exhorts husbands and wives in their relationship to one another in I Peter 3. In verse 8, he turns to the whole church, "Finally, be ye all of ONE MIND, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous."

There is such unity between Jesus and His Father that Jesus said, "if ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also" (John 8:19). In John 14:7-11, we read, "If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know Him, and have seen Him. Philip saith unto Him, Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth (will satisfy) us. Jesus saith unto Him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? He that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father. Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? The words that I speak unto you I speak not of myself: but the Father that dwelleth in me, He doeth the works. Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me."

God desires such unity between Christ, and His body, and also among the members of that body. This unity is necessary for the body of Christ to function in its fullness in the Kingdom of God. "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering forbearing one another in love; Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all" (Ephesians 4:1-6). This tremendous unity between the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and God's purpose in producing the same unity between Christ, and His body, and also between members of that body, is an essential part of the message of the Kingdom.

There are different names given to the body of Christ in the Scriptures. "And He is the head of the body, the church" (Colossians 1:18). Paul speaks of his offerings for Christ's 'Body's sake, which is the church" (Colossians 1:24). We gather from these quotations that the body of Christ and the Church are the same.

Perhaps we should say something about what the church is. It is a very simple structure, when it operates according to the pattern God has given. The "church" is that body of true believers built on the foundation of apostles and prophets of which Christ is the Head. This is speaking of the universal church.

We also speak of the church in a local sense, such as the church at Corinth, or the church at Ephesus, or the church in the house of Aquila and Priscilla. These are local groups of believers, who gather together to worship God, to edify one another, and to witness and serve according to the Scriptures. These local

churches are joined together in harmony by the Spirit of God. The apostolic ministries circulate through the different churches, bringing harmony among believers, and bringing them to a unity of the faith. It is necessary that believers gather together in local churches to be built up in the Spirit, so they may grow, and mature, and be able to minister the Gospel of the Kingdom to others, who in turn may grow and minister. We long for the day when we won't say to our neighbour, "Know the Lord," for all shall know Him from the least to the greatest (Hebrews 8:11). We long for the day when the message of life in Christ Jesus will have taken root in the heart of every man.
In I Corinthians 3:9, Paul speaks of the church as a building or a field: "For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building." Shall we consider the "Church" as a building? We are not speaking of the structure in which people meet, but we are speaking of that structure which is built of living stones. "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ" (I Peter 2:5).

Paul also refers to this building in Ephesians 2:19-22. "Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit."

John 14:1-3 also talks of this building. Many people think this to be a description of our dwelling place in Heaven. Rather, it is a description of God's dwelling place in His people. "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."

Modern translators translate the word mansion as "abiding place" or "resting place." Jesus is teaching us that, as in a building made of bricks, every brick has its abiding place; so we, as living stones, have our abiding place in that temple, not made with hands, but of which Jesus Christ is the chief cornerstone, and the foundation is the ministry of the apostles and prophets. Jesus went, not to build us a house in Heaven, but to prepare a place for us as a living stone in that temple in which God dwells by the Spirit. "But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased Him" (I Corinthians 12:18).

The Scripture we just quoted from Ephesians 2 speaks of the foundation of the temple God is building. "If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?" (Psalms 11:3). If there is going to be a church, this foundation is essential. If there is to be a temple in which God dwells by the Spirit, this foundation must be laid. And it will be laid, for John, in his revelation on the Isle of Patmos, saw that city, and its foundation (Revelations 21:14).

These foundational ministries are spoken of in Ephesians 4:7-8,11. "But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ. Wherefore He saith, When He ascended up on high, He led captivity captive and gave gifts unto men.... And He gave some apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers."

The word translated "gift" in these verses is a different word, and has a different meaning than the word "gift" in I Corinthians 12:4. In I Corinthians 12:4, the Greek word "Charisma" literally means "favour, grace, or kindness," and implies the ability has been given to us to show, through the working of the Holy Spirit, favour, grace and kindness. The word in Ephesians 4:7 that is translated "gift" is "dorea," and it means a free gift or a present. The gifts spoken of here are Christ's gifts or presents to mankind, and they are apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers. The word is used in the same sense as I would use the word gift if I gave my wife a present for her birthday.

These gifts, or foundational ministries, are given for the benefit of all mankind, but they function primarily through the church. They are given "in order fully to equip His people for the work of serving-for the building up of Christ's body-till we, all of us, arrive at oneness in faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God, and at mature manhood and the stature of full grown men in Christ" (Ephesians 4:12,13 Weymouth). This puts a tremendous responsibility upon the Church. God has put within our grasp the way to perfection, and the way to the fullness of the stature of Christ. Paul is speaking here of the manifestation of the sons of God that he speaks of in Romans 8. The terms maturity, perfection, overcoming, adoption, resurrection, redemption of the body, and the manifestation of the sons of God, all refer to the same experience, and speak of the same thing. We must, with all the ability God gives us, seek to be led of the Spirit of God, that we might enter into the experience of adoption (the placing of a son), or Sonship.

When Paul speaks of adoption in Romans 8, he is speaking of God placing men as workers together with Him, as full-grown mature sons. He is speaking of the manifestation of the sons of God. We have not entered into the experience of adoption, but we have received the Spirit of it, and our heart cries out for it.

The reason we desire this growth and experience should be that we might be used of God to deliver the creation from the bond of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. To some, becoming manifested sons is an ego trip, where they will be able to sit with Christ in His throne, and rule with a rod of iron. It is true that some will require correction with the rod, but our attitude should be that of the parent who was using the rod on their child and said, "This hurts me more than it will hurt you." The reason for the rod is sin and rebellion, and such things should hurt us greatly. Oh, that men might learn to know the Lord and His ways.

In Matthew 20, we have the mother of James and John coming to Jesus and asking that her sons might sit on His right and left hand in the kingdom. Apparently, the two sons accompanied her. Jesus asked if they could drink of that cup He was to drink, or be baptized the baptism in the river Jordan, where He was baptized by John; but it was the suffering He had gone through and would go through. His physical suffering was terrible, but His greater Suffering was to come to His own and have them not receive Him. He was despised and rejected of men. The cup was that cup that He spoke of when He prayed in Gethsemene, " Father, if Thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done" (Luke 22:42).

They felt they could partake of these things, and Jesus assured them that they would, but who would sit on His right and left hand would be His Father's decision. That position would be given according to His Father's plan.

Jesus then spoke to them about those who hold positions of authority in the natural realm. It is the powerful that exercise authority over the people. He continued, "But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your servant; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your bond servant (slave): Even as the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many" (Matthew 20:26-28).

This must be our attitude as we seek God to become His manifested sons. It should not be power and authority, as we think of it in this natural realm, that we are seeking after, but the ability to help deliver all creation from their groaning. These are those who will sit with Him in His throne.
When Peter wrote to elders in I Peter 5:3, he exhorted them not to be lords over God's heritage, but to be examples. This same attitude must be in the sons of God. Those, who desire the experience of a manifested son, are taking upon themselves the responsibility for the deliverance of the creation. This all has to do with the establishment of the Kingdom of God. This is the Kingdom Jesus told us to pray for. The Kingdom of God is for the restoration of order and righteousness in the whole creation.

When did sin, rebellion, wickedness, and disorder originate? The Scriptures teach us that it originated with Lucifer. Isaiah 14:12-17 and Ezekiel 28:12-19 tell us in of the exalted position Lucifer held, and describe his beauty. In his rebellion, he aspired to be like the most High. He has made the earth to tremble and has shaken kingdoms. "That made the world as a wilderness, and destroyed the cities thereof; that opened not the house of his prisoners" (Isaiah 14:17).

This disobedience and sin came to the earth as is described in Genesis 3. Because of sin, it was necessary that man be cast out of the presence of God, and the whole creation brought under the curse, and into the bondage of corruption. The only way back is through Jesus Christ. "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned: ... Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of Life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous" (Romans 5:12,18-19).

Death has reigned from that time until now. Jesus conquered death, and we long for the day when His experience will become a reality in our lives. We pray for the day when death will be an uncommon thing. Isaiah prophesies of this in Isaiah 65:20, when an infant won't die, and men will fulfill their days. A child, if it dies, will be a hundred years old. But our cry is for the full deliverance from death, not only for ourselves, but also for the whole creation. In subduing His enemies, Christ's last enemy to be destroyed is death. We see the results of the sin and rebellion of Satan, and also of man all around us, in our day. People's lives are out of order. They walk in sin and accept no responsibility for their actions. Their relationships with one another are the opposite of what God desires and requires. Selfishness and greed reign. In Matthew 5 and 6, Jesus outlines the kind of relationships between people that God calls for, and that are of the order of the Kingdom.

Many homes are out of order. In these homes, there is no such thing as the wife being in submission to her husband, nor the husband loving his wife as Christ loved the church. In many cases, the children rule over the parents. These things are exactly opposite to the pattern God has given us.

I was recently listening to a social worker lecturing, and, in this lecture, they made the statement that, if the trend continues, by 1990, fifty percent of the children in Canada would be living in single parent homes. Satan is doing his utmost to destroy the home. The home is the pattern upon which the kingdom of God is established. How we pray for the Kingdom of God and its order and righteousness.

Because of rebellion, Satan fell; and, because of rebellion against the order of God, homes are being broken up almost faster than they are formed. God has a proper order for the home; and, unless we follow the pattern He has given us, we are doomed to failure.

Churches are out of order. God has given in the Scripture a very simple pattern in which the church should operate; but, because men have adjusted God's pattern or thrown it out, the church is at the mercy of Satan: man's programs have taken over the way of the Spirit. When God instructed Moses on the building of the tabernacle in the wilderness, He made it very clear that Moses was to follow the pattern that had been given him. So it should be with the church.

Nations are out of order too. It is getting so that God is recognized less and less. Laws that were enacted by spiritual men are abolished, or watered down to the extent that People are calling good evil and evil good. There is the cry in the heart of every true believer for the day when the nations of the earth will go up to the mountain of the Lord.

Many people may ask why God allowed such a circumstance to come to pass. God is all-powerful, and I am sure He could annihilate Satan by a snap of His finger. But, there is a purpose in allowing him to function in the creation. We do not know the fullness of that purpose, but one aspect of it is that the whole creation is being tested in its love and allegiance to our Heavenly Father. Jesus had problems with those who followed Him for the loaves and fishes. He also quoted this Scripture from Isaiah, "This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me" (Matthew 15:8). In Hebrews 12:25-29, God speaks of shaking both the earth and the heavens to remove the things that can be shaken. God allows us to be tempted to enter into all kinds of evil, but He also provides the help of the Holy Spirit so that, if we will accept His help, we may overcome. The overcomer will receive a kingdom that cannot be moved. Praise God. Jesus was tested in all points, like as we are, yet without sin. "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" (Hebrews 4:15).

In Hebrews 5:8,9, we read of His testing. "Though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered." A part of this suffering was temptation. Luke 4:1-13 outlines His temptation. There are three main categories in which we are tempted. The lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life; Jesus was tempted in all three. We must also note that He was led of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. I am sure that everyone who reads this has gone through a lot of suffering through temptation. "For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would" (Galatians 5:17). This struggle is one of the most terrible there can be. It causes our hearts to cry out for the day that we have overcome even as He overcame.

As we see in Hebrews 5:9, Jesus' perfection came through His obedience. This suggests that He was not perfect until he had been tested. There is no doubt in our minds that we are not perfect. We are being tested through many temptations, and our love, and devotion, to our Heavenly Father is being tested. If there were no opposition, there would be no way in which we could be proved.

"Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: For our God is a consuming fire" (Hebrews 12:28,29).
The Kingdom of God is to bring order, peace, righteousness, justice, and equity, into the earth. All the disorders of the past will be done away by the consuming power of the Holy Spirit. Most people put the Kingdom of God off until a future age. I know it will come in its fullness in a future age, but Jesus and John the Baptist said the Kingdom of Heaven was at hand, there signifying that it was close enough to reach out and take hold of. We can embrace its blessings in our own lives, in our homes, and in our churches. And I would that nations would begin to seek first the Kingdom of God.

In John 18:36, Jesus spoke of His Kingdom as if it was a reality, and not something that was to come in the future. "My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence (not derived from this realm)." His kingdom is a spiritual kingdom. It is the spiritual that affects the natural realm, for either good or evil. Let us pray that we will be subject to the Spirit of God.

The Pharisees questioned Jesus about when the kingdom of God would come. In His reply, He told them that God's kingdom doesn't come with outward show. It cannot be seen with natural eyes. The blessings of it can be seen with physical eyes, but the kingdom itself is a spiritual thing, and can only be seen and understood by the Spirit. Then, He told them that the Kingdom of God was in the midst of them. I would venture to say the Kingdom of God is within the reach of every one of us. All we must do is embrace it and walk in its order, and enjoy its blessings.

In Daniel, chapter two, we have the account of Daniel having Nebuchadnezzar's dream revealed to him, and also of the interpretation. He saw, in his dream, an image, whose head was made of gold, his breast of silver, his thighs of brass, his legs of iron, and his feet made of a mixture of iron and clay. Daniel told him that the gold, the silver, the brass, the iron, and the mixture of iron and clay, represented different succeeding kingdoms. He told Nebuchadnezzar that he was the head of gold, and that the other Kingdoms would arise after him. In Daniel 2:44, we read, "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever."

The kingdom of God is not something of a future age, but it has been progressively established throughout the reign of all these kings. The stone cut out without hands (signifying it is spiritual) smote the image on its feet, and has destroyed all these kingdoms. They became as chaff, and the wind blew them away. Nebuchadnezzar's kingdom is gone, and there is no trace of it today, and the others either have, or will, meet the same fate. The stone cut out of the mountain without hands is that kingdom which shall never be destroyed, and it will break in pieces and consume all these other kingdoms. The kingdom of God has been around for a long time, and it will grow and become a great mountain and fill the whole earth.

Because we put the things of God off to some future time, we do not take them seriously. But God's kingdom is a living reality, and has been for a long time. Let us seek to enter into His kingdom and accept its responsibilities and blessings.
The Kingdom of God is to restore order to His creation. The curse that came in Eden will be done away. Jesus came to deliver from that curse, and He will bring it to pass through the ministry of His body. Through His death and resurrection, all the powers of evil were overcome. Sickness is a part of the curse, 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 are healed" (Isaiah 53:5). "Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed" (I Peter 2:24).

Christ, not only has dealt with curse of sickness, but He has dealt with the curse of sin. Those who have accepted Him have experienced forgiveness of sin and deliverance from the guilt of sin. We have become children of God, but we still have to deal with sin in our nature; for we have all inherited a carnal nature that must be put to death, if we are to inherit Kingdom of God. In Matthew 25:31-46, we have the prophetic account of Jesus enthroned in glory, and gathering all nations be Him; He divides them as a shepherd separates His sheep from the goats. To the sheep He says, "Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." They were inheriting the kingdom because they had ministered to His brethren.

Who are His brethren? We have answer in Hebrews 2:11; "For both He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause He is not ashamed to call them brethren." He is speaking here of the sons who have been called unto glory. They are His brethren. They are those who have been predestined "to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be firstborn among many brethren" (Romans 8:29). Something very important to note here is that those who were ministering to His brethren were not even conscious that they were ministering to the Lord. If we are to inherit kingdom, we must become so filled with and led by the Holy Spirit that doing these things are just part of our nature. The goats probably put on a big show in what they were doing, but that didn't count, as far as God was concerned. I pray that when our works are tried by fire, as related by Paul in I Corinthians 3:12-15, we will have more than a big pile of ashes.

In Matthew's gospel, Jesus teaches us much concerning entering in to the kingdom of God. In Matthew 5:3, as Jesus sat up on the mountain teaching the people, He said these words, "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Goodspeed translates this Scripture this way: "Blessed are those who feel their spiritual need, for the Kingdom of Heaven belongs to them." That is the first necessity in inheriting the Kingdom. We must feel our need, before God can begin to change us into the image of His Son. We must cry out for the death of the carnal man, and long for the manifestation of Christ within. "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be completely satisfied" (Matthew 5:6 Weymouth).

"Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 5:10). Jesus let us know that it may cost us something to walk with Him, and, we must be prepared to let our light shine, regardless of the consequences. As the world goes deeper and deeper into sin, and unrighteousness, the light of God's people must shine brighter and brighter. The enemy will attempt to put

that light out by any means at his disposal, but we must be strong in the Lord and the power of His might. As Paul and Barnabas travelled among the churches, they brought this message: "that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God" (Acts 14:22).

As Jesus continued to teach the people, He told of His Purpose of fulfilling the law, and not destroying it. His purpose was to satisfy the law. The Scribes and Pharisees kept the letter of the law, but they were far from righteous. As we read in Hebrews 8:10, "For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people." So God wanted to do with the people of Jesus day, and with us today. We must have the law of God written upon our hearts, so we can walk in His righteousness. "For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 5:20). The righteousness of the law must-must-be fulfilled in us, if we are to inherit the Kingdom. To fulfill means to satisfy.

In Matthew 6:9,13, Jesus taught us to pray for the establishing of His kingdom. The kingdom of God must become the pre-eminent desire of our life. "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matthew 6:33). The kingdom of God must come before our need for the material necessities of life. If we will seek His kingdom, God will add the other things to us according to our need.

"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls: Who when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it" (Matthew 13:45,46). The merchant recognized value and quality. We must do the same regarding the Kingdom of God: recognize the value of it, and give all to obtain the pearl of great price. As has been said, "The grace of God is absolutely free, all we have to do is believe. But to inherit the kingdom, it will cost us everything." If we value other things more highly than the kingdom, we can never hope to enter into it.

"At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven? And Jesus called a little child unto Him, and set him in the midst of them, and said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 18:1-4). Humility is necessary to be able to enter the kingdom. To be humble, one must realize that we have not reached perfection, and seek the help of the Lord to go on. We must feel our spiritual need. If we do, God is able to minister to us the things necessary to bring us to the fullness of Sonship.

There is a great lesson for us in Matthew 25:14-30. Jesus tells of a man who entrusted his assets to his three servants. To one, he gave five talents; to another, two; and another, one. When it came to the day of reckoning, the man who had five talents had gained five more, and the one with two had gained two. Because of their faithfulness, they were given more responsibility and were rewarded. The man who had received one talent buried it. When his employer returned, he was just able to give back what he had received. This speaks to us concerning our responsibility regarding the gifts of the Spirit God gives to us. If we use our gifts, they will grow. If we bury them, God will take them away from us. In that case, our hope of inheriting the kingdom will be gone.

In Matthew 13:1-23, Jesus tells the people about the man who was sowing seed in this field. Some of his seed fell on the road and the birds ate it. Some of his land was stony, and there was no depth of earth; the seed that fell there grew, but couldn't endure the hot weather because the roots were not able to get down to moisture. Some of his land was weedy, and the weeds choked out the grain. Other seed fell on good ground and bore some one hundred, some sixty and some thirty fold. The seeds that fell on the road are like people who hear the message of the gospel of the kingdom, but the devil takes away that which was sown before it has a chance to grow and take root. The seed that fell on stony places is like those people who hear and receive the word, but give up as soon as persecution or tribulation comes. The seed that fell among thorns is like the man who hears the word, but the care of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke it out.

This is one thing that we must be very careful about. If a man has enough to meet the need of himself and his family, why does he strive for more? Many people do this at the expense of their spiritual life. One of the hardest things for us to do is to maintain a balance in our lives. We have to learn to have a proper balance between our spiritual life, our work, our family, our recreation, and any other facet of our lives. One person works all the time to the detriment of his spiritual life, and his family, and the next won't work at all.

Some suppose that gain is godliness, and Paul instructs us to withdraw from such people. "But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us be therewith content. But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is a root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows" (I Timothy 6:6-10).

The seed that fell on the good ground is like the man that hears and understands the word and it brings forth fruit in his life. We may not all bear fruit one hundredfold, but let us minister according to the proportion of faith God gives us.

Sometimes, we may not see too many results from our ministry. Paul said he planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase (I Corinthians 3:6). "Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful" (I Corinthians 4:2).

We must be very careful in our approach to the kingdom of God. In Matthew 21:42, Jesus tells of the stone the builders rejected; but this same stone became the head of the corner. This is a quotation from Psalms 118:22,23. It is a marvellous thing to us how God can do this. Then, He goes on speaking to the Jews concerning this, and warns them that God could take the kingdom from them, and give it to another nation, who would bear the fruit thereof. This happened when God turned to the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His Name (Acts 15:14). We must be very careful to bear the fruit of the kingdom, or we likewise will find ourselves on the outside.

When the angel Gabriel came to Mary and told her she was to be the mother of the Saviour, he said, "And He shall reign over the house of Jacob forever; and of His kingdom there shall be no end" (Luke 1:33). As Jesus was giving His final instructions to His disciples, He said, "Ye are they which have continued with

me in my temptations. And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath pointed unto me" (Luke 22:28,29). God help us to be faithful in ours with Him.

"We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is meet, because that your faith growth exceedingly, and the charity of every one of you all toward each other aboundeth; So that we ourselves glory in you in the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that you endure: Which is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer" (II Thessalonians 1:3-5).

GROWTH UNTO SONSHIP

Everything in God's creation that has life has about it the characteristics of growth. A tiny seed has within its walls potential that will cause it to grow into a beautiful flower or a mighty tree. Similarly, in the animal kingdom, all creatures are born immature in both body and mind. Everything into which God has put life grows; and, in fact, when growth ceases, death begins. God has put in every living creature, not only the ability to grow, but also the desire to grow. I was talking to a little boy today who was just beginning to learn to talk. I first asked him if he was a girl to which he replied, "No." I then inquired if he was a baby, and received another emphatic no. In answer to my query as to what he was, he told me he was a big boy.

We can all remember that in our childhood days, there was a desire to be grown up like mother and dad. There was also the desire to do the things that mother and dad did. That is why small boys are always playing with toy trucks and tractors or building everything from houses to super highways and skyscrapers, and their sisters busy themselves with dolls and tea parties. I can well remember how, when I was a boy, I nearly worshipped the ground my Dad walked on. I wanted to be a man just like my Dad. I wanted to do the things my Dad did the way my Dad did them. We will find that all children are practically the same. This is, I believe, a desire placed there by God, which is after the pattern of all God's creation.

Since I have grown up, I have often heard people say that they wish they were a boy or a girl again, but I doubt that if given the opportunity many would take advantage of it. When a child is small, there is a desire to be mature in body. When a man is grown, there is a desire to be mature in mind, understanding, and wisdom. Old age is a time of maturity, and those who are old should be glad, for God has given them through experience much of His knowledge. The Word of God teaches us that grey hair should be honoured.

We do not desire old age that we might die, for the Word of God teaches us that death is an enemy, and that God has no pleasure in the death of His saints. Our desire is to enter those mature years and go on into eternal life without dying. Many will say, "Impossible," but Jesus said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on me hath everlasting life" (John 6:47), and "Whosoever liveth and believeth in Me shall never die. Believest thou this?" (John 11:26). I was talking to an elderly man the other day who, as far as I know, has not had revealed to him by the Spirit what the scriptures teach along this line, and he expressed

his desire for a much longer life and greater maturity. God has put within every man the desire for greater growth and maturity. In fact we are taught in Romans, chapter 8, that the whole creation groans for it and we pray for it by the Spirit with groanings that cannot be uttered.
Not only is growth a dominant factor in God's creation, but God Himself is also in the process of growing. We are taught that God is eternally progressive, and, as Paul says in Ephesians 1:22,23 (Weymouth): "God has put all things under His (Christ's) feet, and has appointed Him universal and supreme Head of the Church which is His body, the completeness (Greek: pleroma, which literally means, "which is put in to fill up") of Him who everywhere fills the universe with Himself." God's eternal desire and plan is to add to Himself after His good pleasure.

In the church also, God has placed the element of growth, and this growth takes place by the development of those members of the Body that comprise the church. At one time, the only growth we could see was a growth in numbers, but (Thank God!) He has delivered us from this carnal vision to see that what He is really interested in is the spiritual growth and development of the Individual believer. We clocked our progress by the number who attended our meetings, or came to the altar, but God measures progress on a higher spiritual plane on which the carnal man has little or no insight. Many who came to our altars were born as tiny babes, but because there were no true shepherds to feed them and lead them on, most of them became spiritually sick children and many of them died. Thank God He has once again established a true spiritual foundation and has set ministries in the Body for the edifying or building up of the church.

I do not want you to think by what I have just said that God is not interested in the salvation of all mankind. He is. The scriptures teach us that Christ died for all men. In Hebrews 8:10,11 we read, "For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them on in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: And they shall not teach every man his neighbour and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord, for ALL shall know me, from the least to the greatest." My heart longs for that day, but the best way to bring it is to concentrate on that which God wishes to accomplish in these days: that is, the calling out of a people for His Name (Acts 15:14), and the edifying of that people "till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" (Ephesians 4:13).

What would be the use of God's bringing great hordes of people into the church when there are no fathers to father them, no shepherds to shepherd them, and no ministries sufficiently developed to feed and edify them? Thank God this situation is fast being remedied. God is raising up elders who are true shepherds, who will not flee when the wolf cometh. He has set ministries in the Body for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the Body of Christ (Ephesians 4:12). Yes, God is accomplishing a growth in the Body of Christ, which growth I would like now to speak more particularly about.

God has made provision for this growth in the Spirit, just as He makes provision for growth in the natural. Now there is something I want you to see. A baby in the natural has no desire to grow. His desire is for food, and then he just naturally grows. A babe in Christ really does not know what he wants, but there is a thirst for the sincere milk of the Word. As a mother ministers food to the child in the natural, so God has set ministries in the church to minister unto the babe in Christ. It is only after considerable growth has taken

place that there comes that understanding and desire for maturity. This applies both to the natural and to the spiritual. God tells us through the Apostle Paul in Ephesians 4:11-16 how He intends the Body of Christ to be ministered unto, "That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive" (v.14). We must bow our heads in shame and admit that this has been the condition in the church for centuries, and repent of our evil works asking God to forgive us our shame and lead us in His way. Thank God, He has led many out of their darkness into the glorious light and liberty of the Spirit.

Now, if we read Ephesians 4:11-15, we see that Christ gave some, apostles; some, prophets; some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers for the glorious result "that we may grow up into Him in all thing, which is the Head, even Christ." With all my heart, I exhort you to receive those ministries. Submit to them so that we may all grow up together into Him. Many object to submitting to a ministry, saying that they do not care to submit to man. My friend, a ministry is not a man. A ministry is Christ. In submitting to a ministry, we are submitting to God Himself. I am reminded of what I was told several years ago by one of my instructors while serving in the Canadian Army. He was teaching us the art of saluting an officer, and during the course of his instruction told us that we were not saluting the man, but we were saluting the king's commission. The same is true concerning our submission to the different ministries of the Body of Christ.

When, by the ministries we have just mentioned, the Body has grown up into Him, it is in a place to start making increase of itself. "Dependent on Him (Christ) the whole Body-its various parts closely fitting and firmly adhering to one another-grows by the aid of every contributing ligament with power proportioned to-the need of each individual part, so as to build ITSELF up in the spirit of love" (Ephesians 4:16 Weymouth). In Hebrews 6, we are also instructed to grow. "Therefore leaving the principles (elementary instruction; Weymouth) of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. And this will we do, if God permit" (Hebrews 6:1-3). The writer here did not intend us to forsake these teachings, but to go on from them, exploring experimentally that ever-unfolding revelation of God.

My children, like all children, enjoy repetition. If I bounce them on my knee, they say, "Do it again, Daddy." If I tell them a story, they want me to tell it over. If I play and romp with them, their desire is repetition. To an older, more mature person, to repeat the same act over and over is wearisome. Concerning the spiritual, repetition satisfies and is necessary to the child, but the more mature desire to go on. These Hebrews should have been teachers, but the need was that they be taught again the first principles of the oracles of God. But let it not be so said of us. Let us go on to perfection. Let us seek God for maturity in the inner man.

Peter teaches us to grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. This is most necessary in these days when God is unfolding the revelation of Himself. Peter tells us that unlearned and unstable people perverted the things Paul wrote. This is the most natural thing for a man dominated by the carnal mind to do, for "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto Him: neither can he know them, for they are spiritually discerned" (I Corinthians 2:14). Let us not speak evil of those things of which we have no understanding, but pray God that He will give us spiritual eyes to see, and spiritual ears to hear, yes, and spiritual hands to do, that we may enter into those things

revealed to us by the Spirit. No wonder Peter instructs us to grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour; for, unless we grow, we cannot understand Him. We all know how hard it is for children to understand and appreciate their parents, but when they are grown up themselves', they realize how right mother and dad were. In the spiritual realm, as long as we are children we cannot understand Him, neither can we know Him, but may the Lord help us to grow up into Him.

Paul tells us, "in [Christ] all the building fitly framed (properly fitted) together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit" (Ephesians 2:21-22). God is building a temple, not built with hands, eternal, in the heavens. "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house" (I Peter 2:5). How we long in our hearts that this temple may grow up; how the whole creation groans for it! How God desires to dwell in the midst and have fellowship with them! How He desires to call us His sons and daughters and be a Father unto us! Every father's heart is made glad as his children grow up and take the place of full-grown sons, because "the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all" (Galatians 4:1). Paul also says that "because ye are sons (full grown sons and not small children), God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ" (Galatians 4:6-7).

Paul says, "When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things" (I Corinthians 13:11). May we also grow and put away from ourselves that which is childish. Jesus told the nobleman whose son was sick that, unless the people saw signs and wonders, they would not believe (John 4:48). Paul also said that "the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness; But unto them which are CALLED, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God, Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men (I Corinthians 1:22-25). God is calling forth a mature people who can believe without seeing and who can walk in the way when there is no way; whose faith is in the Lord their God and shall not turn away. Let us put away all our unbelief and walk as full-grown men in Christ. God will manifest His Sons when they are full grown, when they come unto a perfect man unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

HOLINESS

We are very thankful to the Lord for the moving of the Holy Spirit. We are also thankful He has touched our hearts through the ministry of different members of the body of Christ. It is so precious to live in the presence of God and to be able to walk, at least to a certain degree, in that anointing God is pouring out upon us. We had a tremendous camp in North Battleford this year, a glorious moving of the Spirit of God, and I feel that God is moving in our midst here. Someone asked me, "What took place in the camp meeting at North Battleford?" It was hard to answer them, but I said, if I may speak in the vernacular of 1992, God was saying, "pull up your socks and get with it." God was instructing us to really enter in to the things He has made real to us, and causing us to learn by the help of the Holy Spirit to walk in His ways.

I was looking to the Lord, and I felt that I would like to write to you about "holiness." To walk a holy walk is an important part of our walk with God. I looked up in the concordance to see exactly what the word holiness meant. I found that in Hebrew, the word translated "holiness" in our Bible, is also translated as "consecrated." It is also translated as "dedicated," and "hallowed." That gives us an idea of what God is talking about when He speaks of walking a holy life.

The Greek word that is translated holiness in our King James Version is also translated as "sanctified" or "sanctification." Something that is sanctified is something set apart for God's use and purpose. "Who is like unto thee, O LORD, among the gods? Who is like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?" (Exodus 15:11). Holiness was emphasized a great deal in a previous move of the Spirit. Martin Luther was used of God to re-establish the teaching of justification by faith. Then, God used others in another move of the Spirit to teach the truth concerning holiness. We should be building on the truth laid at that time, and walking on in it. At a later date, in another move of the Spirit, God established the receiving of the infilling of the Holy Spirit and speaking in other tongues. In the present move of the Spirit, God is emphasizing the coming together of the body of Christ, the establishing of ministries in that body, and of the gifts of the Spirit operating in the ministries' life. These gifts are received by prophecy and the laying on of hands of a presbytery. In this article, we would like to deal with holiness and God's desire to see us walk a holy walk.

In II Chronicles, the reign of Hezekiah, king of Israel, is recorded. Israel had been ruled by many kings that had forsaken the way of the Lord. They had desecrated the temple of God. Even in the realm of the natural Israel was suffering. Hezekiah came to the throne at age twenty-five; and he was a man who sought God. God blessed him, as well as the people of Israel. There was a tremendous revival and moving of the Spirit of God in that day.

"He in the first year of his reign, in the first month, opened the doors of the house of the LORD, and repaired them. And he brought in the priests and the Levites, and gathered them together into the east street, And said unto them, Hear me, ye Levites, sanctify now yourselves, and sanctify the house of the LORD God of your fathers, and carry forth the filthiness out of the holy place" (II Chronicles 29:3-5). When the author is talking here about the house of the Lord, we must realize that in our day, God doesn't dwell in a temple in a city over in the Middle East made with hands, but He dwells in that house He is building of living stones. "Ye also, as lively (living) stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ" (I Peter 2:5).

The same command Hezekiah gave concerning that temple comes to the priesthood of the temple God is building today. Peter tells you that you are priests of that temple God is building. We are all responsible. "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light" (I Peter 2:9).

Hezekiah said, "Sanctify the house of the Lord God of your fathers, and sanctify yourselves." It is important, very, very important, that we be able to set ourselves aside for the Lord, and that our walk be in true holiness in the temple that God dwells in today.

"For our fathers have trespassed, and done that which was evil in the eyes of the LORD our God, and have forsaken Him, and have turned away their faces from the habitation of the LORD, and turned their backs. Also they have shut up the doors of the porch, and put out the lamps, and have not burned incense nor offered burnt offerings in the holy place unto the God of Israel" (II Chronicles 29:6-7).

We notice, first of all, that they had closed the doors of the temple. In the temple that is being built today, Jesus said He was the door: "I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture" (John 10:9). It is the responsibility of the church to keep the door of the temple visible to the world, and to keep it open so all may enter in. It appears their first step away from God was to close the doors. Perhaps our first step away from God would be a loss of a burden for those who have never accepted Christ and entered in at that door.

The burning of incense in the temple was a type of the prayer of God's people that ascends up before Him. They had turned away from their prayer life. True holiness can never be accomplished without a prayer life.

They had also put out the lamps that were in the temple. The light from those seven lamps is a symbol of the light the church is intended to be in the world. Jesus said to us, "Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 5:14-16). You are the light that is in the temple God is building today and that light must never go out. The church must, at all times, keep the doors to that temple visible to the world by the light that shines. Israel had shut up the doors to the porch, and no one could enter. Jesus is the door, and through Him all may enter in. "And an highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called The way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; but it shall be for those: the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein" (Isaiah 35:8).

Israel had ceased to offer the burnt offerings God asked of them. Those offerings, and the shedding of the blood of the animals that were sacrificed, were a type of the offering made on our behalf when Christ died on the cross. We must never lose sight of what was accomplished for us by Him offering Himself on our behalf. Holiness only comes through Him. "But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away" (Isaiah 64:6).

"Wherefore the wrath of the LORD was upon Judah and Jerusalem, and he hath delivered them to trouble, to astonishment, and to hissing, as ye see with your eyes" (II Chronicles 29:8). That is the natural outcome that follows backsliding in the realm of the Spirit. In Israel, God had sent His wrath upon Judah and Jerusalem, and they had all kinds of problems and troubles. "For, lo, our fathers have fallen by the sword, and our sons and our daughters and our wives are in captivity for this" (II Chronicles 29:9).

"Now it is in mine heart to make a covenant with the LORD God of Israel, that his fierce wrath may turn away from us. My sons, be not now negligent: for the LORD hath chosen you to stand before him, to serve him, and that ye should minister unto him, and burn incense" (II Chronicles 29:10-11). This was the message Hezekiah brought to the people: they were not to be negligent. The same instruction is for us today. We are not to neglect these things. Paul wrote to Timothy and said, "Neglect not the gift that is in thee,

which was given thee by prophecy and the laying on of hands of the presbytery" (I Timothy 3:14). The priesthood in Hezekiah's day was not to be negligent of those things that set them apart as a holy nation. "And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel. And Moses came and called for the elders of the people, and laid before their faces all these words which the LORD commanded him" (Exodus 19:6-7). The Lord had chosen them, and God has said the same to us today. He has chosen us as a holy nation, and a royal priesthood, that we might minister before the Lord in those things He has called us to. He has chosen you to stand before Him, to serve Him, and that ye should minister unto Him, and burn incense. Lead an active prayer life.

"Now they began on the first day of the first month to sanctify, and on the eighth day of the month came they to the porch of the LORD: so they sanctified the house of the LORD in eight days; and in the sixteenth day of the first month they made an end" (II Chronicles 29:17). There must have been a tremendous moving of the Spirit of God upon the priests of that day. They really went to work on their problems. We don't know what all had accumulated in the temple of the Lord, but they cleaned the place up. There are places in which I am sure all of us could stand a little house cleaning. God is working on that. His house must be a holy house.

"Then they went in to Hezekiah the king, and said, We have cleansed all the house of the LORD, and the altar of burnt offering, with all the vessels thereof, and the shewbread table, with all the vessels thereof. Moreover all the vessels, which king Ahaz in his reign did cast away in his transgression, have we prepared and sanctified, and, behold, they are before the altar of the LORD" (II Chronicles 29:18). God is moving upon us and working with us in order to take away that which is fleshly and carnal, so His house might be holy and a blessing in the earth.

"And they brought forth the he goats for the sin offering before the king and the congregation; and they laid their hands upon them" (II Chronicles 29:23). This was something God had instituted in Israel in Leviticus, "And he shall go out unto the altar that is before the LORD, and make an atonement for it; and shall take of the blood of the bullock, and of the blood of the goat, and put it upon the horns of the altar round about... And when he hath made an end of reconciling the holy place, and the tabernacle of the congregation, and the altar, he shall bring the live goat: And Aaron shall lay both his hands upon the head of the live goat, and confess over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them upon the head of the goat, and shall send him away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness: And the goat shall bear upon him all their iniquities unto a land not inhabited: and he shall let go the goat in the wilderness" (Leviticus 16:18&20-22). We are told here how the sins of Israel were dealt with. A bullock was slain as a sin offering, and some of the blood and certain parts of the animal were placed upon the altar and burnt. The rest of the animal was burnt outside the camp. Two goats were brought to the tabernacle, and lots cast upon them. The one on which the Lord's lot fell was sacrificed. The priests laid their hands on the head of the other goat and confessed all the sins of Israel. The goat was then taken into the wilderness to a place where no one lived and let go. This is an example of the power that is in the laying on of hands. The death of the one goat pictures to us the death and shedding of the blood of Christ. The other goat, called the scapegoat, pictures to us how our sin, having been laid upon Christ, is carried away to a place where it will never be remembered any more. Aaron washed himself and his clothes, and the man who took the goat into the wilderness washed himself and his clothes. This was in order that they might be completely cleansed of any of the residue of sin that was in the house of Israel. Just as that goat was out in

the wilderness and forgotten, so the sin of the people of God has been cleansed and forgotten. I am sure that no one ever went out in the wilderness and hunted for that goat and brought it home.

We can stand in the sight of God, righteous through Jesus Christ. Then, God gives us the ability to walk by the Spirit and to walk in holiness. Holiness cannot be accomplished apart from walking in the Spirit. Holiness does not come by a law that says, do this and don't do that. It comes by having the laws of God written upon our hearts by the Spirit. "For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people" (Hebrews 8:10).

"And Hezekiah commanded to offer the burnt offering upon the altar. And when the burnt offering began, the song of the LORD began also with the trumpets, and with the instruments ordained by David king of Israel. And all the congregation worshipped, and the singers sang, and the trumpeters sounded: and all this continued until the burnt offering was finished. And when they had made an end of offering, the king and all that were present with him bowed themselves, and worshipped" (II Chronicles 29:27-29). When the hearts of the people were cleansed and revived, they began to sing and play music. There was a tremendous rejoicing in the house of Israel. That would have been a wonderful experience to be part of, as God moved upon the people and changed them by causing His blessing to fall upon them. It was because of their change of heart, their change of attitude, the change in the way they were walking, and the change in the respect they had for the house of God. This was the experience that Israel had in that day. When we speak of the house of God that we are, we are talking about the church, that vibrant, living house that God dwells in.

"Moreover he commanded the people that dwelt in Jerusalem to give the portion of the priests and the Levites, that they might be encouraged in the law of the LORD. And as soon as the commandment came abroad, the children of Israel brought in abundance the firstfruits of corn, wine, and oil, and honey, and of all the increase of the field; and the tithe of all things brought they in abundantly. And concerning the children of Israel and Judah, that dwelt in the cities of Judah, they also brought in the tithe of oxen and sheep, and the tithe of holy things which were consecrated unto the LORD their God, and laid them by heaps" (II Chronicles 31:4-6). After the cleansing of the house of the Lord, the people once again began to bring in their tithes and offerings, and there was abundance for those to whom God had designated these things.

Speaking of the priests, and the Levites, their wives, and all their sons and daughters, we are told, "They sanctified themselves in holiness" (II Chronicles 31:18). They set themselves apart in a holy walk. This was the outcome of the moving of the Holy Spirit upon Israel. To be sanctified and holy, we must have that moving of the Spirit upon us personally. The moving of the Holy Spirit is a necessity in our meetings in order that the whole church may enter in more and more to the holy life. That is what God is calling for in His people.

It is a blessing to be called of God and to be faithful in walking with Him. "And in every work that he began in the service of the house of God, and in the law, and in the commandments, to seek his God, he did it with all his heart, and prospered" (II Chronicles 31:21). On their way home from the time of the great moving of the Spirit in Jerusalem, the people went out to all the cities and utterly destroyed all the idols and the places of idol worship. Holiness had returned to the house of Israel. "Now when all this was finished, all

Israel that were present went out to the cities of Judah, and brake the images in pieces, and cut down the groves, and threw down the high places and the altars out of all Judah and Benjamin, in Ephraim also and Manasseh, until they had utterly destroyed them all. Then all the children of Israel returned, every man to his possession, into their own cities" (II Chronicles 31:1).

I expect all of us at certain times have done or said things that afterward we were sorry about, and we repented. There was a great change in Israel when the Spirit of God began to move among them, and we are changed by the moving of the Holy Spirit upon us.

"Thy testimonies are very sure: holiness becometh thine house, O LORD, forever" (Psalms 93:5). We don't use the word "becoming" very much, but it is used sometimes when speaking of a lady's attire. We will tell her that her dress or her hat is very becoming. In other words, it makes her look beautiful. Holiness becomes the house of the Lord. Holiness beautifies the house of the Lord. We desire to see His house, that house of living stones, look its very best.

"Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name; worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness" (Psalms 29:2). There is a beauty in holiness. There is something becoming about holiness. Holiness is something that is due unto His Name. We owe it to Him. Holiness not only affects our own life, but it has a tremendous effect upon the testimony of the church in the earth. If the house of the Lord is desecrated, no one will want to enter into it. That is why Paul and the other apostles wrote so much about holiness and walking in holy ways.

Romans chapter six is an excellent description of what God expects in a holy life. Paul is speaking about water baptism and the effects it should have upon us. "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life" (Romans 6:4). In baptism, we are buried and resurrected as a new man. Our old man is crucified with Him, and we are buried in baptism that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 6:11). This is speaking about the effect that water baptism should have upon us by being buried with Christ. Paul says, "Reckon yourselves to be dead unto sin but alive unto God." We must reckon ourselves to be dead to sin. The responsibility rests upon us. The Philips translation puts it this way: "Look upon yourselves as dead to the appeal and power of sin, but alive and sensitive to the call of God through Jesus Christ our Lord." You must take the stand that you are dead to sin, but alive unto God.

"Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God" (Romans 6:12). Unrighteousness is the opposite of holiness. Unrighteousness is sin. We are instructed to yield ourselves to God as though we were alive from the dead. Christ, who was raised from the dead, cannot die again because death no longer has dominion over Him. Likewise, we should be dead to sin and alive unto God. We are told to yield our members as instruments of righteousness unto God; instruments by which God manifests His holiness in the earth.

"For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace. What then? Shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid" (Romans 6:14-15). If the grace of God is large enough to deal with all our sin, why not let Him show more grace? Paul says, "God forbid." Never think that way and try to take advantage of the grace of God.

"Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?" (Romans 6:16). God has called His church unto righteousness; He has called His church unto holiness. If we yield ourselves servants to sin, we become sin's slave and open the doors of death before us. If we yield ourselves unto righteousness and obedience to God, we are yielding ourselves to the realm of life.

"But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness" (Romans 6:17-18). How much better to be the servant of righteousness that the servant of sin? "I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness. For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness. What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death" (Romans 6:19-21). There is no fruit in those things. When God is talking about fruit, He is talking about the fruit of the Spirit. "But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life" (Romans 6:22).

Paul says you have walked in unrighteousness before, now yield your members to the ways of God. What a tremendous change God causes to take place! The fruit of our life becomes holy. We pray that God will cause a tremendous wave of holiness to spread through the church; that the carnal will be destroyed, and the new man will come to a greater measure of life than ever before experienced. We pray that the fullness of that new man will be manifest in the earth.

"And her merchandise and her hire shall be holiness to the LORD: it shall not be treasured nor laid up; for her merchandise shall be for them that dwell before the LORD, to eat sufficiently, and for durable clothing" (Isaiah 23:18). "Rejoice in the LORD, ye righteous; and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness" (Psalms 97:12).

"O ye Corinthians, our mouth is open unto you, our heart is enlarged" (II Corinthians 6:11). Paul was really burdened for them. He was reaching out to them. From the bottom of his heart, he wanted to minister to them the things that they needed. He then says, "Ye are not straitened in us, but ye are straitened in your own bowels" (II Corinthians 12). A strait is a narrow place, a place of bondage. In our modern way of speaking, we would say they had gotten themselves into a "jam." A strait is a constricted place. He said, "Ye are not straitened in us, but ye are straitened in your own bowels." They were not in bondage to the apostles, but they were in bondage in their own experience. "Now for a recompense in the same, (I speak as unto my children,) be ye also enlarged" (II Corinthians 6:13). Not in bondage, but enlarged out into the glorious freedom of the realm of the Spirit. "God hath spoken in his holiness; I will rejoice" (Psalms 108:7).

"Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness?
And what concord hath Christ with Belial? Or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? For ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people" (II Corinthians 6:14-16). You don't find idols in the temple of God. In speaking of Judah, the profit Malachi said, "Judah hath dealt treacherously, and an abomination is committed in Israel and in Jerusalem; for Judah hath profaned the holiness of the LORD which he loved, and hath married the daughter of a strange god" (Malachi 2:11). In the temple that God is building today, there can't be any idols if we want God to dwell there. The young man that came to Jesus asked what he might do to inherit eternal life. When Jesus told him to sell what he had, and give it to the poor, he went away sorrowful because he had great possessions. He had an idol. We can't have idols in the temple of God. There are many kinds of idols people worship because they follow the ways of their particular idol.

"Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty. Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God" (II Corinthians 6:17-7:1). What more wonderful thing could we have in our life and experience than perfect holiness?

In reading this same passage of scripture from Philips translation, he says, "With these promises ringing in our ears, dear friends, let us cleanse ourselves from anything that pollutes body or soul. Let us prove our reverence for God by consecrating ourselves to Him completely" (II Corinthians 7:1).

Paul addressed the Corinthians as though they were his children. The apostolic ministries attitude toward the church is just as caring. Paul's admonition to them was to not link up with unbelievers. This concerns more than marriage. It is very hard for a believer and an unbeliever to work together in business, except in very exceptional circumstances. "Don't link up with unbelievers and try to work with them. What common interest can there be between goodness and evil? How can light and darkness share life together? How can there be harmony between Christ and the devil?" (II Corinthians 6 Philips) He goes on to say that we are temples of the living God.

We read about the temple in Jerusalem in Hezekiah's day. Paul reminds the Corinthians that we are living temples of the living God. God desires a complete consecration and nothing else will satisfy Him.

"This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind" (Ephesians 4:17). Don't walk like the world walks. It is important that we walk a separate walk. Paul describes the walk of other Gentiles as walking with a blinded heart. You can't blame the man who walks in sin and far from God because his heart is blind. He can't see. It is different with those who have accepted Christ. They should be able to see because they have been enlightened by the light of the world; they should be walking on a higher plane. Their walk should be in the Spirit. Those other Gentiles had given themselves to lustful desires. The world has given themselves to these things in our day. They have given themselves to the satisfying of these desires. We pray that these things will never be mentioned among the people of God.

"But ye have not so learned Christ; If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus" (Ephesians 4:20-21). You haven't learned this type of thing in walking with God. He continues, "That ye put off concerning the former conversation (or manner of life) the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; And be renewed in the spirit of your mind" (Ephesians 4:22-23).

In Romans 12, we are instructed to be transformed by the renewing of our mind. When we become Christians there are a lot of things we have to change our mind about. Before becoming a Christian, we walk in the way of the other Gentiles that Paul describes here, but when you become a Christian, your mind is renewed and changed so you don't want to walk in those sinful ways. That change will keep going on year by year as you walk with God. The Spirit of God will move within us, change our outlook and the things we seek after. He renews the spirit of our mind. "And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness" (Ephesians 4:24).

Paul goes on to list a lot of unholy things. "Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another. Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: Neither give place to the devil. Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth. ..." A wonderful cure for the thief. "...Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers..." Let us consider our words, and let them be holy. "...And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you" (Ephesians 4:25-32). What a wonderful picture of a holy life.

"And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you: To the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints" (I Thessalonians 3:12). This is the end that God has in view to establish your heart unblameable in holiness before Him.

"For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication: That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour; Not in the lust of concupiscence (Philips: strong sexual desire), even as the Gentiles which know not God: That no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter: because that the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also have forewarned you and testified. For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness" (I Thessalonians 4:3-7).

"But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine:" (Titus 2:1). This is Paul's letter to Titus. Titus was a traveling deacon, and Paul was writing him, telling him what to teach to the church. He was to teach the things that beautified sound doctrine. "That the aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience. The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things; That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed" (Titus 2:2-5).

One of the best ways to teach is by example. Let the older women be examples to the younger women. There is always the time when older women should sit down and talk and teach the younger women, that they might walk in the ways in which God would have them walk.

"Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby. Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees..." Don't become discouraged. "...And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed...." By the way we walk, we can turn other people out of the way. "...Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord: Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled;" (Hebrews 12:11-15). Let us at no time manifest a bitter spirit. When a person becomes bitter is the time their tongue really starts going, and that bitterness is communicated to other people, defiling many. The instruction of the writer is to follow peace and holiness.

"For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people" (Hebrews 8:10). God wants us to walk in holiness, but He doesn't want to put us under laws and regulations. He doesn't want to be continually saying, "Thou shalt not." Sometimes you have to do that with a child, but God wants us to mature. He wants to write His laws upon our hearts, so that automatically from within we walk in true holiness and in a way glorifying to God. I am sure that God doesn't want to oversee us with a lot of rules and regulations.

He wants us to walk in the Spirit, so the fruit of the Spirit is manifest. It is His mind that it will never enter our mind to walk in the things that belong to this sinful age. He desires that we walk on a higher level where the Spirit of God is leading us.

God is calling us to righteousness and holiness. May His word be written upon our hearts. We pray that we will enter more and more into those things into which the Holy Spirit leads us. We all need the strength that comes from the Lord. We need the anointing of the Spirit in every aspect of our lives.

THE HOUSE OF GOD

"Except the LORD build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the LORD keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain" (Psalms 127:1). God is building a house in which He desires to dwell in all His fullness. Men can try to build a house for Him to dwell in, but they always have failed and always will. Solomon was conscious of the fact that the beautiful temple he had constructed could in no way contain God and His presence. It is God's purpose to build a dwelling place for Himself in the way in which He has chosen, and in which all His fullness dwells.

God always accomplishes His purpose by the moving and power of the Holy Spirit. This was so when He created the heavens and the earth, and it is still true today. "And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters" (Genesis 1:2). Through the six creative days, He brought forth the creation that He had in mind. God moves by His Spirit to accomplish that which He has planned.

God has moved countless numbers of times upon countless numbers of people throughout the history of mankind. As soon as Adam and Eve had sinned, the Spirit of God moved upon them convicting them of their error. Because of their sin, and the knowledge that they had done wrong, they went and hid themselves. The same is true today. When a child has done wrong, they will try to avoid their parents. A person who walks in sin will try to hide from God. That is why those who are backslidden avoid other Christians and stop assembling themselves with the church. I'm sure that the reason for this is that they are very uncomfortable while the Holy Spirit is talking to them about their sin. We pray for a mighty outpouring of the Holy Spirit in conviction for sin. Anyone who is a born again Christian will remember the time when the Holy Spirit convicted them of their sin and spoke to them about accepting Christ as their Saviour. When the Holy Spirit convicts a person for his sin and pleads with him to accept Christ as his Saviour, God is calling him to be a part of the house He is building for Himself.

The Holy Spirit moved upon Abel and led him when he offered the more excellent sacrifice than Cain. Cain offered the works of his own hands, which were not acceptable to God. There was a sin offering lying at Cain's door which he could have availed himself of, but instead his heart was filled with rebellion. I presume there was an animal laying in the shade of his house that would have been an acceptable offering. Cain reacted bitterly to the urging of the Spirit of God and, in his jealousy, slew his brother. People react in the same way today. They may not commit murder, but hatred and bitterness grows up within them because they are too stubborn to follow the urging of the Spirit of God.

All through the eleventh chapter of the book of Hebrews, we meet those who were constantly reaching out for better things. Their faith and their reliance on the leading of the Spirit of God was what gave them a good report.

The Spirit of the Lord moved on Saul after Samuel had anointed him to be king of Israel. Samuel prophesied to Saul that the Spirit of the Lord would come upon him and that he would prophecy and be turned into another man (I Samuel 10:6). "And when they came thither to the hill, behold, a company of prophets met him; and the Spirit of God came upon him, and he prophesied among them. And it came to pass, when all that knew him beforetime saw that, behold, he prophesied among the prophets, then the people said one to another, What is this that is come unto the son of Kish? Is Saul also among the prophets?" (I Samuel 10:10). The Spirit of prophecy coming upon a man will change him also in our day. That anointing makes a tremendous difference in a person's life and ministry.

The great move of the Spirit that took place in the church around 1900 was known as the tongues movement. By speaking in tongues in one's private closet, one is able to build oneself up. This is a very important aspect of our walk with God. The move of the Spirit that began in 1948 is a move of prophecy. It is a move where the church is continually being edified by the prophecy of the members of the local church as they

minister to one another. Be very careful that the church never loses this prophetic anointing. It should be the exception when there is no prophecy in the meetings of the local church.

The moving of the Spirit was also necessary in the life and ministry of Jesus. His Father sent the Spirit upon Him immediately after He was baptized of John in Jordan. "And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matthew 3:16-17).

The Spirit of God may not always lead us into pleasant circumstances. In this case, Jesus was led of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. Jesus' temptation was to test and prove Him. He couldn't be made perfect without testing. And without perfection He couldn't be the author of eternal salvation. "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him;" (Hebrews 5:8). The Spirit of God was mightily in evidence in the ministry of Jesus.

Anyone sent of God must of necessity have the Spirit of God resting upon them. When Jesus was sending His disciples, He breathed on them with the instruction that they should receive the Holy Ghost (John 20:21,22). There is no record that they received the Holy Spirit at this particular time. Luke writes this: "Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures," (Luke 24:45), and a few verses further on says this, "And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high" (Luke 24:49). These things took place while Jesus was with His disciples after His resurrection.

That enduing with power took place ten days later as the one hundred and twenty waited in one accord in the upper room in Jerusalem. The prophecy of Joel was fulfilled. "And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance" (Acts 2:4).

In all these instances we have recorded here, God is moving by His Spirit in the building of His house. No man can build a dwelling place that will totally contain His presence, but we have the privilege of working together with Him in the building of His dwelling place, in which He dwells by the Spirit.

The purpose of God is to build a dwelling place for Himself. "In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit" (Ephesians 2:21). As God has moved throughout the ages by His Spirit, He has been choosing and molding stones to fit into His house. This building is constructed by the work of the Holy Spirit, just as He was employed in the work of creation. We are joined with Christ and each other by the Spirit, and are part of the dwelling place of God.

The apostle Paul tells us that we are God's building. "For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building" (I Corinthians 3:9). He then gives us further instruction about building upon the foundation that has been laid.

"According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise master builder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; Every man's work shall be made manifest: for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire. Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" (I Corinthians 3:10-16). The materials that are used must be able to stand the test of fire and time. I really don't think that Paul is talking about those materials being tried by natural fire. Only those materials that God can breathe upon by the Holy Spirit, and then remain, will be part of that building. The wood, hay, and stubble will be consumed and the gold, silver, and precious stones will remain and be part of that glorious habitation of God by the Spirit.

Peter also talks about this habitation that God is building. "To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ" (I Peter 2:4-5). Please note that Peter says we are living stones that are being built into this spiritual house that God is building. Christ was the stone that the builders rejected, but He has become the chief corner stone. "And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone" (Ephesians 2:20). Jesus also referred to Himself as the Head of the corner. "Jesus saith unto them, did ye never read in the scriptures, the stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes?" (Matthew 21:42).

We must be very careful not to reject any of the living stones that God is perfecting for His house. The Jews not only rejected Christ, but they also rejected His followers and the Kingdom of God. We must be very careful to discern the body of Christ. The members of that body compose the church and are those stones that God is perfecting to fit into His dwelling place. I do not speak of a man made organization when I speak of the church, but of that living, vibrant organism, called by the Holy Spirit and drawn by our heavenly Father unto Himself.

"Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also" (John 14:1-3). Some translators have translated the word mansions as abiding places. This speaks to me not of many houses in heaven, but of the temple in which God dwells that is constructed of many living stones. Jesus has prepared a place for us to fit into that temple, and God will shape us and mould us by the work of the Holy Spirit so we can fit the place that has been prepared for us. The place Christ has prepared for us in that Spiritual house is our abiding place.

We see in the scriptures that the Holy Spirit has always been the power by which God has accomplished anything that He has done. This was the pattern from the days of creation to the present time. God is building Himself a temple as His dwelling place. This dwelling place will encompass all heaven and everything that He has created. "Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: That in the dispensation of the fullness of times he might gather together in

one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him: In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will" (Ephesians 1:9).

If we are to have a part in the building of this temple, as Paul spoke of in I Corinthians 3, we must build with the right material, we must build according to His pattern, and we must build by the power of the anointing of the Holy Spirit. All else will be burned as He breathes upon it. We, as members of the body of Christ, have a great privilege to be workers together with Him.

Let us be led of the Spirit.

AN INTERCESSOR

When Isaiah's prophecy was written, Israel's relationship with God was very, very strained. As a nation, they were a backslidden people. As individuals, they had turned from the precepts God had ordained that they should walk in. Their relationships with one another were far from the unity that was the mind of their Heavenly Father. "But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid His face from you, that he will not hear. For your hands are defiled with blood, and your fingers with iniquity; your lips have spoken lies, your tongue hath muttered perverseness. None calleth for justice, nor any pleadeth for truth: they trust in vanity, and speak lies; they conceive mischief, and bring forth iniquity. ...Their feet run to evil, and they make haste to shed innocent blood: their thoughts are thoughts of iniquity; wasting and destruction are in their paths. The way of peace they know not; and there is no judgment in their goings: they have made them crooked paths: whosoever goeth therein shall not know peace. Therefore is judgment far from us, neither doth justice overtake us: we wait for light, but behold obscurity; for brightness, but we walk in darkness. We grope for the wall like the blind, and we grope as if we had no eyes: we stumble at noonday as in the night; we are in desolate places as dead men" (Isaiah 59:2-4,7-10).

When the prophet speaks of judgement, he is implying that there were no proper decisions made concerning the way in which they were walking. Their path was crooked, and in that path they could know no peace. Because there were no right decisions made, there was no justice. They looked for a bright light to guide them, but all they saw, because of their iniquities, was darkness.

Isaiah was well acquainted with the condition of his people. They were sinners, they were transgressors, they were iniquitous, they were liars, they were oppressors, they were rebellious, and they had lost all sight of proper judgement and justice. Things had become so bad that if anyone departed from these evil ways he became a prey to his fellow countrymen.

When God saw a man wrongly dealt with for his righteous acts, He was touched. It displeased Him that there was no proper judgement. What really touched Him was that there was no one to intercede for the one who had become a prey to his neighbours. No one felt an obligation to speak up because of injustices done. No one could bother getting involved.

THE KINGDOM OF GOD

The kingdom of God is the realm of which God is the owner and ruler. "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth" (Genesis 1:1). In the six creative days, God created everything to His satisfaction, and saw that it was good. It was a beautiful kingdom.

Sometime in the history of the creation, rebellion appeared in the kingdom of God. Lucifer, a created being, called son of the morning, attempts to establish his throne over God's. Isaiah 14:12-17 and Ezekiel 28:13-19 tell of how Lucifer, or Satan, as we better know him, attempts to overthrow the work of God. They also prophesy of his complete destruction. Many angels shared in Satan's rebellion, as witnessed in II Peter 2:4 and Jude 6. Their judgment is also spoken of.

When Adam and Eve were created and put in the Garden of Eden, there was a wonderful relationship between them and God, as they communed in the cool of the evening. God told Adam that he could eat the fruit of all the trees in the garden, except the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Genesis 2:16-17). After Eve was created, Adam must have passed this instruction on to her (Genesis 3:2,3).

Satan came, and first of all tempted Eve to eat of the forbidden fruit. She gave some to Adam, and he also partook. "And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression" (I Timothy 2:14).

Satan has established his kingdom in opposition to God's kingdom. When Adam partook of the fruit that God had forbidden him to eat, he partook of Satan's rebellious nature. Every descendant of Adam has inherited that nature. The only way that nature can be overcome is to partake of the nature of Christ. We partake of His nature by believing in Him as our personal Saviour, and by learning to walk with Him and be led by the Holy Spirit. We must believe that His death on the cross was substitutionary on our behalf. "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8).

As citizens of God's kingdom, it is plain from Paul's writing in Ephesians that we are in a constant battle. "Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;" (Ephesians 6:10-18).

Paul also speaks in Romans seven of this warfare that is being waged. "For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. 0 wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin" (Romans 7:22-25).

When we accept Christ into our life, the kingdom of God is established in our hearts. Christ is the king of our life, and we are subjects of His kingdom. We desire in our hearts to walk with Him and serve Him, but we have the constant battle, as was pointed out, with the nature of Adam and sin.

God has established examples of His kingdom. A family that is established according to the order of God is an example of the kingdom of God. The man is the head of the family. His wife is given to him by God as his helper; and the children are the subjects of that little kingdom. They all walk together in submission to the plan and will of God.

A local church is also an example of the working of the kingdom of God. The elders assume the role of headship, and the deacons are set by God as their helpers. The people are the subjects of that little kingdom.

All these things are fashioned after that greater kingdom of which God Himself is the king eternal. Praise His Name for His matchless wisdom!

KNOWLEDGE

Natural knowledge in the earth increased at a very slow rate for many centuries. We are told that, previous to the industrial revolution, it took several hundred years for the amount of knowledge to double; but now it has been doubling in a very short space of time.

Spiritual knowledge, as far as we humans are concerned, has also been increased greatly in the last number of years. This is due to the revelation that has flowed from Christ, the Head of the body, to the church, through the apostles and prophets that have been ordained by God.
Daniel's prophecy concerning these days has certainly come to pass. "But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased" (Daniel 12:4).

Knowledge is a very beneficial thing in both the natural and spiritual realm. An example of natural knowledge is knowing how to add two plus two to make four, or knowing how to saw a board square. Spiritual knowledge is knowing Jesus Christ as our Saviour and the bearer of your sin. Generally speaking, it is the man who lacks knowledge of the natural realm who is unemployed. This should help us to see the value of education. I do not however, recommend that people should embrace everything that is taught in our institutions of higher learning.

One, by the help of the Spirit of God, learns to discern good and evil, to keep the good, and discard the evil. "Wise men lay up knowledge: but the mouth of the foolish is near destruction" (Proverbs 10:14). These are the words of Solomon, and they apply in both the natural and the spiritual realm today. "Teach me good judgment and knowledge: for I have believed thy commandments" (Psalms 119:66).

In the days of Hosea the prophet of God, Israel had become an adulterous nation in that they had turned away from God to serve other gods. God had blessed Israel with a knowledge of Himself and His ways, through Moses and the prophets. Now they were in a backslidden state and were reaping the results of their sin and rebellion. They had forsaken the things they had been taught of God through many centuries. "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children" (Hosea 4:6). This is a solemn warning to us, who live today. We must never forsake the knowledge that has come to us from the Lord. As Peter tells us in I Peter 2:9, we too are priests to God, and I pray that we shall never be rejected of Him.

That we can obtain natural knowledge by the Spirit of God is something so wonderful, it is hard to believe. This happened in the building of Israel's tabernacle in the wilderness, and I believe it often happens today. "And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, See, I have called by name Bezaleel the son of Uri, the son of Hur, of the tribe of Judah: And I have filled him with the spirit of God, in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship, To devise cunning works, to work in gold, and in silver, and in brass, And in cutting of stones, to set them, and in carving of timber, to work in all manner of workmanship. And I, behold, I have given with him Aholiab, the son of Ahisamach, of the tribe of Dan: and in the hearts of all that are wise hearted I have put wisdom, that they may make all that I have commanded thee" (Exodus 31:1-6). We are impressed by the knowledge of God as taught us by David in Psalms 19:1-3: "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard." Oh! The glory of the knowledge and wisdom of God! He, who by His knowledge was able to set the planets and stars in their place. "Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it" (Psalms 139:6).

Men are just beginning to understand a little bit concerning the creation. Our efforts to explore space seem so small and insignificant when we view His workmanship in the heavens. We must seek to know Him in all of his creation, and to hear his voice as He speaks to us and brings us knowledge of Himself. In spite of the fact that we do not comprehend the wisdom of God, and we say as David said in Psalms 144:3, "LORD, what is man, that thou takest knowledge of him! Or the son of man, that thou makest account of him," God draws us to Himself and speaks to us concerning the seeking of knowledge.

Knowledge of the creation, and knowledge of the physical natural realm, is very wonderful; but knowledge of the realm in which God dwells far transcends any other. Speaking of Christ and His body, Isaiah tells us of their function in the realm of the Spiritual. "And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: And the spirit of the LORD shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD;" (Isaiah 11:1-2). One must read on to Vs.9 to get a full picture of what God plans to do through His

Son and those sons that He plans to see manifested in the earth. The Spirit of God will move through them in all the marvellous ways that Isaiah speaks of here.

In the first chapter of Peter's second epistle, he tells us of the glorious things that God has accomplished for us through Jesus Christ our Lord. He then proceeds to tell us what we must add to our experience. "And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity" (II Peter 1:5-7).

In Luke 2:52, the apostle tells us that "Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man." As Christ added wisdom to Himself, so Peter exhorts us to add to our faith, virtue, knowledge, and godliness.

In Paul's epistle to the Philippians, he outlines all his natural qualifications. He goes on to say that every advantage he had gained, he counted lost for Christ's sake, and "I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord" (Philippians 3:8).

He continues in Philippians 3:10, "That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death." This is the most important of all knowledge.

In John's epistles, John writes, "WE KNOW," fourteen times. It is very important and reassuring "to know." Read through his epistles and note what it is that he says we know.

I John 2:3: "And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments." We must bear the fruit that witness to repentance.

I John 2:21: "I have not written unto you because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it, and that no lie is of the truth."

I John 3:14: "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death."

I John 3:24: "And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us."

I John 4:13: "Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit."

We can know good and evil by the Spirit. "But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him" (I John 2:27). It is translated this way in the Living Bible: "You need not that any man teach you what is right." If you read the proceeding verses, it is plain to see that that is what John meant. If we will listen for the voice of the Spirit, we will be led in that which is good and away from that which is evil.

People have said, "How do I know it is evil if I don't try it." A Christian has the advantage in that the Spirit of God dwells in them and will speak to them concerning good and evil. He will lead them away from the evil and into the good.

Christians know who they are. "For thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God: the LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth" (Deuteronomy 7:6). "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ" (I Peter 2:5). "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light" (I Peter 2:9).

Christians know where they are. They are a part of the temple and household in which God dwells. "Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit" (Ephesians 2:19).

They are members of the body of Christ and dwell in that body. "Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular" (I Corinthians 12:27). "For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building" (I Corinthians 3:9).

Christians know where they are going. They are pressing on into the Kingdom of God. Note the admonition of Jesus in Matthew 6:33: "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness."

When Israel killed the prophets that God sent them, Jesus said, "Woe unto you, lawyers! For ye have taken away the key of knowledge: ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered" (Luke 11:52). In our day, the theologians have taken away the key of knowledge. They have done away with the apostles and prophets that God has sent to the church. In doing this, they have stopped the flow of revelation to the church, and the church has not been able to grow and develop in their walk with God.

Our hearts long for the day that the prophet Habakkuk spoke of: "For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea" (Habakkuk 2:14).

Likewise, we reach out for the fulfillment of Jeremiah's prophecy in Jeremiah 31:34: "And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the LORD: for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the LORD: for I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more."

THE LAST ENEMY

December 1985

I would like to begin by quoting I Corinthians 15:20-26: "But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the first fruits; afterward they that are Christ's at His coming. Then cometh the end, when He shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when He shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign, till He hath put all enemies under His feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death."

We all have enemies that we must contend with. Our carnal mind is an enemy. Paul says that our carnal mind is Gods enemy and that to be carnally minded is death (Romans 8:6,7). The carnal mind is not subject to God and is constantly bringing us into condemnation by God's law. If we walk in the flesh, we cannot please God (Romans 8:8) and we are partaking of our enemy, death. In Galatians 5:18 we read, "But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law." This indicates that if we walk in the flesh, we come under the condemnation of the law. I am sure that all of us have had the experience that when we have committed some fleshly act, immediately we feel condemned. The works of the flesh will always bring the condemnation of the law, and, if not repented of, will cause us to "not inherit the Kingdom of God," and to partake of death, both physically and spiritually. Paul in speaking of the fruit of the Spirit says, "against such there is no law" (Galatians 5:23).

Our victory is in being led of the Spirit. Those who are led by the Spirit are those who inherit life. "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God" (Romans 8:14). The expressions used in the Scriptures, the manifestation of the sons of God, the resurrection, perfection, and growing up into Him who is the Head, are all speaking of the same experience and indicate an entering into the life in the Spirit.

In Ephesians 6:10-17, Paul speaks of the enemies that are arrayed against God's people. They are principalities, powers, and rulers of the darkness of this world and spiritual wickedness in high places. These enemies continually war against us, endeavouring to cause us to walk in the flesh, so partaking of death.

I am thankful that God has given us the weapons and the ability, by the help of the Holy Spirit, to overcome these enemies. "Therefore put on the complete armour of God, so that you will be able to stand your ground in the evil day, and having fought to the end, to remain victors on the field" (Ephesians 6:13 Weymouth). We must be strong in the Lord and the power of His might.

God's power is the Holy Spirit. God always works through the Holy Spirit. In the days of creation, it was the Spirit of God that moved upon the face of the waters. In the early church it was by the power of the

Spirit that the church was established and ministered. In our day, our strength lies in relying upon the power of the Spirit of God. Paul exhorted the Ephesian church, to "be filled with the Spirit" (Ephesians 5:18). Our ability to overcome carnal nature and death lies in our reliance upon the power of the Spirit in our lives and in His refining fire as He changes us from glory to glory.

The Scripture we quoted from 1 Corinthians 15 speaks of our common enemy called death. In speaking of death here, I believe that Paul is speaking of both physical death and spiritual death. As all Christians know, there is a natural birth and a spiritual birth, so there is also a physical death and a spiritual death. To my knowledge, Enoch and Elijah are the only ones mentioned in the Scripture who never experienced physical death. Tradition also says that the apostle John never died.

Physical death is an enemy to us. When a child goes to the dentist, who finds their first decayed tooth, that decaying is death working. When a young person looks in the mirror and sees his first grey hair, that is his enemy death stalking him. When a middle-aged man finds he can't work like he used to when younger, that is a sign that his days are shortening. When you go to a home for the aged and see them sit day after day in a wheelchair, that is death claiming its victims. This is death and a part of our inheritance through Adam.

We thank God, that although this may seem like a victory for death, Jesus Christ has overcome death. "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive" (I Corinthians 15:22).
Paul speaks of life to the physical body in II Corinthians 5:1-5: "For we know that the mere tent, which is our earthly house, is taken down, we have in heaven a building from God, a house not made by human hands, but eternal. In this one indeed we sigh, because we long to put on over it our dwelling which comes from heaven - sure that when we have put it on we shall not be found unclothed. Yes we who are in this tent do sigh under our burdens, not that we wish to lay aside our tent, but rather to put the other over it, so that our mortality may be absorbed in Life. And He that formed us for this very purpose is God who has given us His Spirit as guarantee" (Weymouth).
Here Paul talks of us overcoming death by putting that house (or body) from heaven on over top of this physical one. He is talking of our mortality being absorbed in Life.

In Philippians 3:10,11 Paul again says this: "That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His suffering, being made conformable unto His death; If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead." Paul was not speaking of some day far off in the future, but his desire was to enter into the life of the resurrection today.

In this chapter of Philippians, the apostle speaks of that circumcision which worships God in the Spirit (v.3). In the physical, circumcision was a cutting away of the flesh; we, through the Spirit, are able to enter into the circumcision made without hands (Colossians 2:11). Those who participate put off the body of sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ. In other words, the carnal nature is cut away and the works of the flesh die. Also, through baptism in water, we may enter into death and resurrection by reckoning ourselves dead indeed unto sin and alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord (Romans 6:11).

Paul counted all his natural accomplishments and abilities as nothing because they only bolstered his confidence in the flesh. His only desire was to walk in the Spirit and have Christ formed in him. He longed for that incorruptible seed, by which he was born of the Spirit, to be manifested as the manifestation of the

Son of God. This was his prayer for the Galatian church, "My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you" (Galatians 4:19).

In Colossians 1:27, Paul speaks of the mystery of "Christ in you" the hope of glory, but let us go on to the experience of being found "in Him."

Paul wanted to be found "in Him," which is the fullness or completeness of having Christ in us. To be found in Christ, we must be fully immersed into Him, into His nature, into His power and into His body. Being found in Him, we do not have our own righteousness but His. This experience is synonymous with the resurrection, perfection, sonship, maturity, and growing up into Him who is the Head, even Christ.

We are thankful to God for the privilege of being alive spiritually through Jesus Christ, but long to have the physical body enter into a life in the Spirit where it is not continually harassed by death. "We who are in this tent (speaking of our earthly bodies) do sigh under our burdens, not that we wish to lay aside our tent, but rather to put the other over it, so that our mortality may be absorbed in Life. And He who formed us for this very purpose is God, who has given us His Spirit as a guarantee" (II Corinthians 5:4,5 Weymouth).

This will come to pass. Death will be swallowed up in victory. Spiritual death will be a thing of the past. As the prophet has said, "And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, know the Lord; for they shall all know me, from the least to the greatest of them, saith the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity and I will remember their sins no more" (Jeremiah 3:14). May God help us to minister in our place in the body of Christ so this may become a reality.

Physical death will also be destroyed. It will go under the feet of Christ (I Corinthians 15:25). The feet of Christ are a part of the body of Christ. The church must overcome if it is to put the death of these temporal bodies under His feet. To partake of physical life, one must firstly partake of spiritual life and then enter into the experience of having the mortal swallowed up by the immortal. We pray that God will increase our vision and Spiritual perception of His great purpose and the part the church plays in it. The last enemy must go. Praise God.

THE LEADING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

January 1986

In Romans 8:14, we have this statement made by the apostle Paul, "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." In other articles, what it means to be a son has been taught. The terms "children" and "sons" are often confused. A child in Scripture is one who is immature, and the state is described by the Greek word "teknon" meaning "one born," or "a child." The word "son" on the other hand indicates one who is mature and comes from the Greek word "herios." The son is one who has entered into the experience of adoption, which means "the placing of a son."

The terms adoption, the manifestation of the sons, resurrection, perfection, maturity, going beyond the veil, and in Christ, all speak of the same experience and refer to what Paul spoke of in Philippians 3:10-14. He was pressing toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

I would like to write about the condition that Paul lays down concerning entering into sonship. That condition is that we must be led of the Spirit. If we are led by the Spirit of God rather than our own carnal desires or an evil spirit, we are in a position where we may become mature or perfect.

To be led of the Spirit, we must first all be "born of the Spirit." You cannot lead someone in the natural unless they have had a physical, fleshy birth. Jesus said, "That which is born of flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit" (John 3:6). We cannot be led of the Spirit unless we have had a spiritual birth. The phrases saved, born again, born of the Spirit, to believe in Christ, and being regenerated, all speak of the same experience; although, some would try to divide these into different experiences and complicate the grace of God.

When we are born of the Spirit, we find that we have two people living in the same house: the carnal man and the spiritual man. "For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would" (Galatians 5:17). So, to be led of the Spirit, the flesh must be put to death. "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me" (Galatians 2:20).

This experience that Paul speaks of here is not an instantaneous experience, but one of struggle that may go on for years. Paul describes his own experience in Romans 7:15-25. He was troubled by the flesh and found victory only in Jesus Christ his Lord.

To be led of the Spirit, we must be submissive to that leading. "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?" (Romans 6:16).

Jesus, the First-born Son, or as Paul describes Him in Romans 8:29, "the firstborn among many brethren," was submissive to His Father's will or you might say the leading of the Spirit of God. In John 5:30, we read, "I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear I judge: and my judgement is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me." "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me, and to finish His work" (John 4:34). "For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of Him that sent me" (John 6:38).

"Though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered; And being made perfect, He became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him" (Hebrews 5:8-9). Christ was made perfect because of His perfection He could become our Saviour and Redeemer. Without obedience we cannot become perfect or, in other words, enter into the experience of being a son. Hence, we cannot be used in God's great plan for delivering the whole creation from the bondage of corruption (Romans 8:18-23). Christ was sinless, but He had to be proven perfect. We are carnal and sinful, but He

died to deliver us from both the guilt and power of sin; so let us learn to know the Spirit's voice and walk accordingly, going on to perfection.

There are many things in the lives of all of us the Spirit of God will lead us to do. Our entering into sonship will be greatly influenced by doing and obedience. As children we have been taught many of the basic things of life, and we require no leading in those things. Only the foolish would bother God about such thing. As we grow in our Spiritual man, we learn that there are many things that are according to God's mind, and once He has told us what His mind is, we shouldn't have to ask again or be told again. An example would be the reading of God's Word. We don't have to be led to do that because we know that is the mind of the Spirit. Sometimes, however, He will lead us to a certain book or chapter. Another example: a man should not have to be led of the Spirit to provide for his family. It is an understood fact that that is his responsibility. Many times though, the Spirit of God will lead him and show him how he can better attend to his responsibility.

The Spirit will lead us into things we should do. It is wise, as the Scriptures teach us, that everything should be confirmed in the mouth of two or three witnesses. First will probably come a feeling that we should do a certain thing. But feelings alone are unreliable. They can lead us into avenues where God doesn't intend us to be. They may be good and honourable, but they are not for us. We need to have a good knowledge of the Word of God and make sure it is something that God asks His people to do. Then will come what was said in those all-important prophecies by which we learned what our ministry is and what is our place in the body of Christ. We are to war a good warfare according to the prophecies that have been given over us (I Timothy 1:18). If we listen to all three of these, we can be led of the Spirit.

A sister I once knew was reading a book about someone who was greatly used in intercessory prayer. She was condemning herself because her prayer life hadn't been as effective as his. It turned out that intercessory prayer had never been mentioned in the prophecies that went over her. She was going by her feelings, which were generated by the book she was reading, and she was condemning herself for not doing something that God had never asked of her. The Spirit of God will lead us into those things in which we can be most effective in the building of His Kingdom.

Every day the Holy Spirit will direct us to things He wants us to do. It may be an act of mercy, the giving of a gift, a word of exhortation or encouragement, or a word of testimony to the unbeliever. Walk faithfully in your ministry and God will lead you.

The Holy Spirit is also a great help to us in checking us in things we should not do. The carnal man is continually wanting to enter in to the works of the flesh, and immediately we will feel a check in our spirit about these things. Again, we have the Word of God to guide us. The works of the flesh are plainly outlined in Galatians 5:17-21. God's mind for the conduct of Israel was given them in the law, especially in Exodus 20:1-17. The law of sacrifices and ordinances was fulfilled in Christ, but this part of the law will be fulfilled in the Body of Christ as it is written upon our hearts. Heeding the Spirit's leading in these things can determine whether or not we partake of sonship or inherit the kingdom. After listing a number of the works of the flesh Paul says, "They which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God" (Galatians 5:21).

A person can also be led of the Spirit in business. I remember a brother one time saying that "If you don't know what to do, don't do anything." I have always felt that was good advice for every avenue of our lives. We generally find that if we will just wait a while, the right way will open up to us. We should consider

business transactions prayerfully. God expects us to use our heads, but if we feel checked in our spirit, we should listen very closely. There is always someone around with a "get rich quick" scheme. Their theme is always, "you just can't lose," but we have known many people who have lost everything. Avoid these schemes like the plague. "Wealth gotten by vanity shall be diminished: but he that gathereth by labour shall increase" (Proverbs 13:11). The same scripture is translated this way in the RSV: "Wealth hastily gotten will dwindle, but he who gathers little by little will increase it." This proverb of the wisest man who ever lived has certainly been proven true in our age.

Another proverb that we must note is "He that is greedy of gain troubleth his own house" (Proverbs 15:27). Some people become so taken up with getting rich that they become completely unbalanced in their lives. The result is that their family and their ministry suffer.

We really must take heed to the Word of God and pay particular attention to the leading of the Holy Spirit in these matters. As we hunger after the ways of the Lord, the Holy Spirit will do His work. When Jesus was preparing to leave this world, He gave this promise to His followers: "And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter that He may abide with you forever" (John 14:16). Another translation of the word "Comforter," is "Helper." The Holy Spirit was sent to be our helper. If we will listen to His voice, He will do that, and we will be led on to perfection, and so be equipped to fit into God's great plan for the ages to come.

A MATE

It is in the heart of most young people to find a life partner. What I write here, I write as though writing to my own children, and I trust that these words may be of help to some.

I suppose that every young man and young woman has many dreams of what they expect to find in a partner. Some of these things you will realize; but, probably, most of them will never be more than dreams and, as such, are much better forgotten. It is not on these things that I wish to dwell, but more particularly to the realm of the Spirit.

Paul writes concerning these things in II Corinthians 6:14-18, and God has, in the last couple of years, made them very real to us by His Spirit. I will quote this scripture from the Phillips translation. "Don't link up with unbelievers and try to work with them. What common interest can there be between goodness and evil? How can light and darkness share life together? How can there be a harmony between Christ and the devil? What business can a believer have with an unbeliever? What common ground can idols hold with the temple of God? For we, remember, are ourselves living temples of the living God, as God has said: I will dwell in them and walk in them: And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Therefore, Come ye out from among them and be ye separate, saith the Lord, And touch no unclean thing; And I will receive you, And will be to you a Father, And ye shall be to me sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." With these promises ringing in our ears, dear friends, let us keep clear of anything that smirches body or soul. Let us prove our reverence for God by consecrating ourselves to Him completely.

It is very evident from what Paul has written that a marriage between a believer and an unbeliever will have many hard places to go through. If your life is consecrated to God, and your partner is not, it would be very difficult to have much in common.

I wish to carry this further now. I feel it is important, and I believe I have the mind of God on the matter, that if one party to a marriage has entered into the anointing as we know it in this Move of the Spirit, it is necessary that the other should have too. If you are looking for a life partner, let this be one of the most important things you look for.

I have seen young men profess to be saved until they get the girl they're after. I have also heard them say they enjoy our meetings until after the wedding. But then the story becomes different.

In I Thessalonians 5:21, Paul tells us to prove all things, and we should know the heart of the one we intend to marry. Paul doesn't mean to prove things by a lot of talk or argument, but to prove them by experience. Experience will take a little time, but it is worth it.

Many people talk and argue over what this or that scripture means. If they would be patient, and let God work it out in their lives by experience, they would KNOW, and there would be no argument. Many a man has talked his way into a girl's heart, and, afterwards, she has found out that he was more bluff than anything else. By having patience, we can see proven, before our eyes, that which is real, and that which is not. And this includes boyfriends and girlfriends.

I was thinking much along these lines a few weeks ago. I happened one day to read the story of Peter's visit to Cornelius' house in Ceasarea. Peter had gone there with questions in his mind because it was not lawful for a Jew to visit the house of a Gentile. God reassured him, and he ministered to the people there. As he ministered, "the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word" (Acts 10:44). This convinced Peter that God had called these Gentiles unto Himself, for he said, "Can any man forbid water that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?" (Acts 10:47).

When Peter got back to Jerusalem, "they that were of the circumcision contended with him, Saying, thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them. But Peter rehearsed the matter from the beginning... When they heard these things, they held their peace and glorified God, saying, then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life" (Acts 11:2-4,18).

The thing that proved this matter to Peter, and also to the Apostles in Jerusalem, was the fact that God had poured out his Holy Spirit on the Gentiles, and they heard them speak with other tongues, magnifying God, as their experience had been in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost.

Everyone in this Move of the Spirit who is seeking a mate should let the Spirit of God prove the worth of his or her young man or young woman. Not only should they be filled with the Holy Ghost, but they also should enter into the anointing of the meetings. They also should be entering into their ministry in the Body of Christ, and taking their place as a member of that Body. It is easy to bluff and deceive people by words, especially when they are "in love," but it is impossible to deceive the Spirit of God. A man may pretend to

have an experience with God, but he can't pretend to minister by the Spirit. If his experience isn't real, his inability will show up like a sore thumb.

There are many qualities that you will desire in your mate. You will find that everything worthwhile will be produced by the anointing. Love, gentleness, good manners, thoughtfulness, and anything else worthwhile, are all the outcome of walking in the Spirit.

When you are thinking of being yoked together let these things be in your mind. "Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in Him; and He shall bring it to pass" (Psalms 37:5).

A MOTHER IN ISRAEL

January 1983

I was pondering the other day about the term "a Mother in Israel." These words are sometimes used to describe the ministry of certain women in the church. I went to the scriptures and found two women who were described as a Mother in Israel. One was Deborah, who along with Barak, defeated the army of Sisera and delivered Israel from the servitude of Jabin, king of Canaan. Deborah referred to herself as a "Mother in Israel" when she and Barak sang in the Spirit about the work of God among the children of Israel after the victory (Judges 4&5).

The other reference to a "Mother in Israel" is in II Samuel 20. A man named Sheba began a revolt against David the king. Joab, the leader of David's army, along with his men pursued Sheba. Sheba took refuge in a city called Abel. Joab and his men began to batter the walls of the city so they could destroy it and capture Sheba. As this was happening, a woman of the city called for Joab to come so she could speak to him. The scripture doesn't mention her name. It only refers to her as a wise woman. Through the wisdom God gave her, she and the people of the city delivered the head of Sheba to Joab, and the city was saved from destruction.

This woman is referred to twice as a wise woman. Deborah displayed her wisdom in the things she said and did. So, it would appear that for a woman to be a "Mother in Israel" she would have to be endowed with great wisdom.

We must consider how this ministry fits into the church, which is the body of Christ. The women referred to were women of natural Israel. There are also "Mothers in Israel" in Spiritual Israel, or the church. And they too would be women of wisdom.

An elder in the church is often referred to as a Spiritual Father to the flock over which God, by the Holy Ghost, has made him an overseer. Elders are men of experience and wisdom. They are fathers in Spiritual Israel. They hold an office of authority in the church, just as a natural father holds an office of authority in a good and well-ordered family.

A mother in Israel doesn't hold an office in the church. Her authority is manifested in the gift God has given her. Her gift makes room for her. I appreciated the fact that Deborah did not usurp authority over Barak by leading the army herself, and I am sure the other woman didn't perform the gruesome task of beheading Sheba.

In I Timothy 2:12, Paul says, "I suffer not (do not allow) a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man...." The implication is that the woman is not allowed to teach men. She is allowed to operate gifts of the Spirit though, and, in the case of a Mother in Israel, the gift of the Word of Wisdom in particular.

Although a woman doesn't have authority over the man in the church, God has endowed many women with much wisdom. Because of experiencing life and all its circumstances, they have learned much. That is if they are teachable. Some women cannot be taught. Some of those to whom God has given wisdom are "Mothers in Israel" and they should be listened to.

I know of men who would be in a much better position both in the material realm, and also in the spiritual if they had listened to the wisdom of their wives. We must remember though that the final decision rests with the authority God has set, whether it is in the home or in the church. The responsibility for that decision rests upon that authority and God will make them accountable for their judgements.

There is a particular place for the "aged woman" to teach. In Titus 2:3-5, Paul outlines what older women are to teach. Because of experience and wisdom many older women are "Mothers in Israel" and should teach the younger women. "The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness (suitable to holiness), not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things; that they may teach the young women to be sober (serious), to love their husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed." This is the responsibility of older wise women, and the younger women are responsible before God to listen to them.

A good mother is also very helpful to her children in many ways. Speaking of a natural mother, she knows because of wisdom and experience when a child needs help and when they don't. She can spoil them and make them lazy if she helps when it is not needed, and she can lift a tremendous load from the child if she ministers when it is needed.

A "Mother in Israel" could very possibly have a "ministry of helps," whereby she ministers help to those in the church. Only the Spirit of God can direct in these circumstances, whether it is through the direction of elders or the woman acts on her own leading. Elders should make use of this ministry in the church.

God may also give a mother in Israel a ministry of "showing mercy. She, by the leading of the Spirit, ministers mercy and kindness to those who need it. It may be to the sick, especially if she has received the "gift of healing."

Her mercy and kindness may also be of a material nature, mingled with her wisdom and understanding. I thought of Abigail, the wife of Nabal. She is described as "a woman of good understanding" (I Samuel 25:3). She not only showed mercy to David and his men in giving them food, but she also, by her

understanding and Wisdom, kept David from shedding Nabal's blood. "And David said to Abigail, Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, which sent thee this day to meet me: and blessed be thy advice, and blessed be thou, which has kept me this day from coming to shed blood, and from avenging myself with mine own hand" (I Samuel 25:32,33).

We trust that all the church will enter into their ministry, and as they are led by the Holy Spirit, pursue it with all their heart. Let the "Mothers in Israel" mother those in whose midst they find themselves so the body of Christ may grow and be compacted together by that which every joint supplies.

THE MOVING OF GOD

It is amazing how God moves upon the hearts of His people and others to accomplish His purpose in the earth. When He wanted the temple rebuilt in Jerusalem, after the Babylonians had destroyed it, he stirred up the spirit of Cyrus, king of Persia, that he made a proclamation decreeing that it be done.

Then, God turned to the family heads of Judah and Benjamin, also the priests and Levites who were captives in Babylon, and moved upon their hearts to go back to Jerusalem to accomplish that which He had purposed - the rebuilding of the destroyed temple. Their neighbours were moved upon to supply those returning with silver and gold for the rebuilding. Cyrus also brought out all of the vessels from the temple in Jerusalem that Nebuchadnezzar had brought to Babylon and put in the temple of their gods, to send them back to Jerusalem.

The purpose of God in this present "Move of the Spirit" is the coming together of the body of Christ, and the rebuilding of His temple, which has been split and divided into a thousand or more different sects. Again God is seeking out a people who are hungry for Him and His ways, and who are submissive to His will and purpose.

His purpose in restoring the gifts of the Spirit to the church was so the builders of His temple would have tools to work with. Most of these gifts or tools had been lost for many hundreds of years. They were lost in the rubble of the destroyed temple.

But God said He would restore the nine gifts of the Spirit to the church. As Ezekiel prophesied to the dry bones in the valley, so prophecy was restored to the church for the bringing together and building up of its members. It is by prophecy and the laying on of the hands of a presbytery on different individuals indicated by the Holy Spirit that the gifts of the Spirit are restored. Prophecy is a life-giving stream that brings life and unity to the people of God. It is invaluable in the reconstruction of the temple. When the temple was being rebuilt in Jerusalem, Haggai and Zechariah prophesied in the Name of the Lord and so helped the builders in their reconstruction work. We are helped and encouraged by the flow of prophecy among us. Those with that gift have a great responsibility.

The gift of healing was restored to the church. Healing is important not only to the physical, but also the spirit. There are many wounded and broken spirits that are in need of healing besides those that have a physical need.

When the temple in Jerusalem was rebuilt, I imagine they reused a lot of the material that had been used in the first temple. Many of those stones would have been damaged in the destruction, so they would have to be reworked to fit into the restoration. Many of us need the touch of the master builder's hand to restore us both physically and spiritually to be fitted into His temple.

A portion of the western wall of the temple mount remains until this day. It is amazing the ability and skill used in its building. How they were able to cut stones four feet by four feet by eight feet without the power tools we have today, and how they were able to move them from the quarry and assemble them without hydraulic power is a mystery to me. There are many mysteries in the building of His temple today. Many of the stones need to be reworked so they can be fitted in, and many are being brought from the quarry and fitted in to His glorious temple. Miracles of this nature continually happen. This is the work of the Spirit of God as exercised through the members of His body.

I am sure that the gift of the word of wisdom came into play many times in the building of that ancient temple, especially when they were confronted by their enemies. It is very important in the building of His dwelling place today. The word of knowledge was very important to them also, especially when the work was being interfered with by their enemies. In Ezra 4 we have an account of all the trouble their adversaries gave them in building. They first wanted to help them build, but an enemy on the construction crew would only be asking for trouble. Their enemies then hired councillors to try to discourage the builders. Finally they sent a letter to the king to try to have him stop the building, which he did. The prophets encouraged the elders and the people, and the building was resumed.

These gifts are invaluable in the construction of the house God is building in our day. There have been many adversaries, but the work is going on. Our King has given orders that the building of His dwelling place proceed; a temple not made with hands, but constructed of living stones which are His people.

God is moving by His Spirit and is calling out people from every tongue and nation to be living stones used by the Builder of His dwelling place. We must never let our adversaries discourage us, but continue building as He leads and instructs us through the leading of His Spirit. Depend much on the operation of the gifts of the Holy Spirit. They are all necessary for the successful completion of that temple which God has called His people to build.

NORTH CAROLINA CAMP, 1971

There is a marvelous anointing of the Spirit of God in our midst, and we thank God with all of our hearts for the way He is moving among us. I believe He is working within us to accomplish that which He has in mind - to bring about His purpose in us and in all the earth and in all creation.

We have a very, very real part in that. We have a very real part to play in what God is doing. He has called us, and it is in His plan and mind that we fill the place He purposed for us before the foundations of the earth were laid.

Many times we look into our hearts and there is a great longing to draw nigh unto Him. There is a great longing to be spiritual; there is great longing to partake of the things that God has been ministering to us by His Spirit, and see them not only as theories in our minds, but see them in our experience, in our lives, and in our walk.

A theory is a wonderful thing, but if it always remains a theory, it is no good. The theory must become practice. It must become a part of our experience. It must become the very thing that we live.

I have marveled many times at the theories men come up with in the natural realm. They'll take their pencil and their slide-rule, figure out all kinds of theories, and eventually someone will put the thing into practice so it works.

We find there are many, many parallels in the realm we walk in. We find that the Spirit of God is leading us in a way that is very, very practical; a way in which the Spirit of God enacts that which He brings into our hearts by revelation. It becomes a part of our experience and a part of our life.

There are many, many theories in the earth about how to become spiritual, and many people make it a complicated thing. But it is not complicated. It's very, very simple, and the simplicity overwhelms us. It is so simple that Isaiah said, "the wayfaring man, though fools, shall not err therein" (Isaiah 35:8); yet, we find it complicated and come at it from all kinds of angles, trying to build something that God has no interest in at all.

I have thought much about this. The thing God wants us to do to be spiritual is just to grow up in Him. That is all there is to it-just grow up in Him. I believe you can all look back over your experience in life; young folks can't look back quite as far as some of us, but you all have very definite experiences in growing up.

There are times in your life when you do absolutely nothing for yourself. Your parents did everything for you. Then, you began to grow and take on responsibility. The next thing you know, you have grown up to the place where you start school.

I believe that if we look at our spiritual life, we will find the experiences of our natural childhood and our growth, parallel very closely the way in which God is causing us to grow in the Spirit. We go through the time of babyhood; we go through the time when we are fed everything that we receive in the spiritual realm; we go through the time when we begin to learn to look after ourselves and we progress and we grow.

I would like to talk to you a little about the growth that God desires so very, very much to take place in His people. It is not God's mind that we remain always children, tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine, by the cunningness and sleight of men. It is God's mind that we grow and become mature.

God's purpose from the very beginning is your maturity, your act of entering into a place of a full-grown son in Him. This is becoming spiritual.

There is a wonderful relationship between our Heavenly Father and us, whether we realize it or not, and that relationship is a relationship of a father with his children. I enjoy very much seeing a natural father deal with his children. I get a tremendous blessing from listening and seeing the way they do different things. I learn a lot about my relationship with my Heavenly Father this way.

There are many, many Dads across the country. I suppose, as many different Dads as there are, there are different methods of dealing with their families; and the wisdom that is used is just astounding. It is a blessing to see a good father deal with his children.

Sometimes, he has to be sharp with them, and that's good and right. I remember one time when a brother was telling me about a young fellow that he knew very well. When he would deal with his children, he would never ruffle a hair. He would just talk to them; and you know the kids never knew they were corrected. I think it is sometimes a good thing for them to know that Dad is a little cross with them.

I don't know how cross our Heavenly Father gets with us. He is very, very patient with us; but every once in a while He takes us to the woodshed. We don't see woodsheds too often anymore, but there is a suitable substitute. Our Heavenly Father knows how to discipline, and He knows how to lay it on so it hurts the most. It is not a very pleasant thing to talk about, is it? But He does it, and I am thankful that he does, because it is all necessary in growing up.

The whole plan and purpose of God is to bring you to maturity. It is to bring you to the place where you are grown up, where you are not a baby, who has to be babied all the time, but you are mature and are taking your place in the Body of Christ, and can assume responsibility. There is nothing complicated about it at all. It is the most natural thing in the world for people to grow up.

We encumber ourselves with so many things that are called "spiritual" that are just weights upon our shoulders. It makes it almost impossible for us to grow. We entangle ourselves with so many things, but we should allow, instead, God to lead by His Spirit and cause us to grow in Him and partake of Him.

Now I would like to read a few scriptures. God's purpose from the very beginning has been your growth and maturity. I'll read from Weymouth's translation in the first chapter of Ephesians: "For He pre-destined us to be adopted by Himself as sons through Jesus Christ, such being His gracious will and pleasure, to the praise and splendour of His grace with which He has enriched us in the beloved One" (Ephesians 1:5-6). He predestined us to be adopted by Himself as sons. I like to think often of our relationship with our Heavenly Father. It is His mind and His purpose to adopt us unto Himself as sons. That is the relationship God wishes to create between yourself and Himself.

I was talking to you about fathers and their children. You who have children know what the relationship is between you and your children. You know that in a true father's heart there is that which desires the very best for his family.

When Paul wrote in Ephesians, the fifth chapter, he tells the wife to submit to her husband as unto the Lord, and then tells the husband to love his wife as Christ loved the church and gave Himself for it. The true father and husband does that. For his children, he does everything he can do, and knows how to do, that will be good for them.

We very often lack a lot of wisdom, and we make a lot of blunders, from time to time, because of our inability; but our Heavenly Father, because of the wisdom He has, isn't subject to these things. In dealing with us, He deals with us as a true father.

We are accustomed to thinking of our Heavenly Father as some far-off being, who stands over us with a stick, but He's not. He is one who is very, very close to us; one who by His Spirit ministers to us that which is necessary for our growth, and that which is necessary for our maturity. He deals with us in all sorts of ways, and He says here He pre-destined us to be adopted to Himself as sons through Jesus Christ.

I would like to read in Romans where Paul is telling about this relationship of sons: "For all who are led by God's Spirit are God's sons. You did not receive the Spirit of slavery..." God did not make you a slave to Himself. That isn't His purpose at all. "...You did not receive the spirit of slavery again inspired of terror" (Romans 8:14-16 Weymouth). I don't know what it would be like to be a slave, but I don't think it would be a very pleasant experience. You would constantly be in terror of the slave owner coming around. He says you received the spirit of adopted sons. You are a part of His family; you are joined to Him. You did receive the spirit of adopted sons in which we cry, "Our Father, My Father."

The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God. I don't have to tell my children that they are mine. They know it. There are lots of ways of knowing it. When it comes mealtime, whose table do they have their feet under? And I never chase them away. When it is bedtime, whose house do they go to bed in? They don't go over to the neighbours' house; they come home. When they want something do they go to the neighbours next door? Not very often. They come to see Dad or Mother. There is something there that bears witness that they are mine.

The relationship with our Father is such that the Spirit of God bears witness that you are the sons of God. The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God, if indeed we share Christ's sufferings in order to share also in His glory.

In so many places in His word, God tells us very similar things. In II Corinthians 6:16-18, Paul writes, "And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? For ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you...." Now listen to this. "...And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty."

I don't know whether everyone's experience is similar to mine, but in the natural, it seems to take a lot of years to learn to appreciate this father-son relationship. I guess I can truthfully say I never really appreciated my Dad until I was pretty well grown up. I think we are all very much alike. I didn't appreciate the way he dealt with me many times, until I became a father myself. Then I could see what he was doing, and the

combination of these experiences have helped me to see and understand my Heavenly Father, because I know that He is dealing with me as a son. I know that His hand is stretched out toward me because He has sent His Spirit to dwell in me.

Paul writes in Galatians 4:6-7, "And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father..." In other words, "our Father." He sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, and that is the cry of that Spirit within you: "Our Father." "...Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son then an heir of God through Christ." All the glorious things God has planned to accomplish in this age and in the ages to come, He desires to accomplish through those whom He has made His heirs.

Many times you have seen a father take his son into his business, and then they go about accomplishing many of the things Dad has dreamed of for years. Our Heavenly Father is taking us as partners with Him, that we might be heirs through Jesus Christ of all the glorious things He has planned and purposed.

I pray that your Father may become far more precious to you than ever before. He says, "Now you are no more a servant." Jesus said the same thing in John's gospel. He said, "Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you" (John 15:15). The servant doesn't know what his Lord does. God is continually revealing by His Spirit those things He is making known to us; those things that are a part of His plan and part of His purpose; those things that have been hidden and those things and that have been mysteries from the very beginning of the ages. God is making them known to us. He is making them known and He is sharing them with us.

Let us read Ephesians 1:7 from the Weymouth, "It is in Him and through the shedding of His blood that we have deliverance for the forgiveness of our offences. So abundant was God's grace, the grace which He, the possessor of all wisdom and understanding, lavished upon us, when He made known to us the secret of His will."

God is continually opening up secrets to us, things that have been hidden in ages past. He's making them known unto the church today, and He says, "This is in harmony with God's merciful purpose for the government of the world when the times are ripe for it, the purpose He has cherished in His own mind of restoring the whole creation to find its one head in Christ."

Oh praise God, the whole creation, not only you and me, but the whole creation! Every gopher that runs across the prairie, every blade of grass, everything that breathes, everything in which life dwells, God will restore. He says things in Heaven and things in earth will find their one head in Him.

We are beginning to learn to find our head in Christ. We are beginning to learn to find what our place is in God, but there is so much of His creation that is so far from Him. So much of it is down under everything, but God will restore by that which He is bringing to pass within His people. God desires with all of His heart to share these things with you. It is God's purpose to take you in with Him as a son, that you may work with Him in the fulfilling of that which He has in mind, Jesus said, "I call you not servants but friends." That is a wonderful relationship.

I will read in Romans 8:28-29, "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren." Those whom He has foreknown, He has also predestined to share in the likeness of His Son. It is God's purpose that you share in the likeness of His Son, that He might be the eldest of a vast company of brothers.

You know, you can't imagine really what God has in mind for us. It is unfathomable as far as our small minds are concerned. Many times we wonder if we are presumptuous, but the Spirit of God witnesses with our spirit, Praise His Name, that we are the sons of God. There is something about that spirit between the Father and those whom He is calling unto Himself; there is something of that drawing together that you can't throw off. He says, "Those who are called according to the divine purpose, those whom He has foreknown, He also predestined to share the likeness of His Son that He might be the eldest of a vast company of brothers" (Romans 8:29 Weymouth). Oh hallelujah.

The last morning of the camp at North Battleford, one of the elders read the account of the prodigal son, and something there very much impressed me. In this story, we are told about how the younger son took his inheritance, and went away into a far country and wasted his father's substance. Finally, this son came to his senses and came home. The father rejoiced and called the servants to bring the fatted calf and be merry. "Now his elder son was in the field: and as he came and drew nigh to the house, he heard music and dancing. And he called one of the servants, and asked him what these things meant. And he said unto him, Thy brother is come; and thy father has killed the fatted calf, because he has received him safe and sound. And he was angry, and would not go in: therefore came his father out, and entreated him. And he answering said to his father, Lo these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment: and yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends: But as soon as this thy son is come, which hath devoured thy living with harlots, thou hast killed for him the fatted calf" (Luke 15:25-30). Now this is what I want you to notice. "And he said unto him, Son thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine" (Luke 15:31). Oh praise God. That struck me one day. "Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine."

I realized that not only did I have such a relationship with my earthly father, but I also have that relationship with my Heavenly Father. All that He has is mine, by right of inheritance. I believe that, many times, we are just like that oldest son. Dad has everything there, and we do not even bother to ask Him for it; then, if we don't get it, we pout about it.

This is a wonderful thing to me. He says, "Thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine." It is a wonderful thing to realize that we are growing up into Him. You know, we don't give our children everything they ask for all the time. Sometimes we give them what they ask for because we know it is good for them, but if they ask for something that isn't good for them we say, "No." Sometimes they accept our decisions graciously, and sometimes they don't. We are exactly the same. We're just like a bunch of children.

We grow up through one experience after another in our lives. We learn to do many different things as children. Our children grow to the place where it is God's mind that they begin to learn to be independent. Some of them will go through that period of life that we call "the teens" very graciously, and others go

through it in a rebellious way. We are like that. Yes, we are exactly the same. God doesn't want us to be independent of Him, but He wants us to grow up, so we can stand on our own two feet; and we desire the same for our children. That is why, when they get to be 13, 14, or 15 that thing nature has built into them starts to work and they start to get a mind of their own; that is right. It is just the same with our Heavenly Father, but still we must submit to Him.

This growing up is a wonderful thing. I pray God will help us to walk with Him as He desires. May we realize that as we grow and mature that the reason for maturity is that He might begin to lay the load upon our shoulder.

We have heard much about the things God has accomplished in his sovereignty. He did these things for us when we were children. These things He did as a sovereign act in previous times. He expects us to now use the ability He gave us to become responsible so that He can lay a weight upon our shoulders.

Someone asked me how you know which is your responsibility and which God accomplishes through His sovereign will. They wanted to draw a line and say this is my responsibility and this is God's. You can't do that, because that line moves every day of your experience. That line would never stay in the same place. I can look back in my life, and I remember the different things my parents asked me to do when I was a boy. I can't remember when I didn't do anything. That is a little too far back. The day came when they started asking me to do things. I remember the first chore I had to do at home was to take a little pail and go to the hen house and get the eggs. That became my job. Up until that time, all I did when mother served eggs was to sit at the table and eat them; but I assumed a little bit of the responsibility. The older I got the more responsibility my parents laid upon me. The next thing I knew, I was milking cows and driving the horses. One fall it was necessary for my dad to be away from home and he said to me, "Son do you think you can take the binder and harvest the crop?" I sweat a lot, but we got it harvested.

Likewise, the line between what God does for us and what God expects us to do is constantly changing. If it stayed in one place too long, you would not be growing. This would be an indication that there was something wrong. If you set your child on the scales today, and he weighs 25 pounds, then, a year later he still weighs 25 pounds, you would be very worried. Likewise God expects us to grow.

That wonderful, glorious relationship between our Father and us will grow, and we'll grow, and the things God has purposed and planned will all grow together, and His purpose will be accomplished. I know this because I have tremendous confidence in my Heavenly Father that the things He has planned He will bring to pass.

To me, being Spiritual isn't a complicated thing. Being Spiritual is learning to walk with our Heavenly Father in His house, and accept the responsibilities, accept the joys, and accept those things that God brings in our path from day to day.

I shocked someone one time. I was talking about the fruit of the Spirit, and I said that these things were a part of God's nature, and they started with love, joy, and peace etc. I said God enjoys Himself, and He does. He enjoys His creation. He enjoys working with you. He enjoys your fellowship in the same way you enjoy your family.

A family is a wonderful thing. To be able to enjoy one another as members of a family is a real blessing. Our Heavenly Father enjoys fellowship with His family. He enjoys giving to us. He enjoys causing His hand to rest upon us as He directs our paths.

The scriptures are full of things that describe God's ways of dealing with us, and they are not things that we do not understand. They are right down to earth everyday things that fit into your experience and mine. We pray you may grow in this glorious relationship that He has created between us, and that you, by the Spirit will more and more be able to say, "My Father."

THE NEW LIFE

Paul's letter to the Colossians shows his concern for all members of the body of Christ. As far as we know, he had never visited the church in Colosse. Other men who ministered with him had ministered there and laid a foundation. His concern for the Colossians is especially manifested in Colossians 3:1: "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God."

When Paul speaks of being risen with Christ, he is speaking of the change that should be in our walk after we have been baptized in water. We see this from what he says in Colossians 2:12: "Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead." We are buried with Him in baptism, wherein also we are risen with Him. The purpose of being baptized in water is to bury the old man. A new life, or being risen with Him, takes place through "faith in the operation of God."

Some people think that you join the church by being baptized. That has nothing to do with it. Its purpose is to bury the old carnal man. Put him down under the water, and leave him buried. It is the new man that we want to see rise again. "And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses;" (Colossians 2:13). What a wonderful experience to be able to enter into.

"Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth" (Colossians 3:2). He speaks of many things that are earthly, many things that are carnal. Many people don't like to hear you speak about these things. They feel you should always speak about love, but never want to talk about judgement. In the creation of God, there is both negative and positive. Many feel you should never minister on the negative. I thank God that He does minister to us negatively, and tells us when we are not walking right.

He convicts us of sin. There is a place called hell. There is a place of judgement. We must pay attention to that. When I went to school and was taught Physics and Chemistry, they told us that the whole creation was made up of negative and positive ions. Both are necessary, and that is the way God created things. I looked in the dictionary to see what an ion was, and it said that it is a very small particle. I don't know whether an ion is a part of an atom or made up of many atoms. An atom is so small you can't see it, yet we are told that

an atom consists of a nucleus with satellites orbiting around that nucleus. Yhe things that God has put into His creation are tremendous. In His creation are things both negative and positive, and we need both.

Go to your car and disconnect the negative terminal on the battery and see how well it runs. You couldn't even start it. God's creation doesn't work without negative and positive. Our Spiritual life doesn't work without the negative and the positive. We have to have that convicting power of the Spirit of God to draw us close to Him and to help us to walk in the ways of the Lord.

Paul says we should mortify our members which are upon the earth. Mortify means "to put to death." I am thankful for the things we have been taught along this line, and I hope we can all hear and remember them.

Paul lists the things we are to put to death:

1. Fornication. I am sure we all know what that is. In the day that I grew up, it was something that was never mentioned, but today, the youngest school child knows all about it. I was ignorant of many things.

2. Uncleanness (Dirty minuteness). He is referring to uncleanness in our walk and uncleanness in our speech. Some people can't utter three words without using the Lord's name in vain.

3. Inordinate affection. That is affection that goes beyond proper limits. When affection goes beyond proper limits it is not right, and God is not pleased with it.

4. Evil concupiscence. A strong evil desire, especially sexual desire or lust.

5. Covetousness, which is idolatry. Covetousness is the lust for other people's possessions.

"For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience: In the which ye also walked some time, when ye lived in them" (Colossians 3:6-7). These are things that belong to the carnal earthly realm. In our baptism, when we have been buried with Christ, we long to rise above those things and live in a new realm. Notice that Paul said, “For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience." I have no desire to be a partaker of the wrath of God. I want nothing to do with it at all. I pray that we will all walk so we will escape the wrath of God.

"But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him:" (Colossians 3:8-10). He says here to put off all these earthly things.

The idea the Holy Spirit would like to get across here is that we put off all these things just like we put off a dirty garment. We put off the dirty garment and we are rid of the dirt. That is what God wants us to do with these things. These are things that will require action on our part. If we have trouble with our temper, we need to work on it a bit. Ask God to help you with that. Put it off. Wrath is when you become very angry. Some of us get very upset with things. Malice is ill will with a desire to harm another. Blasphemy is the way we speak about and use the things of God. Filthy communication out of your mouth is a type of

speech that should never be heard from any Christian. We must be careful of the stories we tell that they do not discredit our Lord.

"What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?" (Romans 6:1). Shall we? Paul has been writing about the grace of God. How wonderful the grace of God is! How thankful we are for God's grace! Should we keep on sinning so God can show more grace? He says, "God forbid." We should say the same thing.

"How shall we that are dead to sin live any longer therein? Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?" (Romans 6:2-3). When we are baptized, we are buried into His death. We become a partaker of His death. "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life" (Romans 6:4). There is no excuse for the person who has been born again and baptized to be walking in sin. Sin should be something behind them. I'm not saying that the devil won't cause us to stumble sometimes, but to be deliberately walking in sin is absolutely not pleasing to God. If we examine ourselves and see we are walking in sin, we need to repent with all our hearts. We should walk in the newness of life that God has made available for us. "For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection:" (Romans 6:5). We long for the fullness of that resurrection.

After a person has been buried in baptism, there should be a beginning of that flow of resurrection life. There should be a turning around. The term, "born again" is used rather loosely in our day. If there is no change in a person's life I doubt very much if there has been a birth. A birth will bring about a new life. If we have been planted together in the likeness of His death we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection.

"Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin" (Romans 6:6). Our King James version says "is crucified." Other translators say "was crucified." We must pray that God will help us to enter into His death. He that is dead is freed from sin. "Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him: Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. Likewise reckon [count as if it happened] ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord; Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof" (Romans 6:8-12). Every one of us has a responsibility. There has to be a difference between the church and the world. "Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God" (Romans 6:13). It is very necessary that we all get our priorities right and start living for the proper master. We can choose. The word "let" is very important. "Let not sin reign." Don't yield yourselves to unrighteousness and to sin. We must "yield ourselves to God," in order that we can be led by the Spirit and walk in the ways that are according to the things He teaches and leads us in.

"For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace. What then? Shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid" (Romans 6:14). We are not under

a law. If we are led by the Spirit we live in a realm where the law can't touch us. The law doesn't say anything to you when you are walking in the Spirit, but as soon as you begin to walk in the carnal, the first thing the law says is "thou shalt not." The law convicts you. We can either yield to the spirit of conviction and make things right, or we can cause our conscience to become dead.

"Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?" (Romans 6:16). We pray God will help us. We can "yield" ourselves to obey sin unto death or to obedience unto righteousness and life.

"But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness" (Romans 6:17-18). We pray God will help us to choose the proper master.
"I speak after the manner of men because of the infirmity of your flesh: for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness" (Romans 6:19). Notice the change God expects here; He wants us to no longer walk in sin.

"For when ye were the servants of sin, ye were free from righteousness. What fruit had ye then in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death" (Romans 6:20-21). Paul is talking about the fruit of the Spirit here (Galatians 5:22,23). There is no fruit of the Spirit in a sinful type of life. All that is manifested is the works of the flesh and the end is death. If we don't walk right there is judgement. Don't let yourself be fooled.
"But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life" (Romans 6:22).

"For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 6:23). We used to memorize this verse to deal with the sinner who was out on the street, but Paul is saying these things here to deal with the Christian that is not walking right. "The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life."

"Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him:" (Colossians 3:9-10). The new man is renewed in knowledge. "And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God" (Romans 12:2). When you walk with God you have to continually change your mind about many things. When we became a Christian after walking in an unholy life far from God, we found that we had to change our mind about many things. Some people haven't made a very good job of changing their mind. It is very important to not be conformed to this world. Don't let the world squeeze you into its mould, but be you transformed by the renewing of your mind that you may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God. This is the same thing Paul talks about in Colossians. We put on the new man that is renewed in knowledge. Our knowledge changes when we are born again. We gain a new knowledge. We learn to walk in a new way that is "renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him."

"Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self [just like that dirty garment] with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its creator" (Colossians 3:9-10 NIV). That is wonderful.

"Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all" (Colossians 3:11). This does away with racism. There are no different races in Christ. Praise God for that.

These are the things that we are to put on like a clean garment, when we set our affection on things above: "Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies [an old expression that means tenderheartedness], kindness, humbleness of mind..." We can all think of people who are far from humble. Just think of the opposite and try to emulate that. "... meekness and longsuffering. Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye" (Colossians 3:12-13).

This is the positive side of our life. "And above all things put on love which is the bond of perfectness" (Colossians 3:14). Love is the bond that ties the body of Christ together. "And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful" (Colossians 3:15). "Let" means that we are to allow the peace of God to rule in our hearts. It is a very disturbing thing when people deliberately do things that destroy peace and bring discord in the body of Christ. Let the peace of God rule in your hearts to which also you are called to be one body.

It is a sad thing when people are not thankful. We are a generation that has more, as far as the natural is concerned, than any other generation before us; but there are so many people, especially children and young people, who are unthankful. Many of us grew up during the thirties, and we had a lot less to be thankful for then. Our lot has changed, and we are loaded with natural benefits. I hope we will never forget to thank God for His blessings materially and spiritually. We also need to be thankful to one another. We must appreciate the different ministries of the Body.

"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him" (Colossians 3:16-17).

Can we do everything we do in His Name, or would we just as soon He wasn't watching? Let us pray that we will walk as though we have risen with Christ-as though we have put on a new life. The old is taken off, but the new is put on. We have so much to thank God for in the things He has done for us and for the life He has allowed us to enter into. Pray God will help us to appreciate it and enter into it with all our hearts.

Heavenly Father you know our hearts, and you know our needs, and we pray that you will help us to enter into that life that you are preparing us for. Father, don't let us be snared by the evil one, but let us think on those things which are above, those things that belong to the realm of the Spirit. We pray that the fruit of the Spirit will be manifest in our lives. We ask Thee to be with us in Jesus Name. Amen.

ON BEING OBEDIENT

I was reading in the Scripture the other day, in the fifth chapter of John, and I would like to read some of it to you. Jesus had just healed the man at the pool of Bethesda and the Jews were seeking to kill Him because He had not only broken the Sabbath, but because He had said God was His Father, making Himself equal with God.

"Then answered Jesus and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things so ever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise" (John 5:19). These were the words of Jesus concerning the things He did. He said He could do nothing of Himself, but He did what He saw His Father do. Then He says: "For the Father loveth the Son, and sheweth him all things that Himself doeth: and he will shew him greater works than these, that ye may marvel" (John 5:20).

We have here the teaching of Christ concerning the things that He did. He didn't do them on His own. He didn't just run and do whatever came to His mind, but He did the things that He had seen His Father do.

"I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me" (John 5:30). Do you know what destroys righteous judgement? It is when we seek our own will and not the will of our Heavenly Father.

As I was contemplating these few verses I read, it seemed that obedience was the prime thing Jesus was talking about. First of all, He said, the Son could do nothing of Himself but what He saw His Father do and the works the Father gave Him to finish, which were the same works He did. He talks in the same way all through the chapter. He seeks not His own will, but the will of the Father who had sent Him. The whole theme is obedience. In our life and experience obedience is one of the most important things there can be: Obedience to the voice of the Lord; obedience to the leading of His Spirit; obedience to that little nudge He gives you from time to time to minister in one way or another. I am not talking just about the meetings. I believe we have gone far past the day when our ministering is all done in the meeting. It is very important that our ministry grow and develop outside the meeting. It is important that we be led by the Spirit in ministering wherever we are and whenever the occasion may arise.

I would like to read from Phillip's translation a few verses from the fifth chapter of Hebrews: "Christ, in the days when He was a man on earth, appealed to the One who could save Him from death in desperate prayer and the agony of tears. His prayers were heard because of His willingness to obey. (One edition of the Phillips says, "; He was freed from His shrinking from death.') But, Son though He was, He had to prove the meaning of obedience through all that He suffered."

Pay very particular attention to this. When Christ prayed His prayers were heard. We often think that if we don't get the answer we want that our prayer wasn't heard. We beat ourselves over the head because we have no faith; We chastise ourselves because there must be something wrong in our lives and God isn't

listening to us, but I am sure of this: there are a lot of prayers heard that we think are not heard. Because our Father is all wise, He gives us the answer that pleases Him, rather than the answer we ask for.

This scripture is referring to Christ's prayer in Gethsemane, and in this case, He didn't' get the answer He asked for. We often ask for things when it is His mind to give us something different. It says that His prayers were heard. He was freed from His shrinking from death. Up until this time He had petitioned His Father saying, "Let this cup pass from me." Now He was freed from shrinking from death. He could face death and go and bear the sins of mankind.

"He was freed from shrinking from death but, Son though He was, He had to prove the meaning of obedience through all that He suffered." Suffering is the thing that will bring out whether we are obedient or not. If everything is going along real smooth we don't know how strong we are. There is no way to judge whether we are growing or maturing. Here Christ proved His obedience by that which He suffered. If He had shrunk from obedience He would not have been the perfect Son. When He had proved Himself the perfect Son, He became the author of eternal salvation, to all who should obey Him, being now recognized by God Himself as high priest after the order of Melchisedek.

The key to things here is obedience. We tend to complicate life so much. We like to struggle and strive when all God asks is a small act of obedience. I pray that the Spirit of God will so rest upon us that we will recognize as Christ did, that we can do nothing of ourselves but we will do what we see our Father do; That we will walk in that which the Spirit of God leads us in. This is a simple thing and we have all experienced it; in fact we have experienced both extremes. We all know how simple it is to be led of the Spirit and do what the Spirit of God says. We have also had the opposite experience where we have run when we haven't been sent, or we have disregarded the leading of the Spirit. May God help us to always have our ears attuned to His leading.

There are so many little things that come into our life from day to day in which God would desire us to minister. I was once acquainted with a man to whom it was prophesied that he would have a ministry of giving. He went on for some time without giving anything saying that he was waiting for God to enable him to give something big. He should have walked in the ministry that God had given him and if all he had to give was a cup of cold water he wouldn't have lost his reward. God would then have increased his ability to give. All that God requires is that we be faithful with that which He has given. God's mind is that we be led by the Spirit and not wait until we can do some spectacular thing. The same thing is true with every ministry. We must begin where we are. Don't think that unless you can do some great thing you can't minister. We are surrounded by little things wherein we can minister that little portion that God has given us, and no doubt it will grow.

We think that to be obedient there is some great sacrifice of obedience necessary. But God asks us to be obedient in the little things that come up continually. It is necessary that we prove our obedience, as Jesus proved His obedience. By that we can prove our sonship. Sonship is an impossibility without obedience. I am thankful to God for His patience toward us. Let us pray that we may always hear His voice. Obedience is something that God calls for in every facet of our life. A child's love for God is shown by their obedience to their parents. Our love for Him is also shown by our obedience to those who have been set over us in the

Lord. Let our obedience to the voice of the Spirit also be manifested. May we prove the calling that God has given us by our obedience.

Paul says, Romans 8:14 "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." That simply means obedience. Don't always be looking for big things, but be looking for those things that are all around us, that the Spirit of God leads you to, and your ministry will be effective. God's mind and will for all of us is to walk in the calling that He has given us. Our life is a part of our life and being, and it is impossible to separate it from us. Our ministry gets up with us in the morning and goes to bed with us at night. It goes with us to work and is with us in our leisure time. It may not always be in evidence but our ministry is always with us and we should listen to the voice of the Spirit that it may become active at any time according to His bidding, whether it is at the meeting, or we are at work or wherever we are. This is the road into Sonship. There are other things that are part of entering into Sonship, but this is the place where we are today. We have believed in the saving of our soul and now He asks for our bodies. (Romans 12:1)

He desires our obedience, even though at times it may mean suffering, that we may become His mature, grown up sons, rather than always being His children. Let your heart be open to God and if all His Spirit desires is the giving of a cup of cold water, give it. If He asks you to give someone a word of encouragement give it, and if someone should ask you concerning the hope that lies within your heart, give him the answer the Lord leads you to give. Let us read 1 Peter 3:15. "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear."

We are not instructed to talk with every man we meet on the street concerning that hope that is in us. He does tell us though that if someone asks us about the hope that is in us to be ready with the answer the Lord leads you to give. If we walk with God people can't help but get curious. If we minister in the capacity that God has called us, people will get curious. We have probably all had people question us about our faith. Peter says that when these questions come be ready to give an answer. Don't be afraid to give an answer. Give a good answer and as much as possible base it on the word of God. Lean on the Spirit of God to give you the answer that God wants you to give. These questions will come as a result of the way you live and the way your ministry functions in your everyday life. I pray that we will all walk in such a manner that people ask about the hope that lies within us.

If someone is curious and interested it is very easy to talk to him about Spiritual things, but if he isn't interested you are usually wasting your time and his too. These things will come as we are obedient to our Heavenly Father. Jesus said, "Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven: but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in Heaven. Matthew 7:21. Obedience is so important.

Peter continues, "Having a good conscience; that whereas they speak evil of you, as of evil doers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ. For it is better if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well doing, than for evil things." Here is something that you may not realize. If a person is walking with God and they meet an ungodly man the sinner is often convicted because of the presence of God within the Christian. This perhaps doesn't always happen but many times I have seen the man who

doesn't walk with God very uneasy in the presence of the man who does. The result of this will probably be that either the man will question you concerning your faith or he will speak evil of you as an evil doer.

Don't worry about a little tribulation. Paul said that all who will live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution. This is just a foregone conclusion. You don't have to ask for it; it will just come. That is because of the presence of God dwelling within you, and sinners don't like the presence of God because it bothers them. It is a good thing if a man is bothered because of the presence of God. That shows that there is something in him that is alive. If the presence of God doesn't convict a man of sin his spirit is dead and there is no way you can help him until God makes it alive. There are two ways this might work. You may be persecuted because of your hope or it may cause people to be drawn to you to question you.

I pray that whatever comes we will be obedient to minister as His Spirit leads us. Let us minister according to the proportion of faith or in other words, according to the faith that we have. Paul said that about prophesying but it is also true about every ministry in the Body of Christ. We all like to minister in the big things that will easily be seen but often our faith isn't big enough for the things we would like to do. Therefore let us minister in the things in which our faith is big enough: even if it is just giving a cup of water in His Name. This is what will make our faith grow.

Man always wants to make such a big thing out of everything he does. He is always trying to complicate things instead of leaving them simple as God ordained they should be. If he can't do the big thing that will be evident in the eyes of all, he won't do anything. Remember what Jesus said about the cup of cold water. Let us not compare ourselves with one another, but let us be ourselves. Let us be what God made us and minister according to our faith in His calling. When we speak of obedience, I pray that our desire for obedience will always be to please our Heavenly Father. We can be obedient because we have to but it is much better and more pleasing to Him if we are obedient from the heart.

THE OPEN DOOR

At the Feast of Pentecost this spring, God spoke to us by His Spirit about the open door. At the beginning of the Move of the Spirit, God made it very, very real to us that He was setting before us an open door. The words He spoke through John were emphasized to us by the Spirit. "These things saith He that is holy, He that is true, He that hath the key of David, He that openeth and no man shutteth; and shutteth and no man openeth; I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it" (Revelations 3:7,8). As God helped us to be led of His Spirit, we truly found that what He had set before us was an open door.

As we walked on with God, we have found that our life with Him is a series of open doors. If we enter one open door with Him, we find that there is another before us, then another, and another, and I expect there are an infinite number of open doors, all leading from one experience to another, in the realm of the Spirit.

The entering of each open door, and the experience that goes with it, contributes to our growth in the spirit. The first open door that we experienced, I should say, the first that were conscious of, was accepting Christ as our Saviour. The baptism of the Holy Spirit is another open door, the receiving of the gifts of the Spirit is another, and the entering into a ministry is another.

These open doors that I have mentioned are, more or less, personal experiences, and I suppose that you could tell us of other open doors through which God has led you, in your walk with Him, which have contributed to your growth in the Spirit. But the open door concerning which God ministered to us at the beginning of this move of the Spirit was an open door that was set before the Church. Many people entered into that open door, but there were also many who refused to enter into that door. It is an open door such as this that once again the Church is standing before.

The entering in of that open door by the Church has brought an order out of confusion; it has brought rest to the people of God, and it has brought peace that we have never known before. By a rest, I do not mean where you sit down and do nothing. This is a far greater rest, where a man knows what he is doing because God has called him, and he learns to be led of the Spirit. He has ceased from his own works, and learns to do only those things that God, by the Spirit, leads him to do. How many well-meaning people, there are, who cause themselves so much unrest by trying to work for God in ways that He never called them to? How much better it would be for us to wait for God to set before us an open door, and then enter into it? The order God has brought to the move of the Spirit sets every man in his place in the Body of Christ, according to the calling of God; and, if I may use the word, makes every man a "specialist" in his own calling.

This, in turn, brings peace. In an order so established by God, there is no jockeying for position and no grasping for prominence. "For by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many. If the foot shall say, because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? And if the ear shall say, because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased Him. And if they were all one member, where were the body? But now are they many members, yet but one body" (I Corinthians 12:13-20).

I would like to refer to several passages of scripture in John's gospel that have to do with entering into these doors. It doesn't make much difference whether it is a door that we as individuals enter, or whether it is a door through which the whole church enters: the experience is much the same.

In John 6:44, Jesus said, "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him." It is first necessary that God open the door; then He shows you the open door and draws you into it by the leading of His Spirit. Too many people try to invent their own doors and then try to enter them by themselves.

One time Jesus said, "I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture" (John 10:9). He is the door to every experience in the Spirit. Again, He said "'All that the Father giveth me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out" (John 6:37).

It is necessary for God to open the door to us, and draw us unto Himself; but it is also necessary for us to yield to the drawing of the Spirit of God. One time, as one of the brethren was ministering at a camp meeting, God made a tremendous impression upon us by the Spirit about how necessary it is for us to make ourselves available to God. There have been many people, when God sets before them an open door, who refuse to enter. It makes me think of how, on the farm, the calves would run and jump around the pasture all summer. When winter would come, we would have to put them in the barn. Some of them were so stubborn that they just weren't going to go through that door. They would dig in all four feet, and you just couldn't move them. Sometimes people are that way when God sets before them an open door. Every new experience brings a change in us, and we hate change. What is beyond that open door may be a fuller and broader experience, and it may entail greater responsibility. May we all learn to make ourselves available, that His Spirit may move upon us.

I can't say that I know what the open door is that God is opening before the Church at the present time, but I do know this: we want to be yielded to Him so we may be able to enter into that door. Let us depend upon the wisdom of God, and be led of His Spirit, and the glorious things God has planned will be wrought in and through His people.

OREGON CAMP 1986

The camp meeting at Turner, Oregon, seemed to be a continuation of the camp meeting in North Battleford. God has been speaking, to young and old alike, concerning our dedication to Him. He has talked to us about coming out, and being separate, so that we touch not the unclean thing. He has given us much instruction concerning the administration of our lives. This includes the ministry we have received of God in the Body of Christ, our walk before Him, our time, and the use of the material things He has put in our hands. All this is part of being spiritual.

The needs of many were met during the camp meeting. The sick and afflicted were prayed for. Those with personal problems were helped.

God manifested Himself in the ministry of the Body. Especially evident was the ministry in song, as many sang new songs given them by the Spirit of God. Our hearts were lifted to Him in praise and adoration.

As one brother ministered concerning the moving of the Holy Spirit in our lives, he was exhorting the people about the benefits of speaking in other tongues. He told them that, as we have been taught, we should speak to God in other tongues every day in our private prayer. Some had gone for a week without speaking in other tongues; some had gone for a month or more. He told them that a week was far too long to go without communicating to God in this manner. As a result, many came for prayer and help. There was a

glorious moving of the Spirit upon the people. I trust they will remember that a week is far too long to go without talking to God in other tongues.

Another highlight was a meeting when those with home problems were prayed for. Couples came for help from the Lord who is the only real source of help. Young people came for prayer on behalf of parents who were separated or having difficulty. Some came for prayer on behalf of brothers or sisters or children. There was a real spirit of intercession, and one couldn't help but feel that only eternity will reveal the result of that meeting. The curse of home breakdown must be stopped, so let us continue to intercede before God on behalf of those with problems.

One comment that was heard of many was concerning the spirit of unity among the people. The young people remarked that they didn't feel like separating themselves from the group, but, because of the flow of unity, they desired to stay together.

We thank the Lord for a wonderful time of blessing and edification.

OVERCOMERS

Nov/Dec 1989 issue of the Sharon Star

Zechariah was a prophet of the Lord sent to the remnant that were returning to Judah from their 70 years of captivity in Babylon. The Lord spoke to Zechariah, telling him of His displeasure with His people. As God talked with the prophet, He showed him a number of visions concerning Judah and Jerusalem, past, present, and future. I would like to focus your attention on the vision described in Zechariah 3:1-7.

He saw Joshua, the high priest, standing before the angel of the Lord, and Satan standing at his right hand to resist him. The high priest, in a typical sense, represents those whom God is calling out to enter that Melchisedec priesthood. The church has entered the place of ministry represented by the priesthood, entering the holy place in the tabernacle in the wilderness to partake of the table that held the bread of the Presence, to burn incense upon the altar of incense, and to tend the light of the golden candlestick. The church has never entered beyond the veil as the high priest did, but our forerunner, Jesus Christ, has entered. "Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil; Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec" (Hebrews 6:19,20).

It is the hope of the church to attain that high priestly ministry that they may minister before God beyond the veil on behalf of the whole creation. This is referred to in the Scriptures as the Melchisedec priesthood, or the ministry of the manifested sons of God. There was only one priest who entered the holy of holies. There will only be one who will enter again.

CHRIST AND HIS UNIFIED BODY

In Zechariah's vision, we have the High Priest standing with an angel on one side of him, and Satan on the other side to resist him. This is the position we find ourselves in today. We find the enemy continually resisting us in our walk and ministry. We find him continually accusing us, and causing us to become discouraged. He tells us how carnal we are, and that we are not spiritual. If we listen to him, we will give up the fight, and he will be victorious. "And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, "Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night" (Revelations 12:10). May God help us to realize that our accuser will be cast down. We must learn not to listen to his accusations, but rely on the help of the Holy Spirit.

In I John 2:1-2, we read, "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: And he is the propitiation for our sins: And not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." Not only is Satan in the presence of God accusing us, but our advocate Jesus Christ is there also on our behalf.

In I John 1:9, we read, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." If we have sinned, in order to have Jesus act as our advocate, we must confess our sin. Just because Christ is our advocate is no excuse for us to live carelessly. We must know the difference between Satan bringing false accusations, and the Holy Spirit convicting us of unconfessed sin. If our sin has been confessed and made right, be confident of this-the Lord has forgiven you, and forgotten it!!

In the front of the High Priest stood the angel of the Lord. Not many people have seen angels, and I am afraid that, if they were visible to us, we would be very frightened. That does not say that they are not all around us. "But to which of the angels said he at any time, Sit on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool? Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" (Hebrews 1:13-14). "For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest. And the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; which voice they that heard entreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more (the writer is referring to Israel's experience in the wilderness when they were camped before mount Horeb where the law was given Moses): ... But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels. To the general assembly and church of the first born, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel" (Hebrews 12:18-19,22-24).

We see from the Scriptures that we are surrounded by angels. David, in the Psalms, wrote, "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them" (Psalms 34:7). When the enemy resists us, and tempts us, let us remember that the angels of the Lord are present to help. I am sure that many times the angel of the Lord has delivered us, and we're not even aware of it.

James teaches us how to deal with the Devil. "Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble. 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 4:6-8). We are instructed to resist the Devil. Do not believe all the accusations he brings against you. Draw close to God. Learn to fellowship with him, and enjoy His presence, and you will find Him very close to you. Our love and thanksgiving must flow out to Him. We cannot afford to let our love for the Lord become cool or lukewarm, or the enemy of our souls will have the advantage. Pray that you may walk in the anointing of the Spirit.

"The Lord said unto Satan, The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan; even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem rebuke thee: is not this a brand plucked out of the fire?" (Zechariah 3:2). A brand is a burning stick. We all are as burning sticks that have been pulled out of the fire. Many people have asked the question, Why me, Lord? Why has God plucked me from a life of sin when all my friends of other years have continued to walk in sin and far from God? The Lord rebukes Satan for his attacks on the church that heavenly Jerusalem made up of living stones. He also reminds him that we are people of His choosing, people who have been plucked from the fire and redeemed.

"Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments, and stood before the angel" (Zechariah 3:3). This describes our unsaved, unredeemed state. "But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousness are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away" (Isaiah 64:6). Something had to be done about Joshua's garments. The same is true of us. Our own righteousness is just a filthy garment. The Lord gave instructions to the bystanders that they would take away his dirty clothes. He makes it clear that he was not just talking of natural clothing when He says, "Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee and I will clothe thee with a change of raiment" (Zechariah 3:4). This, God has done with us, when we believed. He has taken away our sin, and rebellion, and is clothing us with new raiment, even the righteousness found in Jesus Christ.

"Let them set a fair mitre (the headdress of the high priest) upon his head. So they set a fair mitre upon his head, and clothed him with garments. And the angel of the Lord stood by" (Zechariah 3:5). To enter that Melchisedec priesthood, we require not only the clothing, but also the headdress of the priesthood. The headdress is the way we think, and is our state of mind toward the things of the spiritual realm, and to one another. The apostle Paul makes this plain in Romans 12:2-3, "And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God. For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith."

I would like to quote Zechariah 3:6-7 from the NIV: "The angel of the Lord gave the charge to Joshua: 'This is what the Lord Almighty says: "If you will walk in my ways and keep my requirements, then you will govern my house and have charge of my courts, and I will give you a place among these standing here."'"

"To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches" (Revelations 3:21).

It is plain that often the Lord has plucked us from the fire, rebuked Satan concerning his dominion over us, given us a change of raiment, and put a miter upon our head and given us a responsibility to fulfill. If we are faithful to our responsibility, God will set us in a place in His Kingdom. He says, "I will give you a place among those standing here" (Zechariah 3:7 NIV). He is referring to those mentioned in Hebrews 11, who all died in faith, not having received the promise. He is referring to the great cloud of witnesses mentioned here, "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God" (Hebrews 12:1-2).

God bless you. Be faithful to your calling.

GOING ON TO PERFECTION

Nov/Dec 81

In Hebrews 6:1-3 we read, "Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on to perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, Of the doctrine of baptisms and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgement. And this will we do, if God permit."

In the Move of the Spirit, God has restored the foundation for His church. As Isaiah prophesied, the Lord has performed: "Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation:" (Isaiah 28:16). "Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord:" (Ephesians 2:19-21). God has also proven the words of Paul in II Timothy 2:19, "Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are His....”

God wishes to lay this foundation in the lives of all His people. But once it is laid, He doesn't want to have to be laying it over and over again and again. He is very longsuffering and patient, and will do it if it becomes necessary. His best for us is that once that foundation is laid, we remain secure upon it, neither turning to the left hand or the right, but pressing on in the things of the Kingdom of God.

Everyone who is new to the ways of God must have this foundation laid in his life and experience. The acceptance of Christ is the beginning of the work of God in our lives. That is where God starts. We cannot forget the first principles of the doctrine of Christ and go on, any more than we can forget the first principles of mathematics and go to the study of higher mathematics. If we ever forget that one and one makes two, we could never go any further. It is the same in the things of God. We must remember the foundation and

build on it, but we should not have to be continually laying it again in our life and experience. As the student learns that one plus one equals two, and it becomes a part of his knowledge, so the things of the foundation God lays should become a part of our life and experience. It should become something we walk and live in.

Many things in our life change according to need or circumstance, but the foundation of the church never changes. The writer of Hebrews says, "Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on to perfection" (6:1). What I am interested in is where this takes us. What do we go on to? What is our goal? What does God have in mind for His people? How do we attain it? I am sure that these questions are in the mind of every growing Christian. They are a cry from deep within the soul.

In considering these questions, the first thing the Spirit of God brings to our mind is that we must enter into the rest of God. There is no way we can force God to reveal Himself or His ways. If we walk with Him, He will lead us; we can lean upon Him and rest in His love. "I will bless the Lord, who hath given me counsel: my reins also instruct me in the night seasons. I have set the Lord always before me: because He is at my right hand, I shall not be moved. Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth; my flesh also shall rest in hope. For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see the corruption. Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fullness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore" (Psalms 16:7-11). David had learned the security of resting in the Lord.

It is important to yield ourselves to Him and be led of His Spirit. The carnal nature never rests. It is continually striving, striving to overcome the Christ who dwells within. But our victory is not in striving, but in yielding to the moving of the Holy Spirit. "There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from His. Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief" (Hebrews 4:9-11). We must cease from our own works, be led of the Spirit and enter into His works. "Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God; yea thy law is written within my heart" (Psalms 40:7,8).

We often sing a song:

I delight to do thy will O Lord,
I delight to do thy will,
And to walk with Thee is not grievous unto me,
I delight to do thy will.

In Hebrews 5:9, speaking of Christ, the writer says, "And being made perfect..." This was something that was accomplished during His earthly ministry. We have thought that Christ was always perfect, but He was made perfect. It is perfection that we desire to go on to; since we are following Christ, who is our Shepherd, let us find out what made him perfect.

In Hebrews 5:8, we read, "Though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered; ..." Christ had to learn obedience. Before He could be made perfect, He had to be tested by suffering. Suffering, trial and difficulty will test us to see if we can be obedient. His obedience under these

circumstances is what made Him perfect. He had to be tried, and so must we be tried before we can enter the realm of perfection.

The Greek word that is translated "perfect" in this scripture means "complete." The word perfection in Hebrews 6:1 comes from the same Greek word. Christ was made complete by the test of obedience. He was able, because of this completeness, to carry out the purpose of God for Him. Our Father wishes that we would also attain completeness, so we may be able to carry out His purpose for us. God's purpose for Christ was that "He became the author (or originator, or source) of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him;" (Hebrews 5:9).

As we have been taught, our salvation reaches much further than the salvation of our souls. Before we could believe to the saving of our soul, our spirit had to be made alive so we could be conscious of the voice of God speaking to us. Most of us have gone through a period before we have accepted Christ as our Saviour when God was speaking to us about our need. Our spirit had come alive. Then, with our believing and accepting Christ, our soul received life.

It remains, then, for our bodies to attain life. When we speak of life to the body, we speak of that glorious resurrection life that Paul mentions in Philippians 3:10,11: "That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death; If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead."

Paul's attaining of this experience hinged upon, first of all, faith for the saving of his soul. "And be found in Him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith" (Philippians 3:9).

Secondly, His attaining the resurrection rested on his obedience. He suffered the loss of all things that he might win Christ. We may think he was speaking of the loss of material things, but it wasn't just that. Philippians 3:4-6 tells us what he lost: "Though I might also have confidence in the flesh. If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more: Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee; Concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless."

It was all those things that separated him from Christ. If he walked in those things, he couldn't be obedient to the heavenly vision (Acts 26:19) and would miss that glorious resurrection from among the dead.

Entering into that resurrection is synonymous with the manifestation of the sons of God spoken of in Romans 8:19. In fact, the resurrection is the proof of sonship. It was so in the case of Jesus, and it will be the same with us. Let us read Romans 1:4, where Paul is talking about Jesus: "And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection of the dead..." His resurrection proved He was a Son.

In Romans 8:23, Paul speaks of "the adoption" or the placing as a son, which is the same as the manifestation of the sons of God, and how it is a redemption of our body. "And not only they (speaking of the creation),

but ourselves also, which have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body."

If we are going on to perfection, we must learn and practice submission. Without being submissive it will be impossible for us to inherit the kingdom of God. Submission must be taught and practiced in the church. We must submit to those who have an office of authority over us, given by God. Children must submit to and obey their parents. Wives submit to their husbands. The people submit to the elders and deacons of the church. The elders are under the care of the apostolic ministries, and the apostolic ministries must be submissive to Christ who is the Head of His body, the church. And the Head of Christ is God. In this order, God's authority reaches right from Himself to the smallest child and includes everyone. Nobody is exempt, and all have a covering if they will walk in its shelter. We thank God for this order and appreciate it with all our hearts.

There is another aspect of submission I would like to speak about. In Ephesians 5:21 we read, "Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God." This applies in the order I have just written about, but it also applies in a broader sense. Every ministry and gift in the body of Christ is a manifestation of Christ. As a ministry or gift operates, it is Christ who dwells within the person who is ministering. If someone prophesied in the Spirit, it is Christ who is prophesying. If someone exhorts by the Spirit, it is Christ who is exhorting. No matter who ministers in the Spirit, we must all submit to that ministry. If someone feels led of the Spirit to show mercy toward another person or if someone feels to exercise their ministry of helps, we must submit. Sometimes some of us are so independent we don't want to accept help in any way, but we have to submit. It may be a humbling experience, but we are recognizing the Christ who dwells in our brother. To grow and go on to perfection we need the ministry of every part of the body of Christ. "But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into Him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that WHICH EVERY JOINT SUPPLIETH, according to the effectual working in the measure of EVERY PART, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love" (Ephesians 4:15-16).

I wondered for many years what John the Baptist was talking about when he said in Matthew 3:11 that Jesus would baptize us with fire. "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance; but He that cometh after me, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire." Also in Acts 2:3 we read, "And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them." Luke wasn't speaking of the languages they were given when he spoke of tongues of fire. We have all watched a fire burn and have seen the flames rise in what is often referred to as tongues of flame. They spoke in many different languages by the Holy Spirit, but the tongues of fire were for a different purpose. In speaking of the fire that is spoken about here, many people think of the boldness that the Holy Spirit gives. They think of a preacher becoming fiery in his speech and actions. The Holy Spirit will do this, but this is not what the scripture is talking about.

Let us read Malachi 3:1-3, "Behold, I will send my messenger, and He shall prepare the way before me: and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to His temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold He shall come saith the Lord of hosts. But who may abide the day of His coming? And who shall stand when He appeareth? For He is like a refiners' fire, and like fullers' soap: and He shall

sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and He shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness."

Malachi is talking here about the work of the Holy Spirit. This is the fire God has sent to refine His people. This is the fire Jesus has baptized us with. This is the fire that rested upon His disciples on the day of Pentecost. God wants us to partake of His Holy Spirit that the fire may refine and purify us.

I once visited a silver refinery. As one looked in through the door of the furnace one could observe a beautiful sea of molten silver. The flames were reflected mirror-like in the melted metal, and one would doubt if anything could be more pure. Then the operator of the furnace added a chemical reagent and within minutes, none of that beautiful silver was visible. The material that was added reacted with the impurities in the silver and these impurities rose to the top. The beauty was completely obscured. The operator then used a long handled tool to rake all these impurities out the door of the furnace. The silver then returned to its original beauty. Another reagent was added and the same thing happened. This process went on for about a week, and by then, the silver was over ninety nine percent pure.

This is similar to the work of the Holy Spirit in us. We may look at one another and think we all reflect the beauty of Christ from within. Then God allows some circumstance to arise, and we find that beauty clouded over. Many times things come to the surface that we didn't know were in our lives. We are then able by the help of the Holy Spirit to remove those ugly things that were hidden beneath the surface of our lives. We must pray that the process will go on until we are completely in His image and likeness.

To have this work done in us by the Holy Spirit is not easy on the flesh. By the flesh we mean the carnal nature as opposed to the nature of Christ. "For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would"
(Galatians 5:17). We must submit to this process if we desire to be among the overcomers who sit with Christ in His throne. When the writer of Hebrews mentioned going on to perfection or completion, he was talking about the Melchisedec priesthood. Hebrews 7 gives a description of this priesthood. Melchisedec was first of all "King of righteousness." To be righteous simply means to bear the attributes of He who is right. Righteousness is one of the elements of the kingdom of God. It includes righteous living, righteous thinking and righteous judgement. It includes dealing with everyone and everything in a right manner. In Matthew 5:20, Jesus says, "For I say unto you, that except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven." In the next two chapters of Matthew, Jesus takes the law out of the realm of the letter into the realm of the Spirit. Our righteousness does not come by obeying the letter of the law which is written on tables of stone, but by having the law written upon our hearts by the Spirit of God and walking in and being led by the Spirit.

Melchisedec was also King of Peace, another element of the kingdom of God. The Greek word here translated "peace" literally means peace, unity or concord. Concord means agreement and harmony. That is what the church needs, and that is what the world needs. Jesus said, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you" (John 14:27). We need to enter into the peace given by the author of peace. The earth is in a constant state of turmoil and restlessness, but those who are going on to perfection need not abide there. David knew the peace of God, and we find many times that a psalm will begin in a state of unrest, but as he ministers in song before the Lord, God's peace reigns in his heart.

In Hebrews 7:3, we see that Melchisedec had gone beyond the realm of the natural or physical. I'm sure he had a mother and father, and there was a time when he was born; but these natural connections were overshadowed by the Spiritual realm. He had gone on to perfection. He was made like unto the Son of God. Abraham recognized him because he paid him tithes.

"...After the similitude of Melchisedec there ariseth another priest, who is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life" (Hebrews 7:15, 16). This is speaking of Christ who, though He died and by His blood has purged our sin, ever LIVETH to make intercession for us. Through Him we have the power of His resurrection. Christ was resurrected and has left open the door for us to enter into that same realm of life; for we shall be conformed to the image of His Son that He might be the firstborn among many brethren (Romans 8:29). This priesthood is more than the Christ Himself. It includes His body, the members of which shall be made in His image.

In Hebrews 5:5-10, we have Christ described as a priest called after the order of Melchisedec. Verse 7 describes His life of trial and tears, and His experience in the garden of Gethsemane where He prayed, "Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done" (Luke 22:42). His Father was able to save Him from death, and also heard His prayer, but the work of redemption had to be carried out.

"Though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered" (Hebrews 5:8). Christ's obedience had to be tested. It is the same with us. We never know whether we can be obedient unless we suffer. If we can obey in the face of suffering, then we know, and God knows, that we can be obedient.

"And being made perfect, He became the author of eternal salvation" (Hebrews 5:9). It was Christ's obedience that brought about His perfection. You may ask, "Was Christ not always perfect?" In the sense of sinlessness, yes; but in the sense of completeness, no. He couldn't be complete until He had been tested. "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" (Hebrews 4:15). He overcame and was complete or perfect, and we have the opportunity to go on to perfection through Him if we are willing to go through the testing.

"For it became (was suitable to) Him (God the Father), for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation (Christ) perfect through sufferings" (Hebrews 2:10). In Romans 8:29, we have these words: "For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren."

It is God's purpose that not only should Christ the Head be made perfect, but also the members of the Body of Christ be made perfect. He wants us to be so made that we conform to the image of His Son or in other words, to be made like His Son.

Many things are made in a form. First you have a form or a mould. Then a liquid or semi-liquid is poured into the form. The liquid is allowed to harden, and then the form is removed. The substance that was put into the form comes out in the exact shape and size as the form. Likewise God wants us to conform to the

image of His Son Jesus who was made perfect. He wants us to so conform to Christ's image that we will be recognized as His brothers.

When Israel was tested in the wilderness, they failed the test. We must be careful that we do not likewise fail in the testing our Heavenly Father allows to come our way. "Take heed brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. But exhort one another daily while it is called Today; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end;" (Hebrews 3:12-14).

After Paul had been stoned at Lystra and taken out of the city as dead, he ministered to the saints there, saying, "...that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God" (Acts 14:22).

In Philippians chapter three, Paul speaks of himself as not having already attained perfection, but pressing toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

Speaking of the work of the apostolic ministry in the church, Paul speaks of it as for the perfecting of the church. God's purpose for the church is that it will grow in unity, faith, and knowledge of the Son of God until it becomes a PERFECT man and has attained the measure of the fullness of the stature of Christ (Ephesians 4:12-14). When he wrote to the Colossians, Paul speaks of Christ in us as being "the hope of glory: Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man PERFECT in Christ Jesus" (Colossians 1:27-29).

The church, going on to perfection, full maturity or completeness, is very important to God and it should be to us too. We must attain that measure of experience if we are going to inherit the kingdom. Israel missed the promise of God. "Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, they do always err in their heart; and they have not known my ways. So I sware in my wrath, they shall not enter into my rest" (Hebrews 3:10-11). "Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into His rest, any of you should seem to come short of it" (Hebrews 4:1).

"Be sober, be vigilant (very watchful); because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: whom resist steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world. 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, stablish, strengthen, settle you" (I Peter 5:8-10).

THE TEACHING OF PREDISTINATION

The teaching of predestination, as it is given in the scriptures, is one of the most misunderstood teachings. When you mention the word "predestination," many become fearful, and I suppose, with good reason.

Many look upon predestination as fatalism. As far as they are concerned what will be will be and there is no changing it. Many feel God has called them and nothing can change that calling, regardless of their own walk and faithfulness.

We must remember that we have a responsibility in life. In II Peter 1:5-10, Peter admonishes us that after having partaken of the divine nature (God's nature), we are to add to our experiences faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness and love. Those who walk in this way become fruitful, but he that lacks these things is blind and cannot see afar off and has forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Now, may I quote verse 10: "Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure."

On the other hand, we must remember that our ability to walk with God comes from Him. But we do have to make ourselves available to Him and yield ourselves to the leading of His Spirit.

There are two scriptures I would like to quote concerning election and predestination. The first is I Peter 1:2, "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ." The second is Romans 8:29, "For whom He did foreknow, He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren."

The word "elect," as used in I Peter 1:2, means "laid out" or "chosen;" and the word "predestinate," as used in Romans 8:29, means to mark off beforehand.

If you will notice, the key to the teaching of predestination or election as outlined in the above scriptures is foreknowledge. We are able to see the present and the past; but beyond this our vision does not reach, unless God, by His Spirit, makes the future known to us through revelation or the operation of one of the Spiritual gifts.

Our Heavenly Father on the other hand sees the past, the present, and the future. He saw today from before the time He began creation far more clearly than we are able to see it today. He could see you and everything you have done or will do. "Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in His sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do" (Hebrews 4:13). Because of His foreknowledge, God is able to choose or mark off beforehand those whom He finds conformable to the image of His son.

May I illustrate this in this way: suppose that you wanted to hire a man, and you had a number of men to choose from. You would study their present qualifications and past performance. You would get as many references as you thought necessary, but you couldn't really know what type of work he would do for you. That would be in the future, and we are relatively blind to that. I can imagine how many employers wish they had at least a little foreknowledge.

As we have said, our Heavenly Father sees the past, the present and the future. He knows our future performance, and what we will do under any given circumstance. He knows whether we will obtain a good report along with the faithful mentioned in Hebrews 11. He knows whether we are among those things that can be shaken or not. According to His foreknowledge, He has been able to set the members in the Body of Christ as it pleases Him.

There is nothing fatalistic about this. It simply teaches us that we have a responsibility in our walk before God. "Wherefore my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling" (Philippians 2:12). "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God" (Romans 8:14).

God, by His foreknowledge, elects or predestines whom He will in accordance with their faithfulness in their walk with Him. Jesus illustrates and teaches this in the parable of the labourers in the vineyard in Matthew 20. In reading the story over, we find that the householder had trouble settling up with his men at the end of the day's work. He had paid the complainers what they had agreed to work for, but because men who had worked only one hour got the same as they who had worked through the heat of the day, they were dissatisfied. "But he answered one of them, and said, Friend, I do thee no wrong: didst not thou agree with me for a penny? Take that thine is, and go thy way: I will give unto this last, even as unto thee. Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil, because I am good? So the last shall be first, and the first shall be last: FOR MANY BE CALLED, BUT FEW CHOSEN" (Matthew 20:13-16).

We must remember that God is calling out a people for His Name from which He is bringing together a Body upon whose shoulders it is His purpose to have the government of His Kingdom rest. In the parable we just quoted from, we find that the householder learned a lot from this experience about the men whom he had hired. He had learned a lot about them for any future hiring. Many be called, but few are chosen.

For the purpose of governing in His Kingdom, God has called out those who are faithful unto Him and who will walk in His ways. Again, many be called, but few are chosen. Because of our Father's ability to see ahead, He is able to choose or reject us for this purpose, long before He even begins to put His plan in motion.

This has nothing to do with whether we are justified by faith or not. It has to do with those who are going on to maturity, to Sonship, and to perfection. One may have his soul saved, but yet, never see the Kingdom of God because of the irresponsible way in which he walks. Because of His foreknowledge, God has not been able to predestinate, or mark off beforehand, one whose performance in the calling of God does not measure up to His expectations.

This does not subtract from the Grace of God. Our Father, through Jesus Christ, has defeated the power of sin, and He has given us the Holy Spirit to help us walk in His ways. By faith we, as Abraham, look for a city whose builder and maker is God (Hebrews 11:8-11). "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God" (Hebrews 12:1-2).

The experience described in Ephesians 1:3-6 can be ours: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: According as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, To the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the

beloved." The phrase "adoption of children" is the translation for the Greek word "huiothesia," which means the placing as a son. This placing is referred to in Romans 8:19 as the manifestation of the sons of God.

Always remember this, "Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are His" (II Timothy 2:19). By His foreknowledge He has placed the members in the Body of Christ as it has pleased Him. We pray that that Body may soon reach maturity and that its ministry of bringing the knowledge of the Lord to all the earth may be accomplished.

We are in the world, though we are not of it. God has not taken us out of it yet. And while we are here, we have to get along. We have to eat, and in order to ear, we have to have jobs. The wonderful thing about it is this: the Lord can and does work the things of the world to the advantage of His children. Though Satan is the prince of this world, God is still the Almighty, and when He needs to, He can overrule in all our affairs. He has promised to supply all our needs, and He will. If we need a job, the Lord can get us one. We can use this world to supply our needs. The escaping prisoner, while making his way home through the enemy's country, eats the enemy's food and finds shelter in the enemy's houses. We must use this world, but let us be careful that we do not abuse it. "And they that use this world, as not abusing it; for the fashion of this world passeth away" (I Corinthians 7:31).

We must of necessity use this world while we are journeying through it, to supply our needs. But let us remember that we are warned not to do any more. God has promised to supply all our needs. God's children never need to be in want. God doesn't intend his children to be paupers, and to be in want, but neither does he want us to get too much involved in this present system. Let us be careful not to set our aspirations on the things of this world, but to seek that which is to come, and to set our affections on things above.

Contentment is one of the things that it is good to possess. "But godliness with contentment is great gain. ... But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition" (I Timothy 6:6, 8-9). If God is supplying our needs, then let us be content. This is all that we have need of anyway. God may give you a lot; and if He does, praise Him for it, and be careful what you do we it, for we are stewards of what He gives us. But let us be careful that we do not lust after the things of this world. We should not seek to be rich. If God makes us rich, that is fine; but don't lust after riches or possessions: "for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth" (Luke 12:15). "Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have; for he hath said, I will never leave you nor forsake you" (Hebrews 13:5).

These things I have mentioned, are the powers or forces that are working against us. We have enemies; let us not forget that. God has seen fit to leave us in the midst of them. He has purpose in this. What I have mentioned are external forces, things outside ourselves that are out to destroy us if they can. They are our enemies, and if they can't destroy us, they will do their best to hinder our progression in the things of God. Though Jesus has overcome all these powers and has rendered them powerless, we have been left here that we may also overcome them in our own right by making use of the power he has made available to us. Then, having overcome, we may inherit the promises, for the promises of God are to the overcomer.

Jesus overcame Satan and destroyed him, his works, and his power. He overcame sickness and disease; he abolished death and overcame the world; and as far as we, His redeemed, are concerned, this is our victory.

We can and we will overcome, if we take heed to what the scriptures tell us and keep our eyes on Jesus, looking unto Him and walking in His faith and power. Let us set our hearts to overcome.

SENSING THE PRESENCE OF GOD

We have all heard many people say that they have been out in the woods and sensed the presence of God. It is a wonderful experience to be able to feel that He is near in those circumstances. God dwells in nature,

There is another experience that is much more wonderful, and that is meeting another person and sensing the presence of God because God dwells in him. This is an experience that, so far, only belongs to the family of God. Christ dwells in those, who have received Him and walk with Him; and others, who have partaken of the same Spirit, sense it when they come into His presence. Paul prayed, "For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, That He would grant you, according to the riches of His Glory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man; That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith" (Ephesians 3:14-17). John spoke similarly in I John 4:12-13; "No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and His love is perfected in us. Hereby we know that we dwell in Him, and He in us, because He hath given us of His Spirit."

So far, Christ, who dwells within His people, is veiled to those who have not the same Spirit; but a glorious day of unveiling is fast approaching. In Colossians 3:3, Paul writes this: "For as far as this age is concerned, you are already dead, and your true life is a hidden one in Christ. One day, Christ, the secret centre of our, lives, will show Himself openly, and you will all share in that in that magnificent denouement" (Phillips). The word "denouement" means to untie or loosen. The presence of God may be hidden to those who are outside now, but He will show Himself through His people by that great unveiling.

This unveiling, which will be for the revealing of God to those who are outside His family, is still largely in the future. We find a certain amount of it today, but that great day still lies in the future. What God is largely doing today is bringing the Body of Christ to maturity by His indwelling presence in each member of His Body. That Spirit which dwells within them flows from one member of the Body to another to bring about the edification and growth necessary for their maturity.

That is why when the people of God are in one another's presence they sense the presence of God. When you meet another of the same Spirit, you know that God is there, even if no words are exchanged. When the people gather together in the meetings, you know God is there because He dwells within them. The Spirit of God flows from one member of the Body to another, as the different members of the Body Minister in song, prophecy, exhortation, and teaching. This is all necessary, and a part of His purpose in bringing His people to full Sonship. When this has been accomplished, God will then cause His presence to flow out and bring that day that all the creation is longing for. "The world of creation cannot as yet see reality, not because it chooses to be blind, but because in God's purpose it has been so limited - yet it has been given hope. And the hope is that in the end the whole of created life will be rescued from the tyranny of change

and decay, and have its share in that magnificent liberty which can only belong to the children of God! It is plain to anyone with eyes to see that at the present time all created life groans in a sort of universal travail. And it is plain, too, that we who have a foretaste of the Spirit are in a state of painful tension, while we wait for that redemption of our bodies which will mean that we at last we have realized our full sonship in Him" (Romans 8:19-23, Phillips).

Let the Spirit of God dwell in you, and flow out from you, for the building up of His Body, and the eventual redemption of the whole creation. Not only that, but dwelling in the presence of God is a great pleasure. Nothing is more enjoyable than sensing the presence of God when you are fellowshipping with other members of the Body.

SOME PRINCIPLES OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD

During the last few months, it has become very apparent that there is a great desire among God's people to abide very close to Him. Jesus said that they who hunger and thirst after righteousness would be completely satisfied (Matthew 5:6), and I wish to assure you that your hungering and thirsting will be satisfied as He promised.

Many people think that desires of this nature are only for the older people, but the last few months have demonstrated that this isn't so. Never before have I seen the young people and the children entering into the meeting as they have been doing. There is a tremendous longing among all whom He has called to walk very close to Him.

We were reading a few weeks ago in our family worship in Matthew 5, and I would like to bring a few things to your attention that I trust God will use to help you in your walk with Him. In Matthew 5:17 (Phillips), we read, "You must not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to complete them. Indeed, I assure you that, while Heaven and earth last, the Law will not lose a single dot or comma until its purpose is complete. This means that whosoever now relaxes one of the least of these commandments and teaches men to do the same will himself be called the least in the kingdom of Heaven."

I have wondered if there isn't some confusion in the minds of some as to what liberty is. Some, perhaps, have confused liberty with license. Liberty doesn't mean the right to throw the law away, or to act as though it had never been given. Jesus said it would last as long as Heaven and earth last. Liberty simply means liberty from the power and dominion of sin. I am sure we all long after a greater measure of such liberty.

The only possible way to keep the law from touching you is to live in a realm higher than the law, a realm in which our Righteousness exceeds that of those self-righteous keepers of the law of whom Jesus spoke. Immediately, we try to walk on a level where the law is necessary; or on even a lower level, we come under the law, and the law has to tell us how to behave.

In the rest of Matthew 5, Jesus compares the level of the Law and the level of the Kingdom. The law says, "Thou shalt not murder, and anyone who does must stand his trial" (Matthew 5:21 Phillips). Now, listen to the words of Jesus concerning the Kingdom. "BUT I SAY UNTO YOU that whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shalt be in danger of the judgment" (Matthew 5:22 Phillips). When we feel we have a cause for anger, let us be very sure that it is justified.

I am quite convinced that, on the level of the Kingdom into which God is leading us by His Spirit, we should apply the next two verses to our Spiritual Gifts, as well as our natural gifts. "Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift" (Matthew 5:23-24). If you have an unsettled difference with your brother, the ministry of your gift will be ineffectual, as far as he is concerned. In the Kingdom, it is much better that ALL should profit by the gift as it is ministered by the Spirit.

Jesus, again quoting from the Law, said, "Thou shalt not commit adultery." Then, He spoke concerning the level of the Kingdom; "BUT I SAY UNTO YOU, that whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart. And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into bell. And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell" (Matthew 5:27-30).

This is a very sex-conscious age. People are continually speaking about what they call a "new morality." What they are speaking of is not new morality. New morality would lead you on to a higher level of morals than you live on at the present time. What people are calling new morality is, in actual fact, new immorality. It is taking thousands of our young people to immoral levels, not experienced in previous generations. May it be that none who are walking with God will be tempted to walk in the foolishness of this age, but will continually be rising to higher standards of moral principle.

In verse 38, Jesus quotes from the Law again. "Ye have heard that it hath been said, an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth." Under the Law if I knocked your tooth out, you were at liberty to knock mine out. Now, take note of that which belongs to the realm of the Kingdom. "BUT I SAY UNTO YOU, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on the right cheek, turn to him the other also" (Matthew 5:39). This is a stage of our growth I am sure very few, if any of us, have attained to. We don't want to cause ourselves to live in constant condemnation, but let us look continually to God that He may, by His Spirit, change and transform us.

"Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away" (Matthew 5:42). This is another principle of the Kingdom. Reading these things puts a great desire in one's heart for God and His Kingdom, where wisdom, justice, and equity, prevail. It is no use resolving that the principles of the Kingdom will be part of us. These are things that we must grow into as God ministers to us of Himself by His Spirit. When it becomes Christ in us flowing out by the Spirit, then that flow will be real, and not something put on, or imitated. The tree will have become good, and, therefore, the fruit will be good.

The Law said: "Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy." (Matthew 5:43). This is a reasonably easy level to live on because practically everyone finds it easy to love their friend and hate those with whom they aren't so friendly. "BUT I SAY UNTO YOU," Jesus said, "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you... For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? Do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? Do not even the publicans so?" (Matthew 5:44,46).

To write about these things isn't easy because it brings to mind our own weaknesses. It is very easy for us to have cliques and prefer one above another. These things, though, do not belong to the Kingdom of God, and God will cleanse us from them before we are ready to partake of the Kingdom in its fullness.

In Matthew 18, the story is related to us about how Peter came to the Lord and asked Him how often he should forgive his brother who had sinned against him. The Law required forgiveness seven times, but I believe there was a little of the Spirit of the Kingdom stirring in Peter's heart, and he was usually longing for a higher realm. Jesus saith unto him, "I say not unto thee, until seven times: but, until seventy-times seven (in other words, an infinite number of times)" (Matthew 18:22). Part of God's nature is to forgive and forget. There is only one thing that I have ever heard that God cannot do, and that is recall something He has forgotten. As we enter more into His Kingdom, we will partake more and more of His nature; and, like Peter, there will be a longing to enter into a higher and better realm.

What Jesus said in Matthew 5:48 is a very comforting thing to me and gives me great hope to be able to enter into and partake of this Kingdom, not only in part, but in all the fullness and completeness God has planned. He said, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect." The word "perfect," as used here, means to be made complete, or, in other words, to have the complete nature and likeness of God.

Too many of us, this statement of Jesus' would be a command for us to make ourselves perfect or complete, but it isn't. Do you remember the time that Jesus was traveling to the city of Nain? On entering the city, He met a funeral precession bearing the widow's son to the cemetery. He went and touched the coffin and said, "Young man I say unto thee arise." Immediately the dead boy sat up and began to speak and Jesus delivered him to his mother (Luke 8:11-15). Now the words Jesus spoke about being perfect were just such a command. All prayers that Jesus answered, and all commands that He issued, will be fulfilled. We may struggle and strive for perfection or completeness, but we will never attain it that way. In fact, the harder you strive, the further you seem to get away from it. Let us learn to yield ourselves to the Spirit of God, that He may work perfection in us by His Spirit, and it will be done. The very fact that Jesus spoke those words are full assurance to us that completeness will be given to all who will make themselves available to him for the work of perfection.

One who walks with God never tries to live where he wants to relax or do away with the Law, but God gives him a constant longing to live on that level of which Jesus spoke to us about. I should mention this, too, about the order of the Kingdom that God is establishing in us. The closer we walk with Him, the less and less desire there will be to water down that order, but our desire will be to fulfill and walk in it.

It is easy for us to say, "This or that doesn't apply to my circumstance." It may not, but you make good and sure it doesn't. There are circumstances which alter every case, and every case must be judged on its own merit; but don't try to justify something that is unjustifiable. Let such a spirit flee far from us, and let us yield to His Spirit, which is the author of order, rest, peace, and joy.

There are a few things in Chapter six of Matthew about our giving, praying, and fasting, that I would like to mention. When you give, Jesus said not to let your left hand know what your right hand is doing (Matthew 6:3). I suppose that we could say that such a statement was extreme and impossible. But that is how secret our giving should be. I always feel bad to hear someone talking about what they have given, because I know, as far as our Heavenly Father is concerned, they are throwing away the reward that He would enjoy giving them; or, as Jesus said, They have had their reward (Matthew 6:2). When we talk about how much we pray we are making it impossible for God to answer us because He, who sees what is secret, will reward you openly. Prayer is a wonderful avenue of ministry. There is a place for it in our meetings, but prayer is not to be made merchandise of. Let us, with sincerity, pray and talk to God, not hoping that people will notice how spiritual we are. Except when it is led of the Spirit in the meeting, or in our family worship, let our prayer and waiting upon God be in our own room, away from the eyes and ears of others. Our spirituality is what flows from the inner man without having to be talked about, and not displayed by outward appearances.

Fasting falls into much the same category. If done in the right spirit, it is very beneficial. God has placed in our hearts to desire to walk close to Him, and, by the things that Jesus taught us, and us yielding to His Spirit, this we will do. Our perfection and completeness will be attained.

BE FILLED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT

Joel prophesied of the coming of the Holy Spirit; Jesus said He would send Him, and He came as a rushing mighty wind on the day of Pentecost.

Joel's prophesy is found in Joel 2:28-29, "And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit."

Just before Jesus and His disciples left the Passover chamber, Jesus promised the Holy Spirit to them. He had spent three years with them, ministering to all their needs. When Peter needed money to pay his taxes, Jesus sent him to catch the fish with the money in its mouth. When they had forgotten to take their lunch with them, He multiplied the boy's loaves and fish and fed not only the disciples, but also all who were assembled there. Jesus knew that He would no longer be with them in bodily presence to look after all their needs. He also knew that they could not stand alone.

Jesus told them that He would ask His Father to send them another Comforter: "And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever" (John 14:16). The word

comforter has sometimes been translated "helper" or "counsellor." As the next few hours would prove, the disciples were going to need a lot of help and instruction. Jesus was going to leave them, but THE HOLY SPIRIT WOULD NEVER LEAVE THEM.

Jesus had experienced the coming of the Holy Spirit just before He entered into His ministry. When He came up from the water after being baptized by John, the Spirit of God descended and lighted upon Him like a dove. "And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him:" (Matthew 3:16).

Why did the Holy Spirit come upon Jesus like a dove, but when He came upon the disciples, He lighted on them as tongues of fire? There was a great difference between Jesus and His disciples. He was the pure, sinless, Son of God. They were ordinary carnal men like you and I. We, like them, need the burning, cleansing power of the Spirit of God in our lives for the purification that God desires to take place within us. "But who may abide the day of his coming? And who shall stand when he appeareth? For he is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap: And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the LORD an offering in righteousness" (Malachi 3:2-3).

Jesus goes on to tell them of the many advantages that would be theirs by the coming of the Holy Spirit. He describes the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of Truth. Jesus was the Truth, as He told Thomas in John 14:6 ("I am the way, the truth, and the life"). The Holy Spirit was the Spirit of Truth. "Even the Spirit of truth; 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). The world cannot see the Truth, which is the Christ, the anointed One; nor can the world understand concerning the Holy Spirit, who is the Spirit of Truth, because, not having been born of the Spirit, their spiritual eyes have not been opened. Neither can they know Him, because they have not been born into the kingdom of God. A person cannot receive spiritual things without being born of the Spirit. Jesus told Nicodemus in John 3:3 that except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God. He was not speaking of seeing a natural, physical, kingdom, but of a Spiritual kingdom. Jesus reminded them that the Holy Spirit had been with them, but He also wanted them to know that He would be in them. There is no closer proximity than this.

Another advantage He went on to tell them about is found in John 14:18 "I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you." Another translator has said, "I will not leave you orphans". Without the coming of the Holy Spirit, they would have been as fatherless children (and so would we), having no one to instruct them and guide them.

"Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also" (John 14:19). Jesus was going to be removed from the sight of the world. The world would not be able to see Him anymore. Because the Holy Spirit had come, His disciples would be able to see Him with the eyes of the Spirit.

Because He was living, they would partake of spiritual life. Also, because of the coming of the Holy Spirit, they would know that He had returned to His Father, that they were in Christ, and that Christ was in them. "At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you" (John 14:20). These things are seen and heard by all who have been filled with the Spirit. John also confirms this in I John 3:24: "And

he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, BY THE SPIRIT WHICH HE HATH GIVEN US." Also in I John 4:13: "Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, BECAUSE HE HATH GIVEN US OF HIS SPIRIT."

The Holy Spirit is also a wonderful reminder of what the commandments of Jesus were; and, if we are ignorant of those commandments, the Holy Spirit will teach us what they are. "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you" (John 14:26).

In the previous few verses, Jesus spoke to His followers about keeping His commandments. If we love Him, we will keep His commandments. God will love us and come and dwell in us. The Holy Spirit teaches us many things concerning the commandments of Christ, and, after we have been taught, He reminds us constantly what those commandments are.

John writes of the same things in his first epistle. "But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught You, ye shall abide in him" (I John 2:27). The Living Bible translates this verse in this way: "But you have received the Holy Spirit and He lives within you, SO THAT YOU DON'T NEED ANYONE TO TEACH YOU WHAT IS RIGHT."

Here John is also writing about walking in His commandments. There were those who had the spirit of anti-christ, and went out from the church. They didn't walk in the revelation that the Holy Spirit had given them. They denied Christ rather than acknowledge Him. John says, "But you have an unction [anointment] from the Holy One and you know all things" (I John 2:20). In other words, "YOU ALL KNOW IT." How wonderful to have the anointing of the Holy Spirit, and know the Christ that He reveals, by that anointing we have dwelling in us. Just previous to this verse, John is writing about walking in the revelation God had given to the church. The Holy Spirit would help them to walk in those things that they had heard from the beginning from the revelation that came by the Holy Spirit through the apostles.

The Holy Spirit does teach us many things that we have not previously known. He also reminds us of the commandments of Christ, and helps us to walk in them. What John is telling them here is not the fact that they didn't need teachers to teach them, but that they, as believers, didn't need anyone to teach them what was right concerning things that had already been taught them. There were seducers who had come in among them to destroy their faith.

Jesus said that He would manifest Himself to those who would keep His commandments. Manifest means to make apparent to the senses or the mind. That is the manifestation that comes by the Holy Spirit. If we will keep His commandments, or, in other words, be willing to be led by the Holy Spirit, both He and His Father would love us and abide within us. This abiding is by the Holy Spirit.

Just before Jesus was taken up to heaven, His disciples were asking about the restoration of the kingdom. They, like us, were curious about this, but note Jesus' answer: "And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power" (Acts 1:7). There was something much more important for them to be seeking: "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

Jesus said that they would receive power. The Greek word is translated as either power or ability. Without ability, you have no power, and without power, you have no ability.

The Holy Spirit gives us the power and ability to witness for Christ. Peter was changed from one who sneaked into the court and hid among the people when Jesus was being tried, to a man of great boldness on the day of Pentecost. He was able to tell the people, when they were pricked in their heart by his message, that they should repent. "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (Acts 2:38).

Paul also experienced the power of the anointing of the Holy Spirit in his ministry: "And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God" (I Corinthians 2:4-5).

Paul and Silas experienced a mighty moving of the power of God the night they prayed and sang praises in the Philippian jail. There was an earthquake, all the doors of the prison were opened, and their chains fell off. Such was the convicting power of the Holy Spirit upon the keeper of the prison that he brought the prisoners out and enquired, "What must I do to be saved." Their answer was, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." His whole household were saved and baptized before morning (Acts 16:25-33).

The Holy Spirit gives us power to overcome in our personal lives. "According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust" (II Peter 1:3-4).

It is extremely important that we, as Christians, be overcomers because of our influence in the world. "For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God;" (Colossians 1:9-10).

The apostle Paul also exhorts us in Colossians 4:5-6, "Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time. Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man."

We are also reminded of our need of the help of the Holy Spirit in II Corinthians 6:3-10, "Giving no offence in anything, that the MINISTRY be not blamed: But in all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, In stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours, in watchings, in fastings; By pureness, by knowledge, by longsuffering, by kindness, BY THE HOLY GHOST, by love unfeigned, By the word of truth, by the power of God, by the armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left, By honour and dishonour, by evil report and good report: as deceivers, and yet true; As unknown, and yet well known; as dying, and, behold, we live; as chastened, and not killed; As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things."

Whose ministry was the apostle speaking of being blamed? It is your ministry and mine. We need the help of the Holy Spirit to walk right and to be able to minister in a way glorifying to God.

In Romans 7:15-24, we read of the power of the law of sin in our lives. In the first few verses of chapter eight, we read of the power of the working of the Spirit. "For the law of the SPIRIT OF LIFE in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death.... That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (Romans 8:2,4). What glorious power and ability the Holy Spirit gives us.

The coming of the Holy Spirit, and the ability to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gives utterance, also gives us the privilege of being able to edify ourselves. By building ourselves up, we are strengthened in the spiritual man. "He that speaketh in an unknown tongue edifieth himself; but he that prophesieth edifieth the church" (I Corinthians 14:4). We have been taught that we should build ourselves up by speaking to God in other tongues, and then we will be able to prophesy, and build up the church.

Through the power of the Holy Spirit in our lives, we will have the ability to operate the Spiritual gifts that were given us by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery (I Timothy 4:14). We must realize that Spiritual gifts can only be operated by the anointing of the Holy Spirit. When someone tries to operate a gift with his own mind, it falls absolutely flat, and there is no life in it.

Paul lists the nine Spiritual gifts in I Corinthians 12:7-11: "But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal [or, for the benefit of all]. For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues. But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will."

The manifestation of the Spirit that is mentioned here is the ability to operate Spiritual gifts. We are given this ability, not that we should become proud and consume the blessing of God upon ourselves, but for the benefit and edifying of the whole church. We do not choose which gift or gifts we would desire to have, but the Holy Spirit divides them to us according as He wills, and according to the place He has chosen for us in the body of Christ. "But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him" (I Corinthians 12:18).

I talked to a person one time who told me that they were seeking God so that they might receive all nine gifts of the Spirit. I am sure that God will never give all the gifts to one person. If any person had all the gifts of the Spirit, they would have no need for the other members of the body of Christ. They would be completely sufficient in themselves. THE BODY THAT HE IS BRINGING TOGETHER IS A BODY WHERE ONE MEMBER MUST DEPEND UPON THE OTHER MEMBERS, FOR THEIR EDIFICATION AND STRENGTH.

The Holy Spirit baptizes us into the body of Christ. We do not join ourselves to the church as we would join an organization, but the Spirit of God immerses us into the body of Christ and places us in the place chosen for us by God. "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit" (I Corinthians 12:13).

The Holy Spirit witnesses to us concerning our relationship with our Heavenly Father through our Lord Jesus Christ. "And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us" (I John 3:24). It is a wonderful thing to "know." Some people go through life just hoping; but, Praise God, we know that He abides in us by the Spirit that He has given us. It is the desire of those who are truly born again to keep His commandments that they may dwell in Him and have the full assurance that we are His. "Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit" (I John 4:13). Oh, Hallelujah.

"For by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified. Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us: for after that he had said before, This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more" (Hebrews 10:14-17). Praise be to God for the witness of the Holy Spirit.

EDIFICATION

In Romans 14:19, we read: "Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another."

The word, "edify" means, "to build." So many things that we find ourselves involved in tend to tear down; but let us follow after the things that will build.

The word "edify" is related to the word "edifice", which means "a building"; especially of a large or imposing type. When we contribute to the edifying of another, we are building them up; and when this edification applies to another member of the Body of Christ, we are helping to build the temple that God dwells in by the Holy Spirit.

I Corinthians 8:1 says this: "Knowledge puffeth up, but charity [or love] edifieth", or as another translator puts it; "Knowledge may make a man look big, but it is only love that can make him grow to his full stature."

The case that Paul was speaking of in Romans 14 had to do with the eating of meat that had been offered to idols. To him, the idol was nothing as there is only one God and one Lord Jesus Christ "by whom are all things and we by Him" (I Corinthians 8:6). But this knowledge could be a stumbling block to others who are weak. We will deal with this more fully later on.

We must not assume that we have more Spiritual knowledge than others. I have known people who boasted of their superior spiritual experience, and it only made them look big. They were stunted and sour in their growth.

Paul gives this instruction in I Thessalonians 5:11, "Wherefore comfort yourselves together, and edify one another." Comforting another brings about edification of that person. The word "comfort" here is translated

from the Greek word "parabalea" which literally means, "to call alongside or help." We can see the relationship between alongside and helping.

Being alongside or helping should be done in such a way as to bring edification. There is a great difference between helping and interfering. We can get into realms in which we have no business and tell ourselves we are helping. Pray that God will give us wisdom to know the difference.

We have responsibilities toward one another as members of the Body of Christ. "And I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another" (Romans 15:14). We must walk very close to God that we might be filled with His knowledge and understanding, and that our admonishments may be to edification or building up rather than tearing down.

When you think about it, human nature is an odd thing. No one likes to be admonished, and if you want to see a display of someone's carnal nature, try admonishing them. We must be very careful how we give admonition, and we also must learn to receive it, that His body might be built up.

In Romans 14:19, we are instructed as follows: "Let us therefore follow after the... things wherewith one may edify another." Romans 14 and the first half of chapter 15, deal with this subject.

Paul begins chapter 14 by exhorting us concerning arguments. In this instance, the argument was over what they should or shouldn't eat. We would do well to remember Paul's instruction along this line in I Timothy 4:4: "For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving."

The apostles and elders at Jerusalem sent this instruction with Judas and Silas to the Church at Antioch: "it seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us... That ye abstain from meat offered to idols [this was for the sake of the weak brother who hadn't as yet completely realized that an idol was nothing], and from blood, and from things strangled" (Acts 15:28-29). These are the only restrictions put upon diet in the New Testament. So there really wasn't much to argue about.

Paul speaks of other arguments here. There were arguments over days. There were many days that were important to the Jews that were celebrated as feast days because of their history. These days were part of the Jewish ritual and part of the law of ordinance, which was fulfilled in Christ. [These mean nothing: a sinner receives justification through Jesus Christ, not through following rituals.] (Original sentence: These meant nothing was the fact that he was a sinner and that he could receive justification through Jesus Christ.)

There are many other arguments that arise among God's people over many, many subjects. But let us remember that the Kingdom of God is not meat and drink (or any other thing that man in his carnal state may argue about), but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

Romans Chapter 15 continues with what our attitude towards edification should be. "We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let everyone of us please his neighbour for his good to edification. For even Christ pleased not Himself" (Romans 15:1-3).

Who is our neighbour? A neighbour is one who is near. In the story of the Good Samaritan that Jesus told, the man who showed mercy was neighbour to the man in trouble. If you are going to be a neighbour, you can't always please yourself. We see this attitude manifest in Christ. He could have lived a life that was altogether different. He could have yielded to the temptation of the devil when He was in the wilderness. He could have lived His own life and forgot about that for which He was sent. He yielded His will to the will of His Father when in the garden of Gethsemane. He pleased not Himself. His whole life was given over to the edification of those to whom He ministered. We must exercise the utmost consideration toward the rest of the Body, and also to the outsider. Christ could have been too busy to minister the gospel of the Kingdom; He could have been so taken up with His own affairs that He forgot the broken-hearted; the captives could have remained in their prisons of sin and doubt; the blind could go on a sightless existence, and the bruised could look after their own sores. "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 2:5).

Romans Chapter 11 tells us how the true branches of the olive tree were broken off and the wild olive tree was grafted in, and how the wild branches must stand by faith. Paul points out how easily the true branches found themselves broken off, so we, who are wild branches grafted in, must present our bodies a "living sacrifice" (Romans 12:1).

He then proceeds to tell us how this is done. Firstly, by living in a way holy and acceptable unto God; and secondly, by ministering in our place in the Body of Christ. We are given different gifts by the grace of God by which we operate our ministry or by which we function as members of the Body of Christ. One has a ministry in prophecy, another in serving, another in teaching, another in exhortation, another in giving, and another in showing mercy or kindness.

Paul then proceeds to tell how these ministries should function. Love is the principal thing, as outlined in I Corinthians 13. What is performed in love will edify. He also points out that we can't choose to whom we will minister.

There is so much about attitudes in these chapters. Our attitude to those who would be our enemy, our attitude to law and authority of a natural nature, our attitude toward work and many other things. These all lead up to this: "Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another" (Romans 14:19).

I Corinthians 14:26 teaches us that all things should be done with edification in mind. He is speaking here of when the Church meets together. There is no place for one to glorify self or put on a show that will lead to self-esteem. "Forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that ye may excel to the edifying of the Church" (I Corinthians 14:12).

"But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, 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. Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power now and forever. Amen" (Jude 20-25).

FELLOWSHIP WITH THE LORD

"Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; thou crownedst him with glory and honor, and didst set him over the works of thy hands:" (Hebrews 2:7). God created man so He could set him over His creation, dwell with him, and have fellowship with him. There are many examples in the scriptures where God dwelt with man and walked with him.

As we see in Genesis 3:8-9, God was in the habit of coming into the Garden in the cool evening for the purpose of fellowship with the man and woman that He had created. In the scripture mentioned, man and woman had sinned, and the fellowship was broken.

Abraham was also a man with whom God had fellowship, as He talked with him, and made him His friend. "And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God" (James 2:23). On many occasions it is recorded that God spoke with Abraham.

When Jacob was fleeing from Esau after stealing the birthright, he found himself in a dreaded place for the night. He set up a stone for a pillow. He dreamed while sleeping, and saw a ladder set up that reached from the earth into heaven. Angels went up and down that ladder, and God stood at the top of it. God and Jacob communed together. God made many promises to Jacob, and Jacob in turn made many promises to God.

Noah was also a man who walked with God. He was a just man and perfect (Genesis 6:9). God saw the corruption that was in the earth. Noah was close enough to Him that he was able to hear the voice of God tell him how to deliver himself and his family from the judgment that was to come by building an ark. Noah was obedient to God, and because of his faith, he condemned the world, and he himself became an heir of righteousness.

Enoch is a man who is also described as one who walked with God (Genesis 5:22). He walked so close to God that he walked right into the resurrection. By faith, he reached over centuries and dispensations, that he should not see death. God translated him because he had this testimony that he pleased God (Hebrews 11:5).

In Exodus 25:1-9, God spoke to Moses concerning a dwelling place for Himself among the children of Israel. God asked them to bring a free will offering of all the materials required to build such a dwelling place. "And let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them" (Exodus 25:8). As Abraham had been His friend, so God desired the friendship of his descendants. Notice in verse 9 that God was very particular about how this dwelling place was to be built.

The sad thing is that man continually keeps breaking that fellowship and communion. With Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, Eve was deceived, and then enticed Adam to enter into her deception. In Genesis 3:7, when God came to enjoy their fellowship in the cool of the day, they hid themselves from His presence. Disobedience and sin always causes that fellowship to be severed, and until repentance takes place, the sinner will try to hide from God.

In the case of the population that lived in Noah's day, "It repented the Lord that He had made man... . The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth" (Genesis 6:6,11-12). There was no fellowship with, or love for, God.

Immediately after God had so miraculously delivered Israel from Egypt and the armies of Pharaoh, they began to complain and rebel. They threatened to stone the man God had set as their leader, and wished to be back under the bondage of their former oppressors. There was no faith in their midst, neither a desire for the fellowship of their Heavenly Father.

Shortly afterward, Moses went into the mountain to commune with God. Through him, God made many wonderful promises to His people Israel. "Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel. And Moses came and called for the elders of the people, and laid before their faces all these words which the LORD commanded him" (Exodus 19:5-7). Note the people's response to the words of the Lord: "And all the people answered together, and said, All that the LORD hath spoken we will do. And Moses returned the words of the people unto the LORD" (Exodus 19:8).

At a later time, Moses spoke to Israel and relayed the words of the Lord to them. Their response was the same. "And Moses came and told the people all the words of the LORD, and all the judgments: and all the people answered with one voice, and said, All the words which the LORD hath said will we do" (Exodus 24:3). Moses wrote all the things the Lord had said and confirmed them with the blood of a sacrifice. "And he took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people: and they said, all that the LORD hath said will we do, and be obedient. And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, behold the blood of the covenant, which the LORD hath made with you concerning all these words" (Exodus 24:7-8).

In Exodus 32:7-10, we find Moses again up in the mountain with God. God spoke to him, telling him what Israel was doing down at the foot of the mountain. They had fashioned a golden calf and were worshipping it and making sacrifices to it. To them, this calf of gold had become their god who had brought them out of Egypt. God became very wrathful and would have destroyed Israel, had it not been for Moses' intercession. The promises of the natural man are very unstable, and are often not even worth the breath they breathe while uttering the words of the promise. Israel had broken the wonderful fellowship that was theirs through the covenant that God had so recently made with them.

Many years later, Israel, because of their sin and unfaithfulness, was taken captive by Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon. God spoke to them through the prophet Isaiah: "Behold, the LORD'S hand is not

shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear" (Isaiah 59:1). As we consider these things, it is hard for us to believe the stupidity of human beings. We find ourselves, because of the carnal nature that we have inherited, doing similar things, and causing that wonderful fellowship, which is ours through Christ, to be marred.

After their seventy years of captivity in Babylon was completed, the remnant of Israel returned to their inheritance. "Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, that the word of the LORD by the mouth of Jeremiah might be fulfilled, the LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, that he made a proclamation throughout all his kingdom, and put it also in writing saying, Thus saith Cyrus kina of Persia, The LORD God of heaven hath given me all the kingdoms of the earth; and he hath charged me to build him an house at
Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Who is there among you of all his people? his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, which is in Judah, and build the house of the LORD God of Israel, (he is the God,) which is in Jerusalem" (Ezra 1:1-3).

At a later date, Ezra returned, and found a sad state of affairs among those who had previously returned. "Now when these things were done, the princes came to me, saying, The people of Israel, and the priests, and the Levites, have not separated themselves from the people of the lands, doing according to their abominations, even of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Jebusites, the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Egyptians, and the Amorites. For they have taken of their daughters for themselves, and for their sons: so that the holy seed have intimated themselves with the people of those lands: yea, the hand of the princes and rulers hath been chief in this trespass" (Ezra 9:1-2).

At the knowledge of these things, Ezra was greatly troubled: "And at the evening sacrifice I arose up from my heaviness; and having rent my garment and my mantle, I fell upon my knees, and spread out my hands unto the LORD my God, And said, 0 my God, I am ashamed and blush to lift up my face to thee, my God: for our iniquities are increased over our head, and our trespass is grown up unto the heavens" (Ezra 9:5-6). Again, the fellowship that God would have enjoyed with His people was destroyed by their sin.

As the scriptures teach us, God cannot look on sin, condone sin, or let sin pass without judgment. "Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance? But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God; who will render to every man according to his deeds" (Romans 2:4-6).
God has always had a remedy for sin for any who will believe and accept His remedy.

His forgiveness requires a sacrifice and the shedding of blood. "And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission" (Hebrews 9:22). God always wants sin to be dealt with, and He wants to have fellowship restored. But this has to be done according to God's terms. In the case of Adam and Eve, God shed the blood of animals and took their skins to cover their nakedness in order to restore the fellowship that had been destroyed by disobedience. "Unto Adam also and to his wife did the LORD God make coats of skins, and clothed them" (Genesis 3:21).

To deal with Israel's sin, God told them how it could be purged by a sin offering. We have the instruction that God gave to Moses for the sin offering outlined in Leviticus 8:14-17. Firstly, the priesthood laid their hands upon the head of the bullock, and then killed it. Moses took the blood and put some of it upon the horns of the altar with his finger, and then poured the rest at the bottom of the altar to purify the altar. Then certain parts of the animal were burned upon the altar. The rest of the animal was burned outside the camp.

We find a very remarkable thing outlined in Leviticus 16:5-24. After the bullock was offered, Aaron was instructed to take two goats to the door of the tabernacle, and cast lots upon them. The goat upon which the Lord's lot fell was also offered as a sin offering. Aaron was to lay his hands upon the head of the other goat, and confess over him all the iniquities and transgressions of Israel. A fit man was to take this scapegoat, upon which the sins of Israel were laid, into the wilderness where no one lived, and let him go. Aaron and the man who took the coat into the wilderness were then to wash their bodies and clothes. This indicates to us how God wants every trace of sin to be washed away. Even the clothes of those who had touched the animal upon whom the sin of Israel was laid were to be washed. Israel's sin was then to be put into the past and forgotten. God forgot it, and Israel was to forget it too. This was God's way of restoring the fellowship He desired to have with Israel. When we have walked far from God, He, in His mercy, has provided a way for us to be cleansed from our sin. Just as God wanted Israel's fellowship, He wants ours too. Sin has to be dealt with, though, before that fellowship can take place.

In Hebrews 9:1-14, a comparison is made between the way the sin of Israel was dealt with, and we who live after the time of Christ's death. Israel's experience was a type, or a picture, of our experience in Christ. Christ was the one whose blood was poured out for the remission of our sins, and not the blood of an animal, as was the experience of Israel. We have forgiveness by believing and having faith in the sacrifice that He offered on our behalf, even the sacrifice of Himself. "But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us" (Hebrews 9:11-12).

Peter writes of the experience that is ours in Christ in I Peter 1:18-19, "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot," and also in I Peter 2:24, "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed."

Peter explains how Christ suffered for our sin that our fellowship with God might be restored. "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit" (I Peter 3:18).

John explains how we can be cleansed from sin, and be at peace with God. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us. My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: And he is the propitiation (an offering that makes peace) for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world" (I John 1:9-2:2).

The scapegoat that Israel had is typical of our experience when we accept the sacrifice that has been offered for our sin by Christ. God forgets about our sin, and Christ, of whom the scapegoat is typical, has carried our sin away to be remembered no longer against us. There are two things I know of that God cannot do. One is to tell a lie, and the other is to remember our sin after it has been cleansed by the blood of Christ. "As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us" (Psalms 103:12). "He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities; and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea" (Micah 7:19). "For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more" (Hebrews 8:12). There are far too many people who have had their sin cleansed by the blood of Christ, who continually condemn themselves for that which God has forgiven them and forgotten. Let us forget, too.

God wants your fellowship and mine, just as He wanted Adam's, Enoch's, Abraham's, and Israel's. He is accomplishing that by building a Spiritual house and making us a priesthood to offer spiritual sacrifices in that house. Only God could design a plan in which the house could also be the priesthood of that house. "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ" (I Peter 2:5). He is building a house made of living stones, so He can live in that house. In other words, he wants to live right in His people. No other means of fellowship will satisfy Him.

Paul also speaks of the house God is building for Himself to dwell in. When we become a part of that house, we are no longer foreigners and strangers to God. Paul speaks of us as being made alive through Christ. We are made living stones in His house, and that house is built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ being the chief comer stone. "Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit" (Ephesians 2:19-22).

It is very important to God that His house be holy and clean, so that His fellowship with His people will not be destroyed. As we have seen, sin has destroyed that fellowship many times in the past; but let us pray that we may walk in a way that is pleasing to Him. God gave His Son as a sacrifice for us, so that our sin could be dealt with, and he could dwell in that house that is not made with hands. "Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance: But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation" (I Peter 1:13-15). Always remember the scripture we quoted from I John 1:9, "if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." If we sin, the Christ who died for us on the cross will act as our advocate or intercessor. "For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time" (I Timothy 2:5-6).

We pray that we all may learn to know the joy of fellowship with the Lord, and the peace that comes by walking with Him.

"Let the temple be filled with Thy glory, Let the earth be filled with Thy praise, Let us worship the Lord in the holy of holies, Zion rejoices again."

FRIENDSHIP

The Scriptures speak of Abraham as being the friend of God. "And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God" (James 2:23).

The dictionary says that a friend is a person whom one knows well and is fond of. A friend is one who is an ally, a supporter and a sympathizer.

These are wonderful things when applied to our relationship with God. People so often think of God as a despot who is standing over them with a big stick. God desires to be a friend to all of us. "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" (John 3:16).

He knows us well. Even the hairs of our head are numbered. "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? And one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows" (Matthew 10:29-31).

He is fond of us, having created us, and given us place in His creation, and in His Kingdom. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another" (I John 4:10).

He is an ally who stands with us in all of our temptations and trials. I am sure that He stood with Jesus when the devil tempted Him when He was led out into the wilderness. When the temptation was over we are told, in Matthew 4:11, "Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him." God supports us and gives us strength day by day. And I am sure that He sympathizes with us when we are tempted and tried.

Remember, God does not tempt us, but is touched by the feeling of our infirmity. "Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. 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" (Hebrews 4:14-15).

We are tempted when we are drawn away of our own lust and enticed, as the apostle James speaks of in James 1:13-15, "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away, of his own lust, and

enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death."

Jehoshaphat recognized Abraham's friendship with God and used it to advantage in destroying the enemies of Israel. When they received word of the invading armies of Moab and Ammon, Jehoshaphat began to seek the Lord and called a fast for all of Judah. Everyone joined together in seeking help from God including the women and children. He reminded God that He had given them their land because they were the seed of Abraham, who was the friend of God (II Chronicles 20:1-30).

We can come to God with the same confidence because we have accepted Jesus Christ into our lives; and He sits on the right hand of His Father, and makes intercession for us. "But this man [speaking of Christ], because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood. Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them" (Hebrews 7:24).

After Jesus had washed His disciple's feet, He gave them instruction in serving one another. He had washed His servant's feet so they should wash one another's feet: "If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet" (John 13:14).

In the next chapter, He calls them friends. "Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you" (John 15:15).

"Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God, and your God" (John 20:17). Here, the relationship is brought even closer still. Jesus refers to his disciples as brethren. I pray that we may take advantage of His desire to be close to us. "But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ" (Ephesians 2:13). "Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you" (James 4:8).

I trust that we all may come to know Him well and make Him our friend, the One in whom we can trust in all circumstances.

GIFTS

Some twenty years ago, God made it known to us that He was going to restore to the Church the nine gifts of the Spirit by the laying on of hands and prophecy. This He at once began to do, and many since that time have received Gifts of the Spirit in this manner.

There are many other gifts that men have. One is gifted in one way, and another in another, but there are only nine gifts of the Spirit.

By the operation of spiritual gifts, we enter into a spiritual ministry. It is only by the operation of one or more spiritual gifts that anyone can have a spiritual ministry. The many varied ministries are produced by diversities of gifts, differences of administrations, and diversities of operations.

In speaking of the gifts of the Spirit, Paul describes them as the manifestation of the Spirit which is given to every man for the benefit of all. In reading the Gospels, we find that every manifestation of the ministry of Christ was the operation of a Spiritual gift. The same is true of the apostles and other Christians as it is recorded in the Scripture. We hear so much about manifesting Christ. This is only possible as we manifest the Spirit by the operation of the gift that God has divided to us as He willed.

Paul's exhortation to Timothy was: "Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery. Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them" (I Timothy 4:14-15). This is the way God has planned that his Son be manifested: that His people stir up and operate the gift or gifts given to them.

Many people are afraid to allow the gift of the Spirit to operate. Often they have said to me, "How do I know if it is the Spirit desiring to express Himself or if it is my own mind?" If a gift has been prophesied to you, you must rely on God who has given the gift and exercise it with great confidence in Him. If your attitude in desiring to operate the gift is right, you need have very little worry about being wrong.

Paul told us that the hope of all the glorious things to come was Christ in us. This is the mystery that was hidden in ages past, and that which is the riches of His glory. By the operation of your gift and mine, God wishes to reveal His Son in us, so that "Christ, the secret centre of our lives, will show Himself openly, and you will all share in that magnificent denouement, the deliverance from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God for every creature" (Colossians 3:4 Phillips).

Let us go on unto perfection and let us lay aside every weight and sin which doth so easily beset us.

THE MINISTRY OF GIVING

In the book of Romans chapter twelve, the Apostle Paul mentions along with the ministry of the prophet, the helper, the teacher, the exhorter, the ruler, and the shower of mercy, and the ministry of giving. This is a ministry that God gives to certain members of the Body of Christ, and, along with the ministry, He gives them the ability to become competent in that ministry.

All people should give, just the same as every member of the Body should prophecy. Giving seems to open something in a man's soul that nothing else can. It unstops a stream that nothing else will loosen. If you have never learned to give, it will be a good experience for you.

When I speak of giving, I am not speaking of tithing. It is the order of the Church for all members of the Body to tithe. Tithing isn't giving. It is just paying to God what, belongs to Him.

The things that I write here do not apply to every member of the Body of Christ, and you can't make them apply to every member. These things apply specifically to those with a ministry of giving. I just said that we should all give, just as we should all prophecy, but we are not all prophets, and neither do we all have the ministry of giving.

Most people think that the greatest thing would be to be rich. Being rich is a far greater responsibility than being poor, and not many people have the ability to bear the kind of responsibility that riches require. Riches have corrupted many people.

There was a young man who came to Jesus one time and asked what he could do to inherit eternal life and Jesus told him to keep the law. The man replied that he had always done so. Jesus then instructed him to sell his possessions and give what he had to the poor and then come and follow Him. The story (Matthew 19:16-26) says that he went away sorrowful for he had great possessions. This young man was obviously one to whom riches were a great liability rather than an asset.

After this incident, Jesus spoke to His disciples about riches. He said that rich men should hardly enter into the Kingdom of Heaven. He didn't say it was impossible, but that it was something that wasn't ordinarily to be expected. Then He proceeded further to say that it was easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of Heaven. He said that with men this would be impossible; but with God all things are possible. Those about whom I wish to write are those who are rich, and yet God makes it possible for them to enter the Kingdom of Heaven.

What has brought these thoughts to my mind has been talking to different businessmen and farmers of the Move over the last few months. Some of them seem to have trouble getting their operation to pay, while the operations of others seem to grow and prosper. On brother told me he had sold his business, because it had become too big for him, and moved to another part of the country and started up a new business, which he had intended to keep on a smaller scale. Before he had been there hardly any time, it was larger than the original business. To stop a business like that from growing would be just like trying to stop a child from growing. If you stopped it, you would kill it.

People whom God seems to be blessing in this way should very diligently look to Him as to what He would require of their substance. No man can use more than a certain amount of money on himself. If you had large amounts of money, you couldn't even keep up to spending the interest on your investments. I expect the rich young man to whom Jesus spoke inherited his riches, and didn't obtain it by any personal ability or ability given to him of God. You very seldom see a young man rich unless it is by inheritance. This may be why Jesus asked him to give it away. It may be the plan of God for other men whom He has increased to keep what God has given them. This I will say more about later.

A man's first responsibility is to his family. Paul says this: "But if any provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he bath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel" (I Timothy 5:8). Here is something else that we have to consider in this day of affluent living. Besides being sure that we provide for our family, we must ask God for the wisdom that we do not over-provide. Actually, providing too much for our families often does more harm than providing too little.

Many people that I have known feel that it is wrong for a man to make any provision for his family in case God removes him from the scene. They feel that this isn't trusting God. I can't see any difference between a man providing for his wife and family while he is living and providing for them after he is dead. Now, I know that this isn't always possible, but where it is possible, a man should do this. It would be far better for him to care for his widow than to leave her to the care of the church. I have heard men say that there is no need for them to consider the care of their wife, because the church would look after them. This attitude isn't right, and God will not bless it. The church will look after them if that becomes necessary, but let us, as much as we are able, look after our own responsibilities.

After the man to whom God has given much materially has cared for his own family, his next responsibility is what to do with the rest of what God has given him.

I have thought much about this over the last few months. In the old order, if a man had a dollar, some preacher was always trying to get it to promote some scheme or other. In this Move, we all desire that we may become mature enough that we may be led by the Spirit in these matters.

In many cases, I believe it is the mind of God for a man to keep his capital rather than give it away as Jesus instructed the young man we mentioned earlier. Every case is different and I am sure there were very special reasons why Jesus told the young man to give away his possessions. He wasn't setting a precedent for everyone to follow.

In Matthew 25:14-30, Jesus told a story which very much illustrates what I want to say here. A man called his servants and gave them his goods according to each man's ability to administer them. He then left the servants. On his return, two men had traded with the goods left in their charge, and had doubled them. A third one had hidden the goods because he was afraid he would lose them.

When God causes increase to come to us, He is delivering His goods to us. As I said before, it is God's mind for many people to keep their capital, and trade with it, and let it increase. If a man gave away his capital, he would have nothing left for God to increase. When increase comes, it is our responsibility to use it properly according to the mind of God.

A man's tithe belongs in his local church. There are no questions about that at all. His giving he is responsible for, according to the leading of the Spirit of God. When a man has cared for his responsibilities and has some to spare, there is no use in him storing it up. Then it is time for him to look for ways and means to use his wealth for the benefit of others.

I don't suppose there is a man in the country who doesn't grumble about taxation. It is our own fault that our burden in this thing has become so heavy. If men to whom God had given much had administered their wealth properly, governments wouldn't have to step in and take it away from us and then administer it for us. This situation would be pretty hard to change now, but it will be changed when His kingdom is established in the earth.

If we were faithful in administering our riches according to God's mind there would be no social aid problem. The man who has, would be giving to him who has not. There would not be the continual cry for more and more money for schools and hospitals. They would all be endowed and their financial problems would largely disappear.

Don't get the idea that you have to be a millionaire for these things to apply. There are many of us who have more than we, or our families, will ever be able to use. If God has placed you in this position, ask Him to lead you by His Spirit in the administration of your assets. In many cases He will ask you to trade them and take the increase to meet the need of those around you.

About ministering to the needs of other people, I would like to say this: whenever it is possible, it is far better to help a man to help himself rather than to just dole out money to him. This may take a lot of time and effort on our part, but it is far better to be able to teach a man to earn his own bread than to always give him bread. You will be free to help others and he will have become a valuable member or society.

If God seems to be increasing your business, or whatever it is you are engaged in, look very diligently to Him, because there is a reason why He is doing this. May it be that we will all become mature enough to be led of His Spirit in everything. If yours is a ministry of giving, I pray that God will, by His Spirit, give you the ability to become competent in that ministry. It is necessary that every member of the Body may become (if I may use this expression about a Spiritual matter) an expert in the operation of the gift and ministry divided unto you by the Holy Ghost.

THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOOD AND EVIL

In order to achieve maturity, a knowledge of good and evil is necessary. I would like to quote Hebrews 5:11-14 from the Phillips translation: "There is a great deal that we should like to say about this high priesthood, but it is not easy to explain to you since you seem so slow to grasp spiritual truth. At a time when you should be teaching others, you need teachers yourselves to repeat to you the ABC of God's revelation to men. For anyone who continues to live on milk is obviously immature - he simply has not grown up. Solid food is only for the adult, that is, for the man who has developed, by experience, his power to discriminate between what is good and bad for him."

The writer here, in discussing good and evil, is talking about teaching or doctrine; but the same principles apply in every part of our experience. The immature has not the growth or the experience to discriminate between good and evil.

A few words should be said here about growth and experience. These things are not related to time. Some of us may feel that because we were saved so many years ago, we are mature and experienced in the things of God. This depends entirely upon our willingness and ability to yield to the leading of the Spirit of God. "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God" (Romans 8:14). What we need experience in is in listening to the voice of the Spirit of God. Jesus said, "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of

truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will show you things to come" (John 16:13). The Spirit of God will guide you in doctrine; He will guide show us what is good and what is evil, thus promoting growth and maturity among us.

We need to have the words of Amos 5:14-15 written upon our hearts: "Seek good, and not evil, that ye may live: and so the Lord, the God of hosts, shall be with you, as ye have spoken. Hate the evil, and love the good, and establish judgment at the gate: it may be that the Lord God of hosts will be gracious unto the remnant of Joseph." We need to hate evil and love good; but before we can do this, we need to know what is evil and what is good. Many, many people have trouble discerning between good and evil, and this are led astray and will never be able to become mature sons of God.

Adam and Eve gained a knowledge of good and evil experimentally. It is not necessary, nor is it desirable, for us to achieve the ability to discern good and evil this way. Many people do gain this knowledge in this way, but it is a painful and unnecessary way to get it. In every phase of our experience, our knowledge of good and evil may be gained by the Spirit of God showing us what is good and what is evil. It depends on our willingness to be led by the Spirit.

We have the words of Paul in exhortation to Timothy concerning Hymenaeus and Alexander. "This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou by them mightest war a good warfare; Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck: of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme" (I Timothy 1:18-20). These men did not know good from evil, and if they did, they loved evil more than good, hence they made shipwreck of both their ministries, and their lives.

Paul also warns Timothy in I Timothy 4:1-7 of the dangers of not recognizing good and evil: "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth. For every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving: For it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer. If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine, whereunto thou hast attained. But refuse profane and old wives fables, and exercise thyself rather unto godliness."

He says some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrine of devils. This has happened many times because we have not had our ears open to the voice of the Spirit of God, that we might discern between good and evil. It is a sad thing to see anyone depart from the way of the Lord, as it only brings confusion, sorrow, and heartache, and deprives them of the privilege of sonship and the joy of entering the Kingdom of God.

Paul also speaks about lying. It is necessary for us to know that lying is evil. John, in Revelations 21:8, puts the liar in the same category as the murderer, the whoremonger, and the idolater: "...and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death."

Lying is also hypocrisy. What other reason would there be for lying than to try to pretend something that wasn't so? Jesus compares the hypocrite and the evil servant. He said, "The lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of, And shall cut him asunder, and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Matthew 24:50-51). Actions which bring such a harvest of pain and anguish must certainly be evil. The judgements of God are upon all such things to ring about repentance and correction.

Recall those words of Paul to Timothy. Paul speaks of being nourished up in the words of faith and good doctrine. He also suggests that Timothy has attained these things. A knowledge of good, and adherence to what is good, certainly causes growth and maturity in the spiritual man.

"Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines" (Hebrews 13:9). The earth is full of these kinds of teaching. Especially would I like to point out to you that any teaching by which people draw disciples after themselves is evil and not good. This type of thing divides the Body of Christ, causing us to be factious and carnal. Before we can become mature, we must know the evil of this thing and avoid it.

"Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation [manner of life]" (Hebrews 13:7). This refers to parents, elders, and apostolic ministries. If we are not mature enough to discern good from evil in all its forms, God has made provision for us in the ministries mentioned about, that we might copy them and share one another's burdens and so attain maturity together as a body.

"Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight" (Isaiah 5:20-21).

There is much evidence in the world today that men do not know good from evil, nor light from darkness. The traditions of men have been substituted for the commandments of God. This is seen in much of our economic, social, and religious structure. In our economic struggle, we have forgotten that the "good" is to help the other man to the top, as well as ourselves. The ministry of giving, except in a few isolated cases, has been forgotten and a ministry of "grabbing" has been substituted. Let us never be guilty of this in the church.

Many attempts have been made in the past by people trying to have all things common. This looks good on the surface, but it is not God' plan for His people: "But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree; and none shall make them afraid: for the mouth of the Lord of hosts hath spoken it" (Micah 4:4). God never intended common ownership, but he does want us to minister to one another so we are all on a common level.

We will find many problems involved in accomplishing this. All men must be taught the proper use of, and how to administrate properly, the goods that God has put into their hands. There is no use your ministering to me in a material way, if I just turn around and waste what has been given to me. Before we can have all things common, we first have to learn the secrets of proper use.

Another evil that is common in our day is our inability to receive instruction. The world looks upon it as good for man to be absolutely independent in his thinking. God considers it wise to honour experience and grey hair.

The earth is full of rebellion in our day. Dissention and demonstration is upon every hand, with people clamoring for they know not what. This, by many, is looked upon as good, and as a healthy state for society. Let us read the words of the prophet Samuel when King Saul brought all the spoil from the war with the Amalekites to be supposedly sacrificed to the Lord: "Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry" (I Samuel 15:22-23). Saul's action was rebellion against the express command of God, and it cost him his Kingdom. That which was good to his natural mind was evil in the sight of our Heavenly Father.

Our mass media carries many things today that are labelled good when they are evil. Unsuspecting people, who apparently know no better, are taken in by these things and, thus, their minds are warped. Often times, only a thought is presented, but it undermines society or the "establishment," if you wish to call it that.

Parents have a tremendous responsibility in these days to instruct their children correctly in these things. I must say, too, that your responsibility does not end when your children leave home. They are still yours and they should heed your advice and instruction as long as you live.

Another evil of our day is that children and young people fail to listen to and obey their parents. Isaiah spoke of this in Isaiah 3:5&12: "...the child shall behave himself proudly against the ancient, and the base against the honourable. ...As for my people, children are their oppressors, and women rule over them."

Parents, when you hear or read things that are presented in the wrong light, bring it to the attention of your children and show then what is right. Pray that the seed that you sow today will bring forth a harvest of joy in the future.

We can depend upon the Holy Spirit to show s what is good and what is evil. His ministry is to help us, and this He will certainly do. If you find that you need outside help, your elders are also always standing ready to help. This is also their ministry and part of the charge that God has given them.

We pray that we may all develop our power to discriminate between what is good and bad, and also that we may be able to communicate a knowledge of this to one another.

MINISTERING

The last while, there has been a great concern in my heart regarding my ability to minister, or perhaps I should say concern over my inability to minister. We have marvelous demonstrations of the moving of the Spirit of God as the Gifts of the Spirit have been ministered among the people, but in comparison to what God has in mind for the Body of Christ, we know nothing and have nothing. There is not one need or situation in the earth that it isn't God's mind to minister to through the Body that He is calling out.

I would like to quote and make a few comments on a portion of Isaiah, chapter fifty-eight. Apparently Israel had been fasting, much as the Jesus, in Matthew 6:16, spoke of people that fasted. It was mainly for a show. God asks, "Is not this the fast that I have chosen?" (Isaiah 58:6). The fast that He has chosen is a display of action on behalf of a creation that is, suffering, groaning and travailing, waiting for the manifestation of the Sons of God.

As God describes the fast He has chosen, we realize our inability to cope with the situations He describes. By saying this, I am not advocating that we do nothing until we are able to accomplish the ultimate. We should do our best with the ability we have to minister by the Spirit to all the situations with which we come in contact. This makes me things of a man who, when hands were laid on him and prophecies were given concerning his ministry, was told he would have the ministry of giving. Instead of starting to give as he was and as God prospered him, he didn't give anything and tried to save all his money so he could at some time in the future give large gifts. In his effort to accumulate great substance he didn't even tithe his increase. I expect it is needless for me to say it, but I don't think the man has any more to give away today than he had twenty years ago when the prophecies were given; and he has put himself and his family through untold hardship. Minister as you are able now, but continually look to God for a greater manifestation of the Gift He has given you.

"Is not this the fast that I have chosen? To loose the bands of wickedness" (Isaiah 58:6). The word "wicked" simply means "morally bad or evil"; and the world is actually bound by wickedness in our day. I am not interested in cataloguing all the wickedness that is around us, but I am interested in seeing ministries operating freely in the Body, which can say as Jesus did to the man at the pool of Bethesda and' also to the woman taken in adultery, "Go and sin no more." I believe that when Jesus spoke these words, that their bands of wickedness were broken and they didn't go back into their old ways of sin. What a wonderful thing to see people delivered from the power of sin.

It is true that we have seen many people receive help, but we have also had people come to us for help and then they have gone straight back to their old ways. May God help us to so partake of His anointing that wickedness will flee from our presence and never return again.

"Is not this the fast that I have chosen? To loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens" (Isaiah 58:6). Not only do we want to undo the burdens of sin, but there are many other burdens that people have to carry that are too heavy for them. Some people have sicknesses that are a terrible burden to them, and others have responsibilities that are too much for them. With some, it is the burden of a wayward child, and with others it may be a failing business. Whenever I read the Gospels and see how all the sick who

came to Jesus were healed, it increases the longing that David spoke of in Psalm 17:15, "As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness." Very, often a burden could be lifted by the application of a word of wisdom. So often, if we only knew the answer to a situation, we could remedy it. How great is the need of the earth for the operation to a far greater extent than we have ever seen of the gifts of the Word of Knowledge and the Word of Wisdom.

"...and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke" (Isaiah 58:6). There is quite a similarity in letting the oppressed go free and breaking the yoke. When Isaiah speaks of the yoke here, he is talking about the yoke of bondages that people suffer under in our day. There is the bondage of sin and habit, and there is also the bondage of circumstance. I have mentioned the freeing from sin. I would also like to say something about the yoke that circumstances can bring upon a person. I am quite convinced that many people could help themselves with a little ambition. Often, I suppose, they do not know how to go about it, and that is where the Wisdom from God comes into play. God says that if you lack wisdom, all you have to do is ask and He will give it to you liberally.

Speaking to God's people, the prophet says, "YOU break every yoke." There is a lot of room for your ministry to operate in this field. In speaking of the yoke of circumstance, which can be anything from sickness to poverty, open your heart that God may minister through you. When you see a man who is poor, pray that God will give you wisdom to help him. I am not talking about giving him money. That is often necessary, but all it is, is a form of temporary help. If you can teach him to earn his own money, you will have done him far more good. Pray that God will cause you to grow, that by the anointing you will be able to enter into these things more and more. God has told us that His anointing shall break every yoke, and it will as we learn more and more to minister by the anointing.

"Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast down to thy house? When thou seest the naked, that thou cover him?" (Isaiah 58:7). God has set those in the Church with the ministry of giving. Those to whom God has given this ministry need to pray that God will help them to increase their substance and also give them sense to administer it properly. The increase is of no value without proper administration. The Kingdom of God in the earth will be an age of proper administration. If we can become mature enough to handle what God gives properly, I believe God Will give men great empires to be administrators over. Not that God will give it to them for themselves but they will be custodians of that which God has entrusted to them. The realm of their administration will be greatly in dealing bread to the hungry and clothing the naked.

We all have a responsibility in giving. Any need that we see that we can handle, we should look after it. "There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty. The liberal soul shall be made fat: and he that watereth shall be watered himself. He that withholdeth corn, the people shall curse him: but blessing shall be upon the head of him that selleth it" (Proverbs 11:24-26).

The wisdom of man has greatly failed in the earth. We read in our newspapers about people starving to death in Biafra and other parts of the world, while at the same time, here in western Canada, people are almost poverty stricken because they cannot sell their wheat. And what is worse than that is that, if a farmer wanted to give his wheat to someone who was starving in another country, he couldn't do it. It is time men

started to look to God for His wisdom. If God's people will seek Him, I feel sure He will give of His wisdom; and if His wisdom is in you, it will open a door for you to minister.

"...and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh" (Isaiah 58:7). Your own flesh is your husband, or your wife, and your children. It is as important to minister to your own family, or maybe even more so, than outside the family. Here is where all righteousness begins. As far as the earth is concerned, many, many families are breaking down. Don't hide yourself from your family, but minister to them. There are lots of family troubles among God's people for us to work on, and after that, there is the whole earth, where families are falling apart.

When we consider the need of the earth and our inadequacy, I believe it will be a long time before we will be tempted to say we are rich and increased with goods and have need of nothing.

0 my people, saith the Lord, open thine heart to the anointing of my Spirit that I may teach thee of my wisdom that you may be able to minister to the need of your own family and also to the needs that are about you. Lift the heavy burdens and feed the man who hungers for your bread. Also feed the man who seeks for that bread which came down heaven, that his soul may fed and he shall enter into the joy of the Lord. As you are faithful in that which I have given you, it shall be a blessing to all nations and all the earth shall rejoice in the Lord your God.

PACIFIC CAMP 1976

We thank God for another wonderful time spent in the presence of God at the Camp Meeting in Turner, Oregon. When we are at camp we always feel that this one is better than the last one. I believe that is right, because the anointing is growing continually; and, if we are walking with God, we are being changed from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.

I don't believe I have ever been in a Camp Meeting where there was such freedom to minister. Young and old ministered together as one body in prophecy, in singing, in exhortation and teaching. That is the way it should be, that every member of the Body of Christ is a functioning member. We reached a tremendous climax on the Saturday morning as many members of the Body ministered of the glory of God.

There were many needs ministered to during the week. People with problems in their lives were helped, the sick were prayed for, and quite a number were helped to find their place in the Body of Christ by the laying on of hands and prophecy and the receiving of Spiritual Gifts. Also some accepted Christ as their Saviour. Revelation continued to flow as different members of the Body ministered in their capacity.

It was my privilege to speak for a few minutes during the last meeting. We had had such a wonderful time together that I felt to exhort the people to just continue the Camp Meeting in their home churches the next Sunday morning. I pray that all will feel the freedom to continue to minister as they did at camp.

I also mentioned Paul's exhortation to Timothy about exercise. We are living in a day when people are very conscious of the need for physical exercise. If we do not have proper exercise, the body does not function properly. In fact, if we are confined to bed for a few weeks, we get so we can hardly stand up. I am sure of this also, that anyone at camp who was used to hard physical labour would find they had a few sore muscles the first few days back at work. The physical body must be kept in condition.

In speaking to Timothy, Paul said bodily exercise profiteth "a little" (I Timothy 4:8). He was speaking comparatively concerning bodily exercise and exercising ourselves unto godliness. If we find it important to exercise the physical body, how much more important is it to exercise the spiritual man?

Sometimes we wonder why we find it so hard to prophesy or sing in the Spirit or speak with other tongues when we haven't done it for a long time. It is simply that we haven't been exercising our gift and we are out of condition spiritually.

I pray that God will help us all to be exercised in those things that pertain to the Spiritual realm and that His Body will be in the place where it is ready to meet any need that may arise, either in personal edification, or that of the rest of the Body of Christ, or to those who are outside.

GOD'S RELATIONSHIP WITH MAN

God's relationship with man, if we can judge the way we perceive things, must at many times be very disappointing to Him. On the other hand, there are those with whom He has been pleased.

Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord and walked with God, but the generation in which he lived vexed God with their sin.
"And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart" (Genesis 6:5-6). To repent means to feel such regret over an action as to change one’s mind. God was sorry that He had made man because of the grief that man's sin brought Him.

It was God's mind to destroy mankind because of their wickedness, with the exception of Noah and his immediate family. "The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth. And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth. Make thee an ark of gopher wood; rooms shalt thou make in the ark, and shalt pitch it within and without with pitch" (Genesis 6:11). Of all the population of the earth, Noah and his family alone were saved.

Enoch was a man who pleased God. "And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him" (Genesis 5:24). He so walked with God that he entered into the resurrection many dispensations before that great event was to take place.

When the tabernacle in the wilderness had been constructed according to the pattern God had given Moses in the mount, and everything was set in order according to God's instructions, God said, "And I will dwell among the children of Israel, and will be their God. And they shall know that I am the LORD their God, that brought them forth out of the land of Egypt, that I may dwell among them: I am the LORD their God" (Exodus 29:45-46).

A short time later Moses was again spending time alone up in the mountain with God. "And the LORD said unto Moses, Go, get thee down; for thy people, which thou broughtest out of the land of Egypt, have corrupted themselves: They have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them: they have made them a molten calf, and have worshipped it, and have sacrificed thereunto, and said, These be thy gods, O Israel, which have brought thee up out of the land of Egypt" (Exodus 32:7-8).

The disappointment of God was so aroused that He had in mind to destroy the whole nation of Israel and make a new nation from Moses and his descendants. "And the LORD said unto Moses, I have seen this people, and, behold, it is a stiff necked people: Now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them: and I will make of thee a great nation" (Exodus 32:9). Because of Moses intercession on their behalf God spared Israel. "And the LORD repented of the evil which he thought to do unto his people" (Exodus 32:14).

The apostle Paul tells us that the experiences of Israel were examples for us. "Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted" (I Corinthians 10:6).
We who have seen and experienced the glory of the Lord must walk very carefully in His ways. Those who saw his glory in Egypt and in the desert never entered the Promised Land. Ten times they tempted God. "Because all those men which have seen my glory, and my miracles, which I did in Egypt and in the wilderness, and have tempted me now these ten times, and have not hearkened to my voice; Surely they shall not see the land which I swore unto their fathers, neither shall any of them that provoked me see it" (Numbers 14:22-23). "Wherefore (as the Holy Ghost saith, Today if ye will hear His voice, Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness: When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years. Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, they do always err in their heart; and they have not known my ways. So I swore in my wrath, they shall not enter into my rest.)" (Hebrews 3:7).

There were many miraculous things that God had done for Israel. Israel thirsted and complained that Moses had brought them to the wilderness to die of thirst. God sent him to a rock in Horeb accompanied by the elders of Israel. He was to smite the rock, and water would come forth to quench their thirst. "And the LORD said unto Moses, Go on before the people, and take with thee of the elders of Israel; and thy rod, wherewith thou smotest the river, take in thine hand, and go. Behold, I will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb; and thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it, that the people may drink. And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel" (Exodus 17:5-6). This experience of Israel's speaks to us of Christ, the rock from whom we drink of the living water. "Moreover, brethren, I would not

that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; And did all eat the same spiritual meat; And did all drink the same spiritual drink; for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ" (I Corinthians 10:1-4).

Joshua led Israel into the land that God had promised them, and they served the Lord all the days of Joshua. "And the people served the LORD all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great works of the LORD, that he did for Israel" (Judges 2:7).

"And also all that generation were gathered unto their fathers: and there
I arose another generation after them, which knew not the LORD, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel. And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and served Baalim: And they forsook the LORD God of their fathers, which brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods, of the gods of the people that were round about them, and bowed themselves unto them, and provoked the LORD to anger. And they forsook the LORD, and served Baal and Ashtaroth" (Judges 2:10-13).

Baal was the god of money and Ashtaroth was the god of sex. It would seem that, in our day, the majority of people worship either one, or both, of these two gods. Let it not be that our Heavenly Father's people are led into the worship of these false gods.

As we read in the books of the Kings, there were many times after Israel entered the Promised Land when God was disappointed with His people. It seems that, as you read through the history of Israel, they needed a revival about every forty years. A righteous king would arise, and they would serve the Lord. Then, at his death, his son would take over the throne, and lead the people into sin and rebellion against God.
He sent prophets to warn them concerning His judgment. There were also false prophets who prophesied peace and comfort and deceived many. These are the words of Jeremiah that prophet of God: "Moreover I will deliver all the strength of this city, and all the labours thereof, and all the precious things thereof, and all the treasures of the kings of Judah will I give into the hand of their enemies, which shall spoil them, and take them, and carry them to Babylon. And thou, Pashur (the son of the priest), and all that dwell in thine house shall go into captivity: and thou shalt come to Babylon, and there thou shalt die, and shalt be buried there, thou, and all thy friends, to whom thou hast prophesied lies" (Jeremiah 20:5-6).
"And I will send the sword, the famine, and the pestilence, among them, till they be consumed from off the land that I gave unto them and to their fathers. The word that came to Jeremiah concerning all the people of Judah in the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah king of Judah, that was the first year of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon;" (Jeremiah 24:10-25:1).

The partial fulfillment of Jeremiah's prophecy is recorded in II Kings 24:11-15: "And Nebuchadnezzar kind of Babylon came against the city, and his servants did besiege it. And Jehoiachin the king of Judah went out to the king of Babylon, he, and his mother, and his servants, and his princes, and his officers: and the king of Babylon took him in the eighth year of his reign. And he carried out thence all the treasures of the house of the LORD, and the treasures of the king's house, and cut in pieces all the vessels of gold which Solomon king of Israel had made in the temple of the LORD, as the LORD had said. And he carried away all Jerusalem, and all the princes, and all the mighty men of valour, even ten thousand captives, and all the craftsmen and smiths: none remained, save the poorest sort of the people of the land. And he carried away

Jehoiachin to Babylon, and the king's mother, and the king's wives, and his officers, and the mighty of the land, those carried he into captivity from Jerusalem to Babylon."

Everything that was prophesied here concerning Jerusalem can be applied to the church in a spiritual sense. All can be carried away captive to Babylon; the people and all the treasures of the house of the Lord. (Babylon is a symbol of the world). "And Moses verily was faithful in all his house, as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after; But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end" (Hebrews 3:5-6).

The final destruction and overthrow of Jerusalem, the capture of Zedekiah, the putting out of his eyes, and the carrying away of the rest of the people to Babylon is recorded in II Kings, chapter 25. All this was the result of the disobedience of the people to the Lord and their failure to walk with Him. Their captivity lasted for seventy years; yet, as a nation, they never seemed to learn. There were some though, as Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther, who walked very close to God. "But to Israel he saith, All day long I have stretched forth my hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people" (Romans 10:21).

There are similar circumstances in spiritual Israel. The church established by the apostles of Peter and Paul's day backslid and went into apostasy. Many times throughout the centuries, God has moved by the Spirit and breathed new life into the church. Then, as Israel, a new generation would arise that wouldn't walk in the ways of their fathers. God would have to move again upon a backslidden church. Because of their ways, God would remove the anointing of the Holy Spirit. Then, men would try to implement their own program as a substitute for the anointing of the Spirit. Their church services are devoid of the presence of God. An example is the way many will entertain the people with their music. Entertainment does not move the heart. It is the anointing that moves people.
Paul writes, "Esaias also crieth concerning Israel, Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, a remnant shall be saved:" (Romans 9:27). I am afraid it will be much the same with the church. Jesus said, "Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of (obeys) my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? And in thy name have cast out devils? And in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity" (Matthew 7:21-22).

I recently read the report of a survey, which contained appalling statistics. It says that 56% of single fundamentalist Christians practice sex outside of marriage. That is almost the same percentage as was given for non-Christians. God's word condemns such activity. His commandments are absolute and never change. Society may change, but that doesn't change what God has said.

"Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God" (Galatians 5:19-21). If the figures of this survey are true, fornication will really cause that remnant that will enter the kingdom to be very small, not taking into account all the other works of the flesh.

Let the church be purified by the moving of the Spirit of God. We do not want to have to cast aside His people and raise up a new generation who will be led by His Spirit. It is a time to seek God with all of our hearts. "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty. Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God" (II Corinthians 6:17-7:1).

If we have had a problem with the works of the flesh, let us remember that there is always forgiveness from God if we will repent. The blood of Christ will wash and cleanse from all sin. "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the LORD: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool" (Isaiah 1:18). "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (I John 1:9).

How wonderful the grace of God is. But never let us take advantage of that grace that we might continue in sin.

THE RENEWING OF THE MIND

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We all realize that the purpose of God is the establishment of His Kingdom in the earth. That is what our hearts cry out for and what the whole creation is groaning for. When Jesus was teaching His disciples about prayer, He told them to pray, "Thy kingdom come." Thereby, we can easily conclude that is the purpose God has in mind.

In the age in which we live, God is calling out "sons." They will be the ones God will use to administer His kingdom. Sonship is a wonderful calling, and I pray we all will seek God, and strive to enter into the place that He has for us.

You will find, as you read the Scriptures, that there are some who have entered into the experience of sonship. Hebrews contains a long list of people of whom God says, "And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise" (Hebrews 11:39). They haven't received the fullness of the promise, yet, but they have a good report. They are just waiting for those who are coming along behind, so that all may receive the fullness of the promise together. "Wherefore seeing we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us" (Hebrews 12:1). Our instruction before God is that we run this race, and endeavour, by the help of the Spirit of God, to enter into the glorious calling that God has given His people.

The Scriptures tells us of some who did not enter into their calling. In Romans 11:17-18, we read about the branches that were broken off. "And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, were grafted in among them, and with them became a partaker of the root and fatness of the olive tree; Boast not against the branches. But if thou boast, thou barest not the root, but the root thee."

There were some here that God had called. "Thou wilt say then, the branches were broken off, that I might be graffed in. Well; because of unbelief they were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not high minded but fear: For if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest He also spare not thee" (Romans 11:19-21). This is a warning for us that we be very careful of our walk. Because of unbelief there are many who have missed the way. Even in our day, there have been those who, because of unbelief, or lack of submission, have missed the way God had called them to.

In Hebrews 12:12-13, we read, "Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; and make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed." God has been talking to us about making straight paths for our feet. Walking in the way of the Lord is a straight path. He also mentions the lame being turned out of the path. We have a responsibility toward the weaker one. He is talking about the weak one being turned out of the way, or away from the calling of God. Rather than allowing that, let the weak one be healed.

"Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord: Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled" (Hebrews 12:14-15). Bitterness is a terrible thing. It is something that can grow very easily in our hearts. It can grow so quickly, and it not only troubles us, but it will defile other people also. A bitter spirit is very contagious. When a person becomes bitter in his heart, it seems impossible for him not to talk about it to other people. The result is that it spreads and spreads causing a canker or tumour within the body.

The writer of Hebrews continues, "Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright" (Hebrews 12:16). Every one of us could do the same thing for just one morsel of sin of the age in which we live.

Esau came in one day from an unsuccessful hunting trip. Jacob was cooking a mess of pottage. It smelled so good to Esau, and he wanted some. Jacob was quite agreeable to sell Esau the pottage, but it was at a terrible price. Jacob wanted Esau's birthright. As the oldest son, Esau had the right of inheritance. The oriental custom was that the oldest son should inherit everything. Esau sold his birthright for one morsel of meat, and we can do the same thing. A young person can wreck their whole life in one evening of pleasure. Let us be very careful of these things. We can so easily miss the way God has called us to. "For ye know how that afterward, when he would have the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears" (Hebrews 12:17). Another scripture which teaches us the same thing is Hebrews 3:7-11; "Wherefore (as the Holy Ghost saith, Today if you will hear His voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness: When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years. Wherefore I grieved with that generation, and said, “They do always err in their heart; and they have not known many ways. So I swear in my wrath, they shall not enter into my rest.) Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God."

Many of the Israelites in the wilderness provoked God to anger; so much so, that God allowed them to die in the wilderness rather than enter the Promised Land. Let us allow the Spirit of God to move upon us and melt us.

"But exhort one another daily, while it is called today, lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin" (Hebrews 3:13). It is a very easy thing to let hardness creep in. This will destroy our confidence in the thing God has called us to. Hardness of heart causes unbelief, and unbelief makes it impossible for us to enter into the calling of God. "For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end" (Hebrews 3:14).

Sometime ago God spoke very plainly to us concerning an open door. I believe we have been pressing toward that open door. God has been working with us. It has been a time of heart searching, dedication, and sanctification: a time of coming into unity. There has been a tremendous change in the church, in the last few years, in these ways. People have given themselves to the lord like they have never done before, and there has come a unity that has been such a wonderful thing. It is so blessed to have this feeling of oneness among the people of God. We long to see this continue, and keep growing, in our midst. That open door is before us, and I feel that open door is the door into sonship, the place of adoption and of entering into the resurrection. When God speaks of adoption, or the manifestation of the sons, He is also speaking of the resurrection into which He desires we enter.

Paul talks, in Romans 12:1, of a living sacrifice: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." Israel knew what sacrifices were, so Paul speaks to these Christians concerning sacrifices. When Israel brought an animal to the brazen altar to sacrifice it, immediately it was killed and placed upon the altar. It was completely submissive to the one who was offering it. He is talking about us being a living sacrifice. He is talking about submission to the will and purpose of God, which is absolutely necessary, if we are going to enter into His Kingdom. So, we must present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God. If our bodies aren't holy, they really aren't acceptable to God. This is our reasonable service, or, in other words, it is the sensible thing to do.

"Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world" (Romans 12:2 NIV). To conform to something is to make yourself similar, or in the image, of something. We use forms in the making of many things. In many manufacturing processes, forms are used to make things in the shape and size the manufacturer desires. If we conform to something, we are in agreement with it. Phillips translation puts it this way, "Don't let the world squeeze you into its mould." It is very important that God's people keep away from the way the world operates in the age in which we live.

"Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind" (Romans 12:2 NIV). When Paul talks about the world, he is talking about the system of this age; the way people walk; the way they do business; the way they think; the way they live. He says, don't conform to these things. He is also talking about

Let us read Titus 2:11-12. "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts (desires), we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world." This is God's instruction: that we should deny ungodliness and worldly lusts. We should deny the false ideas men have about how to live in this earth. They are not godly. Godly means to be like God. "We should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour, Jesus Christ; Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity (rebellion), and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works" (Titus 2:12-14). We should look for His appearing in His body the church. The place where we want to see Him come is in you and me.

When Paul speaks of a peculiar people, the meaning of the word "peculiar" is as it was in the old English. He is not speaking of queer people, as we would think of it in our modern English. The word "peculiar" speaks of possession; to illustrate, certain characteristics are peculiar to certain people. Blond hair and blue eyes are peculiar to certain nations, whereas black hair and dark eyes are peculiar to other nations. These are characteristics, or possessions, of these people. When God speaks of purifying unto Himself a peculiar people, He is talking about a people whom He possesses, and in whom He dwells. He is talking about a people who possess the characteristics of God. They are not a bunch of misfits, but they are the most sober minded, righteous, and godly people that you could find anywhere. I always get perturbed when somebody thinks that we should be odd because we are Christians. It is the person who walks in the ways of this world who is odd.

This gives us an idea about what Paul means when he talks about the world and not conforming to it. Paul says, "But be ye transformed..." To transform something means to change its condition, its character, or its function. If something is transformed, a change must take place.

The Brethren have talked about the process of metamorphosis. It is a Greek word that means to change, transform, or transfigure. Metamorphosis is the process of change that a caterpillar goes through to become a moth or a butterfly. This past spring we had millions of tent caterpillars that fed on the leaves of our trees, and literally stripped them bare. After a few weeks, they spun themselves cocoons, and went into a state of hibernation. A short time later, they emerged as moths. They in turn will lay eggs, which will hatch next spring, producing more caterpillars. Metamorphosis is the transformation that takes place as we described with the tent caterpillar becoming a moth. God's mind is that the Christian be transformed from the carnal to the spiritual.

In Matthew 17:2, Jesus "was transfigured before them: and His face did shine as the sun, and His raiment was white as the light." The word "transfigured" is translated from the Greek word metamorphoo. The scripture here describes the change that appeared in Jesus at that time. It was a foretaste of the resurrection and, no doubt, is a description of what God's people will experience as they enter into it.

Paul speaks of a metamorphosis in II Corinthians 3:18. "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." The change comes by beholding the glory of the Lord. It comes by contact, and fellowship, with Him. It comes by walking in His presence, and talking with Him.

Paul is also talking of the same experience when he talks of us being transformed in Romans 12:2. What he is talking about is the change that God wants to see take place in us. This change takes place by the renewing of your mind. He said, "Be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind." Our mind is that part of us that thinks. What Paul is actually talking about is changing the way we think. He is not talking about getting a different brain, but he is talking about the way we use the one we have. We are changed by changing the way we think.

There are two ways of describing our mind. Let us turn to Romans 1:28-30. "And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient ('He gave them over to a depraved mind, to do what ought not to be done' NIV); Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whispers, Backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents...," etc. This is what Paul calls "a reprobate mind." In Romans 8:6-7, Paul speaks of the carnal mind: "For to be carnally minded is death." He has spoken about the reprobate mind, and here speaks of the carnal mind. I suppose they are the same. They work the same results in our lives. A reprobate mind is a mind that is corrupt, thinks only of evil, and entering into evil. Paul then gives us the contrast: "But to be spiritually minded is life and peace."

In I Timothy 6:3, we read, "If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; He is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds,..." etc. If a person enters into all the things that Paul has mentioned here, which are teachings that are contrary to the teachings of Christ, they are the fruit of a corrupt mind. They will destroy the work and the plan of God in our lives.

In Colossians 2:18, he talks of the fleshly mind. "Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind." The fleshly mind is that which is controlled by the carnal nature.

James talks about a double-minded man being unstable in all his ways (James 1:8). He is talking about the man who tries to walk with one foot in the things of the evil one, and the other in the ways of the lord. This type of person doesn't know whether they are coming or going. It is very important that we open our hearts to God and let Him establish us so that we know where we are going. He will show us what He has called us to enter into.

Let us read I Corinthians 2:9-11. "But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him. But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit..." This is not talking about something away off in the eternal realm. These things are for us to enter into today. God has revealed them to us by His Spirit, and they are for today. "...for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God." You know what is in your heart because of the Spirit that is in you. I don't know what you are thinking about. I really don't know what is in your heart, unless you tell me. Likewise, we only know the things of God by

the Spirit of God. To know these things, we must partake of the Spirit of God. Then God will reveal to us all the glorious things He has prepared for them that love Him. He reveals them to us by the Holy Spirit.

"Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God...." This changing of our minds takes place by the moving of the Spirit of God within us. This changing of the way we think or the transformation that God desires is the work of the Holy Spirit within us. "...Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual...." The things that God teaches us come by the Spirit of God. "...But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (I Corinthians 2:12-14). He speaks here of the natural man and most of us have a large measure of the natural man in us yet. There are things that it seems hard for us to believe and hard to enter into. These things are made real to our hearts by the discerning of the Spirit of God.

"But he that is Spiritual judges (examines) all things ('The spiritual man, on the other hand, has insight into the meaning of everything' Phillips), yet he himself is judged of no man. For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct Him? But we have the mind of Christ (we think as Christ thinks)" (I Corinthians 2:15-16). That is the only way you can enter into the thing that God has for you. We must begin to think the way Christ thinks in all things. That is the way that God thinks.

In John 5:30, Jesus says, "I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me." In making a judgment, Jesus did not judge according to His own mind, but He judged according to His Father's will-- according to the mind of His Heavenly Father. It was absolutely necessary that they be of one mind in order for Christ to judge righteous judgement. It is the same with us. If we are to judge righteously, it is important that we think as God thinks. This is necessary if we are to perform according to the will of God.

Let us read again from Romans 12:2: "...be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind." The renewing of the mind is not an instantaneous process that will take place sometime in the future, but it is something that comes day by day, with fellowship with God, by reading the Word of God, and by prayer. People are transformed because God is renewing their minds. God is changing their way of thinking. God is changing their attitudes. It comes by a spiritual growth. They look at things from a different viewpoint altogether. Things are seen in a different light.

Entering into sonship is a process of growth, and, also, is not an instantaneous happening, but it is a process of growth. Unless you are growing now, and continue to grow, it will be impossible for you to become a manifested Son of God. Sometimes I think we have the wrong idea of what sonship will be. Some think of it as a high and mighty place of power, but it will actually be a place of service. It will be a bearing of the responsibility for the whole creation in delivering it from the bondage of corruption. This is the weight God will place upon the shoulders of the administrators that He set over His kingdom.

God desires to change the way we think, and to change our attitudes. The way society in general thinks has nothing to do with what is right. People seem to think moral codes change, but when God said, "Thou shalt

not," in the days of Moses, it is still true today. I am thankful God is moving upon His people, and that He is changing and renewing their minds.

In the King James Version, Philippians 2:5 says, "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." The NIV puts is this way: "Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus." Attitude has a very important part to play in your life. Someone was interviewing the skipper of the boat who had won the race, off the coast of Australia, run for the Americas Cup. He was asked what he considered the three most important things in his crew that had caused them to win. The skipper replied, "Attitude, attitude, attitude." This is also true of our walk with God.

"Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus, Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made Himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. ..." This is what sonship is going to be like. "...And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to death--even death on a cross! Therefore God exalted Him to the highest place and gave Him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and very tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Philippians 2:5-11 NIV).

Now turn to Isaiah 14:12 to read about another attitude; while you are reading this, make a comparison with what we read about Jesus in Philippians. "How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning!..." Another name for Lucifer is the devil, the one who tempts us to do evil and become discouraged. He used to be in the heavenly realm with God. He still seems to have access to the presence of God to accuse us day and night (Revelations 12:10). "...how art thou cut down to the ground, which did weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High...." The next part of the quotation tells what has happened to him, and what will happen in the future. When Paul wrote of Jesus, he told how God had highly exalted Him. When it comes to Lucifer, who tried to usurp God's place, Isaiah says, "...Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit. They that see thee shall narrowly look upon thee, and consider thee, saying, is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did shake kingdoms; that made the world as a wilderness, and destroyed the cities thereof; that opened not the house of his prisoners?" (Isaiah 14:12-17). If I may put it his way, these are all the works of the evil one: he makes the world a wilderness; he is a destroyer; he doesn't open the house of his prisoners, he keeps them bound.

Let us turn to Luke 4:18, where the ministry of Jesus is described: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; He hath sent me to heal the broken hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives." The devil keeps people shut up in his prison. Jesus preaches deliverance to the captive, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised. The difference of attitude is plainly visible. Jesus came to deliver and to set free. The devil binds and refuses to set his captives free.

Jesus made Himself nothing. He humbled Himself and became obedient unto the death of the cross. Then God exalted Him and "set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that

which is to come; And hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is His body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all" (Ephesians 1:20-23). I pray that God will establish the same attitude in our hearts.

"And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind (the changing of your attitude), that you may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God" (Romans 12:2). God wants us to prove Him. There are different times in the Scriptures where God asks us to prove Him.
One was where Malachi spoke of tithing. God said, "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse... and prove me" (Malachi 3:10). God said He would pour out a blessing upon them that they couldn't contain. I don't know of anyone, who has actually proven God in this way, who hasn't found it to their benefit.

When someone tells of their financial problems, the first thing you should do is ask them if they are tithing. This is not a hit and miss thing. When a person gets their pay-cheque, they should take ten per cent, right off the top, to give to God. Prove God if he will not bless you. I am sure that your financial circumstances will improve. God is calling out administrators for the kingdom, and, if we can't administer our own every day affairs, how are we going to be able to administer in the kingdom?

Gideon also proved God to be sure that it was God who was speaking to him. God had asked him to deliver Israel from the hand of the Midianites. Gideon spoke to God and said, "I will put a fleece of wool on the floor; and if the dew be upon the fleece only, and it be dry upon all the earth beside, then will I know that thou wilt save Israel by my hand, as thou hast said" (Judges 6:37). The next morning Gideon was able to wring the water out of the fleece. He wanted to prove God further, and said to Him, "let me prove, I pray thee, but this once with the fleece; let it now be dry only upon the fleece, and upon all the ground let there be dew" (Judges 6:39). That night the fleece was dry and all the ground was wet. Gideon was proving God.

Paul talks about us proving what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God. Paul is not talking about three wills of God here, but he is using three words to describe the will of God. The will of God is good, and perfect, and it is acceptable.

In the rest of this chapter of Romans, Paul talks about what the will of God is. There are a lot of young people who are wondering what the will of God is for their life. You may be wondering what your ministry is in the body of Christ. It is good for you to be concerned about this. Along with your prayers, and seeking God, you can get a lot of help from your parents, and your elders. It probably won't be as hard to find what the will of God is as you might think. When prophecies are given over you, and hands are laid on you, you will receive help to enter into your ministry in the body of Christ. They will teach you what God wants you to know about your ministry.

What Paul talks about in the rest of this chapter is the good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God for all of us. Our attitude and our thinking will be seen by how we respond to what is said in the rest of this chapter. In verse 3, he says, "For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith." This is the will of God: that we don't think of ourselves more highly than we ought to think, but we should think soberly. We should think of ourselves as God thinks of us. We will

find out much about what God thinks of us by the prophecies that are given over us. God is usually very encouraging to us in the prophecies given through the presbytery that lay hands on us. He instructs us concerning our ministry and our place in the body of Christ. We don't want to have an inflated idea of ourselves, but we should think according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.

We often find the opposite kind of a person to what Paul is talking about here. It is the person who feels they are useless to God and everyone else. They, too, should think soberly, and as God thinks of them. They also must think according to the will of God.

"For as we have many members in one body, and all the members have not the same office; so we being many, are one body in Christ, and every one of us members one of another" (Romans 12:4). It is very important part of the will of God that we recognize the members of the body of Christ. There is no way that we can please God unless we think soberly concerning ourselves and also think soberly concerning all the other members of Christ's body.

"Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; or ministry, (serving) let us wait on our ministering: or he that teacheth on teaching: or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth with diligence; he that showeth mercy, with cheerfulness" (Romans 12:6-8). These things are the will of God for the church. Entering into your ministry is the will of God for every one of us. Entering into the calling that has been given us; and warring, according to the prophecies that have gone before on us, a good warfare: this is the will of God.

"Let love be without dissimulation or hypocrisy" (Romans 12:9). This, too, is the will of God. The carnal man never thinks in this vein. He only thinks of elevating himself and putting the other person down. As our minds are renewed, as we are transformed, and as we are changed, we begin to think in the way Paul is speaking of here, which is according to the will of God.

"Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good" (Romans 12:9). To abhor something means to shrink from it in disgust. We can become so used to evil all around us that we fail to notice it anymore, and finally come to the place where we accept it because everybody is doing it. God doesn't want us to do this. He wants us to abhor evil. He wants us to hate evil, and have no part in it. His instruction is to cleave to that which is good. One of the prophets said, "Hate the evil and love the good" (Amos 5:15).

We must repent of any evil that is in our lives. To repent means to be so sorry for our past way of life that we turn around and go the opposite way. We depart from sin and evil, and cleave to that which is good. Our mind is renewed, and we are transformed, or changed. To renew means to make new. We have to have a new mind, as far as good and evil are concerned. Let us despise evil.

"Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another;" (Romans 12:10). If we allow the Spirit of God to lead us, He will cause us to want to put the other person first. If God wants us to be number one, He will cause us to be that without us walking over other people to get there. This attitude is so different from that of the world; it's no wonder Paul says our minds must be made

over. This is not the way of the carnal mind, with which we are all born after the flesh; but it is the way of the new mind that God gives us when we are born of the Spirit.

"Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the lord " (Romans 12:11). Phillips translates that verse this way, "Let us not allow slackness to spoil our work." This should apply in both the material realm and the spiritual. There is no place in God's plan for slothfulness or laziness. "I went past the field of the sluggard, past the vineyard of the man who lacks judgment; thorns had come up everywhere, the ground was covered with weeds, and the stone wall was in ruins. I applied my heart to what I observed and learned a lesson from what I saw: A little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to rest -- and poverty will come on you like a bandit and scarcity like an armed man" (Proverbs 24:30-34 NIV). This can be applied to our lives in general and not only to material things.

"Rejoicing in hope;" (Romans 12:12). Paul is talking about us not becoming bogged down by the circumstances that surround us. He is encouraging us to rejoice in the hope that the Lord has set before us. He wrote in Philippians about pressing toward the mark that is set before us. God's will is that we rise up in the Spirit, and rejoice in the calling that God has given us.

"Patient in tribulation" (Romans 12:12): this is much easier to talk about than to accomplish. Don't let tribulation discourage you, but patiently look to God for His deliverance. Those suffering tribulation need to read Romans 8:31-39. "If God be for us, who can be against us?" (Romans 8:31)

"Continuing instant in prayer" (Romans 12:12): or, in other words, faithful in prayer. Prayer is our means of communication with God. He desires fellowship with his people as He fellowshipped with Adam in the garden before he sinned. Prayer is the means by which we can receive from God.

"Distributing to the necessity of the saints; given to hospitality" (Romans 12:13). Some have a ministry of giving, but we should all be able to open our hearts to give to those who are in need. To be hospitable is another way of giving. Only it is exercised by taking people into our homes and entertaining them there. "Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares" (Hebrews 13:2).

"Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not" (Romans 12:14). This is also much easier said than done. The carnal man finds it very easy to curse. The will of God is that the new man overcomes the carnal man, and blesses the persecutor rather than curse him.

"Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep" (Romans 12:15). To be able to rejoice with someone is a wonderful thing, but to be able to sympathize with someone is also very important. In I Corinthians 12:26, Paul writes, "And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it." Often when someone suffers others criticize him, or, if one is honoured, others become jealous of him. The will of God, and the evidence of the renewed mind, is that we suffer with those who suffer, and rejoice with them who rejoice. Tears of sympathy are never wasted.

"Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate" (Romans 12:16). In other words, treat all the members of the body of Christ with the same respect. We cannot have favourites among God's people. Let us read James 2:1-4, "My brethren, have the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons. For if there come unto your assembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment; And you have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, Sit thou here in a good place; and say to the poor, Stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool: Are ye not then partial in yourselves, and are become judges with evil thoughts?" Paul ends his exhortation to the Romans with, "Be not wise in your own conceits" (Romans 8:16). It is the natural tendency to think in the ways described here, but the renewed mind thinks differently. It has learned to think of other people the way God thinks of them. I pray that God will help us so that our minds will be renewed, for therein lies our hope of transformation.

"Recompense to no man evil for evil" (Romans 12:17). If someone has done you evil, the man controlled by the carnal mind always wants to get even. In verse nineteen, we are told not to avenge ourselves, but, rather, give place to wrath. It is very important how we react to situations of this kind. If we allow the carnal mind to hold sway, we can become angry, and then try to get even by taking revenge on the one we feel has wronged us. But the will of God is that we recompense to no man evil for evil. In writing to the Corinthians, Paul says this, "But brother goeth to law with brother, and that before the unbelievers. Now therefore there is utterly a fault among you, because ye go to law with one another. Why do ye not rather take wrong? Why do ye not rather suffer yourselves to be defrauded?" (I Corinthians 6:6-7). God says that he will take the necessary vengeance: "I will repay, saith the Lord" (Romans 12:19).

"Provide things honest in the sight of all men" (Romans 12:17). The Scriptures say a lot about this. In I Thessalonians 4:12, we are instructed to walk honestly toward them that are without. In I Timothy 3:7, one of the qualifications of an elder is that he must have a good report of them that are without. Not only elders, but also every member of the church, should have a good reputation. "And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please Him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God," (Colossians 1:10 NIV). "Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time. Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man" (Colossians 4:5-6).

Please read II Corinthians 6:3-10 I will quote verses three and four. "Giving no offence in anything, that the ministry be not blamed: But in all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses...." When he speaks of a ministry not being blamed, he is speaking of your ministry and mine. If we do not walk right, there is no way that our ministry can be effective in the church or in the world. We are approved in the sight of others by our patience and the way we deal with afflictions, necessities, and distresses, etc.

"Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous: Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing. For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile: Let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it (follow it immediately). For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and His ears

are open to their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil. And who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?" (I Peter 3:8-13).

"If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men" (Romans 12:18). We, as God's chosen representatives of the new creation, must put forth every effort to be at peace. I know it is impossible to be at peace with some people, but never let it be that we are to be blamed for the contention.

"Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head" (Romans 12:20). This is the way the changed man treats his enemy. A person has to have a new attitude to be able to do this. The carnal mind fights and takes revenge.

"Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good" (Romans 12:21). These things are the will of God. When Paul speaks of proving what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God; we find it comes about by a change of attitude, a change in thinking; it is a renewing of your mind, and a making over of your mind. This is what God desires us to enter into. This is all part of becoming a manifested son, and entering into that place of administration in the kingdom of God.

There are many other scriptures that talk about the will of God. "Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul; having your conversation (manner of life) honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation" (I Peter 2:11-12). Your testimony is so important. "Submit ourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well" (I Peter 2:13-14). Now, listen particularly to this: "For so is the WILL of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men" (I Peter 2:15). This is the will of God.

"Furthermore then we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye would abound more and more" (I Thessalonians 4:1). Paul is talking here about growth, about change, and about transformation. "For ye know what commandments we gave you by the Lord Jesus. For this is the WILL of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication: That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour; Not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God: That no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter: because that the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also have forewarned you and testified. For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness" (I Thessalonians 4:2-7). The will of God is your sanctification.

"Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind (attitude); for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin;..." Other translators put it this way, "Ye that hath suffered in the flesh, sin loses its power." "...That he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the WILL of God" (I Peter 4:1-2).

Let us pray that God will help us to seek His will in these matters, and that we might walk in them. Let us pray that our attitudes will continually change, and there will be a real transformation, a real metamorphosis,

accomplished in the people of God. When that change is completed, we will enter into the fullness of sonship. We will enter into resurrection.

In Hebrews 9:27, we read, "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." This is right. We either have to die to the carnal man, or we will die physically. It is the carnal man that causes physical death. If we could only die to the carnal nature and the reprobate mind! If our minds could be renewed, and changed, out before us is the glorious realm of the resurrection!

THE RENEWED MIND

God, by His Spirit, is opening the way beyond the veil. For many years, we have looked, and hoped, but now the way into the Holy of Holies is being made manifest.

The Lord has been speaking to us concerning the mind. In fact, there are actually three minds a man may have. A man may have, and be directed by, the carnal mind, which is the mind that is controlled completely by the flesh. His mind thinks and does exactly what the flesh desires, which of course brings forth "the works of the flesh." If we are completely directed by the carnal mind, our body will die, and our soul will also be brought unto death.

A man may live in the realm of the natural mind by which we direct and walk in our everyday affairs. This realm is perfectly legitimate. We may even take the odd excursion into the realm which is in the Spirit, but this is not that which satisfies the man who is hungering and thirsting after righteousness; for, even though his soul may live, he will be unclothed and his body pass into decay.

There is a realm that God is now endeavouring to lead us into: the realm controlled by the spiritual mind. This is the realm where our soul and body live; a realm where we do not put off this house, but we put that house from heaven over it; a realm where death does not reign, but where life is supreme. It is concerning this spiritual, or renewed, mind of which I would write to you.
May I mention, though, that it is impossible to set up lines or barriers between the carnal, natural and spiritual minds because those lines are not fixed. In fact, if we are walking with God, they will be changing every day. We will find that that which belongs to the realm of the natural mind today, will tomorrow belong to the realm of the carnal.

In the natural realm, the mind is a very powerful factor. Our state of mind will determine, in many cases, whether we are sad or happy, sick or healthy. Paul teaches us that the same effects can be carried into the spiritual realm, for he says, "For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace" (Romans 8:6). Then, he proceeds to show us, in the next few verses, the effect of the carnal mind at enmity with God, and also of the spiritual mind, which is the Spirit and mind of Christ, and the result of that mind being the quickening of our mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in us (Romans 8:11).

"Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live" (Romans 8:12-13).

In Romans 12:1,2 Paul writes, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world (or as Phillips translates: 'Do not let the world squeeze you into its mould'): but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."

Brethren, it is impossible for us to present this decaying, dying, body as a living sacrifice. It must be transformed so that we may in truth offer it as a living sacrifice. Now, Paul says we are transformed by the renewing or changing of our minds: the changing of our mind from the carnal and natural mind to the spiritual mind.

I never noticed it before, but the apostle continues throughout the rest of the book of Romans telling us how the renewed or spiritual mind operates. As he writes, you can see how the carnal mind operates, and he tells us how the renewed mind operates. In Romans 12:3, he tells us that the carnal mind thinks more highly of himself than he ought to think, but the renewed mind thinks soberly. In Romans 12:4-8, he speaks of our ministry in the body. The carnal mind does not bother to minister, unless of course, as we have known, it will sometimes minister in the flesh; but the renewed mind waits upon its ministry according to the grace that is given unto it.

In verses 9-16, he speaks of the relationship of the renewed mind to the members of the body. Let love be without hypocrisy, abhor evil, cleave to the good. Be kind to one another; esteem others more highly than ourselves; etc. Distribute to those in need, and be hospitable. Share one another's joys and sorrows. Have full sympathy with one another. Do not let your thoughts be high-flown, but accommodate yourself to humble ways. Do not be self-opinionated.

In verses 17-21, Paul speaks of the way the renewed mind gets along with those outside the body. If it is possible, as much as lies in you, live peaceably with all men. Let God give vengeance where vengeance is necessary; feed your enemies if they are hungry. Chapter 13 tells us how the renewed mind is obedient to ruling authorities. The carnal mind resists them, as it also resists God. Paul says to be subject not only for wrath, which means being subject because we are afraid of being caught in our evil deed, but also for conscience's sake. For the same reason you pay your taxes. "Render to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; reverence to whom reverence; honour to whom honour" (Romans 13:7).

Next, the apostle speaks of the renewed mind in relation to the law, and we find that the whole law is fulfilled. "Put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof" (Romans 13:14).

The fourteenth chapter deals with the renewed mind and those who are weak in the faith. The carnal mind either judges the weak in the faith, or else does not consider him in his weakness. The renewed mind does not judge another in his weakness; neither does it put a stumbling block, or an occasion to fall, in his brother's way. "For the kingdom of God does not consist in eating and drinking, but in uprightness, peace,

and joy in the Holy Spirit; and whoever in this way serves Christ, pleases God, and is approved by men" (Romans 14:17,18 WEYMOUTH).

Chapter 15 speaks of the strong bearing the infirmities of the weak, and not pleasing themselves: for even Christ pleased not Himself. Paul prays that we may be like-minded, or have the mind of Christ one toward another.

I would ask you to read fully the book of Romans in the light of these things so that the Spirit of God may quicken them to your heart. A man may resolve in his carnal mind to walk in these ways, but except he be led into it by the Spirit of God, it will avail him nothing in his transformation. Paul says, "but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the flesh ye shall live" (Romans 8:13).

There is a peace and a rest that goes with the renewed mind that I cannot wholly explain. That is why Paul said, "to be spiritually minded is life and peace."

May God lead us all to the finding of that realm that is beyond the veil.

RESPECT

The word respect means: to feel or show honour, admiration, reverence, or esteem for.

In view of what we have experienced in the goodness and blessing of God, it is important that we show Him a great deal of respect. In the first place, we were created by Him. The fact that "we are" demands respect for our Creator. When we, as Isaiah says, have all gone astray and turned everyone to our own way (Isaiah 53:6), He provided a way of redemption that we might not suffer the judgement that will come upon all unrighteousness. "But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved)... For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast" (Ephesians 2:4-5,8-9). Let your hearts flow out in admiration for Him.

As members of the body of Christ, it is important we show respect for our brother in whom Christ dwells. None of us has a corner on everything. Our physical body is so often used as an example to help us understand the body of Christ. "But now are they many members, yet but one body. And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you" (I Corinthians 12:20-21). The eye cannot read a book without the hand turning the pages nor can the head move from place to place without the feet to transport it. Likewise, because of our dependence upon one another as members of His body, we must recognize and have respect for each other.

There was a time when men showed respect for women. The apostle Peter instructs husbands to give honour unto the wife as unto the weaker vessel. There was also a time when a man would remove his hat when in the presence of a woman because of his respect for her. When he met a woman on the street he would doff his hat for the same reason. What has caused the difference? Is it because women are no longer ladies and

therefore not worthy of respect? Or is it because men are no longer gentlemen? It is perhaps part of both. Men, never let it be said that you in any way disrespect a woman. After all a woman gave birth to you and was your mother. "For as the woman is of the man, even SO IS THE MAN ALSO BY THE WOMAN; but all things of God" (I Corinthians 11:12). We have one day a year, Mother's day, on which we show respect for our mothers. Let every day be a day of respect.

When a man enters someone's house, proper deportment teaches us that he should remove his hat out of respect for the house. When we speak of the house, it is not the building that is respected, but the people who live in that building. They are the ones who comprise that house.

Good manners and respect also demand that a man remove his hat when sitting at the table to eat. This signifies respect and thankfulness for the provision God has made for our bodily needs. In I Timothy 4:3, we are instructed that the food God created is to be received with thanksgiving of them who believe and know the truth. Before we eat, we should always bow our head and give thanks to God for the food. In honour to our Head, which is Christ, we must remove our hat. God has provided food for us as He has provided for no other generation or people, and we must be appreciative of His provision.

When a man enters a place where the church meets together, he should immediately remove his hat out of respect for the presence of God. A man who wears a hat in the meeting place is dishonouring his Head, which head is Christ. A woman, on the other hand, should wear a head covering. If she doesn't, she is dishonouring her head, which is her husband.

Our mode of dress when the church meets together is also important because of respect for God. When we are meeting with the Almighty, we should dress in the best we have. Dress UNBECOMING TO A LADY should never be worn in His presence. The apostle Paul instructs us in I Timothy 2:9 that women should adorn themselves in modest apparel. Neither should a man be careless about what he wears.

These may seem like small things, but in the sight of God they are very important. Much is known of a man or a woman by the way they conduct themselves in these matters. These things are so often branded as trivial and of no importance.

RESPONSIBILITY

The last few months, God has been speaking to His people concerning their responsibility. Over the years, God has moved sovereignly upon us by His Spirit, and has led us in a wonderful way. As we have all appreciated the blessings of childhood, so we appreciate what God has taught us and done for us.

When we were children, our parents housed us, fed us, clothed us, taught us, loved us, and performed all the other parental duties (or privileges) toward us. We just took it for granted, and accepted it, but had very little responsibility. Some have never come to the place where they can shoulder their part of the load, but we are thankful that the majority of people do reach this place. Some are mistaken by believing that children

should have no responsibility. Even the smallest baby cries when it is hungry, and lets its mother know when it is uncomfortable. We might say that in this measure it is responsible for its own welfare.

As children grow, more responsibility is given to them. They learn to walk, to feed themselves, to put on their clothes, they learn how to get along with others, they are given certain duties around home, they attend school and are educated and gradually come to the place where they are ready to take on the responsibility of their own home. Likewise, it is God's mind that the church grow up in Him; that they come to a place of maturity, and the stage in their Spiritual growth where they can bear the responsibility He has in mind for them.

In this day, it is hard to find people who are willing to take responsibility. It seems that most are anxious for the pay-cheque, but do not want to carry the load that earns it. They want the blessing of a good, home but can't be bothered to teach and enforce God's order that this might be possible and, in every part of life, take the easiest way out. Responsibility may not be gratifying to the flesh, but it is an absolute essential for everyone. Children must have it if they are going to mature. Jeremiah the prophet said, "It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth" (Lamentations 3:27). And so must all of us accept the measure of responsibility that God gives to us.

God's plan is to lift a fallen creation, from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the children of God. He never intended to do all the work of this Himself, by sovereign action on His part. It would be easy for us to adopt a "what will be will be" attitude and let God worry about His own creation. But he has called us to share with Him the burden and responsibility of His plan. Jesus said, "Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his Lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known to you" (John 15:15). Why is it that we share our joys, our sorrows, and our plans, with our friends? It is because we want them to help bear the burden of the sorrow, to help share the pleasure of our joy, and to help in the accomplishment, of our plans. Likewise, God is making His plan known to us so that we may, as friends, share the burden of it with Him.

There is one thing we have never been able to do, and I don't expect we ever will be able to do it, and that is draw a line between God's sovereignty and our responsibility and say "this I am responsible for, and that God is responsible for." If there is such a line, it is not a constant line, but is continually moving as we mature, and grow-up, in Him. As we mature, and I pray that we are constantly becoming more mature, God allows us to take upon ourselves a greater measure of the responsibility that he has in mind for us.

Some people may wonder what our responsibility is. First of all, and by far the most important, it is the yielding of ourselves to the moving of the spirit of God. Paul said in Romans 6:16, "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?" Things in the Spirit are not figured out like a problem in geometry. The mind of the natural man and God's mind seldom see eye to eye. "For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? Even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God" (I Corinthians 2:11). It is impossible, then, to either see or walk properly, except we yield to and are led by His Spirit.

To be effective in carrying out our part in God's Plan, He has purposed that we should be transformed and changed. Our own mind and flesh has ruled us all our life, but God's desire is to change us by the transforming power of His Spirit until we are of the same image as His Son.

Perhaps I should say a little about how God plans to release His creation from its present bondage. In the "old order," we tried every way we could think of to endeavour to bring men to Christ. We preached, we gave out pamphlets, and buttonholed every one we met; but, in much of it, God wasn't even interested. We almost tried to force men to believe.

Now let us read a little of God's true pattern in Isaiah, "The word that Isaiah the son of Amoz saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem. And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted among the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the Word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And He shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more" (Isaiah 2:1-4).

Our idea was to try to persuade people to join themselves to the church. All our effort was an external effort on our part to try to reach them. But God has a far more effective plan. Of course, there is no room in it for the ambitions of men. No one will be able to say that he has accomplished such and such for God, for everything that will be accomplished will be done by the flowing of His Spirit through His Church. God's way is for the people to say, "Come and let us go up to the house of the Lord," and for the nations to flow unto it. If the church is walking as it should be, the people will come to it, rather than the church going out to persuade people to come to it. How I look forward to the day when all men and creatures and nations have entered into the righteousness, and peace, and joy, of His Kingdom. We may all, from the smallest man, have a part in bringing that to pass. I can picture in my mind a child teaching the lion and the lamb the ways of peace.

Now, perhaps, we can see why God is changing His people. If the church is the same as the world, why would anyone desire to become a part of it? If our children walk in disobedience, if our young people walk in worldliness, if our men do business as the world does, if our mothers forsake the heritage God has given them, who would want any part of the Church? This puts a responsibility upon us to be led of the Spirit in our walk as never before. It places before us, both young and old, a challenge such as has not been known in the church for many generations.

We do not want to get the idea that, "We are going to become so good or holy that men will flock to us." It is not us, but Christ who dwells within by whom God shall draw men to Himself.

Let us read II Corinthians 3:18, "We all with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the 'same' image from glory to glory even as by the Spirit of the Lord" (Weymouth). To many people, for us to say that we will be changed into the same image as Christ would be blasphemy, but that is what Paul has said. When Jesus told the people that He was the Son of God, they said that He blasphemed;

nevertheless, what He said was true. Always remember that Paul has said that we are changed into the "same" image by the Spirit of the Lord.

Peter writes in II Peter 1:4, "Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust." What is the Divine Nature? It is the nature of God, and God's nature is made up of everything that belongs in the realm of the Spirit, or I should say that the realm of the Spirit is made up of that which belongs to the nature of God. God's nature is love, for the scriptures say that God is love. God's nature is light, for in Him there dwelleth no darkness at all. God's nature is joy. It seems almost foreign to us to think that God could enjoy Himself, but I am sure He does because joy is one of the fruits of the Spirit. In fact all the fruits of the Spirit are part of God's nature, namely love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance, and I suppose there are many more that Paul hasn't listed in Galatians. God's nature is wisdom, and knowledge, "for in Him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Colossians 2:3). God's nature is life, for David said, "With Thee is the fountain of life!" (Psalms 36:9).

Today, God is imparting, by His Spirit, His Nature to those whom He has called. He does not impart it all at once, but, by day-by-day experience, His people are becoming like Him. That is why every detail of our life is important. Some people think that the material side of life has no bearing on the spiritual; but, I want to tell you, you could never become spiritual, or partake of God's nature, without the experience of the material. How could you learn patience, unless you sometimes found yourself in circumstances that made you impatient? How could you know rest, unless you had experienced turmoil? The time will come when, as the work of the Spirit of God progresses in His people, the only difference between Jesus and those whom He has called is that He is their Older Brother.

I would like to draw your attention for a moment to the ministry of Jesus. His ministry was one that needed no build-up. He didn't have to advertise His healing meetings. He didn't have to proclaim His evangelistic campaign in the press, or over the radio. In fact, He told people not to tell others about Him. I am convinced that if a ministry needs advertising to get a crowd, that ministry isn't sufficiently matured to be able to minister.

When Jesus ministered, He walked down the road and met a blind man; so He healed him. He went to the well for a drink, and came away not having drunk Himself, but having poured forth the water of Life to the woman He met there. When the sinful woman was brought before Him, He uttered a few words of wisdom to free her from her accusers, and forgave her sins that she might be free of that bondage also. The fame of Him went out through all the country, not because of what He claimed to be, but because of what He was. When the time is ready for it in God's plan, and His people are sufficiently matured, don't be surprised if many people seek you out for the same reasons they sought after Jesus.

The other day, I was thinking of how God has denied children the ability to procreate. Everyone knows the reason for this. It is that children are not matured enough to take the responsibility of caring for other younger children. As I thought of this, I realized how gracious God was to us in not answering our prayers when we prayed for the salvation of the millions who do not as yet know Him as we do. Don't think for a minute that God couldn't have done it: if He wanted to, He could bring every man in the earth to his knees in a matter of minutes. The church was not sufficiently mature to care for children, but I trust that, as we

continue to yield ourselves to the moving of His Spirit, we will mature, and reach the place where we can accept, and carry, the responsibility God has in mind for the Church.

God has taught us much about ministering to one another when we meet together as the church. We prophesy, exhort, teach, and sing, for the edification of every member of the body. I am very thankful for the way in which the different members of the body minister, because it is also by the ministry of every part that we grow up into Him.

God is now speaking of another phase of the operation of gift and ministry that is outside our times of meeting together. This is why God is changing us and making us partakers of His nature so that we may be able to allow Him to flow forth through the church to those in need. Don't try to make yourself minister in His capacity, but yield to the Spirit of God and allow Him to flow when He so desires. Let the Word of Wisdom go forth to the man who needs it, allow the ministry of showing mercy to be directed by the Spirit, let the ministry of giving operate as God directs. Yes, let every member of the Body minister, according to the degree of maturity he has attained, and in the capacity God has made him for. I am very sure that it will seldom be necessary for us to deviate from the ordinary pattern of our daily life to be able to minister as God would have us.

In Romans 8:18-23, we read, "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of Him who hath subjected the same in hope, Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body."

God has planned, in His wisdom, to use His church in the accomplishment of this part of His purpose that we have just read as outlined by the apostle Paul. I pray that we may accept the challenge and responsibility God is giving us. We live in a day the privilege of which no other generation has ever known.

Let us learn, more, and more, our need to be led of His Spirit; let us walk in the order that God has revealed. Be one that presses on to higher ground, and let us allow Him to cause us to grow up into the image of His Son. Let us willingly, and anxiously, bear the responsibility that God has given us. But let us also remember that His yoke is easy and His burden is light. Live in the atmosphere of His kingdom, which is righteousness, peace, and joy, in the Holy Ghost.

REVELATION

It is a tremendous privilege to know of and to enter into the kingdom of God. It is a privilege to be able to see the kingdom. Remember that when Jesus was talking to Nicodemus, He said to him, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3). I don't believe Jesus was talking so much about seeing it in a physical sense as He was talking about seeing it by the Spirit, and partaking of the Spirit of the kingdom.

You only see spiritual things by the revelation of the Spirit of God. Except the Spirit of God reveals it to you, the things concerning the kingdom of God, or any truth concerning the move of the Spirit and what God is doing, you are in the dark. We will look at a few scriptures concerning revelation.

Revelation is a very important part of our spiritual experience. All spiritual truth is received by revelation. There is no other way that you can partake of anything that belongs in the realm of the Spirit, unless the Spirit of God reveals it to you. The apostle Paul makes that very plain to us in I Corinthians 2:7-10: "But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God." That is the only way that we can possibly partake of what God's mind is for this present age and for the ages to come. It is by that which the Spirit of God makes real to us.

Our salvation comes by revelation. The understanding of God's plan of salvation is revealed to us by the Spirit. There are many scriptures that teach us that. "At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight. All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him" (Matthew 11:25-27). Our knowledge of God comes because Christ has revealed His Father to us, and we are able to see, and understand, and know, concerning our relationship with God.

"And, behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon; and the same man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel: and the Holy Ghost was upon him...." Simeon was waiting for the Kingdom of God to be established. "...And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ. And he came by the Spirit into the temple:..." The spirit of God led him to come to the temple on that particular day. "...and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him after the custom of the law, Then took he him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said, Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: For mine eyes have seen

thy salvation" (Luke 2:25-30). Note the part that the Spirit of God played in this circumstance. The Holy Spirit led him into the temple, and it was revealed to him that he would not die until he had seen Christ. God wants to share with us the glorious things of the Spirit and the glorious things of the kingdom of God. He does this through the revelation that comes from Him.

When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, “Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?” And they said, “Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets”. He saith unto them, “But whom say ye that I am?" This was the important thing. "And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 16:13-17). The revelation that took place there was caused by the heavenly Father showing Peter who Christ was. I thank God today for the fact we have been privileged to have this revelation, and that we can know whom Christ is. We can know that He was not just a man who lived two thousand years ago, but that He was the Son of God, and that He died as a sacrifice for our sin. We are thankful that we have been able to accept the atonement that He has made upon the cross of Calvary. There is no way the natural man can understand that. We are able to understand it because the Spirit of God has revealed it unto us.

"Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints," (Ephesians 1:15-18). That is how we are able to see the things of the spiritual realm. "And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power" Ephesians 1:19. This is our privilege: to be able to see things by the Spirit. It is very, very important that we keep our spiritual eyes open. Our sight can become dim and clouded by all the things that belong to this age, and take away from us the glory of the age to come. May God help us to keep our hearts open to Him so He can teach us and lead us.

Spiritual truth must first be received by revelation. Any revelation must then be confirmed by the word of God. If you reverse that order you then come up with the doctrines of men. If you take your bible and read it looking for revelation from the Lord, all you will have is the theory of man. When the Spirit of God speaks, and then you take the scripture and read it, the thing that God has spoken about seems to appear in everything you read. You then know it is revelation from God.

God has established an order in the church. First, revelation comes from Christ, the head of the body. It flows from Him through the ministries that God has set in the body of Christ to receive revelation. The elders of the local churches take up the revelation that has been revealed to and passed on by the apostolic ministries, and minister it to the people. Then the parents take the teaching home and teach it to their family. Every individual in the church is able to receive, by this pattern, the things that God is talking to the church about. If this pattern and order is followed, everyone, from the youngest to the oldest, is able to receive and understand the ways of God.

As the early apostles ministered, they continually quoted from the Old Testament. James, Paul, Stephen and many others quoted from the Old Testament. Jesus quoted from the Old Testament. It is important that, when we minister, we follow the scriptures very closely. Anything that is a revelation from God will be confirmed by the scripture.

"And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Berea: who coming thither went into the synagogue of the Jews" (Acts 17:10). This was after Paul and Silas had been put in jail in Philippi and had had the wonderful experience of seeing the jailor and his house accept the Lord. For their safety's sake, the brethren sent them to Berea. "These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so. Therefore many of them believed; also of honourable women which were Greeks, and of men, not a few" (Acts 17:11-12). Searching the scriptures is something we must do continually. We must have a good knowledge of the Word of God. The opposition followed the brethren to Berea and stirred up the people there too. It always seems there are those who stir up opposition to what God is doing.
If something is true, the scripture will confirm it. When the move of the Spirit began, and we have had the same experience many times since, when God began to throw light on something, we would go into the scriptures, and there it was. I have wondered many times how I could read something over, probably hundreds of times, and never see what God was talking about. That is why it is so important to read the scriptures under the anointing of the Spirit, so we can understand what the purpose and mind of the Lord is.

The scriptures have been used many times out of context. We must guard against doing this. Someone mentioned the scripture that says that Judas went and hanged himself. Another scripture says, "Go thou and do likewise." Some people are foolish enough to take scriptures out of context and use them in that way. All this does is confuse people. In searching the word of God, don't just read isolated verses, but read the context. Read the whole chapter, or, better yet, read the whole book. Then you will see the picture that God is presenting. It will give you a far better understanding of what the Lord's mind was when He inspired the writer.

A few years ago, someone took part of a verse from II Corinthians 5:18 and emphasized those few words very strongly. The words were, "And all things are of God." If left there, it will bring a lot of confusion to your life. In fact, it brought a lot of confusion to some people. We know that all things are not of God. The enemy is the author of many things, not to speak of our own carnal imagination. Read the context and you will see what the apostle is talking about. I would like to quote, beginning at verse fourteen, from the Living Bible. You will find that the same thought is portrayed through the other translations, as well as the King James Version. "Since we believe that Christ died for all of us, we should also believe that we have died to the old life we used to live. He died for all so that all who live - having received eternal life from Him - might live no longer for themselves, to please themselves, but to spend their lives pleasing Christ who died and rose again for them. So stop evaluating Christians by what the world thinks about them or what they seem to be like on the outside. Once I mistakenly thought of Christ that way, merely as a human being like myself. How differently I feel now! When someone becomes a Christian, he becomes a brand new person inside. He is not the same any more. A new life has begun! All these new things are from God who brought us back to Himself through what Christ Jesus did" (II Corinthians 5:14-18 Living Bible). What Paul is

talking about here when he says "all things are of God" is that we have been made over; made anew. God is creating us in the image of Christ.

Sometimes the thought in the old English of the King James Version is a little clouded; but when this passage is seen in its context, it becomes quite clear. "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all (these) things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation" (II Corinthians 5:17-18 KJV). He is speaking of all the things mentioned in the previous verses. So it is very important that, as we read the scriptures, we take account of the context of the passage we are considering.

Revelation is of little value unless it has a practical application. If it is from God, it will have a practical application and will affect our life and walk. By itself, it is of no value; but if you can apply it to your life, it becomes a valuable tool and help in walking in God's ways. There are many people who have itching ears to hear some new revelation; but to be valuable, it must have a purpose. "I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. But watch thou in all things" (II Timothy 4:1-4). The Athenians were this way. When Paul visited them, he found that they spent their time in nothing else, but either to tell or hear some new thing (Acts 17:21). The world is full of this kind of people, who come with fables and stories and who turn away from the truth and do not accept it. God has given the church the ability to know and be led of the Spirit. This will affect our life and walk.

The revelation that God gives the church will require much of us. We are in warfare, and it will require our dedication and a desire to walk with God. In speaking of the purpose of the apostolic ministries in the church, we are told in Ephesians 4:12 that it is for the perfecting of the saints. The flow of revelation will require our perfecting; it will call on you to yield yourself to God according to the ministry that you have. Paul goes on to say, concerning the apostles ministry toward the church in Ephesians 4:12, "For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ." The New International Version puts it this way: "To prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up."

So often we think that the purpose of our ministry is accomplished on Sunday morning. You go the service and take part in it, but do very little else for the rest of the week. Your ministry is a seven-day a week, twenty-four hour a day responsibility. It is important that we have the anointing on us when we are at work. What would be wrong with you exercising the word of wisdom as you talk to and exhort the person working next to you? Let that gift function. Or perhaps God has given you the gift of the word of knowledge or a ministry of showing mercy. When visiting someone who is ill, lay your hands on them and pray for them. Give the gift of healing that God has given you an opportunity to operate. Don't make a big thing of it but just simply do it, and pray that the life of Christ will flow. Because of the things that God has revealed to us, much will be required of us. We are responsible for the things that we have been given knowledge of. If we have no knowledge of a thing, we have no responsibility; but once we come into the knowledge of God's ways, there is a responsibility that rests upon our shoulders.

In speaking of his experience, Paul said, "But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ. For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it" (Galatians 1:11-13). What Paul had received was revealed by Christ. He wasn't taught it, but he received it by revelation. That is the way that the truth that is in the church today has been received. "But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood" (Galatians 1:15-16). Christ was revealed to him. Many things concerning the order of the church were revealed also.

At first Paul didn't confer with other apostles, but later on, he went to Jerusalem and spent fifteen days with Peter and James. After another fifteen years he was led by the Holy Spirit to go back to Jerusalem. He says that he went to see the other apostles, "lest by any means I should run or had run in vain" (Galatians 2:2). I can imagine that Paul, like the rest of us, was sometimes troubled with doubts and fears concerning his ministry that were sent by the enemy. He conferred with the apostles in Jerusalem to be sure he was hearing from the Lord and not just imagining the things he was teaching. He was given the approval and the right hand of fellowship by the brethren there.

The things that Paul taught were not things that he had figured out for himself, but they were revealed to him by the Spirit of God, which he wanted to see imparted to other Christians. "Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power" (Ephesians 1:15-19). This was Paul's prayer for the Ephesian church. We need to pray for one another in the same way, that we may have our understanding enlightened by the Spirit of God, and that we might walk in the way that God has called us.

"Wherefore I desire that ye faint not at my tribulations for you, which is your glory. For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God" (Ephesians 3:13-19). This is what our heart cries out for: to be filled with all the fullness of God. The fullness of God dwelt in Jesus Christ, and God is creating us in the image of Christ. Paul prayed that they might be able to comprehend these things and enter into them. We pray that the Spirit will continue to move upon us and cause us to be able to see.

Here is a scripture about the Holy Spirit being the One who reveals to us the things of God: "Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also" (John 14:19). How do you see Him? You see Him by the Spirit. We used to sing a song about knowing Christ by the nail prints

in His hands. I don't think that that is the way we are going to know Him. We will know Him by the Spirit. "At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you. He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him. Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world? Jesus answered and said unto him, “If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me. These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you. But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you" (John 14:20-26). Isn't it a wonderful privilege to be a partaker of the Holy Spirit because He will teach us?

I expect that most of the teaching that the Holy Spirit does is through the anointing that He places upon some member of the body of Christ. If a brother ministers something under the anointing, and I receive it and benefit from it, it is the Holy Spirit that has taught me. It is the anointing that has taught me. The Holy Spirit is the one that reveals.

"But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me" (John 15:26). The ministry of the Holy Spirit is to testify of Christ. That is the way we come to know Christ as our Saviour: because the Spirit of God reveals Him unto us, and we are able to receive Him.

"I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you" (John 16:12-15). It is a tremendous ministry that the Holy Spirit has. He will guide us into truth. A wonderful thing about the Holy Spirit is that He doesn't speak of Himself. Sometimes we like to exalt ourselves a little. That is the natural man, but the Holy Spirit never does that. He reveals Christ. I pray that our whole being will be a revelation of Jesus Christ in the earth.

"These remarks of mine about the Antichrist are pointed at those who would dearly love to blindfold you and lead you astray. But you have received the Holy Spirit and He lives within you, in your hearts, so that you don't need anyone to teach you what is right" (I John 2:26-27 Living Bible). Previous to this, John has been writing about people who are trying to deceive and cause others to go astray. There is something about the anointing of the Spirit of God in your life, and that is, when it comes to right and wrong, you don't very often need anyone to teach you what is right and what is wrong. The Holy Spirit will witness to that in your heart.

"For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse" (Romans 1:18). Paul has been writing about the way in which man has fallen and turned away from

God. There is something that God builds right into a person, and if they will listen, they will know right and wrong. Sometimes we call it conscience. We don't need someone to tell us if we will listen to that inner voice. If we will listen to that voice, it will guide us right. If you don't listen, your ears will get used to that voice and you won't hear it. In a place where we once lived, there was a railway track that went very close to the building where we lived. Trains went by regularly, but we got so we would never hear them. That is the way it is with the Spirit of God. If we don't listen, we get so we never hear. As we quoted from John, we don't need a man to teach us what is right because the Holy Spirit will teach us, and will show us, if we have a mind to listen.

"Now about the midst of the feast Jesus went up into the temple, and taught. And the Jews marveled, saying, How knoweth this man letters, having never learned? Jesus answered them, and said, ‘My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me. If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself" (John 7:14-17). The same thing is true today. If anyone will do God's will, he will know the doctrine. The Spirit of God will make it plain to his heart so he can hear and understand, and he will know whether it is of God or not. "He that speaketh of himself seeketh his own glory: but he that seeketh his glory that sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him" (John 7:18). If someone seeks his own glory, Jesus is telling us not to listen to him. If we are sent of God, we will seek God's glory and not our own.

In Proverbs 29:18, we read "Where there is no vision, the people perish." Other translators say, "Where there is no revelation, the people perish." We read concerning Abraham in Hebrews 11:8, "By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went." Abraham had a revelation. "By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God" (Hebrews 11:9-10). He lived by a revelation. That is what kept him going. God has promised us a kingdom. He has established that within our hearts. We groan within ourselves for the manifestation of the sons of God, and the deliverance of the whole creation. We pray that revelation will be just like Abraham's vision of the city that he sought, whose builder and maker was God. May He keep alive in our hearts the glorious things that He has revealed to us, and help us to walk orderly in the way that He has called us. We desire to keep hearing from God through the channel that He has ordained, and that we will keep hearing His voice. Sometimes He will speak to us personally, and sometimes He will speak to us through other ministries. May our hearts be open to Him so we can walk according to His will and purpose.

RIGHTEOUSNESS

We are thankful that God is helping us to walk on in the ways to which He has called us. Some people are looking for another revival. I don't think that we need another revival. We just need to walk in the one that God has given us. The things that God has revealed by the Holy Spirit will take us on into Sonship, and into the Kingdom. I pray that the Lord will move within us and bring such a wonderful sense of His presence that we can walk in His ways and glorify Him.

As we, in our meetings, listen to different ones ministering, we realize that God expects us to be an extension of the ministry of Christ. As we sing the song that is taken from Luke 4:18, where Jesus tells about His ministry, we see that His ministry has been shared with each of us. We are able to enter into the glorious capacity that was in Him as He ministered.

In Matthew 6:33 we read, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." God has promised to minister to our material needs; not necessarily to our wants, but to our needs. We have heard many, many, sermons preached on the first part of this verse, which is, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God." We seldom hear a sermon on the second part of the verse, which is, "And His righteousness." This is the thing that we need to concentrate on today; seeking His righteousness. That is the thing that God desires in order that we might come into the image and likeness of Christ: that we seek His righteousness, and that His righteousness will be displayed in the body of Christ, in everything that the members of that body does and says.

During our recent Camp Meeting, God spoke much to us about righteousness. Many times the altar was filled with people seeking God. Righteousness is the thing that God requires of us, and He desires that it will be a pre-eminent thing among us.

What is righteousness? Righteousness is simply, "that which is right." Most of us have within us a sense of what is right and that which is wrong. God has given us a conscience. Paul, in his epistle to the Romans, writes of this very thing. "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse" (Romans 1:18-20). People have the witness of the Spirit of God within them, even though they have never come to know Him in a personal way. There is something within the unbeliever that speaks to him about what is right and what is wrong. God desires that we learn what is right.

In the day and age in which we live, it is hard to really know what is right and what is wrong by the things that you hear. God has established His righteousness. Let us pray that God will help us to know good and evil. In Hebrews, chapter five, the writer is talking about the maturity of the saints. He speaks of growing to the place where we can discern both good and evil. He is speaking about the Melchisedec priesthood. "Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing. For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat" (Hebrews 5:11-12). I trust that is not the case with us, as it was with those Christians, where they had to have someone teach them once again what the first principals were. "For every one that useth milk is unskillful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil" (Hebrews 5:13-14).

I pray that our spiritual senses will be alive so we can discern good and evil, so we can know right and wrong, so we can recognize righteousness and unrighteousness, that we might bring glory and honour unto the Lord.

When we speak of righteousness, or what is right, whose standards do we go by? In the world today they tell us that right is what seems right to you. Isn't that an absolute farce? The carnal man has no idea of what is right. He doesn't understand the ways of God. In fact, the carnal man is at enmity with God. "Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be" (Romans 8:7). He walks on an altogether different plain than God would have us walk.

God has established standards of right and wrong. He desires that we all walk in that which He has revealed. "In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother" (I John 3:10).

The way to establish standards of righteousness is by the word of God. There is no other standard to go by. When God gave the law to Israel, it wasn't to be a means of salvation to them; but, as Paul writes in Galatians, the law was given to establish a standard of righteousness, so we could know good and evil, and so we could choose to walk in that which is right. We pray that God's word will help us, and also that we will pay very close attention to it. The things that God said thousands of years ago are still just as much the word of God today as they were when He said them.

We pray that we will not be deceived by the many things that are spoken by those who walk according to the carnal mind, but that God will lead us in His way. It is not what society thinks. I read something not long ago where the writer said that what the majority of people feel to be right that, that is right. That couldn't be further from the truth. God has established a standard of righteousness, and you will find it in the word of God.

"For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would" (Galatians 5:17). I am sure that you are all acquainted with that struggle; that is if you know the Lord and are walking with Him.

"But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law. Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revelings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things SHALL NOT INHERIT THE KINGDOM OF GOD" (Galatians 5:18-21).

Let look at the fruits of the flesh as translated in the New International Version, and I will try to comment on the different things mentioned. It is more modern English and easier for us to comprehend its meaning. "The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: Sexual immorality (KJV: Adultery and fornication)" (Galatian 5:19). Today, sexual immorality is everywhere you look and in everything you listen to. I recently read an article in a secular magazine that comes to our house where the writer told of a survey taken by an evangelical scholar. In this survey he found that 56% of single fundamentalist Christians practice sex outside of marriage. This is an appalling figure. It is hard to understand how anyone could practice sex

outside of marriage, and still call themselves a Christian. That is a terrible testimony for the church. Paul has written here that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. I am thankful though, that there is always the place for repentance and forgiveness. I thank God for His grace and love for the sinner.

"Impurity and debauchery" are the next works of the flesh mentioned. The KJV translates it as "uncleanness and lasciviousness". "Lustful, overmastering desires" are the next. This includes impurity of thought or deed. "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things" (Philippians 4:8).

"Idolatry" is next. An idol is an object of excessive devotion. In Paul's day, many people worshipped man made images. In our day, many of us worship material possessions. "Witchcraft:" Supposed supernatural powers or contact with evil spirits. "Hatred:" A strong dislike. "Discord," or KJV "variance:" Disagreeing. "Jealousy" or KJV "emulations:" Trying to equal or surpass other people. "Fits of rage" or KJV "wrath." "But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him" (Colossians 3:8-10). "Dissensions" or KJV "strife: “Contention or quarrelling. "Factions" or KJV "seditions and heresies:" Stirring up of rebellion in opposition to established view, or sound doctrine. "Departure from what God has revealed by the Holy Spirit." "Envy" or KJV "Envyings:" Discontent over another's advantages, position etc. "Drunkenness:" This includes the use of any habit forming drug. "Orgies and the like" or KJV "revelings:" Overindulgence in an activity.

May the Lord help us to all take heed to Paul's warning. "I warn you that those who live like this WILL NOT INHERIT THE KINGDOM OF GOD." May the Holy Spirit speak to us and lead us in God's ways.

Every so often, we should read over this list of the works of the flesh and examine ourselves, applying these scriptures to our own heart and life. We must search our hearts that we all may be filled with righteousness, rather than the works of the flesh. When Paul wrote about the communion in I Corinthians 11:28, he said "But let a man examine himself." It is important that we examine ourselves to make sure that these things of the flesh don't exist.

The wonderful thing about God is that he always provides a remedy for our unrighteousness. "Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup." We were always taught that you examined yourself and then you didn't dare touch the communion, but that isn't what Paul said. He said examine yourself and then eat. Praise God! The life that is in that communion will give you power and strength to overcome. Hallelujah!

"Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting" (Psalms 139:23-24). Do we dare pray that prayer? I am fearful to. The way into the way everlasting is to have God search us and remove those things that are not pleasing to Him.

We read in Romans of the struggle that Paul was having with the natural carnal man. "For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I" (Romans 7:15). We all have this struggle. We have the trials that come through the carnal nature. "If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not" (Romans 7:16-18). The works of the flesh must have given him a terrible time. "For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me" (Romans 7:19-20). We need that purging and cleansing that does away with the sin that dwells in the natural man. "I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me" (Romans 7:21). This law is just like the laws that we learned in Physics. If I pick up my Bible and hold it here, there is a law that is in action; but if I let go of it, there is another law that takes over. When I let go of it, I have never seen it go up. It always goes down. God has created laws that govern His creation.

Paul found that there was a law that, when He would do good, evil was present with him. The carnal nature is something that the human race has inherited because of Adam's sin. It is stronger than the desire for good. "For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin" (Romans 7:22-25). That was the struggle that Paul went through.

I am glad that we can have the victory spoken of in Romans 8. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death" (Romans 8:1-2). Hallelujah! I was thinking about our spiritual experience when they first started to put satellites into orbit. Theoretically, if satellites were shot fast enough and high enough, they would never come down. If I threw a ball, it would come down and hit the ground. If I could throw it fast enough and high enough, it would never come down. One law supersedes the other. The laws governing speed and height supersede the law of gravity. Paul is talking about this very thing. "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." Praise God! "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: That the RIGHTEOUSNESS of the law might be fulfilled in us, WHO WALK NOT AFTER THE FLESH, BUT AFTER THE SPIRIT" (Romans 8:3-4). Bless God!

We desire that the law of God be written upon our hearts. It is hard to have to live after a law, but if that law is written upon your heart, you automatically do the thing that the law requires. God said that He would write His law upon our hearts. When His law is written on our hearts, we walk not according to the flesh but we walk according to the leading of the Spirit of God. Praise God!

"That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man BELIEVETH unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Romans 10:9-10). I pray that we will be able to believe God for righteousness in our life. Our salvation comes through believing in the first place. For the

scripture saith, “Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him" (Romans 10:11). The secret is calling out unto Him and reaching out for Him.

"Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree: That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith. Brethren, I speak after the manner of men; though it be but a man's covenant, yet if it be confirmed, no man disannulleth, or addeth thereto. Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, and to seeds, as of many; but as of one, and to thy seed, which is Christ. And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect. For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise: but God gave it to Abraham by promise" (Galatians 3:13-18). We have that promise through Christ. The promise of life; the promise of righteousness. It is ours by believing.

"For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost" (Romans 14:17). Paul was dealing with an argument that had arisen about whether they should eat food that had been offered to an idol. Paul's contention was that the idol was nothing. The only thing was that we should be careful not to offend someone with a weak conscience. The kingdom of God is not an argument over meat and drink, but it is righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost.

"For the arms of the wicked shall be broken: but the LORD upholdeth the RIGHTEOUS. The LORD knoweth the days of the upright: and their inheritance shall be forever. They shall not be ashamed in the evil time: and in the days of famine they shall be satisfied. But the wicked shall perish, and the enemies of the LORD shall be as the fat of lambs: they shall consume; into smoke shall they consume away" (Psalms 37:17-20). The Word of God stands true. The things that God says will come to pass. The judgements of God are very real, but I am thankful for the grace of God and for His help if we will seek after Him.

Jeremiah the prophet was sent by God to speak to the rebellious nation of Israel. "Therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts, Behold, I will melt them, and try them; for how shall I do for the daughter of my people? Their tongue is as an arrow shot out; it speaketh deceit: one speaketh peaceably to his neighbour with his mouth, but in heart he layeth his wait. “Shall I not visit them for these things?” saith the LORD: “Shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?" (Jeremiah 9:7-9). In the Living Bible it is translated this way: "Therefore the Lord of Hosts says this: 'See, I will melt them in a crucible of affliction. I will refine them and test them like metal. What else can I do with them?'" (Jeremiah 9:7).

"But who may abide the day of his coming? And who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap: And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the LORD an offering in righteousness" (Malachi 3:2-3). We pray that the word of God will speak to His people.

"LORD, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? Who shall dwell in thy holy hill? He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart" (Psalms 15:1-2).

"But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom" (Hebrews 1:8).

THE SALT OF THE EARTH

In speaking to His disciples, Jesus said, "Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt has lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? It is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and trodden under foot of men" (Matthew 5:13).

Salt is a preservative. It is added to many things to keep them from spoiling. Christians have that effect upon the earth, or, I should say, upon the population of the earth. It is God's mind that they should act as a preservative in the earth.

We have two problems in the earth today. One is that there isn't enough salt. The second is that much of the salt there is has lost its savour. We must admit that moral conditions in the earth are becoming worse. This, I am sure, is obvious to all, so does not require discussion here. From Jesus' words our conclusion must be that there aren't enough who follow Him to act as a counteracting force to moral decay, and that those who do profess to follow Him have become so lukewarm in their experience they have lost their preserving power in the earth.

In speaking of the law, Jesus said, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil" (Matthew 5:17-19). The law of ordinances was fulfilled in Jesus the head, but the law of commandments will be fulfilled in the body of Christ. His law will be written upon our hearts. In Verse 19, He says, "Whosoever therefore shall break one of the least of these commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven." Other translators translate the word "break" as "weaken." In many circles today, the commandments of God are not only broken, but they are so weakened and watered down they don't mean anything anymore. We must be very careful not to do this, lest we join the ranks of those who have lost their savour, and then lose our effect in the earth.

I have been very impressed by how much the scriptures say about our relationship to those who are without, or in other words with those who are not Christians. Paul in writing to the Colossian church says, "Walk in wisdom toward them who are without, redeeming the time. Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man" (Colossians 4:5,6). Again, he says, "But concerning love of the brethren you have no need to have anyone write to you, for you yourselves have been taught of God to love one another: and indeed you do love all the brethren throughout Macedonia. But we exhort you brethren, to do so more and more, to aspire to live quietly, and to mind your own affairs, and to work with your hands, as we charged you, so that you may command the respect of outsiders, and be dependent on nobody" (I Thessalonians 4:9-12 RSV).

In I Timothy 3:7, we are instructed that elders must have a good report of those who are without. If this is necessary for elders, it is also necessary for every member of the church. Elders must lead their people in righteous and holy living, that the whole church may bear the likeness of Christ.

The apostle Paul prayed for the Colossian church, "That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God" (Colossians 1:10).

In the book of Ephesians, Paul writes of the wonderful plan and call of God. He outlines the spiritual heights God has set before us. Then in chapter four, verse one he begins to tell us of our responsibility: "I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that you walk worthy of the vocation wherewith you are called." The rest of the book outlines our relationship to one another as members of the body of Christ, as well as our relationship to those who are outside the church.

We all know what a natural vocation is. It is our work, or the way we are employed to make a living. Paul is speaking of our spiritual vocation, or in other words our calling in the body of Christ. We are to walk in such a way that our worthiness of the calling God has given is apparent for all to see.

In II Corinthians 6:1,3&4, we read, "We then, as workers together with Him, beseech you also that you receive not the grace of God in vain.... Giving no offence in anything, that the ministry be not blamed: But in all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distress ...” First of all, God doesn't want us to work for Him. He wants us to work with Him. A servant works for his employer, but a friend works with him and has shared in the secrets of the business. "Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you" (John 15:15).

Do not receive the grace of God in vain. In other words, let us not by our walk spoil God's purpose for us. Goodspeed translates that verse in II Corinthians this way: "As God's fellow worker, I appeal to you too, not to accept the favour of God and then waste it."

When he speaks of giving no offence in anything that the ministry be not blamed, he is speaking of our own individual ministry. By our walk we can destroy the effect of our ministry. By the way we live we must be approved in the eyes of the outsider. We must commend ourselves not in words but in deed. It is often very hard to do, but we must commend ourselves by our reaction in all kinds of circumstances.

In I Peter 2:11-21, Peter gives us instruction along the same line: "...abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul." The desires of the carnal man will bring death to the spiritual man, therefore it is important that we abstain from these things.

Sometimes we have to bring ourselves under a law in these matters until we are able to walk in the Spirit. However, we can accomplish nothing under a law without the help of the Holy Spirit. He then instructs us to have our manner of life upright among the Gentiles, or unbelievers, so that if they speak against us as evildoers, by the good works they shall see, they will glorify God (I Peter 2:12).

We are then instructed to obey the law of our country. "For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men" (I Peter 2:15).

Peter then instructs employees to obey their employer. This includes the boss who sometimes becomes unreasonable, as well as the one who is kind and considerate. "For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults ye shall take it patiently?" If we have done things wrong and are reprimanded by our employer for our faults and we take it patiently, there is no glory in that for us. We have received what we have deserved. (I am not giving employers license to be overly hard on their employees.) But if we have done things right and suffer for it, and we take that patiently then, "this is acceptable with God" (I Peter 2:20).

When Christ was reviled, "He reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not; but committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously" (I Peter 2:23). When these things happened to Jesus, He committed it all into His Fathers hands. He knew that His Father would judge all matters correctly.
We are instructed to follow in His steps. We must not take measures to get even, but commit all things into the hands of our heavenly Father. When we feel we have been wronged, commit it to our Father who will judge right.

"Do not pay anyone back with evil for evil. See that you are above reproach in the eyes of everyone. If possible, for your part, live peaceably with everybody. Do not take your revenge, dear friends, but leave room for God's anger, for the scripture says, 'Vengeance belongs to me; I will pay them back,' says the Lord. No! If your enemy is hungry feed him. If he is thirsty give him something to drink. For if you do, you will heap burning coals upon his head. Do not be conquered with evil, but conquer evil with good." (Romans 12:17-21 Goodspeed).

"Who is going to harm you if you are eager to do good? But even if you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed. 'Do not fear what they fear; do not be frightened.' But in your hearts acknowledge Christ as the holy Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give a reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behaviour in Christ may be ashamed of their slander." (I Peter 3:13-16 NIV).

It is very important that the salt should not lose its savour. I pray that, with the help of the Holy Spirit, we all may live lives that are commendable not only to the church, but to the outside world as well. I pray that we may live in such a manner that they will ask a reason for the hope that is within our hearts and that we, with the help of the Lord, may be able to give a good answer.

SANCTIFICATION

January 1987

There has certainly been a tremendous anointing upon the meetings during the camp. God has blessed us in many, many ways, and I believe that we have all been well instructed by the Holy Spirit, and we'll be able to walk more circumspectly in the thing that God has called us to.

At the beginning of camp, I was praying and asking the Lord, if opportunity came to minister in this way, what I would minister on. You wonder how the theme of the camp is going to go, and you pray that the Lord will put something in your heart that may be of help to the people and minister to some of the needs that there are. As the meetings progressed, God was speaking very, very definitely to us about our walk and becoming holy. The very first meeting, Brother Oldridge spoke to us about that holiness that we attained through the work of the cross. As others ministered, that theme seemed to build.

I felt in my heart I would like to talk to you concerning sanctification. This fits in with water baptism. They are very closely related, and the one can be a step into the other.
The word "sanctify," according to the dictionary, means, "to set apart as holy, consecrate." As you study the history of Israel, every time God had something tremendous in store for Israel, He always told them to sanctify themselves.

In Exodus 19:1-10, God was giving the law to Israel, "In the third month, when the children of Israel were gone forth out of the land of Egypt, the same day came they into the wilderness of Sinai" (Exodus 19:1). To the end of Verse 10, God's message to Israel was that they should sanctify themselves and wash their clothes. All the experiences of Israel are given to us as an example, and when God spoke to them that they should sanctify themselves, separate themselves, consecrate themselves, and set themselves apart, He is speaking to us in the same way, today. He is also speaking unto us, not about washing our natural clothes (you need to do that once in a while), but He is talking about those spiritual robes that we area robed with. Christ gives unto us a robe of righteousness when we believe, and it is very, very important that we keep that robe clean. You can easily get it dirty. God has been talking to us a lot about that during these meetings. He talked about walking different and separate from the world.

When God spoke here to Israel He said, "And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation" (Exodus 19:61). Israel failed in the calling that God had given them. They failed in entering into that priesthood, and they failed in being a holy nation. In this day, God has made the same call. Peter talks about us being a holy nation. He is talking to those who are the elect according to the foreknowledge of God. He

says, "But ye are a chosen generation, royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people" (I Peter 2:9). Israel failed in that they couldn't seem to get away from the worship of idols. Wherever they met up with another nation, they began to worship their idols. They would bring those people in among Israel who would bring their idols with them.

Someone read, during the meetings, in II Corinthians 6:14-16, and it bears reading again. "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness?" What fellowship is there? There are so many things that will illustrate this. You can't mix oil and water. You can't ride two horses at once. Righteousness and unrighteousness just do not go together. "...and what communion hath light with darkness?" When you turn the light off immediately it becomes dark. There is no communion between the two. You either have one or you have the other. It is exactly the same in our life and experience. "...And what concord hath Christ with Belial? Or part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols?" This is where Israel had their problem. God called upon them to sanctify themselves and set themselves apart. One of the brethren mentioned the other day that, as soon as Moses went up in to the mountain, they started worshipping the golden calf. We have the things that come into our lives, maybe they are not idols of stone or idols of gold, but these things interfere with our walk with god and they interfere with that holiness of life that God is leading us into. He says, "And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols, for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people." What a glorious experience that we can enter into!

Concerning the priesthood, let us read from II Corinthians, chapter 3. There is a comparison made here concerning our experience and the experience of Israel. We'll read II Corinthians 3:6-8 -- Paul is talking about his ministry. He is talking here about the priesthood, and he says, speaking of God, "Who also hath made us able ministers of the New Testament, not of the letter, but of the Spirit; for the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life. But if the manifestation of death, written and engraven in stones, was glorious, so the children of Israel could not steadfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which glory was to be done away: How shall not the ministration of the Spirit be rather glorious?" Hallelujah. The thing that God called Israel to sanctify themselves for was glorious, and here the apostle Pail compares the two situations. He says here, "For if the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory. For even that which was made glorious had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth." Oh bless God! If Israel was expected to set themselves apart and consecrate themselves as holy unto God, how much more does God expect of us who walk in that far more glorious covenant. Oh blessed be the Name of the Lord!

Let us now look at Israel, after they had wandered forty years in the wilderness. "And it came to pass after three days, that the officers went through the host; And they commanded the people, saying, When you see the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God, and the priests the Levites bearing it, then ye shall remove from your place, and go after it. Yet there shall be a space between you and it, about two thousand cubits by measure: come not near unto it, that ye may know the way by which ye must go: for ye have not passed this way heretofore" (Joshua 3:2-4). Joshua was instructing them to stay back a little. Don't crowd up around the ark, so you can see where you are going. Sometime it is a good idea for us to look where we are going. Observe the path that God is leading us into, and I believe it will give us a better understanding. We will be able to appreciate more the thing that God is doing and enter into it.

Joshua said unto the people, "Sanctify yourselves: for tomorrow the Lord will do wonders among you" (Joshua 3:5). Jordan was before them. We have a Jordan before us. Many people, in speaking of crossing over Jordan, speak of it as death. To us it is life. Glory to God! That is life. That Promised Land.

He talks here about the land being filled with Canaanites, Hittites, Jebusites and all those kind of people. They were in the land, and they were there to be conquered. The thing that God wants is for His people to sanctify themselves, cross that river into life, and conquer the things out there that cause the creation to groan: the sickness, the bondage, and all the unrighteous administration in the earth. There is so much of it. You go into some of these other countries (maybe I shouldn't talk about other people's countries, but you all know about it anyway) and you see the administration of those places. They tell us that India is one of the richest countries in the world, yet it has almost the most poverty. There are other countries whose people are poorer. It is unrighteous administration that causes things like that. Part of the kingdom of God is justice and equity. God is calling a body for Jesus Christ that can administer those things that God would have administered in the earth. I pray that God will help us in the administration of our own lives and the administration of the church. These things that the brethren spoke of concerning this offering are the administration of the kingdom of God coming into being: where needs that are there are being ministered to. (Editor's note: Once a year, at the summer camp, an offering is lifted, especially for the help of the needy and the work of God in other countries.)

I pray that God will help us to grow in this respect, that as we set ourselves apart unto Him, these practical things will become a part of our life and experience. If you are having problems in the administration of your own life, you look to God about it, and ask God to help you. Be concerned about every avenue of your life: the way you administer your time, and the way you look after your finances. All these things can be spiritual, and God wants you to look upon them as spiritual. Ask God for His wisdom so that you might use the things that God gives you in a proper manner.

Let us turn to Leviticus, to where the priesthood was set in Israel. "And Moses took of the anointing oil, and of the blood which was upon the altar, and sprinkled it upon Aaron, and upon his garments, and upon his sons, and upon his sons' garments with him; and sanctified Aaron, and his garments, and his sons, and his sons' garment with him" (Leviticus 8:30). Praise God! There is sanctification of this priesthood. The setting apart is an experience that God asks us to progressively enter into. I know we can't enter into the fullness of sonship just like a snap of your fingers, but it is something you grow into. You grow into sonship, just the same as a natural son grows into maturity. God will cause us to grow into that realm of maturity in the Spirit.

God told Moses here to anoint Aaron and his sons, and to sanctify them, and set them apart. Not only was this to be one with the men themselves, but with their garments also. We have already mentioned the cleansing of their garments and the responsibility of keeping them clean.

In II Chronicles 29, we have sad happening here under the kings of Israel. The nation had backslid. The temple was broken down, and it was filled with rubble. When Hezekiah came to the throne, the Lord spoke to him. These things were changed. "He in the first year of his reign, in the first month, opened the doors of the house of the Lord, and repaired them. And he brought the priests and the Levites, and gathered them

together into the east street, And said unto them, Hear me, ye Levites, sanctify now yourselves, and sanctify the house of the Lord God of your fathers, and carry forth the filthiness out of the holy place. For our fathers have trespassed, and done that which was evil in the eyes of the Lord our God, and have forsaken Him, and have turned away their faces from the habitation of the Lord, and turned their backs. Also they have shut up the doors of the porch, and put out the lamps, and have not burned incense nor offered burnt offerings in the holy place unto the God of Israel" (II Chronicles 29:3-7). God was angry with them. We read on in the fifteenth verse, "And they gathered their brethren, and sanctified themselves, and came, according to the commandment of the kings, by the words of the Lord, to cleanse the house of the Lord."

In the thirtieth verse, Israel began to worship the Lord. "And they sang praises with gladness, and they bowed their heads and worshipped." The people brought sacrifices and offerings to be offered to the Lord, but the priesthood was so backslidden that there weren't enough of them to offer the sacrifices that the people had brought. That is a real sad situation. Let us pray that priesthood God has called us to, as Peter says, will be able to give an answer concerning the hope that lies within us. We must continually be ready to minister according to that ministry God has placed within us. Our ministry is not something that only functions on Sunday when we attend the meeting. It is not like a person putting on his Sunday clothes on Sunday morning to attend the meeting, and, after the meeting putting, them in the closet until next Sunday. It is something that is with you twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. I pray that every one of us will be able to so enter into our ministry that the anointing of God can move upon us at any time or in any place.

Let us read Verse 32-34, "And the number of the burnt offerings, which the congregation brought, was three score and ten bullocks, an hundred rams, and two hundred lambs: all these were for burnt offering to the Lord. And the consecrated things were six hundred oxen and three thousand sheep. But the priests were too few, so that they could not flay all the burnt offerings: wherefore their brethren the Levites did help them, till the work was ended, and until the other priests had sanctified themselves: for the Levites were more upright in heart to sanctify themselves than the priests." What a situation. We pray that God will move upon us.

Let us read a verse from John 17. We have dwelt upon this a great deal the last few years, as God has been moving concerning the coming together of the body of Christ. Jesus was praying that His people would be one "As Thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world. And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth" (John 17:18-19). That they might also be sanctified through the truth. This goes along with God's people becoming one and being joined together by the Spirit. There is that setting apart: that holiness that God is calling us to enter into.

There has been much said about the walk that God is calling us to. We are not walking in something in which we can please the flesh. It is necessary that we enter in with all our hearts into that calling that God has given us.

Let us turn to Romans 6:1-3, "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? Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized unto His death?" Paul was speaking here to people who had apparently been baptized, and, as you gather from reading it, some of them were having trouble with their walk. He says, "Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?" He was talking to those people that were

having problems in their life. He says, "God forbid, how shall we that are dead to sin live any longer therein? Know ye not that so many of ye who were baptized in to Jesus Christ were baptized into His death?" By baptism, we become a partaker of His death, and the purpose of God is that we should die.

Paul says, "Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life" (Romans 6:4). He is talking about that setting apart, that sanctification, a separated life where we should walk in newness of life. "For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also in the likeness of His resurrection"(Romans 6:5). Not in some far off future day but, bless God, by entering into that resurrection right now. Hallelujah! If Enoch could enter into the resurrection away back thousands of years ago, why can't we enter in to it today? "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin" (Romans 6:6). May God help us to claim the things that are ours.

He says that "our old man is crucified with Him," and if you can believe it, your old man was nailed to the cross with Jesus Christ. If you can believe it, there is resurrection life to enter into. "For he that is dead is freed from sin. Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him" (Romans 6:7-8).

He says that we are buried with Him by baptism into death. Actually, if we can enter into it, that is the only death we ever need to die. He that is dead is freed from sin.

"Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him: Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over Him. For in that He died, He died unto sin once: but in that He liveth, He liveth unto God"(Romans 6:8-10). Listen carefully to this. "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 6:11). When you come up out of that water, reckon yourself dead unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. Hallelujah! You who have been baptized at a previous time, enter into the experience of that baptism continuously. Reckon yourselves dad. You don't have to go back and be baptized again, but walk in the experience that was yours when you were baptized. Look to God that you can be entering into the resurrection.

"Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under law, but under grace. What then? Shall we sin because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid. Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom you obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?" (Romans 6:12-16). You have a lot to do with this. Notice that he says, "To whom you yield yourselves servants to obey." In other words, you become the servant of whomever you yield to, whether it is unto sin or unto righteousness.

There have been things said about walking in the grey area. I suppose we all do that sometimes; but God is very, very concerned about it. That is why He has spoken to us the way He has during this camp. He wants us to forsake that grey area and not walk in it. Perhaps some do not know what I mean by the grey area.

There is white and black, and when you mix the two together, you get grey. Some try to have one foot in the world and partake of the things of this age, and yet, have the other foot in the church; thus, they are walking in the grey area. Through the years the brethren have spoken to us much (especially in the young people's gatherings) about the things that we do and the things we enter into. They have mentioned the TV, and how we need to control it. There are many things on it that are really not fit for a Christian to be looking at. They are things that feed our carnal desires and give us an appetite for sin. I always remember what Bro. Tyler said one time. He said, "The TV has a switch on it, and you can turn it off." May God help us to learn how to use it. Parents, it is important that you control your TV. See that your children are not watching things that they should not be watching.

There is another invention that has recently come into being that is worse than the TV, and that is the video cassette player. You can go down to the corner store and bring home all the pornography and violence that you want to bring home. As parents, be sure of what is on that video cassette player. If you don't have one and your neighbour does, and your children go there to watch it, you be sure you know what is being shown. Many of the things that are for rent down at the corner store are absolutely spiritually devastating, and there is no way that we, as God's people, should be watching that kind of thing. We pray that God will help us and give us wisdom in controlling the thing. There are good things. I don't say throw it out, but control it. That is part of the setting apart that God expects of His people.

Let us turn to Colossians 2:9-10, "For in Him [Christ] dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in Him, which is the head of all principality and power." Paul is not talking about an individual here, but he is talking about the body of Christ. He is saying that body is complete in Him, which is the head of all principality and power. "In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ" (Colossians 2:11).

Circumcision was the cutting away of the flesh, and we can enter into that experience through Jesus Christ. That was one of the ordinances of Israel that was fulfilled in Christ. Because of the circumcision of Christ, we can enter into that circumcision that is made without hands.

"Buried with Him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with Him through the faith of operation of God, who hath raised Him from the dead. And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath He quickened together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses;" (Colossians 2:12-13). Hallelujah! Buried with Him! You are risen with Him!

Now let us read Colossians 3:1-2: "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things of the earth." Let your love to God reach out to those heavenly things, to those things that belong to the realm of the Spirit. Let the things that belong to this age die, and walk in that which God has called you to.

"For you are dead,..." Yes, you are dead if you can believe it. "...and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory" (Colossians 3:3-4). What appearing is he talking about here? Is he talking about that appearing that is spoken of in Acts, where it is said that as Jesus went away He would come in like manner? He isn't talking about that at all. He is

talking about that appearing of Jesus Christ in you and me. When that manifestation or that unveiling takes place, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory. He is not talking about us appearing with Him in heaven, but he is talking about that state into which Jesus Christ has entered. Glory actually means a state into which we can enter. Then shall ye also appear in that same state that Jesus Christ is in.

Somebody was talking today about how Christ came to His disciples when the doors were closed, and ministered unto them. You also will appear with Him in glory, or in that same state that He was in. I pray that we can so partake of the life of Christ: that doors will mean nothing to us, that languages will mean nothing to us, that those things that hinder the working of the plan and purpose of God will be under our feet, and that the fullness of the things that God has called us to will be performed.

As someone said the other day, there is a price to pay for the kingdom. They were talking about the kingdom of God, and the man who had found the pearl of great price. He went and sold all that he had in order to buy that pearl. A brother said one time that the grace of God is free, but to inherit the kingdom will cost you everything. That is true. It is very true. I pray that God will help us to set ourselves apart so we won't mind selling everything that belongs to this carnal realm in order to buy that pearl of great price. May the things that have been ministered at this camp grip your hearts, young and old alike, that we will entirely and completely forsake the grey area and enter in more and more to the realm of the Spirit. May we enter into that to which God has called us.

"And I myself also am persuaded of you, my brethren, that ye also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another" (Romans 15:14). We have a responsibility to one another. If you see your brother having problems, don't be afraid to go and admonish him. He might need that encouragement that will come with your admonition.

Paul says, "Nevertheless, brethren, I have written the more boldly unto you in some sort, as putting you in mind, because of the grace that is given to me of God" (Romans 15:15). Paul spoke plainly to them. In this chapter, he talks a lot about the relationship between the members of the body of Christ. He said he had written boldly to them. Continuing, he says, "That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost" (Romans 15:16). There is no way you can set yourself apart unto God by yourself. It is the Holy Spirit: that fire of the Spirit of God working in you. The Spirit of God is a refining fire that changes us. God's desire is to set us apart by the working of His Spirit within us.

In II Corinthians 3:10, Paul writes about the difference between the two covenants: "For even that which was made glorious had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth." The glory that was at Mount Horeb, where the law was given, had no glory at all compared to the glory of that new covenant that God is asking us to enter into. "For if that which is done away was glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious. Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech: And not as Moses, which put a veil over his face that the children of Israel could not steadfastly look to the end of that which is abolished" (II Corinthians 3:11-13). The modern translators speak of it in this way: Moses put the veil over his face so Israel couldn't see the glory fading. Paul says we are not that way. The glory that God has put within His people is not a fading glory, but is a glory that is growing. "Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the

glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord" (II Corinthians 3:17-18). Lord, help us to let that change take place.

I am so thankful for the fifth and sixth chapters of Matthew. In speaking there, Jesus took the law and brought it into the realm of the kingdom. He took that which belonged to the old covenant and brought it into the realm of the Spirit. Read those chapters in that light: Not as the law that was given by Moses, but as that which has been brought into the realm of the Spirit, and into the realm of the kingdom.

"Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly" This is where discipline in the church comes in. Warn them that are unruly. "Comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all men. See that none render evil for evil unto any man; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men. Rejoice evermore." We have certainly done a lot of rejoicing during this camp meeting. "Pray without ceasing. In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you. Quench not the Spirit. Despise not prophesyings. Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. Abstain from all appearance of evil." Does he say abstain from all evil? No, he says abstain from all appearance of evil. If something has a shady look to it, stay away from it. "And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (I Thessalonians 5:14-23). One of the other translators says, "Be preserved blameless until the time you come alongside Christ." That is our desire: to stand beside Him as our older brother, and we as a vast company of brethren, which have been redeemed and changed into His image and into His likeness.

"Faithful is He that called you, who will also do it" (I Thessalonians 5:24). Do you have that confidence that God is going to change you? Praise God. May it come within our hearts. Many of us have ourselves walked in that grey area. I was so glad the other night to see all the young people come to the front. There was such a tremendous moving of the Spirit of God upon their hearts. I'm sure that God did a lot for most of you. There was a great change took place, and I feel confident that, when you go back home, your life is going to be different because of what God did for you here. May you continue to walk in and grow in that which was begun here. "Faithful is He that calleth you, who also will do it."

Baptism is part of what we have been talking about. Enter into it believing that there is a death to die and a resurrection to partake of.

SEEKING THE LORD

To most of us seeking the Lord is just a matter of looking Him up when we need something. We do it in much the same way as one would call the plumber or the electrician in a household emergency.

"O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is" (Psalm 63:1).

David didn't seek God just at the time of some great emergency, like the time that Saul, the king and his father-in-law, sought him to take his life; or the time when Absolom usurped his throne. Seeking God was to him a progressive experience, and it should be the same with us today. David's longing for God and his seeking after Him was something that went on day after day, all of his life. You may ask, "Didn't he find Him?" Certainly he did. Only, when he found Him today, he sought Him in a greater measure tomorrow.

"As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake with thy likeness" (Psalm 17:15). There was a constant longing in David's heart to see God, and this longing could only be accomplished when he became like God. As Paul says in II Corinthians 3:18, "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord."

Our seeking and finding God is a progressive measure. A man finds God in justification by faith; he finds Him in baptism; he finds Him in his ministry; he finds Him in his everyday walk with Him; he finds Him in other members of the Body of Christ. In fact, if we seek Him, His presence fills the whole universe.

To find God is to partake of Him. You cannot experience the presence of God and be the same again. When we find Him, the melting, flowing, and moving of His Spirit changes us from one level of experience to another. You can never be satisfied if you find God only in one experience, or on one level. But you will be satisfied when you seek Him and find Him in your whole life and experience, and when you are changed into the same image as He is, and you are in His likeness. Only then can you stop seeking; but by that time, I doubt if you will want to. God will have other glorious things filling the future of which you and I will be eager to partake.

Some people feel that God is hard to find. This is not so. He may be hard to find if it is your intention to get Him to be a party to your plan and program. If you are yielded to Him, and desire His purpose, He is right with you. "For ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they still be my people" (II Corinthians 6:16).

WE WILL SERVE THE LORD

Near the end of his long and good life, Joshua called all Israel together to talk to them. First, he related to them how God had been with them, right from the time He had called Abraham and separated him from the other gods they had served, up to the present time when He had helped them to possess the land God had promised to Abraham. He told them how God had raised up Moses and Aaron to lead them out of Egypt, and how He had plagued Egypt until they let Israel go. Joshua spoke to them of the crossing of the Red Sea, the sojourn in the wilderness, and then the crossing of Jordan into the Promised Land. He reminded them of how God had delivered the inhabitants of the land into their hands, and how many of them were driven out without sword or bow.

Let me quote from Joshua 24:14-15 some of the last words of Joshua: "Now therefore fear the Lord, and serve Him in sincerity and in truth: and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt; and serve ye the Lord. And if it seem evil unto you to serve the Lord, choose ye this day whom you will serve; whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land ye dwell: but as for me and my House we will serve the Lord."

In view of all that God had done for them, Joshua was urging the people to take a definite and decisive stand about whether they were going to walk with God or not. This is something that I feel we are all being faced with today. It will be necessary for all of us to declare our loyalty and consecration to God as Joshua did in these words, "As for me and my house we will serve the Lord." Yes, we will all have to decide whether we will serve the Lord, or the gods of rebellion, and lawlessness, and the spirit of this age.

In view of what has been happening in the last few weeks, I can see, better than ever, why God spoke to us as He did at the camp meeting this summer. God is preparing a people who are devoted and consecrated to Him; a People who will turn away from the lawless, and rebellious ways of the earth, and walk with Him.

At the beginning of the Move of the Spirit, God made these verses in Hebrews 12:25-27 very real to us: "See that ye refuse not Him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spoke on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from Him that speaketh from heaven: Whose voice then shook the earth: but now He hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven. And this word, yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain."

Throughout the years, God has been going through a process of shaking, and sifting, and removing, what can be shaken. It is up to us to so consecrate ourselves to God that we cannot be shaken and may remain in the calling to which God has called us.

The writer goes on in the same passage, "Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear: For our God is a consuming fire" (Hebrews 12:28-29). If we are to enter into His Kingdom, we, like it, must be such that cannot be moved.

Under these circumstances, it is necessary that we, along with Joshua, be able to say, "as for me (and my house, we) I will serve the Lord" (Joshua 24:15). In the day in which we live, it is absolutely necessary that we make a clean-cut decision to walk with God.

No one can walk with God entirely by his own ability. Don't forget that we have our part to do, and that our part is a fairly large part. We will never grow up and be strong without having responsibility. But God has sent His Holy Spirit to help us when our strength fails. Therefore, the next part of our responsibility is to yield ourselves to the leading of the Spirit of God.

A party was questioning me recently about what they could do and what they couldn't do. All I had to do to help them to make a decision was to ask them if they thought the Spirit of God would lead them to enter

into what they were thinking of. When faced with it in that light, there was no doubt in their mind as to what God's mind would be. I can assure you that the Spirit of God would not lead anyone into the use of tobacco or alcohol. He would not lead anyone to the dance hall, or to any other places of ill repute. He would not lead anyone into the practice of adultery or fornication; neither would He lead anyone into any other work of the flesh.

Sometimes, if we cannot walk by the Spirit, it is necessary for us to be put under a law. Paul, the greatest proponent of the gospel of grace, had to sometimes put himself under a law. He says: "But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when, I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway" (I Corinthians 9:27).

In Phillips translation of Romans 8:2, we read: "The law never succeeded in producing righteousness-the failure was always the weakness of human nature." The law will not produce righteousness, but if my child had not learned to walk by the Spirit, or refuses to walk by the Spirit, I can prevent him from being lawless or worldly by putting him under a law. Sometimes it is necessary for me t0 put myself under a law, but realize that this will not bring perfection. Perfection only comes by walking in the Spirit. I pray that the law of God will be written upon our hearts so that we may, by the Spirit, walk in His ways and always please Him.

"The carnal attitude sees no further than natural things. But the spiritual attitude reaches out after the things of the Spirit. The former attitude means, bluntly, death: the latter means life and inward peace. And this is only to be expected, for the carnal attitude is inevitably opposed to the purpose of God, and neither can nor will follow His laws for living. Men who hold this attitude cannot possibly please God" (Romans 8:5-8 Phillips).

I am very grateful to God for this statement made by Paul: "We are able to meet the law's requirements, so long as we are living no longer by the dictates of our sinful nature, but in obedience to the promptings of the Spirit" (Romans 8:4 Phillips)

I have tried to point out to you the importance of taking a very definite stand concerning the things of God. I pray that we might all be as definite in this as Joshua was. In II Thessalonians 3:6, we read, "One further order we must give you in the name of our Lord, Jesus Christ: don't associate with the brother whose life is undisciplined, and who despises the teaching we gave him" (Phillips). Not only must our own lives be clean cut, and definite in the things of God, but the brethren we associate with must be the same. Paul says not to treat him as an enemy, but reprimand him as a brother. Jude says to pull them out of the fire, hating even the garment spotted by the flesh. Never compromise in your walk with God.

"We pray for you constantly that God will think you worthy of His calling, and that He will affect in you all that His goodness desires to do, and that your faith makes possible. We pray that the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ may become more glorious through you, and that you may share something of His glory-all through the grace of our God and Jesus Christ the Lord" (II Thessalonians 1:11-12 Phillips).

THESE SIGNS SHALL FOLLOW

"And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover" (Mark 16:15).

After Jesus resurrection, no one would believe the reports that He was alive. When He met with the eleven, He upbraided them for their unbelief and hardness of heart because they wouldn't believe those who had seen Him. Even though they had trouble believing, He made the promise to them that signs would follow their preaching of the gospel.

We find all through the scriptures that God has used signs to confirm His word. When God called Moses to lead the people of Israel out of Egypt, He gave him signs that would establish his leadership. Moses had feared that the Israelites wouldn't believe him when he told them God had sent him to deliver them from the bondage of the Egyptians. The first sign God gave him was this: when he threw his rod on the ground it became a serpent. At God's instruction, he picked it up by the tail and it became a rod again. The second sign was that he was instructed to put his hand inside his shirt, and when he took it out it was leprous. God then told him to put his hand back in and when he took it out it was restored like the rest of his flesh.

The same signs were demonstrated before Pharaoh when Moses and Aaron confronted him. Because of Pharaoh's unbelief and hardness of heart, many more signs were performed in Egypt. The rivers, streams and ponds were turned to blood. The fish died and there was no drinking water. There was a plague of frogs, and when, at Moses command, the frogs died, the land stunk. There was a plague of lice and flies in Egypt, but not in Goshen where the Israelites lived. The cattle of the Egyptians died, but not those of the Israelites. The people of Egypt had boils. There was hail that destroyed the flax and barley crops that were in head at the time, but there was none on the crops of Israel. After the hail, locusts came and ate everything that was not destroyed by the hail. The Lord then sent three days of such darkness in Egypt that they couldn't see one another, but there was light in all the houses of Israel. Then came the last judgement, which actually caused the Egyptians to send the people of Israel out of their country. The first-born of all men and animals of Egypt died, but Israel was spared because of the blood upon their doors. These signs brought about the deliverance of Israel from the bondage of Egypt.

At this time of year each year, the Israelites were to eat unleavened bread for seven days as a sign to their sons concerning what God had done in delivering them from their bondage (Exodus 13:7-10). Israel was instructed to keep the Sabbath throughout their generations as a sign between them and God. Six days they could work, but the seventh was a Sabbath of rest to be kept holy to the Lord.

In Numbers 16 we read of the rebellion of Korah and those with whom he associated. They were rebelling against Moses and Aaron, God's chosen leaders of Israel. Moses spoke to Korah and his company saying, "Tomorrow the Lord will show who are His, and who is holy, and will cause him to come near unto him; even him whom he hath chosen will he cause to come near unto him" (Numbers 16:5). As the confrontation

continued, the two hundred and fifty rebels were instructed to take censers and put fire and incense in them and stand before the Lord in front of the tabernacle. Moses instructed the people to separate themselves from the wicked rebels. The ground opened under Korah and his company: "And the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up, and their houses, and all the men that appertained unto Korah, and all their goods" (Numbers 16:32). A fire from the Lord consumed the two hundred and fifty. "And the earth opened her mouth, and swallowed them up together with Korah, when that company died, what time the fire devoured two hundred and fifty men: and they became a sign" (Numbers 26:10). The Lord instructed Moses that they should gather the censers and make broad plates out of them for a covering for the altar. These plates were a sign to the children of Israel. I am sure that a look at those plates would take rebellion out of many hearts.

In Deuteronomy 6, we read that the word of God was a sign to the Israelites children. "And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes" (Deuteronomy 6:6-8). One of the brethren taught us one time that the sign upon our hands speaks of the things we do with our hands, and the frontlets between our eyes speaks of the things we allow our eyes to watch. What we do and watch is a sign to those around us.

Deuteronomy 28 speaks of the chastisement that comes upon the people of God for their disobedience. God sent a sign to His insubordinate people. "The stranger that is within thee shall get up above thee very high; and thou shalt come down very low. He shall lend to thee, and thou shalt not lend to him: he shall be the head, and thou shalt be the tail. Moreover all these curses shall come upon thee, and shall pursue thee, and overtake thee, till thou be destroyed; because thou hearkenedst not unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to keep his commandments and his statutes which he commanded thee: And they shall be upon thee for a sign and for a wonder, and upon thy seed forever" (Deuteronomy 28:43-46).

When Israel crossed Jordan into the land God had promised them, He told Joshua to take a man from each tribe and have them each pick up a stone from the middle of the river and take it to the place where Israel would lodge. These stones were a sign to future generations that God had parted the waters of Jordan for His people to cross over. "That this may be a sign among you, that when your children ask their fathers in time to come, saying, what mean ye by these stones? Then ye shall answer them, That the waters of Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the LORD; when it passed over Jordan, the waters of Jordan were cut off: and these stones shall be for a memorial unto the children of Israel forever" (Joshua 4:6-7). It is a good thing to place some stones in significant places and amid circumstances in our lives as a memorial to what God has done for us. We all need things that will quicken our memories to the goodness and blessing of God.

Gideon, as most other people that God chose to do great things, felt very incapable of the task he had been given. God promised to be with him as he fought against the Midianites. Not satisfied with God's promise, Gideon asked for a sign to prove that it was the Lord speaking to him. Gideon prepared a feast. The Lord told him to lay it out on a stone. The Lord reached out with the staff he held in His hand and touched the food. Fire came out of the rock and consumed the food.

Gideon then destroyed the altar of Baal. This brought the Amalekites and the Midianites together against Gideon. The Spirit of the Lord came upon him, and he called together all the tribes of Israel. Gideon still didn't seem to be too sure that God was leading him, so he put out a fleece of wool. "Behold, I will put a fleece of wool in the floor; and if the dew be on the fleece only, and it be dry upon all the earth beside, then shall I know that thou wilt save Israel by mine hand, as thou hast said. And it was so: for he rose up early on the morrow, and thrust the fleece together, and wringed the dew out of the fleece, a bowl full of water" (Judges 6:37-38).

Gideon still wasn't completely satisfied, so he asked God for another sign. "And Gideon said unto God, Let not thine anger be hot against me, and I will speak but this once: let me prove, I pray thee, but this once with the fleece; let it now be dry only upon the fleece, and upon all the ground let there be dew. And God did so that night: for it was dry upon the fleece only, and there was dew on all the ground" (Judges 6:39-40). Many times we would be wise to seek the Lord more diligently before we enter into many things that we do. We will often presumptuously assume God is leading us when things are only our own idea. In many things, there should be no doubt in our mind concerning our actions because the word of God gives explicit instructions, but in other things we need to be more like Gideon.

Eli's sons walked in evil ways because they didn't know the Lord. Through the prophet, God pronounced His judgement upon the house of Eli. "And this shall be a sign unto thee that shall come upon thy two sons, on Hophni and Phinehas; in one day they shall die both of them. And I will raise me up a faithful priest that shall do according to that which is in mine heart and in my mind: and I will build him a sure house; and he shall walk before mine anointed forever" (I Samuel 2:34-35). This was a sign to Israel, and it is still a sign to us today. God doesn't bless evil.

We read of another sign in the lives of Jonathan and his armour bearer when they invaded the Philistines garrison. They made sure the Philistines knew they were there. "If they say thus unto us, Tarry until we come to you; then we will stand still in our place, and will not go up unto them. But if they say thus, Come up unto us; then we will go up: for the LORD hath delivered them into our hand: and this shall be a sign unto us" (I Samuel 14:9-10). Jonathon was able to slay twenty of the Philistines bringing fear upon the garrison and a victory for Israel.

In the thirteenth chapter of I Kings, a man prophesied concerning the altar on which Jeroboam offered incense. He prophesied that Josiah would become king and would offer the heathen priests upon that altar. The sign was that the altar would be rent and the ashes upon it poured out.

Deuteronomy 13:1-4 gives us a warning that we should not follow the sign of the false prophet. "If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder, And the sign or the wonder come to pass, whereof he spoke unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them; Thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams: for the LORD your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul" (Deuteronomy 13:1-3). Under these circumstances, we may be tempted to follow the false prophet. As Israel, we must be steadfast in our faith and not follow false signs and wonders. As He did with Israel, God may allow these things to prove whether or not we love Him.

We have spoken of many of the signs that God performed in Israel. Now let us return to the words of Jesus in Mark 16:15, "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. And these signs shall follow them that believe; in my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover."

"He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." What a glorious experience is ours by believing and being baptized. Believing is believing that the purpose of the death and shedding of the blood of Jesus was a perfect sacrifice as an atonement for our sin. The purpose of baptism is to bury the old man and old way of life, and to see the resurrection of the new man.

Jesus spoke of the judgement that comes upon the unbeliever. "He that believeth not shall be damned." It is in our best interest to avoid this condemnation by believing and accepting the sacrifice of Christ.

These signs He spoke of shall follow in the wake of the believer's life and ministry. He said that in His Name they would cast out devils. We see a scriptural evidence of this in Paul's ministry, as recorded in Acts 16:18, where a young woman had followed him for many days, saying the apostles were the servants of God. She obviously was speaking by a wrong spirit and only did it to antagonize them. "And this did she many days. But Paul, being grieved, turned and said to the spirit, I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And he came out the same hour." We have seen people who have been possessed of an evil spirit delivered from that bondage and who were set free. How we thank God for the power that is in the name of Jesus.

Jesus said that speaking in new tongues would be sign. On the day of Pentecost, as recorded in Acts 2, Jews from every nation were in Jerusalem. They heard those upon whom the Holy Spirit had fallen speaking in the languages of the different countries from which they came. "And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven. Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language. And they were all amazed and marveled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galilaeans?" (Acts 2:5-7).

On occasion this has happened in our day, but we would like to see it happen much more often; especially when visiting and ministering in a country where the people speak a different language than we do. How often the brethren have prayed that they might be able to communicate with the people in their own language.

The situation in Acts 2 was a demonstration of the gift of divers kinds of tongues mentioned in I Corinthians 12:10. Paul speaks of this sign in I Corinthians 14:22, "Wherefore tongues (or the gift of languages) are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not: but prophesying serveth not for them that believe not, but for them which believe." We pray that this sign might be commonly manifested in His church and used of God to draw people to Himself.

In Acts 28:3-6, we have a demonstration of the next sign Jesus mentioned, "They shall take up serpents, and it shall not hurt them." After Paul and the others from the shipwreck escaped to the shore of the Island of Melita, the residents of the island made a fire for them to warm themselves. Paul gathered sticks and put them on the fire. A viper came out of the sticks and fastened itself to his hand. Paul shook the viper from his hand into the fire and suffered no harm. The people watching had expected the worst. They at first thought he must be a murderer suffering judgement. When nothing happened, they changed their minds and thought he must be a god.

This sign is not something to be exploited or a means of tempting God. It is for a circumstance where we accidentally are confronted with a situation similar to Paul's. Who knows how often we have unknown to ourselves stepped upon a poisonous snake and our heavenly Father has protected us?

Jesus also said, "If they shall drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them." This is also a protection given by God in an instance where we are unaware that the drink is deadly. God doesn't intend us to tempt Him by intentionally drinking poison.

We have the example of Jesus, when the devil put Him on the pinnacle of the temple and suggested that He jump off, quoting the scripture that says, "He shall give His angels charge concerning Thee: and in their hands they shall bear Thee up, lest at any time thou dash Thy foot against a stone." Jesus reply was, "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God" (Matthew 4:8-10). We have no idea how often or when this type of thing has happened to us, but we are thankful for God's protection.

The last sign Jesus mentioned was, "They shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover." This is a sign that follows in the life of those that believe. There have been innumerable instances of people recovering from sickness by the laying on of hands and prayer. Jesus practiced this, and because it was promised by Him, we shouldn't hesitate.

The unbelieving Jews came twice to Jesus asking for a sign. "Then certain of the scribes and of the Pharisees answered, saying, Master, we would see a sign from thee" (Matthew 12:38). There had been many signs in His life and ministry, but because of unbelief, their eyes were closed. Jesus called them an evil and adulterous generation because they sought a sign rather than believing. The only sign they would receive would be that He would spend three days and nights in the grave, just as Jonah had spent three days and nights in the whale's belly. The men of Nineveh repented when they heard Jonah's message, but these unbelievers would not repent, even though one greater than Jonah was there.

"The Pharisees also with the Sadducees came, and tempting desired him that he would shew them a sign from heaven" (Matthew 16:1). Jesus berated them because they could read the signs in the sky concerning the weather, but couldn't understand the signs of the times. Again He called them a wicked and adulterous generation, and told them as before that the only sign would be that of Jonah.

In Luke 11:14, Jesus was casting out a devil that caused the person possessed to be dumb. When the devil was gone, the dumb spoke. Some of the people accused Him of casting out devils by the power of the devil. Some wanted a sign from heaven, but He told them again that as Jonah was a sign to the Ninevites so would the Son of man be to that generation.

"For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom: But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness;
But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God" (I Corinthians 1:21). What a difference between the religious Jews and the wise Greeks. One sought signs and the other sought wisdom, but the real answer was Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

The queen of Ethiopia, who came to partake of the wisdom of Solomon, would condemn that nation because one greater than Solomon was there.

We pray that God will give us the ability to believe. We desire that all these signs will be manifest in our life and ministry. We desire that we may be a good witness for Him and that we may bring glory and praise to Him.

ABRAHAM PAID TITHES TO MELCHISEDEC.

Genesis 14:20 And blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And he gave him tithes of all.

ISRAEL INSTRUCTED TO PAY TITHES.

Deuteronomy 14:22 Thou shalt truly tithe all the increase of thy seed, that the field bringeth forth year by year.

Leviticus 27:30 And all the tithe of the land, whether of the seed of the land, or of the fruit of the tree, is the LORD'S: it is holy unto the LORD.

Leviticus 27:32 And concerning the tithe of the herd, or of the flock, even of whatsoever passeth under the rod, the tenth shall be holy unto the LORD.

Nehemiah 13:12 Then brought all Judah the tithe of the corn and the new wine and the oil unto the treasuries.

Numbers 18:24 But the tithes of the children of Israel, which they offer as an heave offering unto the LORD, I have given to the Levites to inherit: therefore I have said unto them, Among the children of Israel they shall have no inheritance.

Malachi 3:8 Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings.

Malachi 3:9 Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation.

Malachi 3:10 Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that here may be meat in mine house, and 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].

Malachi 3:11 And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, and he shall not destroy the fruits of your ground; neither shall your vine cast her fruit before the time in the field, saith the LORD of hosts.

Malachi 3:12 And all nations shall call you blessed: for ye shall be a delightsome land, saith the LORD of hosts.

Hebrews 7:5 And verily they that are of the sons of Levi, who receive the office of the priesthood, have a commandment to take tithes of the people according to the law, that is, of their brethren, though they come out of the loins of Abraham:

Hebrews 7:6 But he whose descent is not counted from them received tithes of Abraham, and blessed him that had the promises.

Hebrews 7:7 And without all contradiction the less is blessed of the better.

Hebrews 7:8 And here men that die receive tithes; but there he receiveth them, of whom it is witnessed that he liveth.

THE LEVITES TO GIVE A TITHE OF THE TITHES THEY HAVE RECEIVED.

Numbers 18:26 Thus speak unto the Levites, and say unto them, When ye take of the children of Israel the tithes which I have given you from them for your inheritance, then ye shall offer up an heave offering of it for the LORD, even a tenth part of the tithe.

Numbers 18:27 And this your heave offering shall be reckoned unto you, as though it were the corn of the threshing floor, and as the fullness of the winepress.

Numbers 18:28 Thus ye also shall offer an heave offering unto the LORD of all your tithes, which ye receive of the children of Israel; and ye shall give thereof the LORD'S heave offering to Aaron the priest.

Numbers 18:29 Out of all your gifts ye shall offer every heave offering of the LORD, of all the best thereof, even the hallowed part thereof out of it.

Numbers 18:31 And ye shall eat it in every place, ye and your households: for it [is] your reward for your service in the tabernacle of the congregation.

Nehemiah 10:38 And the priest the son of Aaron shall be with the Levites, when the Levites take tithes: and the Levites shall bring up the tithe of the tithes unto the house of our God, to the chambers, into the treasure house.

WHERE DO WE PUT OUR TITHE.

Deuteronomy 12:11 Then there shall be a place which the LORD your God shall choose to cause his name to dwell there; thither shall ye bring all that I command you; your burnt offerings, and your sacrifices, your tithes, and the heave offering of your hand, and all your choice vows which ye vow unto the LORD:

THE USE OF THE TITHE.

Deuteronomy 12:17 Thou mayest not eat within thy gates the tithe of thy corn, or of thy wine, or of thy oil, or the firstlings of thy herds or of thy flock, nor any of thy vows which thou vowest, nor thy freewill offerings, or heave offering of thine hand:

Deuteronomy 12:18 But thou must eat them before the LORD thy God in the place which the LORD thy God shall choose, thou, and thy son, and thy daughter, and thy manservant, and thy maidservant, and the Levite that is within thy gates: and thou shalt rejoice before the LORD thy God in all that thou puttest thine hands unto.

Deuteronomy 14:23 And thou shalt eat before the LORD thy God, in the place which he shall choose to place his name there, the tithe of thy corn, of thy wine, and of thine oil, and the firstlings of thy herds and of thy flocks; that thou mayest learn to fear the LORD thy God always.

Deuteronomy 14:24 And if the way be too long for thee, so that thou art not able to carry it; [or] if the place be too far from thee, which the LORD thy God shall choose to set his name there, when the LORD thy God hath blessed thee: Then shalt thou turn it into money, and bind up the money in thine hand, and shalt go unto the place which the LORD thy God shall choose: And thou shalt bestow that money for whatsoever thy soul lusteth after, for oxen, or for sheep, or for wine, or for strong drink, or for whatsoever thy soul desireth: and thou shalt eat there before the LORD thy God, and thou shalt rejoice, thou, and thine household, and the Levite that is within thy gates; thou shalt not forsake him; for he hath no part nor inheritance with thee.

Deuteronomy 14:28 At the end of three years thou shalt bring forth all the tithe of thine increase the same year, and shalt lay it up within thy gates:

Deuteronomy 14:29 And the Levite, (because he hath no part nor inheritance with thee) and the stranger, and the fatherless, and the widow, which are within thy gates, shall come, and shall eat and be satisfied; that the LORD thy God may bless thee in all the work of thine hand which thou doest.

Deuteronomy 26:12 When thou hast made an end of tithing all the tithes of thine increase the third year, which is the year of tithing, and hast given [it] unto the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow, that they may eat within thy gates, and be filled;

Deuteronomy 26:12. Living Bible. "Every third year is a year of special tithing. That year you are to give all your tithes to the Levites, migrants, orphans and widows, so that they will be well fed."

Deuteronomy 26:13. Living Bible. "Then you shall declare before the Lord your God, I have given all my tithes to the Levites, the migrants, the orphans, and the widows, just as you commanded me; I have not violated or forgotten any of your rules." During Hezekiah's reign. II Chronicles 31:5 And as soon as the commandment came abroad, the children of Israel brought in abundance the first fruits of corn, wine, and oil, and honey, and of all the increase of the field; and the tithe of all things brought they in abundantly.

II Chronicles 31:6 And concerning the children of Israel and Judah, that dwelt in the cities of Judah, they also brought in the tithe of oxen and sheep, and the tithe of holy things which were consecrated unto the LORD their God, and laid them by heaps.

II Chronicles 31:5 And as soon as the commandment came abroad, the children of Israel brought in abundance the first fruits of corn, wine, and oil, and honey, and of all the increase of the field; and the tithe of all [things] brought they in abundantly.

Matthew 23:23 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cumin, and have omitted the weightier [matters] of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.

WHAT IF YOU SPEND YOUR TITHE.

Leviticus 27:31 And if a man will at all redeem [ought] of his tithes, he shall add thereto the fifth [part] thereof.

THE LEVITES INHERITANCE WAS THE TITHE OF THE PEOPLE.

Numbers 18:21 And, behold, I have given the children of Levi all the tenth in Israel for an inheritance, for their service which they serve, [even] the service of the tabernacle of the congregation.

Deuteronomy 10:9 Wherefore Levi hath no part nor inheritance with his brethren; the LORD [is] his inheritance, according as the LORD thy God promised him.

TRUE

There is much said these day about witnessing for the Lord, and many people go to a great deal of trouble to employ countless means to make this witnessing effective. Some things that men do on the level they are on are their response to the leading of the Spirit of God, but countless things used to try to draw men to God are nothing more or less than the product of men's thinking and the natural mind.

Man has always tried to figure things out for himself, and this matter is no exception. Abraham tried to get the promised son by Hagar. Jacob got the birthright by deceit, which probably would have been his anyway had he been willing and patient enough to allow God to work it out in His own way. As an extra bonus for his genius, he received many years of fleeing from the face of Esau his brother. Peter would have established the kingdom in the earth by building three tabernacles on the mount of transfiguration, but God had many years of experience, test and perfection for His Church before such a thing could be. He also would have protected Jesus from His captor by cutting off the high priests' servant's ear. And so we, oft times by any means, fair or foul, endeavour to further the cause of God.

I would like to quote two verses of scripture: "If I bear witness of myself, my witness is not true. There is another that beareth witness of me; and I know that the witness which he witnesseth of me is true" (John 5:31-32).

As I have already mentioned, many people have taken into their own hands the work of witnessing for the Lord. But we see from the scripture I quoted that He who was the very Son of Truth and Light and Perfection did not bear witness of Himself. If He had, His witness would not have been true, but false. If this is so, then how can we be so bold as to endeavour to carry on a witness for Him and of Him that has as its source our own mind and effort?

Jesus said, "There is another that beareth witness of me" and "the Father Himself, which hath sent me, hath borne witness of me" (John 5:31&37). The Spirit who was sent forth from God was the one who bore witness of Jesus. Today, the only true witness is the anointing of God as it flows out through those who are yielded to Him. "He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spoke he of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive...)" (John 7:38,39).

I would like you to notice John 5:36, "for the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me." May I point out that it was the work that the Father had given that bore witness of Him. It was not His own work, or the work of someone else, but the work the Father had given. Men are so busy trying to work for God that they forget that it is only the work God gives that bears witness. They put forth all kinds of effort, and when it falls flat, they become frustrated and feel that God has forsaken them. Or they think up some bigger idea than ever, hoping it will work, only to find that their so called ministry runs into the sand, and their efforts are vain, bearing nothing but discord and confusion.

I have talked to many people, lately, and listened to them talk of what they are doing for God, only to find that "their" works, and words which flow like a never ending river, are only obscuring and hiding the true witness of God by His Spirit. How wonderful it would be, in many cases, if people could see that they are doing far more harm than good by their efforts.

When God's Spirit dwells within you, there is a far deeper and more effective witness than a lot of words or works. Because of the Spirit that dwells within, we have come to realize that that same Spirit can minister to the far ends of the earth without us ever moving a foot or saying a word. Nothing limits the moving or scope of God's Spirit.

This may be a surprise to many people, but our most effective witness for Christ is accomplished in our daily routine of life. Seldom need you deviate from that to accomplish the work that the Father has given you to do. While you are at your job, while you are carrying on transactions in the business world, while you are working your land, or talking over the fence to the next-door neighbour, a flow will be going forth from you, charged with that life from above. Never underestimate what God is doing for His people. He is creating them in His own image; He is making them partakers of the Divine Nature, and this work that God is accomplishing within is coming to the place where it will be in evidence.

Men have always tried to picture the life of Jesus as a chain of spectacular events, and they attempt to pattern their own lives accordingly. But Jesus never walked in the realm of the spectacular. When He walked along the road and came to a blind man, He healed him and went on His way; when they brought Him a deaf man, He opened his ears and sent him away, charging him to tell no one; when Lazarus was in the grave, He simply ministered to the grief stricken sisters and said, "Lazarus come forth"; when the crowd around Him was hungry, He took the loaves and fishes and fed them; when Nicodemus came to visit Him one evening and asked the way of Life, Jesus simply told him he needed to be born again.

We need to be far more interested in ministering the Spirit than speaking a lot of words, or doing a lot of works, or making a big name for ourselves. Our own words and works may make a name for us temporarily; but only the works that the Father hath given us to do will minister the Spirit that God will cause to bring Life to all creation as He opens their eyes to see and their ears to hear.

THE UNITY BETWEEN CHRIST AND HIS CHURCH

God began a mighty Move of the Spirit in the church, and established an apostolic ministry to oversee the body that He was bringing together from all the peoples of the earth. This apostolic ministry was the gift of Christ to all mankind, for the establishment of the kingdom of God, and it's order in all of the whole creation. "Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men" (Ephesians 4:8). These gifts were, "And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers" (Ephesians 4:11).

To be able to reach out to other lands, representatives of that apostolic ministry were required. As the apostolic brethren ministered in those other countries, God seemed to bring men to the surface who would fit this need. These were men called of God, and they are known as apostolic deacons, or just simply travelling deacons. The word "travelling" is used in order to differentiate between them and the deacons of the local churches. The word "deacon" means "one who assists." In the local church, the deacons assist the elders. In the universal church, the travelling deacons assist the apostolic ministries, in the establishing of the order of the kingdom of God. A mighty and important ministry has been given them.

We are shown what the work of the apostolic ministry is, in Ephesians 4:12. It says the apostolic ministry was given for the perfecting of the saints. As the word "perfecting" is used in the scriptures, it means, "to bring to full maturity." The saints are to be perfected, or brought to maturity, for the work of the ministry.

It is the members of the body of Christ who, through their personal ministry given them by God, are used to bring the knowledge of the Lord to the earth. Perfect saints will be recognized by their walk in the unity of the faith, and in unity of the knowledge of the Son of God. They will be one as Jesus prayed, and this unity will cause the world to believe. "That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me" (John 17:21). That will cause the saints collectively to become a perfect "MAN." Not perfect men, but a perfect man, which is used in referring to the body of Christ. That perfected body will have come to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.

Embodied in Christ was the fullness of every gift and ministry. Those gifts and ministries were shared with the members of the body of Christ, as the Holy Spirit wills, and as God has set (I Corinthians 12:11,18). Because of this setting and dividing to all the members of His body, the body, when it is perfected, will have come to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. The complete Christ will be revealed in His body. The body will minister as He ministered. Because of the physical body in which He dwelt, He was limited to only one locality at a time. His body will have many, many members in every nation of the earth, and the gospel of the kingdom will flow out as a mighty river to all mankind.

We must not put this wonderful time off "to some day when...." A part of the perfecting process is the faithful function of the members of His body, in the gift and calling that has been given them. We are stewards of the gift of God. "As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God" (I Peter 4:10).

Children can be very easily confused, tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive (Ephesians 4:14). This body that God is perfecting will not be confused or deceived. It will grow up in all things.

The body will grow into a union with Christ, the Head of the body. In Ephesians 5:26-33, Paul uses the union between a man and his wife to illustrate the union between Christ and His church. We look at a man and a woman, and we see two people. God looks at them and sees one, and then says, "This is a great mystery." The same type of mystery exists between Christ and the church. We see many members scattered throughout all the nations of the earth, but God sees them, along with Christ, as one. As a man and his wife grow together and become one, so Christ and His church grow into the same type of unity.

In Ephesians, Paul speaks of the marriage union. "For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word" (Ephesians 5:23-26). This speaks of that union where one gives himself, or herself, unreservedly to the other, according to the order that God has established. This has proven to be the most workable of relationships, when God's pattern is followed. This is what a good marriage is.

In Ephesians 4:16, Paul returns to the relationship between Christ and the members of His body, and also the relationship of the members of the body to one another: "From whom the whole body (the Head and also the members of the body) fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love." The marriage union was still in Paul's mind, where the members of that union fit together, and grow in unity. As in a marriage, the church is joined together and compacted, by that which every joint supplies. All the members must effectively work together to cause growth, and for love to multiply.

The leadership of the apostolic ministries, and the deacons who assist them, will be used of God to cause this union between Christ and His church to grow and develop. The knowledge of the Lord will cover the earth, as the waters cover the sea.

OUR WALK

We have been greatly blessed by many of the things written by the apostle Paul, which were given to him by the revelation of the Holy Spirit. He wrote of the redemptive work of Christ through the shedding of His blood on Calvary. "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" (II Corinthians 5:21).

Paul wrote of how God, the Father of Jesus Christ, gave to His Son the place of Head of the church, Christ's body. "And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all" (Ephesians 1:19-23).

Paul wrote of how we, as believers, are set as members of that body: "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ. For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit" (I Corinthians 12:12-13).

Paul wrote how Christ brought a unity between the Jew and the Gentile: "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free, and have been all made to drink into one Spirit" (I Corinthians 12:13).

He wrote about how we are all given gifts of the Spirit, or Spiritual abilities, that we might minister as members of His body. "But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues: But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will" (I Corinthians 12:7-11).

Paul also wrote much about how we are to walk as believers and members of Christ's body. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:" (Ephesians 1:3-4).

In Galatians five, we are exhorted to walk in the Spirit and not to give way to the works of the flesh. Paul mentions a number of the works of the carnal nature. There are many more not mentioned. The first works of the flesh to be named are adultery and fornication. Jesus also mentions these works of the flesh in Matthew 5:27-30. He carried the definition beyond the actual act of committing adultery to just looking: "But I say unto you, that whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart. And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell. And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell" (Matthew 5:28-30).

Speaking of the works of the flesh in Galatians 5:21, Paul says, "...they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." If we walk according to the desires of the carnal nature, we cut ourselves off from God's kingdom. It is very important that we yield ourselves to the leading of the Holy Spirit concerning these fleshly works. God's Spirit will be with us to help us crucify the flesh and also help us to allow the fruits of the Spirit to be manifest in our lives.

In Ephesians 4:17-31, Paul gives instruction concerning our walk as Christians. "This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind, having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart: Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness. But ye have not so learned Christ; If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus:" (Ephesians 4:17-21). Please read the rest of the chapter as it gives good instruction concerning our walk with the Lord.

"Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children; And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savour" (Ephesians 5:1).

Our love for Christ is manifested in our walk. We are asked to compare our love for Him with his love for us.

Paul gives warning, in the following verse, concerning the consequences of the carnal walk: "For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God" (Ephesians 5:5). We are warned not to be deceived by those who walk in ungodly ways. He tells of the day when we walked in the way of the sinner; but, having partaken of the light of the Lord, let us walk according to that light.

Our desire should be the fruits of the Spirit, and to turn away from and reprove the "the unfruitful works of darkness." "See then that you walk circumspectly (Cautiously and discreetly)," (Ephesians 5:15). Paul wrote similar instruction to the Philippians. He instructs them to be filled with the "fruits of righteousness;" caring for others in a better manner than they would care for themselves. Paul gives Jesus as an example who made Himself of no reputation and took upon Himself the form of a servant.

When Paul speaks of working out your salvation (Philippians 2:12), he is talking about giving consideration to our walk. "That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world;" (Philippians 2:15). Unity is always of great importance among believers. In Philippians 4:2, Paul exhorts two men, presumably elders of the local church in Philippi that they be of the same mind concerning spiritual things. It is so important that we be able to walk in unity, especially elders who are the leaders of the people.

People tend to act upon the things they think about. "For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he" (Proverbs 23:7). Our walk is shaped by our thoughts. "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things" (Philippians 4:8).

It is important that we read the scriptures and take heed to the instruction given by the Lord concerning our walk. We can have the help of the Holy Spirit to lead us in God's ways if we will listen to His voice. May God bless and guide you.

WALKING WITH GOD

Let us pray that we may learn to walk with God. The man who is crippled, or a paraplegic, or even a man with no legs at all, can walk with God, because it is not a physical walk, but a walk in the Spirit.

When one walks with God, He always seems to be between us and the dangers that present themselves along the way. He stands between us and carnality, the works of the flesh, and all that belongs to the lower nature; adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, and heresies. He shields us and puts His covering over us. Paul says, "This I say

then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh" (Galatians 5:16). May we realize that we must walk with Him, and not insist that He walk with us, satisfying what we want, while we pay no attention to the mind and will of God.

"And all the days of Enoch were three hundred sixty and five years: And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him" (Genesis 5:23-24). That would have been a wonderful three hundred and sixty five years. He so experienced the presence of God that the natural realm couldn't hold him. "By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God" (Hebrews 11:5). There must have been a very close sense of communion between him and our heavenly Father.

"And it came to pass, as Moses entered into the tabernacle, the cloudy pillar descended, and stood at the door of the tabernacle, and the LORD talked with Moses. And all the people saw the cloudy pillar stand at the tabernacle door: and all the people rose up and worshipped, every man in his tent door. And the LORD spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend" (Exodus 33:9-11). Several times, the scriptures refer to Abraham as the friend of God. It would be wonderful to walk with God as with a friend, with nothing of the carnal realm causing a division. Not only does God want us to walk with Him in that way, but He also wants us to walk with one another in that relationship.

When Israel was fleeing from Egypt, they greatly feared the Egyptian army, which was pursuing them. They complained to Moses, for they were sure that they would die in the wilderness. So far on their journey, God had led them by a pillar of fire, and a pillar of cloud. God removed the cloud from in front of them, and put it between them and Pharaoh and the Egyptian army. God dwelt in the cloud that came between Israel and the Egyptians. If only they could have seen and valued the protection that cloud gave them, they could have rejoiced rather than complained. We must live and walk in such a way that the cloud is between us and the ways of Egypt. Then, and only then, can we know the protection of the hand of the Lord upon us. Jesus spoke of covering Jerusalem as a hen covers her chicks with her wings. David says in Psalms 91:1, "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty." Those wings and that shadow of the almighty is there for us, as the pillar of cloud was for Israel. May we walk with Him in His shadow.

God caused the sea to go back, and Israel entered into the midst of it on dry ground. The Egyptians pursued them, and God looked at them from the pillar of fire and the cloud. He troubled the Egyptians and their wheels fell off. Sometimes, because of our rebellion and waywardness, we get ourselves into a circumstance where our wheels fall off. We must be sure that we are on the right side of the cloud. To Israel, the cloud was their salvation; but to the Egyptians, who were just a short distance away on the other side of the cloud, it was their destruction.

I always marvel as I read the writings of the apostle John. He must have been over ninety years old when he wrote his first, second, and third epistles. We are told that he was the youngest of the twelve that Jesus chose as apostles. That would mean that, when he wrote his epistles, he would have walked with his Lord for close to seventy years. His epistles speak of the wonderful experience that was his as he walked with God. Those epistles are words of experience, and we would do well to read them often.

He speaks to us as, "My little children," and then, throughout his writings, tells us what makes a true follower of Christ. "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.... And this is his commandment, that we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment. And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us." (I John 3:16, 23-24). We have the privilege of dwelling in Him and having Him dwell in us. Not only can we live under the shadow of the cloud as Israel did, but we can live in the cloud with Him.

Another thing that John was able to say because of his long experience in walking with God was, "we know." Those words are repeated fourteen times in first John. "And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments" (I John 2:3). "And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin" (I John 3:5). "And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us" (I John 3:24). "Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit" (I John 4:13). The assurance of knowing comes by experience and by walking with Him.

Because of his ministry, John was exiled to the penal colony on the isle of Patmos. The things that were to come to pass over thousands of years in the future were shown him by the angel of the Lord. His imprisonment in no way took away from his close walk with God. By the Spirit, he was able to see into the future beyond our day, and see the things that are to take place both in the physical and spiritual realm. His vision was not clouded by walking in the carnal realm.

It is recorded in history that all the other apostles died a violent death, but there seems to be no record of John's death. Tradition tells us that John never died, but that he entered into an experience similar to Enoch's. We, in our day, are looking for such an experience where we will walk right into the resurrection.

Jesus told Martha that He was the resurrection and the life. By that saying, He shows us that the resurrection is not an event, but a partaking of the person of Jesus Christ. We tend to take on the ways of those that we walk with. We pray that our walk will be in the Spirit that we might be a partaker of Him. "That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus" (Philippians 3:10-12).

WORKS

It would seem the last few months, as the Spirit of God has been moving upon His people, that God has been speaking to us about our works. As different brethren have ministered in teaching, and many people have ministered in prophecy, this trend has become apparent.

I have been reading quite a bit in Paul's epistles lately, and I have been surprised how much Paul, the apostle of grace as he is sometimes called, has to say about works. "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. Those things which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, DO; and the God of peace shall be with you" (Philippians 4:8,9).

In Paul's epistle to Titus, we find a whole letter on the subject of works. After his very important teaching on how every member of the church, from the elders to the children, should walk, he says this: "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously and godly, in this present world; looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; who gave himself for us that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works" (Titus 2:11-15).

In this day and age, people who are zealous of good works may be peculiar, but we don't worry about that. Our heart and mind is on the plan and purpose of God and fulfillment in His creation in the bringing forth of His Kingdom.

In Titus 3:8, Paul says this: "This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men." And in Titus 3:14, this; "And let ours also learn to maintain good works for necessary uses, that they be not unfruitful."

Over the past number of years, God has been revealing by His Spirit what He has been doing and what He still intends to do. I believe our understanding of many of these things is growing, and I would like to relate some of them to you in the light of the present truth.

We have been taught that God isn't interested in just saving our souls, but intends to save the whole man, spirit, soul and body. Our spirit is the first part of us to be saved, or brought to life, and that is accomplished by hearing the voice of the Son of God. There is absolutely no responsibility on our part. Christ simply speaks, and everyone to whom he speaks hears, and everyone who hears has life come to his spirit. You may wonder how this can be, but think back to your experience before you knew Christ as your Saviour. There was a time in your life when you were not conscious of God. In fact, you had no interest in Him and didn't care to be interested. Then, one day, something came alive in you and you were very conscious of God and couldn't help being so. We have called this experience "conviction of the Spirit," and to most of us, it was a very uncomfortable time. This is the experience that Jesus spoke of in John 5:25, "The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live."

In the things of God, one experience always leads to another, and once our spirit has come alive, it is time for our souls to receive life. When life came to our spirit, we had absolutely no responsibility. We just heard and God spoke SO forcibly that we couldn't help but hear. But, when it comes to the saving of our soul, we

have a measure of responsibility, and that responsibility is to believe. "But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul" (Hebrews 10:39).

There is still another level of salvation to enter into: that of the body. It will be a glorious day when our bodies have taken on that measure of life that God is planning to give unto us. This part of our salvation requires a larger measure of responsibility on our part, because our bodies are saved by "doing." As John wrote in I John 2:17, "...the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever." Life, Praise God, comes to this body, and it shalt abide. But life can only come in this manner as we do the will of God and enter in with Him. This realm of "doing" is what God has been speaking to us a great deal about, and which we are beginning to enter into.

God has spoken to us also about three levels of anointing. There may be many levels of anointing, but those three in particular he has made us conscious of. Our first experience of God's anointing by His Spirit was an anointing of feeling. Someone who has never experienced this will not know what we are talking about. When the Spirit of God fell on the day of Pentecost as recorded in Acts, there was a great evidence of feeling, shown by the way the one hundred and twenty reacted. Some never like to let their feelings enter into their spiritual experience, but God intends that they should.

Feelings aren't the most reliable thing. Sometimes we feel good, and sometimes we feel bad. Sometimes our feeling is so bad that it overcomes the anointing of feeling. If we have had a meeting with lots of feeling, we have had a good meeting, and if there was no feeling, the meeting was poor. If our feelings get down, we believe God has forsaken us, which is not true, of course. Even though feelings are unreliable in themselves alone, I would never want to part with the anointing of feeling. It should accompany us all our days and always be a part of our experience. It is a very great privilege to feel the presence of God.

There is a more stable level of anointing that one enters into as they grow and mature, and that is an anointing of "knowing." That is a realm where, regardless of how you feel, you know. "For I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day" (II Timothy 1:12). Your Spiritual experience doesn't depend on your feelings; but, by knowing God, you know His ways, and His plan, and His purpose. Come what may, you realize the stability of God, and by His Spirit He imparts this stability to you. The prayer of Paul in Philippians 3:10-11 is being answered in us today: "That I might know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death; If by any means I might attain Into the resurrection of the dead." I believe it is the prayer of every child of God that they may be strengthened and matured by this anointing of knowing.

There is another level of the anointing of the Spirit about which God is now beginning to speak to us. It is an anointing of "being." "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord" (II Corinthians 3:18). The anointing of being is what you are, what God by His Spirit has changed you into.

Now I wish to show you how the salvation of the body by "doing," and the anointing of "being," work into what God is bringing to our attention about works at the present time.

First of all, we need to know what works are. In our ignorance in the past, we have run here and there working for God, and it seemed never accomplishing much. We are like the people who came to Jesus and said to Him, "What shall we do that we might work the works of God?" Jesus knew what was in their hearts. They wanted to do great miracles (I suppose more to be seen than to help the sufferer) and multiply loaves and fish to feed the thousands so that the multitudes might follow them. He gave them a very simple answer, "This is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent" (John 6:29). Believe and let God's Spirit work in you, and you will be working the works of God.

The work of God is the operation of a ministry by the Spirit. Such works are inspired by the Spirit, led by the Spirit, and executed by the Spirit.

God has helped us a great deal in our ministry to one another when we are gathered together in a meeting, but we have as yet learned very little about ministering outside the meeting. This, however, God is beginning to speak about. It is the works of God, or the manifestation of the anointing of being.

The most effective ministering outside the meeting is that which is done when the one who is ministering isn't even aware that he is ministering. You have all heard of and know the person who would "give you the shirt off his back." His living is done in such a way that he would never feel that he had a ministry of giving. You also know people of whom you could say, "They were born helping others," but they never feel themselves that they are doing much for others.

The manifestation of the anointing of being is a manifestation by the Spirit of what you are. That is what is happening when a man gives by the Spirit, helps by the spirit, shows mercy by the Spirit or governs by the Spirit, etc. This is in part the works God has been speaking to us about. Our responsibility here, and it is a great responsibility, is to allow what God has built into us over the years to flow out by the Spirit.

That which is written upon our heart will manifest itself. As James wrote in James 3:11-13, "Doth a fountain send forth at the same place sweet water and bitter? Can the fig tree, my brethren, bear olive berries? Either a vine, figs? So can no fountain yield salt water and fresh? Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? Let him show out of a good conversation (walk) his works with meekness of wisdom."

Let us refer back to the scripture quoted from Titus 2:13; "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." We are looking for His appearing in His people. He dwells within His people, and He will appear from within His people. His appearing will be a flowing out by the Spirit of Himself from within, a manifestation of the anointing of being, an operation of the ministry that you are.

Christ is a combination of everything that belongs to the realm of the Spirit. He is love, joy, peace, temperance, patience, generosity, etc.; and as we are changed into His image and likeness, these things will flow out from us by the Spirit. As Jesus said in Luke 6:45, "A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil: for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh."

May God help you to see that it is what you are that really counts; because what you are, and what you are only, will manifest Jesus Christ. It is what you are that will minister to the need of mankind, and even to the whole creation. If you are a shower of mercy, let it flow by the Spirit from the compassion that is in your heart. If you are a giver, let it flow from the generosity that comes from Christ in you. If you are an Elder, let the government rest upon your shoulders, as it does on His.

Whatever your ministry is, that is what God is making you. What flows from you by the Spirit are the works that God has called you unto and which will continue to bring about that transformation in yourselves and in the earth.

Our own works do not fit into the picture of what GOD IS DOING AT ALL. We often meddle, in our impatience, with what God has promised, by trying to bring it to pass by our own ideas and works. Like Abraham, Joseph, and Moses, let us wait for the promise, and let it be fulfilled by the flow of the anointing, rather than our own engineering.

WORSHIP

There is something that we have learned in the Move of the Spirit that is very important to us and very important in the kingdom of God. This is that when the Spirit of God is leading our times of worship, those times will vary from one time to another. Sometimes there will be great jubilance, and at other times it will be a very, very, serious hour. God moves in different ways at different times according to the need of His people.

In the old order, people would think that they had a good meeting when everyone was really rejoicing. That is not always the way it is in what God is doing. Very often, the best time in the presence of God is when things are very serious, and God is searching our hearts, and digging to the bottom of things. I always appreciate when God moves by prophecy too. It brings a solemnity to the meeting that causes us to carefully consider our ways and the ways of the Lord. Sometimes He wants us to clap our hands in jubilance, and at other times He wants us to raise our hands and pour out our soul to Him. Let us be very careful to distinguish one time from the other.

Someone said one time that we shouldn't get in a rut, because a rut is just a grave with the ends knocked out. So we don't want to be in a rut. We don't want to bind ourselves in a pattern that we won’t allow the Holy Spirit to deviate from. Be careful to give the Spirit of God preeminence in our meetings, that He may lead us according to the mind of God. If we do this, our meetings will always benefit the members of the body of Christ. Let us pray that God will give the church help in this matter.

WRITTEN UPON THE HEART

Several years ago, we felt it to be the mind of God to discontinue the Sunday school in the Church. The reason God led us to do this was because He had something better in mind. God never asks us to leave something behind until He has something better to replace it. And most of us are wise enough not to throw the old away until something new and better is in sight.

Many parents were depending entirely on the Sunday school and Church for the spiritual growth of their children. They were forsaking the responsibility that God had given them and were giving it over to Sunday school teachers and others outside the home. It is hard for God to bless those who will not accept their responsibility.

It is very seldom that a child turns out any better than the home he was reared in; and if he does, it is a sovereign act of God. It then becomes very important to us to do all that we are capable of for good in the rearing of our offspring. With the revelation God has given us on the order of the home, this is no longer empty talk, but a reality of experience that God wishes to establish by his anointing in our lives and the lives of our children.

Many people are afraid to teach their children. They seem to fear putting them under a law. If I teach my boy not to steal because it is evil when he is four years old, I am writing on his heart. If I still have to tell him not to steal when he is sixteen, I may be putting him under a law. Don't think that sixteen is the age to stop writing on young people's hearts. God will continue to write upon our hearts in one way or another as long as we live.

If a child will not walk orderly, it is better to put them under a law than to have them walk in wickedness. God put Israel under a law because of their waywardness and the hardness of their hearts. Abraham, Jacob, Enoch, Noah and others walked by the Spirit, offered their sacrifices in the Spirit, and worshipped in the Spirit. When it came to Israel, in order for God to get any of the responses He received from men of earlier times, He had to put them under a law. He even had to put them under a law concerning their sacrifices and the choosing of an animal for sacrifice. In their dishonour of Him, they would offer a runt, a crippled or a sick beast. Hence, the sacrifice stunk in God's nostrils, and He had no pleasure in it.

If our walk with God is after the law, He gets about as much pleasure out of it as He did Israel's sacrifice, and we get no pleasure from it either. But walking by the Spirit is a glorious experience, and I hope by His grace we may all walk as Enoch did, right into His presence. By His example here, God has taught us that a forced obedience is better than a willful disobedience, which is a long way from God's best, walking in the Spirit.

It is within the power and ability of parents to write a knowledge of good and evil on their children's hearts. God has placed within children's hearts a natural esteem for their parents. Some may, at certain periods of

their growth, put on an attitude of having lost this esteem; but if they have had it written on their hearts by word and example from the time they were very small to honour and obey mother and dad, you will find this esteem, perhaps a little rusty and buried by the false sham that often comes with growing up, still there.

There are many ways to write a knowledge of good and evil on a child's heart. First of all, you can teach him. When you teach him what is evil, turn him around and show him the good. Nothing makes black looks so black as the purity of white. Whatever you do, don't be afraid to teach them and make the evil as black as it is, and the good as good as it is. This is a day of great peril, and we need sound knowledge coupled with a rich anointing of the Spirit of God to be able to walk with Him, and so do our children.

You can pray with them and ask God to put His anointing upon their hearts and put it in their hearts to serve Him.

Perhaps the most important way of teaching a child is by our own life. If mother and dad shun even the appearance of evil, the children will be more likely to shin it as well. If, in their everyday lives, they seek after good, their children will be more likely to seek after good.

Do not allow children to rebel against you as parents, for rebellion is evil. If when they are small they learn rebellion, they will not depart from it when they are old. How it saddens my heart to see a three or four year-old strike at his mother when being corrected, or a thirteen or fourteen year old talk back to their parents in a disrespectful way. Do not allow your children to pursue these evil ways; because if they do, it will only be a few short years until they are striking at the policeman and talking back to the judge. If your children learn respect and honour for their parents, it is quite likely they will always honour and respect those in authority over them.

Forget, and put far from you, the modern ideas of family democracy, self-expression and the teachings against the parental repression. Father is the head of the home, and mother is his helper for God make them so. Accept your responsibility as parents, and bring up your children to walk with God. Don't forget that sometimes the rod is a useful instrument for writing upon the heart of the young.

YOUTH FELLOWSHIP

We have just finished a time when many of the Young People have gathered together, here at North Battleford. We spent the long weekend here, and I believe that we all had a very profitable time. We had a lot of fun as we fellowshipped together in games and contests, but I believe the part that we enjoyed the most was when we met together in the meetings.

The Spirit of God was with us as the different ones ministered in the meetings. Some talked of their experiences, some sang in the Spirit, and others prophesied. Altogether we had a time of real edification.

It is very wonderful to see how so many of these younger ones, and some of them were quite young, have accepted Christ as their Saviour; they have been filled with the Holy Spirit and have gone on to enter into a Spiritual ministry, as part of the Body of Christ. No one can tell me that young people and children don't understand the things of the realm of the Spirit. They not only understand them, but they enter into them, and walking with God becomes the central and most important part of their lives.

As different ones told of their experiences, you could tell that they had committed their lives to God, and that, regardless of what battles the future held, when the smoke cleared, they would be standing as victors on the field. You could see many elders and deacons of the future, and many young ladies who would make good elders' or deacons' wives. As God continues to move, none of us really know what all He may have in mind for many of these young people.

Many have committed their life and their way to the Lord. I would like to quote Psalm 37:5-7 to strengthen your faith in this. "Delight thyself also in the Lord; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart. Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass. And he shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noonday. Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him." This is God's promise, and it is impossible for God to lie that if we commit our ways unto Him, He will bring to pass the desires of our hearts. When we are committed to Him in all our ways, our desires are His desires. We can rest in Him, and if we wait patiently, all he promised He will do.

In many places in the scriptures we are told to wait patiently and endure. We often think that things have to happen right now; but God, who sees away down the road, can tell whether it is best for it to happen now, or later on, or whether it is best for it to happen at all or not. Paul writes the following in Romans 8:24-25, "In our moments of impatience, let us remember that hope always means waiting for something that we haven't yet got. But if we hope for something we cannot see, then we must settle down to wait for it in patience" (Phillips translation).

In Hebrews 6:11-12&15, we read the following: "It is our earnest wish that every one of you should show a similar keenness in fully grasping the hope that is within you. We do not want any of you to grow slack, but to follow the example of those who through sheer patient faith came to possess the promises...." He is talking here about Abraham and others. We are told this about Abraham, "...after patient endurance he found the promise true" (Phillips translation).

We do not want to be slothful or slack in doing our part to bring to pass what God has in mind on our behalf, but neither do we want to take things in our own hands to try and force them to happen. Abraham and Sarah did this when they decided the promised son (Isaac) wasn't coming, and that Abraham should have a son by Hagar. These things always bring a great deal of heartache and never work out for the best.

"But let patience have her perfect work, that you may be mature and entire, wanting nothing" (James 1:4). This is a day when a lot of stress is placed on maturity and being a completely fulfilled person. Nothing will accomplish this like patience under the trying and testing that God either allows or Himself brings into your life. As Paul wrote to Titus concerning the older men, so let the younger press toward the same mark. "The old men should be temperate, serious, wise spiritually healthy through their faith and love and patience" (Titus 2:2 Phillips).

Going back again to the thirty-seventh Psalm, notice what God says about your righteousness and judgment. Your righteousness shall be as light. That is what Jesus told us. Our whole life should be a light, and there should be no darkness in it at all. When is the light the brightest? It is at noon. If we commit our ways to Him our judgment will shine brightly in the earth. Everyone around us may be doing the most foolish things, but our judgment will stand out as a bright light.

I trust that we will be able to meet together many more times, and that we will always, young and old alike, be able to minister to one another. The young often underestimate the value of their ministry in the Body of Christ, but we need every member working and fulfilling the ministry that God has called them to. It is very important, and it is God's mind, that we all work together. God doesn't want a children's project, or an old person's project, but He has one project, and we are all members of one Body.

CHILDREN'S CORNER: God's Love For Us and Our Love For God

I would like to write to you today about God's love for us and our love for God. I wonder if we have ever stopped and thought about how much God loves us. If we think about God's love for us, I'm sure some of us will be surprised. Think of the Way God cares for us: He provides food, clothing, shelter, parents, friends, and many more things.

When Jesus was talking to the people about God's love for them, he talked to them about the sparrows that were for sale in the market place. He said two sparrows were sold for a farthing, which is about one half cent. One, then, was never killed without our Heavenly Father noticing it. We are worth many sparrows, Jesus said, so He will love us much more than He did the sparrows. God loves us so much that He even keeps track of the number of hairs we have on our head.

These are only small reasons for us to believe God loves us. John the Apostle gives us the big reason in I John 4:9-10. He says: "To us, the greatest demonstration of God's love for us has been His sending His only Son into the world to give life through Him. We see real love, not in the fact that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to make personal atonement for our sins" (Phillips).

The word atonement is big word for many young people, but I will try to explain what it means. Have you ever had an enemy, and then had that enemy become a friend? We were enemies of God, the scripture tells us; but when we receive Jesus as our Saviour, He makes us God's friends. The reason we were enemies of God was because we were sinful and disobedient to Him. When Jesus died for us on the cross, He took the blame for all our sins, and if we will believe this, we can become God's friends. This is what atonement means.

God loved us so much that He sent Jesus to die on the cross for all our sins, so we could become God's children and God's friends. Sin always makes us afraid of God and makes us uncomfortable in His presence.

When Jesus took our sins on Himself, we need no longer worry about them. His blood washes them all away. That is how much God loved us. No one ever loved us more than that.

Not only did Jesus love us enough to take away our sin, but He also will give us God's life. I pray that God will help you by His Spirit to understand a little bit about His love for us.

If God loss us so much, what about our love for God? When somebody loves us, it makes us want to love them; and when God loves us so much, we want to return His love.

We were taught at the Feast of Pentecost this spring that our bodies are God's.
In I Corinthians 6:19, the Apostle Paul says, "Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which you have of God, and ye are not your own?" Our bodies belong to God and are the house in which He lives. When we love Him, it is our desire to keep His dwelling place clean and holy for Him. Many people don't worry about how dirty they get God's dwelling place. They get drunk, they smoke, they tell lies, they steal, they covet, they say evil things about each other; but if we love Him, we ask Him to help us keep His house clean; and He Will help us. This is one way that we can show God that we love Him.
When John wrote about love, he told us that because God loved us so much, we should love one another. If we love one another, this shows that God dwells inside us, and it also shows that we love God.

When King David was a boy, out in the hills herding his Dad's sheep, he would sing about God's love for him and how much he loved God. I can imagine him sitting on a stone, with no one around but the sheep, singing to God about how much he loved Him and how much he appreciated God's love.

King Solomon, who was the wisest man that ever lived, tells us in many places in the book of Proverbs what a wonderful thing love is. I hope that as we all get to know God better, our love for Him and for one another will grow and grow.
Some of you might find it hard to love God because you can't see Him. I think the children of Israel had that trouble too. God told Moses to tell the Israelites to love Him. This is in Deuteronomy 6:5. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul and with all thy might." The Israelites found they couldn't do it. They just kept on rebelling against God. But even though we can't see Him, we love Him because we have an experience Israel didn't have. Jesus lives within our hearts, and we can tell by the Spirit of God that He lives there and so we love Him. The apostle Peter said in I Peter 1:8, "Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." Yes, we are happy because we love Him.

Because we love God, it is our desire to put Him in our lives. We love Him better than anything else in the world. He tells us that as children, we can show our love for Him by obeying our parents. Then, as we begin to grow up, He wants us to put Him first in our plans for our life. Ask Him to direct your path and He will. Always remember that your place in the Body of Christ is more important than a job or a lot of money. He will make your job fit into your place in His Body, if you will let Him. He loves us so much that He promised to supply everything we need.

We love Him because He first loved us, and, because we love Him, we want to walk with Him all the days of our life.

CHILDREN'S CORNER 2

October 1969

It is very important for all of us, whether we are children, young people, or adults to take a definite stand for our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. I suppose there are many reasons why we should do this. I will mention a couple.

Firstly, our love for Him, as the one who shed His blood for the cleansing of all our sin, should make us very strong on His behalf. It is very easy when you are with other people just to kind of go along in their ways and forget that we belong to God and that He has bought us with the Life and blood of His Son.
Secondly, Jesus stands for everything that is good and right; so we, as belonging to Him, should stand for the same things. Let us never be afraid to stand up for anything from God that is right and good.

I would like to remind you of a story that took place in the lives of Jesus and His disciples. "Then said Jesus unto them, All ye shall be offended because of me this night" (Matthew 26:31). Do you know what He meant by saying they would be offended? He meant they would be ashamed of Him. A lot of people hated Jesus, so Jesus was telling them that when they found themselves with those who hated Him, they would be ashamed to confess that they were His disciples. Never let any of us be ashamed of belonging to Jesus, and, if anybody asks us about being Christian, let us be ready to give them a good, sound, sensible answer.

We'll come back to our story in a minute, but, first, I would like to read you something else Jesus told His disciples. "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in Heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in Heaven" (Matthew 10:32,33). What did Jesus mean by "Confess me?" To confess Him is to admit that we know Him. What would you think if you had a friend who wouldn't admit to other people that you were their friend? In other words, they were ashamed of you. I don't think you would call them much of a friend. Jesus said that if we deny Him, He would deny us before His Father in heaven. Knowing Jesus is the only way we can have access to our Heavenly Father. It is only through Jesus that we can be saved, so you see how important it is that we confess Him or our Father will never know us.

I go on with our story. Peter answered Jesus and said unto Him, "Though all men shall be offended because of Thee, will I never be offended." Jesus said unto him, "Verily (truly) I say unto thee, that tonight before the cock crows, you shalt deny me thrice." Peter said unto Him, "though I should die with Thee, yet will not deny Thee." Likewise also said all the disciples (Matthew 26:33-35).

The story goes on about how Jesus and His disciples went to the garden, Judas betrayed Him, and then the wicked men came and took Him captive. While Jesus' trial was going on, Peter was sitting outside the palace. All the other disciples had fled, but Peter was going stay as close to Jesus as he could.

As he was sitting there a girl came and said to him something about being one of Jesus' disciples. Peter was probably afraid and he denied knowing Jesus in front of all the people that were there. In fact, he said that he didn't know what she was talking out. He felt a little uncomfortable there with that crowd, so he went in the porch, where another girl saw him and mentioned to the people around that he was a follower of Jesus. Again Peter denied ever knowing Jesus. Poor Peter had forgotten that, only a few hours before, he had told Jesus that he would die before he would deny Him.
After a while some people who were standing around came over to Peter and said to him that he must be one of Jesus' followers. Even his manner of talking sounded like it. Peter got angry then and started to swear and said that he didn't know Jesus.

Jesus had told Peter that before the rooster crowed, he would deny Him three times; and right then the rooster crowed. As soon as Peter heard it, he remembered what Jesus had said; so he left all the people and went away by himself. He must have felt so bad about denying Jesus. He wept and he cried, and I'm sure he asked God to forgive him for denying Jesus.

I hope that none of us will ever deny Jesus, but if we do, I hope that we will be very quick to ask God to forgive us. He forgave Peter and I know He would forgive us too.

There are other ways in which we can deny the Lord too. I'll quote you Titus 1:16 from Phillips translation. Paul is talking about evil and unrighteous people. "They profess to know God, but their actual behaviour denies their profession, for they are obviously vile and rebellious and when it comes to doing any real good they are palpable frauds." We can deny the Lord by our behaviour. If our behaviour isn't right, what we say in confessing the Lord doesn't count at all. These people that Paul was talking about professed to know God, but the way that they lived showed that they didn't know Him at all.

First, he says their lives were vile. I think we all know what that means. It means to be sinful and wicked. If we love the Lord, one of the first things He puts in our hearts to do is to get rid of all our sin and wickedness. If our lives are sinful we are denying that we know Him.

Then he says they are rebellious or disobedient. The scripture tells us that rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft. When anyone, it doesn't matter whether they are grown-up or a child, rebels against any authority set by God they are denying the Lord. I should mention some of the authorities God has set. God has set our parents in authority over us; He has set elders in the church in authority over us; He sets policemen in a place of authority to enforce the law; He sets governments over us to rule us in our different countries. God tells us to be subject to kings and governors and magistrates for the powers that be are ordained of God. By being rebellious to any of these authorities, we are being rebellious against God and are denying Him. Let us be very careful to obey our parents, to walk in the ways that our elders instruct, and to obey the laws of our country. By doing this, we are confessing Him before men and are setting a good example for other people. We are also showing that we love Him.

Paul also describes these people as plain, obvious frauds when it comes to doing good. They may talk a lot, but what they do will prove whether or not they are truly confessing the Lord.

I hope we will all be very careful that we don't deny the Lord by the things that we do. Pray that God will help you by His spirit that He has placed within you. If you make mistakes, the best thing to do is to make them right as soon as possible. If it affects a person, go to them and make it right, and then ask God to forgive and help you. If we confess our sin, we know that God is faithful and just to forgive us our sin and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Paul continues in the second Chapter of Titus to tell us what kind of life is a good confession of Christ. He tells the older men how they should walk, and also the older women, the younger women, the young men and servants. In this chapter we are taught to be a living testimonial to the teaching our Saviour.
There are some things that we are taught that we should deny. "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world" (Titus 2:11,12).

I hope that God will always help us to deny these things and always to confess Him by the things we say and all the things that we do.

CHILDREN'S CORNER 3

Jesus ministered here on the earth for three years in human form. As we all know, during that time He taught the principles of the Kingdom of God to the people with whom He was in contact. He healed their sicknesses and diseases and He got them out of one trouble after another.

Near the beginning of His ministry, He chose twelve men to be very close to Him. He also had many other faithful followers who loved Him very much. These twelve He chose to carry the message of the salvation of God and His Kingdom after His earthly ministry was finished. They were with Him almost continually, and He spent a great deal of time teaching them the ways of God and the things of His Kingdom. They witnessed the many miracles which He performed in healing the sick and afflicted; they saw him feed the large crowds of people who came to listen to Him minister; He was there when their boat was sinking and He quieted the storm; they saw Peter try to walk to Him on the water and begin to sink and when he called to Jesus, He stretched out His hand and caught him; they were with Him when He silenced the Pharisees by the words of wisdom which He spoke; and they saw and heard all the other wonderful things which He said and did.

During this time they had learned to depend on Jesus a great deal. He was always there when they needed Him, and He was always ready to help them when they asked. But Jesus knew that He would not be able to stay with them as He had been for very much longer. He tried to tell them that He was going to die, but they wouldn't believe it.

One night Jesus and His disciples were eating the Passover feast together. After they had finished eating, Jesus washed their feet and they had the communion together. Then, Jesus started to talk to them to prepare them for His departure. Can you imagine how sad they would be?

I would like to talk to you about some of the things Jesus said to them that night before He left to go into the garden of Gethsemane to pray. He knew how much they depended on Him and that they wouldn't be able to walk in the ways He had taught them without Him being there to help them. So He said to them, "And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you forever; even the Spirit of truth" (John 14:16-17). Now, there are different things we think of when we hear the word comforter. We may think of a person who brings comfort to another person, or we may think of the different articles that we use to bring comfort to ourselves. Because of the change in the meaning of and use of words, the word "Comforter" here doesn't mean what we might think it does. Instead of Jesus asking His Father to send a comforter as we think of it, He was going to ask Him to send them a "Helper." He said He would ask His Father to give them another Helper that He might abide with them forever.

This helper is the Spirit of God who God sends to dwell in us. The world cannot receive His Spirit, but anyone who receives Christ as His Saviour can receive the Spirit of God.

Jesus told His disciples that He wouldn't leave them helpless, and He won't leave us helpless either. He has taught us many things about how we should walk with Him, and He has told us to keep His commandments. But do you know something? We are helpless to walk as He would have us walk. How glad I am that our Father has sent His Spirit as our Helper.

Jesus said, "But the Comforter (Helper), which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you" (John 14:26).

There are many, many things that we don't know which we need God to teach us. In ourselves, we don't know how to be obedient. It is the nature of all of us to rebel against all authority. God, by His Spirit, can teach us to be submissive and obedient. When all the earth is rebelling, he will help us to stand against the spirit of rebellion. Never let rebellion take hold of your heart.

By ourselves, we cannot stand against the evil of the day in which we live again. God has sent us a Helper, and He will teach us how to stand against sin and evil. When other young people are entering into sin, He will teach you how to say "No" and help you to turn your back to it.

In the Phillips translation of Romans 12:2, we read: "Don't let the world around you squeeze you into its own mold, but let God remold your minds from within, so that you may prove in practice that the plan of God for you is good, meets all His demands and moves toward the goal of true maturity." Let us all yield to the Spirit of God that He may reach us what is right. Don't let the world push you into it's way of doing things, but be man or woman enough to determine to walk in what is right by the help of the Spirit of God. God will then mold you from within, and change you into His Image and likeness.

"When all kinds of trials and temptations crowd into your lives, my brothers, don't resist them as intruders, but welcome them as friends! Realize that they come to test your faith and to produce in you the quality of endurance. But let the process go on until that endurance is fully developed, and you will find that you have become men of mature character with the right sort of independence. And if, in the process, any of you does not know how to meet any particular problem he has only to ask God-who gives generously to all men without making them feel foolish or guilty-and he may be quite sure that the necessary wisdom will be given him" (James 1:2-5 Phillips).

You always want to remember this scripture. In fact it would be a good idea to memorize it. If you meet a problem you don't know how to cope with, all you have to do is ask God and He will give the necessary wisdom. Sometimes when we ask people they will think we are kind of foolish for being so stupid; but when we ask God, He will never treat us this way. Always be assured of this, that if we really want an answer to our problem God will, by His Spirit, help us to understand what the answer is.

Wherever you go or whatever you do, always remember that our Heavenly Father has sent us a helper that we might be able to walk in His ways and do what He wants us to do. He will stand by us and be with us always.

CHILDREN'S CORNER 4

Dear Boys and Girls:

There are a number of things that we, as Christians, need to know and be very particular to remember. First, I would like to quote you what the Apostle Paul told the Corinthian church when he was writing to them in I Corinthians 7:24 (Phillips). "You have been redeemed at tremendous cost; don't therefore sell yourselves as slaves to men." The word, "redeem," means to get or buy back, to set free or rescue. God, through Jesus Christ our Saviour, has bought us back and set us free from the slavery of sin. It is our nature to live in sin, but we are being set free from that nature. Paul says it cost Him a tremendous price to set us free and that is right. It cost the life of Christ on the cross.

Now this is the part that is important to us now. Paul says we shouldn't sell ourselves as slaves to men, but we can do worse: give ourselves as slaves to sin. God has promised His Kingdom to people who will walk with Him and who feel their need of Him. Jesus said, "Blessed are they who feel their spiritual need for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven" (Matthew 5:3 NAS). God also tells us that, if we walk in sin, we shall not see the Kingdom of God. Let us read I Corinthians 6:9 in the Phillips translation. "Have you forgotten that the Kingdom of God will never belong to the wicked? Don't be under any illusion; neither the impure, the idolater nor the adulterer; neither the effeminate (weak or unmanly), the pervert nor the thief; neither the swindler, the drunkard, the foul-mouthed nor the rapacious (greedy) shall have any share in the Kingdom of God."

Because of God's love for us in giving His Son as a sacrifice for us on Calvary, our love should flow out to Him. Because of His love for us, our consecration and submission to Him should just come natural. It seems, though, that He has to give us a lot of warnings about behaving and walking right. I suppose we are all like natural children. We have to be corrected from time to time by our parents, even though we may love our parents and have a desire to please them.

Now, I quote I Corinthians 3:16 from the Phillips: "Don't you realize that you yourselves are temples of God, and that God's Spirit lives in you? God will destroy anyone who defiles His temple, for His temples are Holy-and that is exactly what you are!" I wonder how often we stop and remember that we are God's temples and that He lives in us. We need to pray every day that he will help us to keep His dwelling place clean. I believe that, if we love Him enough, we will do our best to keep His temple clean; and, if we lean on Him to help us by the leading of His Spirit, I am sure He will be pleased with us.

When Paul wrote to the Corinthian people, they had seemed to have forgotten that they were God's temple. They were divided against one another, and many of them were living in sin. He said to them in his letter, "Have you forgotten that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who lives in you and is God's gift to you, and that you are not the owner of your own body? You have been bought, and at what a price! Therefore bring glory to God both in your body and your spirit, for they both belong to Him" (I Corinthians 6:19-20 Phillips). This is something we need to realize, that we do not own our own bodies. They belong to God and it is our responsibility to keep them clean and holy that we may bring glory to Him. If we get His temple dirty by sinful and unclean living, He won't be too pleased to dwell in it. If the temple gets dirty, we always find we are ashamed to let anyone know that we are the temple of God. I sometimes wonder if our Heavenly Father is ashamed of us when we let the temple get dirty. I don't think He would disown us, but I am sure He would be disappointed. I know that sometimes we as natural parents are disappointed and are even sometimes a little ashamed of our children's actions.

Sometimes you may have difficulty walking and acting the way you know God would want you to. I want to quote to you what Jesus told His disciples: "If ye love me, keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father and he shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you forever; Even the Spirit of truth; 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. I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you" (John 14:15-18). You will understand it a lot better if you know the meaning of the word comforter as it is used here. It means "helper" and our helper is the Spirit of God.

Jesus asks us that, if we love Him, we should do what he asks us to. He will make it easy for us to follow Him by giving us His Spirit to be our helper. God has really been very good to us. First He buys us and lets us share in all the wonderful things of His Kingdom and of the ages to come. Then when He wants us to walk with Him, He gives us a helper to make it easy. We all need to learn more about leaning on the helper God has given us.

When God lets us share in such benefits, it should make us all anxious to consecrate our lives to Him. Our bodies, our spirits, our lives, everything, belongs to him. The word, "consecrate," means to set apart for God's use. When we belong to Him, let us submit ourselves to Him that His temple may be holy and a Glorious place for Him to dwell in.

CHILDREN'S CORNER 5

Dear Boys and Girls:

The days are becoming shorter, and there is a real nip in the air. I know some of you are even hoping for a nice blanket of snow when you awake in the morning. This is because the summer and fall have passed, and winter is arriving. I know that some of you are becoming quite excited because a very important date is arriving, and that date is December 25.

This is the day our dear Lord and Saviour was born into this world and it is His birthday we are going to celebrate.

Now, birthdays are a day on which gifts are given. What kind of a gift would you like to receive this Christmas? Perhaps a doll, or a sled, or maybe even a new pair of shoes, or a new dress. I hope you get what you want. Sometimes we think of gifts as being only those things you can see, touch and feel. One time, when God wanted to give King Solomon a gift, He asked Solomon what he would like; and what do you think he asked for? It wasn't in more wealth or a bigger Chariot. It wasn't popularity or more power. If you will read I Kings 3:5-14, you will see that what he wished to receive most of all was an understanding heart so he could understand his people's problems and minister to their needs wisely. God was well pleased with his request and made him the wisest man who ever lived and a real blessing to his people. Then God added to him wealth and power because be knew that if Solomon remained humble and dependent on God, he would use these extra gifts wisely.

At Christmas time, we ask for and receive many gifts. You will find, though, that most of the joy of Christmas comes from giving. To see a friend receive a gift with delight makes you happy and warm all over because you were able to give to them. However, just as it was with receiving, it is with giving. You do not need to feel that each gift has to be one you can touch and see and has a price tag on it. Some of the most wonderful gifts you can give cannot be seen or handled and have no price on them.

The most wonderful gift that was ever given was priceless. No one could ever accumulate enough money to buy that gift. That was God's gift of His Son to us to be our Saviour, and Jesus' gift of Himself to die on the cross that we might be saved by accepting Him.

The most important gift for any of us to give is to give our hearts and our lives to the Lord. I trust that everyone who reads this has already given their heart to the Lord; but if you haven't, be sure your bow your head and ask Him to cleanse you with His blood and to come and live in your heart.

There are other things that you can give God too. One is a reverence, which simply means respect. We always want to respect God above everything else. He desires that we respect Him because He is our heavenly Father. He desires that we respect His wishes or His will concerning us. I know it isn't in your

heart to do that which we know would show disrespect for His wishes for us. Our desire should be as the apostle Paul's was: "It all accords with my own earnest wishes and hopes, which are that I should never be in any way ashamed, but that now, as always, I should honour Christ with the utmost boldness by the way I live, whether that means I am to face death or to go on living" (Philippians 1:20 Phillips).
Another thing we can give God is obedience. Do you know the best way to obey God? The best way is to obey Mother and Dad. Paul wrote in Colossians 3:20, "As for you children, your duty is to obey your parents, for at your age this is one of the best things you can do to show your love for God" (Phillips). Not only would God appreciate a gift of obedience, but your parent would like that better than anything else you could give them. There is a promise that goes along with obedience. If we are obedient to our parents, He has promised to give us something in return, and that is long life.

We usually have a lot of fruit around at Christmas time. We have all sorts of apples and oranges. Paul tells us in Galatians 5:22,23 about some fruit that would make wonderful Christmas gifts for anyone; it doesn't matter whether it is an older person or a young person you want to give a gift to, they will appreciate these fruits. They are love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, fidelity (truthfulness), adaptability and self-control. These are called "fruits of the Spirit," or fruits that are produced by the Spirit of God.

How about giving your parents, who often work hard to make your days pleasant, a nice bunch of the fruit of love? When you sense they are going through difficult times, give them the gift of gentleness. Encourage them and tell them how much you appreciate their care and concern for you, and tell them you have faith they will teach and lead you in God's ways.

Do you have any brothers and sisters on your Christmas list? How about dipping into that basket of fruit and coming up with a generous sized package of peace and longsuffering to distribute? How much happier home is if all live in harmony and no one complains, even when things don't go just as they had hoped or planned. I once knew a lady who had such a desire to have all people at peace with each other that she received the name of "the peacemaker" in her home when she was a girl.

Don't forget your school friends, either, in giving these gifts. I am sure there are many who would appreciate just what you are able to give them.
Now, the big question is, "How do you get these things to give away?" I know I don't have them in myself and, if I don't have them, I can't give them away. And I'm pretty sure that these things aren't naturally a part of your life. First of all, as I said in the beginning, we have to give our heart and life to the Lord and ask Jesus to come and live in our hearts. Then, if we yield ourselves to Him, He will cause all these wonderful things to flow out from our lives because they are all part of Him. He has told us that He would send His Spirit as our helper, and He has sent Him; so, as we yield to His anointing, He will make these things part of us, and everyone we come in contact with will be able to share in the blessings of God through us. Remember that, to give these gifts, we must yield ourselves to the Lord.

We hope that you all have a real nice Christmas.

CHILDREN'S CORNER 6

Dear Boys and Girls:

We all had a wonderful time at the Camp Meeting this summer. Many boys and girls and young people received Christ as their Saviour, and many were filled with the Spirit of God and spoke with other tongues. These things are a very, very valuable start in our walk with God. God has done many wonderful things for us for which I am sure we very thankful.

I have been thinking about King Solomon the last few days. God made him king over Israel after David, his father, died. We couldn't begin to name all the things God did for Solomon. Twice, God appeared to Solomon and talked to him. You remember the first time was when God told Solomon to ask whatever he wanted and He would give it to him? Solomon asked for wisdom to reign over God's people. This pleased God very much, and He told him that He would not only give Him wisdom and an understanding heart, but also riches and honour so that there would not be any among the kings like him.

God kept his promise to Solomon in the same way He always keeps His promises. Almost immediately, Solomon's fame went throughout the land because the people saw that the wisdom of God was with him. The people showed great respect to him as word of his wise judgments were spread around.

Not only did the people of Israel receive the benefit of Solomon's wisdom, but all the surrounding nations with their kings came to hear the wisdom God had given him. His wisdom exceeded all the wisdom of the other nations.

Do you know what a large heart is? God gave Solomon one. Saying that someone has a large heart is another way of saying that a person is very generous. We say a person is big-hearted. We all like a big-hearted person, and I am sure that many people loved Solomon because God had made him generous.

David, Solomon's father, had had to fight many wars with surrounding nations; but God gave Solomon peace among all nations. God gave him dominion over these nations as well. That means that he ruled over them. These kings and nations also brought him many presents. This was a great blessing for the people of Israel because they had been chased by enemies and had fought wars ever since Moses had led them out of Egypt. God's word tells us that Israel dwelt safely, every man under his vine and under his fig tree.

How many of you like horses? Well, God gave Solomon forty thousand of them. These he used for his chariots. He also have him an army and thousands of horsemen.

He was provided with food of all kinds. When there are so many hungry people it is great to blessing to have enough to eat. I hope we are always thankful for the food with which God provides us.

Because of the great wisdom that God had given him, Solomon spoke thousands of proverbs. A proverb is a wise saying. The book of Proverbs was written by Solomon. I'll quote you one of his proverbs: "Trust in

the Lord with all thine heart, and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths" (Proverbs 3:6,7).

God also gave him many songs. God gave David, his father, songs too. Many of these we still sing today. Whenever we sing a Psalm, it is probably one of David or Solomon's songs. Paul, the Apostle, told us to sing Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs. We find this type of singing far more satisfying than any other, and these songs also have a good spirit in them.

Solomon loved the created World. By that we mean the material things that God has created by which He speaks to us. He gave him great knowledge of plants, animals, birds and fish, etc. All these things would speak to him much about God and His wisdom.

God gave Solomon houses to live in. These just weren't ordinary houses, but were made of beautiful stones and were decorated with gems of many kinds. Probably the greatest thing God gave Solomon was the privilege of building a house for God to dwell in among the Children of Israel. This was a very beautiful and costly building, but the most wonderful thing about it was the fact that God dwelt in it. When they dedicated the temple, the presence of God was so strong that the priests couldn't stand to minister.

As Solomon was building the temple, God gave him another promise. I will quote it from I Kings 6:12,13: "Concerning this house which thou are in building, if thou wilt walk in my statutes, and execute my judgments, and keep all my commandments to walk in them; then will I perform my word with thee, which I spoke unto David they father; And I will dwell among the children of Israel and will not forsake my people Israel."

When the temple was finished, the Lord spoke to him again and said, "I have hallowed this house, which thou hast built, to put my name there forever; and mine eyes and mine heart shall be there perpetually. And if thou wilt walk before me, as David thy father walked, in integrity of heart, and in uprightness to do according to all that I have commanded thee, and wilt keep my statutes and my judgments: Then I will establish the throne of thy kingdom upon Israel forever as I promised to David thy father, saying, There shall not fail thee a man upon the throne of Israel" (I Kings 9:3-5).

Now we come to the sad part of the story. Up to now, Solomon's life has been blessed of God, and God was with him in all that he did. Now, listen to this: "For it came to pass, when Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods: and his heart was not perfect with the Lord his God, as was the heart of David His father" (I Kings 11:4). And the Lord was angry and appeared unto him twice.

From this story, I want you to see what happened to Solomon after God had blessed him in so many wonderful ways. God was with him while his heart was right; but, when His heart turned away from the Lord, God could no longer be with him and his country Israel.

We want to be very, very careful that we never allow anything to turn our hearts away from God. The earth is full of things that will distract us from the path that we are walking in. God has done much for us, and He plans to do much more. By the grace of God, and by the Help and leading of His Spirit, let us go on as children, as young people, and older people, to enter into His glorious Kingdom.

CHILDREN'S CORNER 7

Boys and Girls:

I would like to write to you a little about the life of King Solomon. Perhaps we should start before Solomon's time in our story. If you remember, Saul was the first king of Israel. The people begged God to give them a king so they could be like the other nations. Finally, God listened to them and had Saul anointed king. Saul was satisfied to remain in his office, but, because of his impatience, tried to enter the priest's office. Perhaps you can get your folks to read you the story about that. From that time on, Saul began to turn from the Lord. An evil Spirit possessed him, and he tried to do all sort of evil things. If you remember the story you will recall that he many times tried to kill David.

David was the man God chose to be king after Saul. David loved the Lord with all his heart and tried to walk very close to God. He sometimes made mistakes and did things that displeased the Lord. When he realized that he was wrong, he would always ask God to forgive him and would turn away from his evil. David was a very merciful man and showed kindness to many, many people during his lifetime.

Solomon was David's son. David, by the wisdom of God, chose Solomon to be king after him. In I Kings 2:1-4, we read some of the instructions that David gave Solomon. "Now the days of David drew nigh that he should die; and he charged Solomon his son, saying, I go the way of all the earth: be thou strong therefore, and show thyself a man; And keep the charge of the Lord thy God, to walk in His ways, to keep His statutes, said His commandments, and His judgments, and His testimonies, as it is written in the Law of Moses, that thou mayest prosper in all that thou doest, whithersoever thou turnest thyself: That the Lord may continue His word which He spoke concerning me, saying, If thy children take heed to their way, to walk before me in truth with all their heart and with all their soul, there shall not fail thee (said He) a man on the throne of Israel."

First of all, I want you to notice that as Saul didn't walk with the Lord, none of his sons ever became king of Israel. Now, as David walked with God and pleased Him, one of his sons became king. Sometimes you may wonder why your parents are so fussy about how they walk before God, and how you also walk. The way both you and your parents walk with the Lord makes all the difference in the world in your future life. Good parents are always very concerned about their children and what they are doing. Sometimes, children don't appreciate this; but if your parents are this way, thank God that they are, because it will make a lot of difference in your future.

After David's death, Solomon became king, and we are told that Solomon loved the Lord, walking in the statutes of David his father. The statutes of David are the things that David taught Solomon, and also the things that David walked in as an example for Solomon that he might walk in the same way.

One night after Solomon had become king, the Lord appeared to him in a dream, and God said, "Ask what I shall give thee." This was a pretty big offer that the Lord was making. I will quote the rest of the incident, and I want you to pay particular attention to what Solomon did about the offer that God made.

"And Solomon said, Thou hast showed unto thy servant David my father great mercy, according as he walked before Thee in truth, and in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart with Thee; and thou hast kept for him this great kindness, that Thou hast given him a son to sit on his throne, as it is this day. And now, O Lord my God, thou hast made thy servant king instead of David my father; and I am but a little child: I know not how to go out or come in. And thy servant is in the midst of thy people which thou hast chosen, a great people that cannot be numbered nor counted for multitude. Give therefore thy servant an understanding heart to judge thy people that I may discern between good and bad: for who is able to judge this thy so great a people? And the speech pleased the Lord, that Solomon had asked this thing" (I Kings 3:6-10).

There were many, many things that Solomon might have asked for. Most people would have asked for fame or money or something like that. Solomon had his eyes upon true values. The thing about which he was most concerned was having the ability to serve in the place where God had set him. Even though he was a king, he felt like a little child and didn't even know how to open and shut the door. Jesus said, one time, that unless we all become as little children, we cannot enter the Kingdom of Heaven. This is what He meant. We must all, whether young or old, realize our inability to perform our ministry without God's help and anointing.

God was very much pleased with Solomon's request; and besides giving him what he asked, He gave him a lot of other things as well. God said, "Behold I have done according to thy words: lo, I have given thee a wise and understanding heart;... and I have also given thee that which thou hast not asked, both riches, and honour: so that there shall not be any among the kings like unto thee all thy days" (I Kings 3:12-13).

Jesus also taught us to seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things would be added unto us. So, we see it is very important to decide in our hearts what is most important and then seek it. Let us also be sure, when we are deciding, that it is God who is leading us in our decision, and not our own desires.

If we keep our hearts right before Him and seek to serve Him and minister to the rest of the Body of Christ, by the ministry which God gives us, I am sure we will never have any trouble coming up with the right decisions in things.

CHILDREN'S CORNER 8

Dear Boys and Girls:

I have been thinking the last few days about how important it is for all of us to determine in our hearts to serve the Lord and walk with Him. If we don't care how we walk, we will never be able to walk with Him;

but, if we decide that by His help and the leading of His Spirit we are going to walk with the Lord, I am sure we will accomplish it. It is a very good thing to have a purpose in life before us. What we all need to do is to yield to the purpose that God has for us.

I remember a song we used to sing about Daniel when I was a boy. It told about the purpose that Daniel, and those that were with him, had in their hearts to serve God. Perhaps, before I quote you the words of the song, we should turn to the book of Daniel and read some. In chapter one, we read how Daniel and three other boys were taken captive in Israel and carried away to Babylon. Because these were smart boys, the king wanted to teach them the language of Babylon and all their ways, and then have them serve him. He also wanted them to eat all the food the Babylonians ate, and to drink their wine. Now much of the king's food was unclean to the Israelites because God had commanded them not to eat of many things, and they knew that the wine wouldn't be good for them. We read in Daniel 1:8, "But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the kings' meat, nor with the wine which he drank: therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself."

It took a real strong boy to purpose such a thing in his heart. Many of us would be afraid that others might laugh at us or make fun of us in some other way. Daniel had things to be scared of too. If he displeased the king, the king could take his life right then. If you are strong in the things God wants you to be strong in, He will stand with you. In Daniel 1:16-21, we read what happened: "Thus Melzar took away the portion of their meat, and the wine that they should drink; and gave them pulse. As for these four children, God gave them knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom; and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams. Now at the end of the days that the king had said he should bring them in, then the prince of the eunuchs brought them in before Nebuchadnezzar. And the king communed with them; and among them all was found none like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah: therefore stood they before the king. And in all matters of wisdom and understanding that the king enquired of them he found them ten times better than all the magicians and astrologers that were in all his realm. And Daniel continued even unto the first year of King Cyrus."

At a later date, Nebuchadnezzar decided to make a gold image of himself and set this image up out on the plain. He then called his governors, princes, captains, and all the important people of his kingdom together to worship this image. When they were all gathered there, and as soon as the music started to play, there were so many people there that it looked like they were all worshipping the image. But somewhere in the crowd were Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, who hadn't bowed down. Some messengers came to the king and told him that some Jews refused to worship the golden image, and so refused to worship their gods. This made the king very angry, and he had already decreed that any who refused to worship his image should be thrown alive into a great furnace he had. He ordered that this should be carried out with Daniel's three friends. In his fury, he ordered that the furnace should be heated seven times hotter than ever before. Then they brought Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego before the king, and he told them what was going to happen. This was their reply to the king. "O Nebuchadnezzar, we are not careful to answer thee in this matter. If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us out of thine hand, O King. But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up" (Daniel 3:16-18). God helped these boys, I am sure, to make their decision, but they had to be determined in their own hearts that they were going to serve the Lord.

They then bound the three men with ropes with all their clothes on and threw them into the fire. The fire was so hot that the men who threw them in died from the heat of it.

The king was watching all this, and, suddenly, he was really surprised. Instead of there being three men in the furnace, there were four. The king recognized that it was the Lord in there with them, and they were walking up and down in the fire and their clothes weren't even burning. Nebuchadnezzar then called them out of the fire, and this is what he said to them. "Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego, who hath sent His angel, and delivered His servants that trusted in Him, and have changed the king's word, and yielded their bodies, that they might not serve nor worship any God except their own God. Therefore I make a decree, That every people, nation, and language, which speak anything amiss against the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, shall be cut in pieces, and their houses shall be made a dunghill: because there is no other God that can deliver after this sort" (Daniel 3:28-29). Then, the king promoted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, in the province of Babylon.

After this, Daniel was promoted to the place where he was over all the other princes and governors. Because, as the Scripture says, an excellent spirit was in him, the king planned to set him over the whole realm. This made all the other presidents and princes jealous, so they tried to find some fault in Daniel. They couldn't find any, so they decided they would have to get something against him because he served the Lord. They came to the king and persuaded him to make a decree that anyone who prayed to any God except him for thirty days would be thrown in the lions' den. These envious men knew that they would get Daniel into trouble by this, because they knew that three times every day Daniel knelt down in his bedroom and prayed and gave thanks to the Lord.

What do you think you would have done in these circumstances? If you have purposed in your heart to serve the Lord, you would just keep on praying and giving thanks as you had always done. That is what Daniel did, regardless of what might happen to him. And that is what we will have to do, even if it sometimes means great trouble for us. We can never allow ourselves to do wrong just because that is the easiest thing to do. To do what is right and live right is often the hardest thing to do.

The apostle Paul, in writing to the young man Timothy, told him that all who would live godly in Christ Jesus would suffer persecution. The same thing is true today, so you might as well count on having troubles brought upon you by other people because you serve the Lord. Paul told him that evil men would get worse and worse, but for him to continue in the things he had learned and been assured of. These things won't bother us too much, though, if we have purposed in our heart to serve the Lord.
These evil men came and found Daniel praying and immediately went and told the king. The king was very sorry, when he heard it was Daniel, that he had made the law against it. Because they had another law, which said that once a law was made it couldn't be changed, they threw Daniel into the lions' den.
Al1 that night the king fasted and couldn't sleep. He got up very early in the morning and went to the lions' den. He yelled into the den to see if Daniel was still alive. Can't you imagine how excited he was? Daniel answered, "My God hath sent His angel, and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me: forasmuch as before Him innocence was found in me; and also before thee, O king, I have done no hurt" (Daniel 6:22). The king was very, glad and brought Daniel up out of the den. He then made another decree that all the people should worship the Lord.

From these stories God gives us in His word, we can see that Daniel and his three friends had purposed to serve the Lord. They were determined that nothing should hinder them in their walk with him. We all need to determine that no evil thing will come between us and the Lord.
I was talking to two boys, who love and serve the Lord, the other day. They are planning to go into Northern Canada and work in a mining camp this summer. Because I know what they will run into, I told them that this experience will prove whether they are men or children, spiritually, and it will also prove whether they have purposed in their heart to walk with God. They will find gambling, drinking, smoking, foul language and dirty stories all around them. If they refuse to have any part in all that, they will come out stronger and much better off. I hope and pray that they do.

Now I would like to quote you the song we used to sing about Daniel and his friends. I hope it will help you to have a strong purpose in your heart.
Standing by a purpose true,
Heeding God's command,
Honour them, the faithful few!
All hail to Daniel's band.
Dare to be a Daniel;
Dare to stand alone!
Dare to have a purpose firm,
Dare to make it known.
Many mighty men are lost,
Daring not to stand,
Who for God had been a host
By joining Daniel's band.
Many giants, great and tall,
Stalking through the land,
Headlong to the earth would fall
If met by Daniel's band.
Hold the Gospel banner high!
On to victory grand!
Satan and his host defy
And shout for Daniel's Band.

CHILDREN'S CORNER 9

By the time you receive the Sharon Star, Christmas will be over for another year. Most of you will have received some very fine gifts and had a good time visiting with relatives and friends. I hope that your Christmas will have been a very happy occasion.

I wonder if you have ever thought much about our customs at Christmas time. I know you all know that is the time we celebrate the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem. God was very, very good to us to send His Son to the earth. In John 3:16, we read, "So greatly did God love the world that He gave His only Son, that everyone who trusts in Him may not perish but may have eternal Life" (Weymouth).

There are many reasons why God gave his Son. I will mention a few of them here. I think that the most important reason is because God loved us. We were sinners, and we couldn't free ourselves from sin. We were bound by it and, no matter how hard we tried, we were unable to get out of its grip. I would like to read to you what Paul the Apostle wrote to the Ephesian church in Ephesians 2:1-5, "To you also, who were dead through your offences and sins, which were once habitual to you, while you walked in the ways of this world and obeyed the Prince of the powers of the air, the spirit that now works in the hearts of the sons of disobedience, to you God has given life. Among them we too once all passed our lives, governed by the inclination of our lower nature, indulging in the cravings of that nature and of our thoughts, and were in our original state deserving of anger like all others. But God, being rich in mercy, because of the intense love which He bestowed on us, caused us, dead though we were through our offences, to live with Christ" (Weymouth). Because God loved us, He gave his Son to die for us and deliver us from the bondage of sin. Paul also tells us in Galatians that Jesus loved us and gave Himself for us.

When we receive Christ as our Saviour, He comes and dwells within us. If we will listen to His voice and walk with Him, He will guide us in new ways. When He made man, God said that He was going to make him in His image and likeness. That is why Jesus dwells within: to help us to be changed from our old sinful selfish selves to God's image and likeness. This is another reason why God gave His son.

God's nature is to give, and you always find Him giving. When Jesus dwells within you, God still wants to give Him to others. When He lives in us, the only way He can do that is through us.

That is why God gives all the members of the body of Christ a ministry. Jesus dwells in us, and God wants Him to flow out so other people might receive the same blessings God has given us. None of us are big enough to contain all God wants to give to other people, so that is why God gives us each a part. That is why one person's ministry is different from another person’s. Our ministry is formed by what flows out from us. So God gave His Son to dwell in us, that other people might receive the benefits of our salvation.

Another reason God gave His Son was so we might enjoy His company and fellowship. Do you like being alone? I guess all of us like to be alone a little bit; but, if it is too long, we start to be lonesome. God gave us Jesus so we could always have Him with us. If you love Him, I'm sure you have learned to value Him as a friend. Just as God told Joshua, when he became leader of Israel after Moses' death, He gives us the same message today: "As I was with Moses, so I'll be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee" (Joshua 1:5).

Maybe, by this time, you have guessed where our custom of giving gifts at Christmas time came from. We give gifts to another because God gave us the best gift of all to us-His Son. God loved us and gave us His Son so, when we give gifts to people, we should do it because we love the people we're giving to. How nice it is to receive a gift from someone we love! And it is also very nice to be able to give gifts to those we love.

There is another gift that God mentions to us through the ministry of John. We read it in I John 3:16, "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because He laid down His life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." The gift He is speaking of here isn't just something nice to give away at Christmas time, but it is the gift of yourself to other people. There are many ways in which you can give of yourself throughout the whole year. You can do it by being helpful to other people. You can do it by being obedient to your parents, and in many other ways, of which I am sure you can think.

There is one gift that I am sure that all of our parents would be delighted to receive. It is a gift that Moses spoke of when he gave the Law to Israel, Jesus spoke of when He taught the people, and about which Paul wrote to the Ephesian children. This gift is honour to your father and mother. Moses said, "Honour thy father and mother, that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee" (Exodus 20:12).

Honour your father and mother, and God's promise will be extended to you. Not only should we honour our father and mother, but children and young people should also give respect to older people. You will be honoured for doing this. I have seen it happen many times, where a young person has showed respect to older people, and older people in turn honour them. The honour might be a good word, or it might be a reference when you go to look for a job or any of many other things.

There is nothing that hurts more than a young person who doesn't show respect to older people. Maybe the older person feels the hurt, but it is the young person who is really being hurt. We all need to learn first to respect father and mother, and then carry that same respect for others all through our lives.
To learn to give respect and honour is one of the most valuable things that we can ever learn. Learn also to give yourself as Jesus taught us to do.

May God's blessing be with you all.

CHILDREN'S CORNER 10

Dear, Boys and Girls:

The last few days I have been thinking of a portion of scripture that we call the beatitudes. This is a part of what Jesus said one day, when He was sitting on the mountainside, talking to His disciples.

The word "beatitude" is a big word, but it has a very simple meaning. It speaks of that which makes us happy or blessed. The things that Jesus spoke of here will make us happy or blessed. Perhaps we should say a little about the word blessed. In this instance, it means having found the favour of God. If we are blessed, His favour rests upon us, which should make us very, very happy. Remember, though, that God's blessings are not all joyful experiences. Sometimes His blessings are very hard to endure, and we think that they aren't blessings. Always remember this, God will bring you hard experiences to make you strong. It

should always make us happy to know that, if we are walking with Him, He will give us the very best thing for us. If we are disobedient and hard things come, then have to ask God to forgive us so that we might rightly walk with Him. Peter told us not to let ourselves suffer as evildoers.

Now, let us read from the Phillips translation what Jesus told his disciples, beginning in Matthew five verse three. Remember that those things Jesus talks about are things that make you happy or blessed. First He says, "Happy are the humble minded, for the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs." To help us understand what Jesus meant, I will quote what the Apostle Paul wrote to the Romans: "I say, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly," (Romans 12:3). You have all seen people who think too much of themselves. That is the opposite of being humble. Now I want to ask you a question. Are people who think too much of themselves happy people, or does God's favour rest upon them? I'm afraid they usually feel pretty miserable. If we think of ourselves as God thinks of us, we will be happy, contented and peaceful people. We must not think too little of ourselves either. That, too, will make us unhappy. Always remember what Jesus said, "How happy are the humble for the kingdom of heaven is theirs."

Next Jesus says, "Happy are those who know what sorrow means, for they will be given courage and comfort" (Matthew 5:4 Phillips). None of us like sorrow, but that is the only way we can know what it means. Sometimes, as young people, we would like our parents to shield us from everything that is hard; but they, in their wisdom, allow us to take many hard knocks. Both by them and by teachers in school, we are given hard things to do. Hard things are necessary to make us grow. If we never have sorrow or hardship, we can never have courage, and we'll never know the blessing of receiving comfort from other people. Paul tells us that God comforts us in all our trouble that we may be able to comfort those who are in trouble with the same kind of comfort God has given us. I am glad that many of you have learned to give comfort and sympathy to those who need it. That is a real ministry and is evidence that Christ dwells within you.

Jesus continued by saying, "Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth" (Matthew 5:5). To be meek means to be gentle and not easily provoked or irritated. People are never happy or satisfied when they are bullies. God has given us a different spirit, the spirit of meekness. So let us yield to that spirit. Not only will this bring true joy, but, Jesus said, if we yield ourselves to meekness, we will also inherit the earth. We don't have to push other people around to get our fair share. You do what God asks you to do and He will look after the rest.

I have always felt that the next thing Jesus said was very, very important: "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be completely satisfied" (Matthew 5:6 Weymouth). The world is full of people who hunger continually after evil. There are many young people who have never been taught anything else except to get their happiness and joy from evil. God has not taught us that. He has told us not to let the world squeeze us into its mold. Many people feel that the only pleasure there is is in committing evil. We know that there is far more pleasure in good than there is in evil. I expect that many of you have learned that the pleasure there is in evil is very short lived and usually turns into heartache and sorrow. The pleasure there is in righteousness and goodness lasts forever. Jesus said that if we hunger after righteousness, or the things that are right, we will be completely satisfied. There will be a sense of satisfaction, as we do what is right, and that satisfaction will go on and on forever. If we live evil lives, our evil will haunt us as we live. God has cleansed us from evil, by the blood of Christ, so let us live in the way

He has called us. As you live this way, you will find that God will make you completely satisfied. He said to hunger and thirst for righteousness. Seek for it, and long for it, and God will bring it to you.

Now Jesus says, "Happy are the merciful, for they will have mercy shown to them" (Matthew 5:7 Phillips). There is always a real satisfaction, accompanied by happiness, when we show mercy. Sometimes, it is hard to show mercy to someone who has done evil toward you; but God will reward you for it, not only with the good feeling that comes with it, but He will reward you in many other ways as well. There is a law God has made that always works: "Give, and it will be given unto you" (Luke 6:38). This is true when we give mercy, or whatever we give.

Jesus says many other things here, but I won't write about them now. You get your mother and dad to read them to you and teach you about them.

May God bless you and help you that these things will be a part of your life.

CHILDREN'S CORNER 11

Dear Boys and Girls:

Many of you who were at the camp meeting this summer received some wonderful experiences. Some of you received Jesus into your heart as your Saviour. That is a wonderful experience. Also, it is the place where we must all begin our walk with God. Some of you received the baptism of the Holy Spirit and spoke with other tongues. That is an experience that is necessary, if we are going to be at our best in our walk with the Lord. By speaking in other tongues, we strengthen ourselves, and help ourselves to grow in the inner man. Then we are better able to minister to and serve others. The Spirit of God dwelling within us is our strength. Just as our physical bodies need strength for our daily life and activities, so we need the Spirit of God to help us in our Spiritual walk and ministry.

Others of you consecrated your lives to God. To consecrate your life to God means to give your life completely to Him to lead and guide as He pleases. Never forget that consecration, and renew it quite often. Tell your Heavenly Father that because He has brought you with a great price, the blood of our Saviour Jesus Christ, that you will walk with Him and serve Him, to the best of your ability, as He leads you by His Spirit.

I want to write further to you about something that I didn't have the privilege of understanding when I first came to know the Lord. That is about the Body of Christ. As I expect you all know from the things your parents, the elders, and traveling ministries have taught you, Christ is the head of that Body, and we all go together as members to make up the rest of that Body. "For we are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones" (Ephesians 5:30).

In the Scriptures, the Body of Christ is many times compared to our human bodies. Our bodies have hands, feet, eyes, ears, a heart, a stomach and so on. You could name many more members of parts of our bodies. The body of Christ has many, many different members, but we are all one body. We are joined together by the Spirit of God.

You may wonder where you fit into the Body. That is a good thing to be concerned about. It is important to know where we fit in. When we know, we can walk much easier in the way that God wants us to. Could you imagine having a hand that didn't know it was a hand? It wouldn't be of much value to you if it did nothing but just hang at your side. I'm sure none of us want to be that kind of a member in Christ's Body.

We read in I Corinthians 12:18, "But now hath God set the members every one of them in the Body, as it hath pleased Him." He also tells us in Ephesians 1:4 that He hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world. Before God ever made the world, He chose us; and He also chose the place for us in the Body of Christ. Some of us sometimes think that we aren't very important to God, but we must be for Him to choose us and make a place for us in the Body of Christ. In I Corinthians 12:27, we are told that we are the Body of Christ and particular members. God was very particular when he chose a place for you, so let us be careful to fit into that place. What a blessing to us to know that God loves us so much and has so carefully placed us.

In Romans 12:4-5, we read, "for as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another." The word "office" here implies our place or job in the Body of Christ. Your foot's office is for you to stand or walk on. Your eyes' office is to see with and so on. In Christ's body, we don't all have the same job, but that does not mean that one member of His body is more important than the other. All the members in our bodies depend upon one another, and so it is in His Body. I'm sure that you all have stood on your tiptoes to try to peek into the cupboard or to see onto a shelf that is just a little too high for us. You could do that because the members of your body worked together.

First, you stretched as high as you could on your toes. Perhaps you held onto the shelf with your hands, and then your eyes did the peeking. We might sometimes think that our eyes were the most important, because they did the seeing, but they couldn't have seen onto that shelf if our toes and fingers hadn't worked with them. So never think that one member of Christ's Body is more important than the other. We are all of equal importance, whether we are a boy, or a girl, or a man, or a woman. God just asks us to find and fit into the place, He has for us.

Many of you will ask how you are to know what your place is. First of all, learn to yield yourself to God and the moving of His spirit, even though you may be very young. If you do that, you will find that God will start whispering things to your heart, and you will find that there will be places where you can help others. In our bodies, all the different parts help one another; and in His body, we all help one another. We all love one another and encourage one another.

If you seek to walk with God and please Him, the day will soon come when the Lord will separate you for the work for which He has called you. By the Spirit, He will indicate to some of the traveling ministries

that it is time to pray over you with the laying on of hands and prophecy. That will be a wonderful day to you; look forward to it with all your heart.

I want you to always remember that God has chosen you to be a member of the Body of Christ, and that, as a member of that Body, He has a very special place for you, and only you can fill that place. Most young people desire to be able to serve mankind, and by filling your place in His Body, you will be able to do a much better job.

CHILDREN'S CORNER 12

You have all heard the ministries and elders speak of the Body of Christ. I would like to write a little to you about this Body, and how it affects you, and where you fit into it.

When the Apostles wrote in the Scriptures about the Body of Christ, they always compared it to the human body. As you know, your body is made up of many parts all joined together to make one person. Even parts that are farthest apart are joined together by the parts that are in between. God created the body so that all the parts would work together. If they don't work together, you are sick or crippled. If we are healthy, all the parts of body work just exactly as our head tells them to work.

Christ's Body is the same. All the parts are joined together by the Spirit of God. Because He is the Head, all the members of His Body operate as He instructs them; all the parts work together just like a healthy, human body.

Now, what is the Body of Christ? In Colossians 1:18, Paul, in speaking about Jesus, said, "He is the head of the body, the church." So we see that He is the head of the Body. In I Corinthians 12:27, speaking about the members of the church, Paul says, "Now ye are the Body of Christ, and members in particular." From this we understand that we are the members of His body. Not only are we members, but very particular and special members. There is something very special about being a member of His body.

Where do we, as His called out Ones (which is what the word "church" means), fit into His Body. There is a particular place for each one of us: whether we are a boy or a girl, a young person or an older person. In fact, God had planned your place before He made anything or even laid the foundation of the earth.

If our place in the Body of Christ is so important to God, we should pay very close attention to it. I don't expect that too many boys and girls know what it is. Even though you may be very young, you should start talking to God about your place in His Body. Young people should consider this very seriously. Your place in His Body is more important to you than the means by which you will earn your living. When seeking an occupation, look for one that won't interfere with your place in the Body.

As every part of the human body plays some part in the function of the whole body, so every part in the Body of Christ has something to do. That is where our ministry comes in. In the human body, what a certain

part of the body does is its ministry. For example the eye sees, your feet are for walking or standing, your stomach is to digest your food, and so on. Every part has some purpose. In the Body of Christ, every part has a purpose as well, and that purpose is called our ministry.

Your ministry is something that God started to build into you before you were born. It isn't something you can pick up or lay down at will. You can't just take it to church on Sunday, like you carry your Bible, but your ministry is in you and with you all the time. Everything God has put into you helps to shape and mould that ministry.

The members of our body don't operate just when they feel like it, but they are ready to work anytime our head tells them to. Some parts work all the time, like our heart and our lungs and blood. Other parts, like your feet and hands, just stand ready to work when called on by your head. We are all told in the Bible to stand ready to minister at any time Christ may see fit to call upon us.

Some people think that a ministry is something God gave them to use in the meeting on Sunday, but it isn't. When we realize how much a part of us our ministry is, and that God has built it right into us by His Spirit, we can understand that it goes with us all of the time. I know boys and girls who minister a lot, although I don't expect they know they are ministering. I am not speaking about the few hours a week we spend in the meeting, but all that time we spend out of the meeting. I know lots of young people who just love to help; and I know others who are very good at comforting other people. These things are ministries, and if you walk with God, He will cause it to grow in you.

I would like to say a little bit again about one of the stories that Jesus told. This is a very short story, but it teaches us a lot. It is found in Matthew 13:44. He tells of a man who was out looking for treasure. Perhaps he was a prospector. Anyway, he found the treasure in a field. As soon as he found it, he covered it up so no one else could find it. Then he went and sold everything he had and bought the field where the treasure was.

Jesus says this is like we should be with the Kingdom of Heaven. He wasn't talking about us selling earthly possessions so much as He was talking about getting rid of those things that interfere with our possession of His Kingdom. What He meant was this: if our head tells our hand to pick up something and it doesn't do it, there is something wrong in our body. Right away, we start trying to get rid of the ailment. In the Body of Christ, if the Head, who is Christ, tells us to do something and nothing happens, there is something wrong, and, whatever is wrong, we want to get rid of it. Sometimes these things that cause the trouble can be evil, and sometimes they are very good things just carried to extreme. Whatever they are, we either want to get rid of them, or adjust them so they fit in right.

Nothing is so important to us as God's Kingdom, and our part in it. Our part in it is the ministry that Christ has given us in His Body. Let us all, whether young or old, sell everything that hinders our possession of what God has in mind for us. When you, as children, are making plans for your life, consider these things very closely. God has a place for you and He wants you to fit into it.

CHILDREN'S CORNER 13

Jesus told many stories that we call parables. A parable is simply a story that teaches a Spiritual truth or causes us to be able to understand something that belongs to the Kingdom of God. Often, when you have heard the Elders or Ministries speaking, they tell a story about some natural everyday thing that helps us to understand the truth they are presenting. They are using the same method of teaching that Jesus used.

I would like to write a little bit to you about one of the parables that Jesus told. In Matthew 13:3-23, we read the story of a man who went out into his field to sow his crop. I expect that, by the time you get this, many of your Dads who are farmers will have their seeding done for this year. This man didn't have equipment like your Dad to do his seeding. All he had was a little bag, that he carried the seed in, on a strip over his shoulder. He would put his hand into the bag, take a handful of wheat, and throw it out thinly onto the ground. Then, he would take another handful, and do the same thing until he had his field all seeded.

When this man that Jesus told about was seeding, some of his seed fell by the wayside. The wayside is the edge of the road or the highway. That was a real good place for the birds to find the seed, and they came along and ate it up. Other seed fell where there was just a little bit of earth on top of stones. Stones can't hold moisture, so, when the sun got hot, the little plants withered and died. Jesus said other seed fell in among the thorns. They were little bushes that grew up in the man's field. Perhaps he had worked hard and thought he had them all dug out. But the thorns grew up, took all the moisture, and left none for the poor little plants the man had sown. Some of the other seed fell on real good ground and grew lots of wheat for the man who sowed it. Jesus said some brought forth a hundred-fold, some sixty-fold and some thirty-fold. By that he meant that where the man had sown one handful of grain, he had harvested thirty or sixty or a hundred handfuls.

Now, Jesus began to tell them what He wanted them to learn from the story. First, though, He told them they were blessed to be able to hear things he was telling them. Many people who had lived in days before had longed to know of His kingdom, but those things hadn't been revealed unto them. He says the same today, "Blessed are your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear" (Matthew 13:16). He wasn't talking about the eyes that we see people and houses and trees with, or the ears that we hear voices or music with; but the eyes and ears of our inner man. You want to be very thankful that you are able to see and understand the things that belong to His Kingdom. Be very thankful that Jesus has come to live in your heart. I have read all the things that Brother Wylie has written to you children. He told how Jesus died to save you. He told how God sent His Spirit to live in you, and many other wonderful things. All those things that Brother Wylie has written, the other ministries, the elders, and your parents, have taught you are like the seed in your hearts.

The seed that fell by the side of the road is just like some man or woman or boy or girl who hears about Jesus and His Kingdom and doesn't understand it. What happens is that the devil comes along, just like the birds came along, and eats up the seed that is growing so that nothing grows at all. You want to pray that God, by His Spirit, will always enable you to understand what He wants you to, and that it may grow in your heart.

The next seed Jesus told us about was that which fell where there was just a little earth on top of the stones. This is like someone who hears of the way of the Lord, and is very happy to receive it; but when a little trouble comes to them, because of believing God's Word, they turn away from it. Jesus called it persecution or tribulation. We always tell all the boys and girls to bring their Bible to church, but some are a little afraid to let their friends see them carrying their Bible, so it is easy to leave it at home. Your friends might persecute you a little bit, but don't let that bother you. You will find, all through your life, God will let troubles come to you to see how strong you are or how deep your roots are. Make sure you are not like the seed that was sown on the stony place, but let your roots go down good and deep and be really strong in the things that God has taught us.

Jesus said that the thorns, which some of the other seed were sown among, were like the cares of this world or the deceitfulness of riches. I don't know what all He meant by the cares of this world, but I do know that you and I can get so taken up with so many other things that we forget about the Lord. Even good things can take such a large part of our lives that they squeeze Him out, turning a good thing into a bad thing. If you ever find that anything is taking such a large part of your life that there isn't room or time for the Lord, get rid of it or at least a part of it. We all have to learn to keep things in their right place and this is true of our lives too.

When Jesus spoke of the deceitfulness of riches, He spoke of letting our money become more important to us than God. Most people think that if they were rich they would be happy. This isn't true unless you take your riches and help other people.

Just like the thorns took all the moisture and the plants died, so these things can take away all of our spiritual life and cause us to miss what God is calling us to. This is the happy part of the story. We all want to be like the good ground. We want to hear what God teaches us, we want to understand what He teaches us, and we want what He teaches us to bring forth fruit in our lives. We all want to be like the seed that bore a hundredfold. We can be that way, too, if we all, both young and old, learn to yield ourselves to God so He can lead us. We should all be like good farmers. If our wheat bears thirty-fold this year, try to make it bear sixty-fold next year.