

FAITH AND VICTORY

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Discerning the Lord's Body, The Church

By Bro. Harlan Sorrell

Part II

"Now the Spirit speaketh expressly (clearly), that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, *giving heed to seducing spirits*, and doctrines of devils." I Timothy 4:1. Whenever children of God become seduced by "other spirits" and begin to listen and give heed to "other voices" then discord, confusion, schisms, and divisions always occur. The voice of a seducing spirit desensitizes one's spiritual ears to the voice of the Divine Spirit. A spiritual illusion then takes place. Spiritual landmarks that were once clear by virtue of the eye salve of the Holy Spirit's anointing become foggy and dim. Understanding that was once revealed to the inner man by Divine inspiration begins to give way to human reasoning and philosophical criticism. Sacred standards and boundaries that were once perceived clearly begin to move or disappear. The voice of the seducing spirit now re-

veals doctrine from a different perspective, in a "new light," suggesting to the mind a different slant or interpretation of the Scriptures. The illusive spirit may even produce an emotional high to accompany that new light. But yet the fruit of that new light is "variance" and "discord," which "the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God" (Ephesians 6:17) declares to be "works of the flesh" (Galatians 5:19-21) and "abomination" (Proverbs 6:16-19). It is vital and essential that we keep our spirits tuned and our souls in harmony with the Holy Spirit, as well as our physical bodies subjected to the Spirit at all times. Otherwise we will lose our direction and cease to discern the Lord's body. Whoever becomes out of joint with the Divine Spirit is out of joint with Christ and His body. Therefore "grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption." Ephesians 4:30. Any *work* of the flesh or unholy *provision* we make for the flesh grieves the Holy Spirit of God and will break the seal of our redemption if not repented of.

The Divine Spirit always brings His subjects under one government, into one body that conveys the essence of Christ in a visible manner. Therefore, "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. 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 2:8-10.

As surely as there exists the Holy Spirit and other opposing spirits, so there also exists the

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Lord's body and other opposing bodies. Every religious group, unit, or corporation is animated and united by some kind of religious spirit. Just as the Holy Spirit animates all who are led by Him, uniting them into one corporate body and making them partakers of the fullness of the Godhead in Christ, so other spirits also unite those who are led by them into corporate bodies, units, or groups, making them partakers of the essence of what they are all about. Each schismatic group pivots on some point of theology or ideology. The animation of each is the spirit that promotes whatever "heresy" or area of doctrine or practice it has been seduced in. The words "heresy" and "sect" come from the same Greek word, "hairesis," which literally means "a choice, a party, or disunion." A schism is ALWAYS the result of disunion from the true Spirit on the part of someone, or some ones. We can become disjointed with the body of Christ because of spiritual choices we make. God wants none of His children to have any connection or identification with any heresy, sect, or schism. To do so is to grieve the Holy Spirit and make one's soul vulnerable to other spirits.

A common approach to religion is, "it doesn't really matter what group you fellowship with just as long as you love and serve the Lord." Beware! Is that a Bible doctrine, or is it part of a deceitful, humanistic philosophy? Is that not the same as saying you can choose to fellowship any schism, sect, or heresy you please and still serve the Lord? Your choice in this matter will mean the difference in whether or not you attain to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. Be sure that if you take your spiritual meat and drink at a table that is not spread by the Spirit of the Lord you will soon be spoiled! You will soon cease to discern the Lord's body. The Bible says, "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." II Corinthians 6:17-18. In coming out from among them, where should we go? Just simply resort to the Lord's body! You'll find it, identify it, and be a part of it simply by conforming to every precept and principle of God's Word and being led by His Spirit. "...And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth." I John 5:6. Listen now.

In I John 3:24 and 4:1-3 we read: "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. Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that *spirit* of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world."*

This is how we can tell whether or not a spirit is in harmony with God's Spirit: if it confesses through its manifestation in human flesh an identity with the life of Christ, in all humility, holiness, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts (which is what the anointing of the true Spirit of grace teaches us - Titus 2:11-12), and in keeping unspotted from the world (James 1:27), then we know this is by the influence of the real Spirit of God. But if a spirit manifests evidences of carnality and self-interest, a love for the things of the world, making provision for the lusts of the flesh, or a disposition to reason around the requirements or the principles of the Scriptures, we know that this spirit is not of God, but is a spirit of antichrist. Whoever is not joined to the Lord in one spirit (I Corinthians 6:17), always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in his body (II Corinthians 4:10) is not confessing that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, therefore cannot be identified as part of His true body. "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts." Galatians 5:24. They identify as real members of His flesh and of His bones (Ephesians 5:30) because they are crucified with Him (Galatians 2:20; 6:14). They are dead, and their life is hid with Christ in God (Colossians 3:3; II Corinthians 4:11).

But Paul said, "(Many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, *that they are* the enemies of the cross of Christ: Whose end is destruction, whose God is *their* belly, and *whose* glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.)" Philippians 3:18-19. Peter said, "For when they speak great swelling *words* of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, *through much* wantonness, those that were clean escaped from them who live in error. While they promise them *liberty*, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage." II Peter 2:18-19. Whoever chooses to give liberty to the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, or the pride of life will certainly

be brought in bondage to corruption and will imbibe a spirit of antichrist. The apostle John, after warning against the love of the world and the *things* that are in the world, said, "Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time. They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would *no doubt* have continued with us: but *they went out*, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us." I John 2:18-19. Jude said, "These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit." Jude 19.

Just as the human body rejects foreign material, so does Christ's spiritual body. Physically speaking, our bodies will not retain a substance that is foreign to their own composition. Also, our bodies release and eliminate all dead cells. The body has no use for those cells that are no longer receiving the nourishment that flows through the blood. They die and the body disposes of them by natural process. And so it is with the spiritual body of Christ. He said, "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. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered;..." John 15:5-6. As He also said regarding the lukewarm, "...I will spue thee out of my mouth." Revelation 3:16. This means a complete removal from His body.

It is through the Holy Spirit that the life of the Vine flows to every branch in Christ. The Holy Spirit is like the blood that flows through the body and feeds and replenishes all the living cells. The Holy Spirit feeds every living cell of Christ's body, the Church, the very substance of Christ. "This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh." Galatians 5:16. Jesus said, "He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him." John 6:56. Through His Word and through His Spirit we eat His flesh and drink His blood and *abide* in His body. Otherwise, we are released from the body by the natural process of elimination.

Song #404 in the *Evening Light Songs* says, "Jesus gave His life to purchase For Himself a spotless bride All who fear Him and obey Him, Cleansed beneath the crimson tide. To preserve her pure and spotless, He must make a sacrifice; Give to evil spirits supper, All who give to sin a place. See, His sword is bathed in Heaven,

And the mountains strewn with dead; 'All ye birds and beasts assemble,' Lo! A feast for you is spread."

What deep, solemn words! They are based on the prophecies of Isaiah 18:4-6, Ezekiel 39:17-20, and Revelation 19:17-18. Jesus also said in Luke 17:33-37, "Whosoever shall seek to save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life shall preserve it. I tell you, in that night there shall be two *men* in one bed; the one shall be taken, and the other shall be left. Two *women* shall be grinding together; the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two *men* shall be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left. And they answered and said unto him, Where, Lord? And he said unto them, Wheresoever the body (carcase—Matthew 24:28) is, thither will the eagles (vultures) be gathered together."

Revelation 18:2 says, "...Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird." This spiritual Babylon consists of all the *carcasses*; the dead religious bodies where men and women are "taken" who have ceased to abide in the true Vine by failing to drink into the one Spirit who baptizes into the Lord's one living body, the Church. Babylon the great is where the vultures are gathered together. All manner of unclean birds and beasts (foul spirits and religious devils) assemble and feed there. They feed on the souls of the backslidden and spiritually fallen, the degenerate and "twice dead" (Jude 12), and console them in their delusions. Therefore God says, "...Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues." Revelation 18:4.

Sometimes, through lack of understanding, or through lack of having their spiritual "senses exercised to discern both good and evil" (Hebrews 5:14) sincere and honest Christians become misled and entangled with fallen religious bodies that they suppose to be the body of Christ, or at least a part of it. Yet, when carefully scrutinized by the Word of God, the systems by which those bodies operate are found coming short of the Divine system — **they either endorse some kind of heretical doctrine, make provision for sin in the flesh, or some element of human or satanic control is involved where Holy Spirit leadership ought to be. The Word and the Spirit of God do not have free course there.** All who are truly born of the

(Continued on page nine.)

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This publication teaches salvation from all sin, sanctification for believers, unity and oneness for which Jesus prayed as recorded in John 17:21, and manifested by the apostles and believers after Pentecost. By God's grace we teach, preach, and practice the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ—the same gospel that Peter, John, and Paul preached, taught, and practiced, including divine healing for the body. James 5:14-15.

Its motto: Have faith in God. Its object: The glory of God and the salvation of men; the restoration and promulgation of the whole truth to the people in this "evening time" as it was in the morning Church of the first century; the unification of all true believers in one body by the love of God. Its standard: Separation from sin and entire devotion to the service and will of God. Its characteristics: No discipline but the Bible, no bond of union but the love of God, and no test of fellowship but the indwelling Spirit of Christ.

Through the Free Literature Fund thousands of gospel tracts are published and sent out free of charge as the Lord supplies. Cooperation of our readers is solicited, and will be appreciated in any way as the Bible and the Holy Spirit teach you to do or stir your heart. "Freely ye have received, freely give." Read Ex. 25:2; I Chron. 29:9; II Cor. 9:7; and Luke 6:38.

Freewill offerings sent in to the work will be thankfully received as from the Lord. Checks and money orders should be made payable to Faith Publishing House. All donations are tax deductible.

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"There's stealing o'er my peaceful, trusting soul
A power that is most divinely sweet,
As all my burdens on the Lord I roll,
And meekly linger at His blessed feet"

This lovely song, "The Blessing of Prayer," conveys the beauty of the fellowship that exists between the Heavenly Father and His trusting children. This fellowship can only exist when one's heart is opened before the King of Glory in humility, with truth and fervent sincerity. Those who are arrogant and filled with their own resources are barred from finding this blessed haven of peace. It is for those souls, who recognizing their need of God, will bring their earnest petitions before Him in the spirit of faith—believing that He hears and will respond to their needs according to His abundant wisdom. It is more than simply communicating our wants and desires, it is a communion of the spirit of man with the powerful Creator of the universe. In this sacred place before the Lord one experiences "A power that is most divinely sweet." That power is the presence of God's love that is conveyed to the soul by the precious Holy Spirit. This power not only changes situations, but it transforms the soul itself into the likeness of Christ's spirit.

The transforming power of Divine love is what causes the children of God to be different from the world. It is the power that changed Zacchaeus and caused him to say, "... Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore *him* fourfold." Luke 19:8. It is what motivates a man to willingly sell his earthly possessions so that he may obtain that Pearl of great price. It is what caused the woman who had an alabaster box of precious ointment to pour it all out on Jesus. It is what stirred within the hearts of Peter and John when they were going into the temple and they met a man begging alms near the entrance who had been lame from his birth. When he asked an alm from Peter, it was the power of Divine love that responded to that request, "Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk. And he took him by

the right hand, and lifted *him* up: and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength." Acts 3:6-7. This power is what caused Paul to write to Philemon in behalf of his servant Onesimus who had previously left his master's employment on bad terms but was now ready to return. Paul said, "'If thou count me therefore a partner, receive him as myself. If he hath wronged thee, or oweth *thee* ought, put that on mine account; I Paul have written it with mine own hand, I will repay it;..." Philemon 1:17-19. The working power of Divine love is what the Gospel story is all about. The Good News message is that Divine love is reaching out to mankind through God's Son, Jesus Christ.

These acts of love can be traced back to the spirit that Christ had when He came into the world to bring reconciliation between God and man. Isaiah 53:5-7 says, "But he *was* wounded for our transgressions, *he was* bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace *was* upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth." Jesus was willing to suffer much pain and agony so that we can also enjoy the power of Divine love and have fellowship with God. Jesus said, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you:...Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." John 14:27. The "power that is most Divine and sweet" is the "...peace of God, which passeth all understanding,..." which shall "...keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." Philippians 4:7. This power is still alive in the hearts of God's people and Divine love is still beckoning to those in need. Bidding all that labor and are heavy laden to come unto Christ and He will give them rest.

There is a story of a wicked woman who lived in one of the towns of Ohio. This woman had broken nearly every law of her state. Eventually, by yielding to her sinful disposition caused her to be found guilty of murder and she was sent to the state penitentiary.

The wickedness of this woman became somewhat of a legend of the town and when babysitters would tell scary stories to the children in their care, it would usually be about the nefarious

deeds of this woman. Even being incarcerated did not cure her, for she continually broke the laws of the institution and they had exhausted on her nearly every form of punishment at their disposal.

In the course of time a woman of God, having heard of her wickedness, began to pray for the Lord to talk to her heart. Eventually she felt a burden to visit this woman in prison and requested permission from the authorities to do so. That permission was granted and the woman of God was ushered into the presence of a pitiful picture of despair. This poor, wretched, hopeless woman was bound with chains hand and foot and possessed a countenance that did not welcome friendship. The dear woman of God, with a prayer in her heart for wisdom, walked gently to the other lady and called her "sister." The woman growled with an oath and said, "I am not your sister." She then said, "I love you," and the sinful one responded with a greater oath and said, "No one loves me!" This was when the saintly woman of God bent over and gently kissed her and said, "God loves you." What happened in the next few moments of this visit is a mystery that only God can truly understand, but the sinful woman's downcast eyes came up to meet the benevolent gaze of her visitor and tears began to roll down her cheeks. Never in her life had she felt the presence of God's love like she did at that moment. Her hard heart of stone melted before its warmth, suddenly she abhorred her sinful life and rising to her feet vowed that if God loved her, she would serve Him with her life. It was not long before they took her chains off, never to put them on again. She was a changed woman. Until the day of her death she went up and down the corridors of the prison, herself an angel of mercy.

We thank the Lord for His Divine love that brings such joy and hope to our hearts. What a difference it has made in our lives and it will do the same for others who likewise seek Him. This love is addressed by God's Son to "whosoever will." It matters not what a person's background has been, whether they have been exceedingly sinful or whether they have lived a good moral life, Divine love has the power to deliver from all sin and transform that one into a Saint of God. We also know that what peace and joy we experience now is only a foretaste of the glory that awaits the redeemed. Therefore we want to keep our lives in close contact with His love and

bask in its glory all the days of our life. Then one bright glorious morning we will meet our blessed Savior face to face and share with Him the joy of those things that He has prepared for His people.

—Bro. Willie E. Murphey
wemurphey@yahoo.com



MO—Our daughter, Lori, is still in a battle, especially at times. Please keep her in your prayers. Love and prayers, Sis. Lana Johnson

Standing Prayer Requests

Bro. Roger Anderson
Sis. Agnes Burleson
Bro. Gary Burleson
Sis. Gladys Cashio
Sis. Helen Carson
Sis. Genevieve Carver
Sis. Elizabeth Corteway
Sis. Waneta Creel
Bro. Terry Dawson Sr.
Bro. Mancil Doolittle
Sis. Guy Domin
Sis. Dorall Forbes
Bro. Dan Gellenbeck
Bro. Troy Gentry
Jaden Howard
Sis. Patsy Jordan
Sis. Earnestine Jordan
Sis. Karoline Kessler
Bro. Mark and Sis. Darlene Knight
Sis. Evodna Marler
Sis. Virginia Myers
Sis. Elsie M. Offerman
Bro. Vernon Robinson
Bro. David Runion
Bro. Edward and Sis. Gloria Taylor
Sis. Imogene Taylor
The Mitch Taylor family
Sis. Norma Tiller
Bro. Delmar Wilkins
Sis. Jan Wood

MEETING DATES

Alabama Spring Singing

(Near Warrior, AL)—April 7

Wichita, KS (Spring Meeting)—April 15-22

Vanceburg, KY (Spring Meeting)—May 18-20

Oklahoma State (Guthrie, OK)—May 25-June 3

Holly Hill, SC (Camp Meeting)—June 3-10

Green Bank, WV (Camp Meeting)—June 15-21

Sisters' Retreat (Wichita, KS)—June 22-23

Fresno, CA (Camp Meeting)—July 1-8

MEETING NOTICES

ALABAMA SPRING SINGING

NEAR WARRIOR

(April 7th, Easter Weekend)

The Church of God congregation near Warrior, Alabama, is planning a singing April 7th at 6:30 p.m. in the chapel. Activities will begin on Saturday morning at 10:00 a.m. at the C.W. Day Park in Hanceville, which is the same place we had it last year. On Easter Sunday, April 8th, there will be services at 10:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. with dinner on the grounds at the chapel.

Everyone is welcome. The chapel is located approximately two miles west of Interstate 65 off exit 289 on Acton Bend Circle. For further information, please contact Bro. Roy Herron at (205) 647-7869 or Bro. Marshall Whitson at (205) 647-6325; Cell # (205)317-5175

WICHITA, KS, SPRING REVIVAL

The Wichita congregation welcomes you to our spring revival. The meeting will run Sunday, April 15 through Sunday, April 22. Monday through Saturday, services will be held at 11:00 a.m. and 7:30 p.m. On Sunday, services will begin with Sunday School at 9:30 followed by Morning Worship at 10:45 and afternoon and evening services.

Please join us and pray for the revival. For more information contact Bro. Emanuel Gracey at (316) 461-1267 or Bro. Theodore McCray at (316) 641-4170.

VANCEBURG, KY, SPRING MEETING

Lord willing, the Vanceburg, Kentucky congregation will be holding a spring weekend meeting May 18-20th. There will be services on the grounds at 11:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. Friday and Saturday, with Sunday morning service beginning at 10:00. There are rooms and RV/

camper hook-ups on a first-come, first-served basis. There are also dorms available for those who wish to stay on the grounds and hotels within 15-20 miles. The weather is unpredictable, so come prepared for warm or cold weather. We also ask that you bring your own linens. The meeting is run on a free will offering. We trust that the Lord blesses and sends the ministers of His choosing. For more information you may call Bro. Dallas Cooper at (606) 796-3645 or (606) 202-1366, or Bro. Matt Howard at (606) 796-6729 or (606) 202-1766. God Bless. Christian love and prayers, the Vanceburg, KY congregation.

HOLLY HILL, SC, CAMP MEETING

We would like to announce the dates for our camp meeting. They are June 3-10. Everyone is welcome to come and be with us. Some rooms are provided and meals will be served.

For more information contact Bro. Floyd Crummie (803) 496-5768, or Bro. Clinton Crummie (803) 759-0302. May the Lord bless you.
—Sis. Judie Crummie



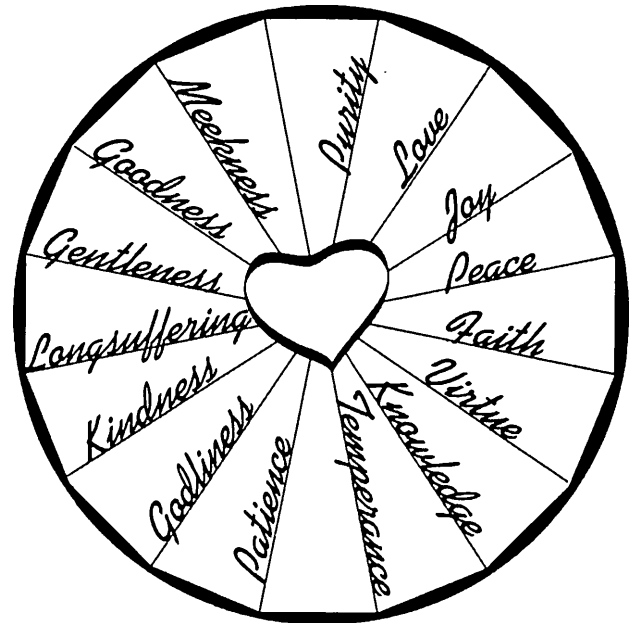
LETTERS FROM OUR READERS

LA—Dear precious workers at the *Faith and Victory* print shop: Greetings to all! When we recall our blessings, we know we have a heavenly Father taking note and thank Him again. It is truly wonderful what the Lord has done, and is doing every day! Let us be faithful, the world conditions would truly be frightening if it wasn't for the Lord.

We recall the scripture again, "If my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land." II Chronicles 7:14.

Well, after many years I have been so thankful how the Lord heard and answered prayer and healed my eyes. But now, I have cataracts real bad and I'm in a battle again. Praise our Lord, He is able to help me again. So let us pray on!

Some time ago I was inspired to draw a wheel that included the fruits of the Spirit and went along with the scripture found in II Peter 1:5-7.



"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 1:8.

With Love, prayers and appreciation,

—Sis. Gladys Cashio

Jesus Christ, our Passover Lamb

By Sis. Melonie Whitson

"Then assembled together the chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders of the people,...and consulted that they might take Jesus by subtlety, and kill him. But they said, Not on the feast day, lest there be an uproar among the people" Matt. 26:3-5. God overruled this decision and Christ's death coincided perfectly with the feast of the Passover. The Passover is a seven day Jewish holiday in remembrance of their escape from bondage in Egypt. They were to tell their children how they were commanded on the night of their escape, to kill a lamb and put his blood on their doorposts in order for the death angel to pass over their home and spare their firstborn. They were to eat unleavened bread (not taking time for it to rise, as they were to leave in a hurry when the sign was given to go). Christ ate the Passover supper with his disciples just before his arrest, telling them, "This is my body that is broken for you" and "This is my blood that is spilled for

you". No bone of the lamb was to be broken (Ex. 12:46). In Psalm 34:20, a prophecy of Jesus was that no bone in his body would be broken. A devout Jew named Paul called Christ, "our Passover" who is sacrificed for us.

In Exodus, the Lord told them to celebrate the Passover, by choosing a lamb on the 10th day of the month. Jesus entered Jerusalem on the 10th day, the same day a lamb was chosen.

The sacrificial lamb was to be held until the 14th day of the month and was to be examined for blemishes or faults. During these four days after Jesus arrived, he was arrested and tried before Herod and Pilate. They could find no fault with him.

On the fourth day, he was hung on the cross the third hour (9 a.m.) and in the sixth hour (3 p.m.) darkness came upon the earth. This was the very hour that the lamb was sacrificed in the temple and the shofar (ram's horn) was blown. In the 9th hour, Jesus said, "It is finished" and gave up the ghost. At this time, the temple curtain, said to be several stories high and three inches thick, was torn from top to bottom, showing that God had opened the way into the Most Holy Place through Christ's death.

On Jesus' resurrection day, during Passover, the wave offering consisting of their firstfruits was offered. Christ is called by Paul in I Corinthians, "the firstfruits of them that slept."

God spoke to His people so clearly by using their own celebration of the passover and correlating it perfectly with Christ's giving of himself. The Messiah, "the Lamb of God, that takes away the sins of the world", has come and still lives! The blood of that Passover Lamb still cleanses our souls today when we apply it to our hearts. "For God so LOVED the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him shall not perish, but have everlasting life."



A Tender Invitation From Jesus

By Sis. Angela Gellenbeck

I always seek for a special Word from God at the beginning of each new year. This year, I wasn't really just asking, but I was just talking to the Lord about things. He gave me an invitation. It's an old, familiar one, but to me, He was saying, "Angela, this year, come unto Me. When you are laboring under a heavy burden, come to me, and I will give you rest." I looked up the word "labor." It means "to feel fatigue." Sometimes, we think, things have to be perfect, we have to

feel good, etc., to be in a condition to come to Jesus, but He's saying, "Come to me when you are worn out and burdened down, and I will give you rest." Then He says, "Take my yoke upon you—" What? He just said to bring Him my burden, and He's going to put more on me? Not really. I looked this up also, and the significance of this yoke is that it's something that CONNECTS me to Christ. He's in one side, and I willingly take the other. We forget this sometimes, don't we? That whatever task or obligation we are called to fulfill, it's always with Him. He bears the load; we only share in the companionship. His CROSS has wondrous beauty! It seems a paradox, but dying with Him, suffering with Him, IS the only way to living and reigning!

The next part of the invitation has been—beyond telling. "Learn of me. . ." When I take His yoke, willingly stretch myself out on His cross, voluntarily share in His sufferings and loss of things earthly and fleshly, I really begin to understand Him. To know Him. To experience Him. He manifests Himself to me through the yoke-bearing, as it was also said of Him, "Yet learned He obedience by the things which He suffered." I feel that I am only now coming to know Him, and I've been a believer for over 30 years. I cannot tell you the delight of whispering to Him throughout the day, as we share the load together. Of hearing Him whisper to me in the early morning, and again and again in the unexpected moments of the day. The ways He's causing me to change, deep inside; the connections He's helping me to make in His Word, that have never made sense before. I am learning how to cast every care, every anxiety, every sadness, every emotion upon Him. I am learning how to ask Him about EVERYTHING, to plead His Wisdom, to depend on His direction, to wait on His inspiration, to rest on His promise. I am beginning to SEE God. The thing is, I cannot explain HOW this all happens. HE is doing it. He reminds me to lean on Him. He prompts me to ask, to seek, to cast, to wait. He cleanses my thoughts and my affections, on a moment by moment basis. I cannot explain it, but I know it is real. His salvation really works. He IS my salvation. He is freedom, he is deliverance, He is sanctification, He is wisdom, He is love.

I am only grateful. There is so much more to learn. I'm just glad, so glad, that in this life, I am finding these precious treasures. I am so glad He opened His arms to me and said, "Come."

Discerning The Lord's Body, The Church

(Continued from page three.)

Divine Spirit are by virtue of that heavenly birth actual members of Christ's body. They are God's people—the ones that He is calling to "come out" of Babylon, that is, degenerate and fallen religious bodies animated by false spirits that work confusion and deception.

God knows that "Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness" (see II Corinthians 11:13-15). False prophets always appear as ministers of righteousness and will deceive even the very elect, if possible. Many of the prophets do not realize that they themselves are deceived, and suppose that they are doing the Lord's work. Part of Webster's definition of a "prophet" is "an interpreter; one who explains or communicates sentiments; a spokesperson for some cause, group, etc.," whether Divinely inspired or not. A false prophet is simply one, who, without Holy Spirit inspiration and guidance, has become a false interpreter—one who explains and communicates wrong sentiments relative to God's Word. There are many trained and eloquent speakers (prophets) prophesying in the interests of the many various religious bodies, each seeking to sell the ideology of the body he endorses as Christ's body. Each proclaims the vision he believes is right, as he vies for proselytes. But "they speak a vision of their own heart, and not out of the mouth of the Lord" (Jeremiah 23:16). He whose heart is not purified and taught by the Spirit of the Lord cannot rightly interpret the Word of the Lord nor discern the Lord's body. One whose spiritual eyes have not been anointed with the eye salve of the Holy Spirit (Revelation 3:18) cannot proclaim the vision of the Lord, nor will his preaching carry the Spirit's life-giving unction and transforming power. Therefore, many unfortunate proselytes never attain to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. And no wonder, for the prophets they heeded never attained to it either! While they profess a faith in Christ they are not really crucified with Him, nor is their life hid away with Him. They themselves are yet servants of sin (John 8:34) and fleshly and worldly lusts, not realizing that "if the Son shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed" (John 8:36), and "they which receive abundance of

grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ." (Romans 5:17.)

How, then, shall we rise to the plane of fellowship with "spirits of just men made perfect" (that is, "made complete" in Christ) and discover the "general assembly and church of the firstborn" that we read about in Hebrews 12:22-23? Be led by the Word and the Spirit. Allow the Spirit to interpret the Word to your heart, and follow and apply the Spirit's interpretation. Drink deeply of that one Spirit that supplies the living essence of Christ's blood to all the members of His body. That Divine substance is one of a kind and, just as the human body naturally recognizes its own blood as its life, so the Christ body naturally recognizes its own blood as its life. There is no substitute for it. There is no other taste like it! As inspired songwriters of the past have said, "I have learned the wondrous secret Of abiding in the Lord; I have found the strength and sweetness Of confiding in His Word; I have tasted life's pure fountain, I am drinking of His blood, I have lost myself in Jesus, I am sinking into God. I am crucified with Jesus, And He lives and dwells in me, I have ceased from all my struggling, 'Tis no longer I, but He; All my will is yielded to Him, And His Spirit reigns within, And His precious blood each moment, Keeps me cleansed and free from sin." – A. B. Simpson. "I am drinking at the fountain, Where I ever would abide; For I've tasted life's pure river, And my soul is satisfied; There's no thirsting for life's pleasures, Nor adorning, rich and gay, For I've found a richer treasure, One that fadeth not away.... And I love to follow Jesus, Gladly counting all but dross, Worldly honors all forsaking For the glory of the cross." – Author unknown. "I am clinging to Jesus, my Redeemer and Friend, Ever trusting His promise, standing firm to the end; Oh! I love to obey Him, live alone by His grace, Feeling His sweet approval and the smiles of His face. Oh, the Lord is so sweet, I will live at His feet; I am resting in Jesus, In His favor complete." – B. E. Warren.

Living and walking in the Spirit and rejecting every spirit, element, or system that grieves the Holy Spirit, or is foreign to the Christ-life, keeps us in the Christ-body. We are members of His body inasmuch as we are in harmony with His spirit, nature, and life. "Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; Forbearing one another, and for-

giving 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." Colossians 3:12-15. This charity suffers long, and is kind; envies not; boasts not itself, is not puffed up, does not behave itself unbecomingly, seeks not its own, is not easily provoked, thinks no evil; rejoices not in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, and never fails. (see I Corinthians 13:4-8).

"God is love" (I John 4:8,16). He that dwells in love dwells in God and God in him. Also, "God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all" (I John 1:5). And, "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). We are safeguarded against becoming entangled in some kind of heresy or work of the flesh, which is darkness, "because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us." Romans 5:5. The Spirit guides into all truth (John 16:13). In this blessed place (living and walking in the Spirit) a clear discernment, vision, or perception is opened to the soul of the Lord's body, the church. D. S. Warner found that blessed place many years ago and penned the following words of inspired song: "He that dwelleth in love ever dwelleth in God, Sweet home never clouded by fears; And this heaven of love is our native abode Through time and eternity's years. I'm at home, blessed home, I am safe in the bosom Divine; Oh the home of the soul, Thy heaven of glory is mine." And for that very reason, "We will enter no door that is opened by men Who promise a home for the soul; **For in Christ we abide in the church that will stand** While ages eternally roll." *Evening Light Songs* #30. Consider, also, the words of the following Holy Spirit-inspired songs.

"Holy Fellowship"

(1 John 1:3)

"Sweet fellowship, thy crystal tide,
Flows joyful in our souls;
Baptized in one, naught can divide,
While heav'nly peace controls.

"God over all, and through us all,
In floods of blissful light,
Is fellowship in ev'ry soul
That's pure in Heaven's sight.

"O fellowship, my brethren dear,
In bonds of perfect love;
How blest the seal of union here
With all the saints above!

"This fellowship with Father, Son,
And all who love the Lord,
Is Heaven here on earth begun,
'Tis Paradise restored.

Chorus:

"O brethren, how our spirits blend
In fellowship so dear;
Though sundered far by God's command,
We feel you still so near."

— D. S. Warner

"Fellowship"

"Sweet fellowship unites our souls as one,
It is the bliss of Heaven now begun;
When heart to heart by this blest tie is bound,
We seem to stand each day on holy ground.

"The mingling flow of kindred minds and hearts,
That only from the fount of true love starts!
The sweetest but most fragile gift of grace,
Which only with the blood-washed has a place.

"Unseen thy beauty and unknown thy worth
To all who have not yet the Spirit birth:
Where ranketh hate and sitteth lordly pride,
Thy gentle presence doth not there abide.

"All hearts where thou dost dwell must be as one,
For thou dost flee where strife is but begun:
Nor wilt thou show again thy timid face
Where there may be of wrong or sin a trace.

Chorus:

"Sweet fellowship with God on high,
And with His Son, Who came to die,
With all His saints in ev'ry clime—
Be this my portion all the time."

— C. W. Naylor

Thus we discern and experience the Lord's
body, the church. Amen!



James William Linch was born in Santa Monica, California, on New Year's Day, 1949. He was the youngest of three children born to Eldie and Evelyn Linch. He passed on December 2, 2011, following a short illness, at the age of 62. Jim attended school in Santa Monica until his senior year, graduating from Sylmar High in 1967. He then received his degree in printing at LA Trade Tech and spent 30+ years in that field working up to manager. Jim married Geraldine Marie Luehring, the love of his life, on August 16, 1969, at Pacoima, CA. They are parents to five children: Karla, Duane, Janette, Randy, and Sara. They raised their children in Oregon, attending the Jefferson Church of God.

After living in Oregon thirty-two years, Jim and Gerri moved to Oklahoma in 2003, to be near their children and grandchildren. Jim loved being with his family and sharing activities with them: tractor pulls, school events, civil air patrol, museums, historical sites, restaurants and many more.

Jim gave his life to Christ at age 16 and continued to have a tender heart toward God. He felt called to serve God in many ways: preaching, visiting and praying with the sick, and lending a helping hand with any kind of need. He was always helping others with mechanic work, carpentry, electronics, even tech support. In Jim's late teens his Mother married Bro. Ostis Wilson. Jim and Bro. Ostis quickly developed a profound, loving father-son relationship which remained a beacon throughout Jim's life. Jim was a good friend to many, a man who showed his love to his family by sharing in their lives. We who held and treasured his friendship are grateful for his victory, but will sadly miss the happy times together.

He was preceded in death by his parents, Eldie and Evelyn Linch; his stepfather, Ostis Wilson; his brother, Kenneth Linch; his sister, Betty Garges; a daughter-in-law, Melissa Linch; and grandson, Jaron Booher. Jim's memory is cherished by his wife, Gerri; his children, Karla and husband, Arlan; Duane and wife, Lacinda; Janette and husband, Jeremy; Randy; Sara and husband, Mark. There are 14 grandchildren:

Darla, Marlan, Devan, Alaina, Kylan, Cameron, Jathan, Kyla, Joelan, Marissa, Preston, Jaleesa, Jerrison, and Mason, as well as 6 nieces and nephews: Laura Lei, Wade, Craig, Lisa, David and Ken.

A Memorial service was held Wednesday, December 7, 2011, at Pacoima Church of God chapel in California. It was officiated by Bro. Steve Elwell. A funeral service was held on Saturday, December 10, 2011, at Neosho Church of God chapel, officiated by Bro. Michael Smith, Bro. Ed Wilson, and Bro. Phillip Gellenbeck. Jesus' final words on the cross were, "Into Thy hands I commend my spirit." So Jim has gone now to be in another world, leaving us with memories and love that we shall hold dear until we renew our acquaintance around the Father's throne.

A Note of Thanks

The family of Jim Linch wishes to express our appreciation for all the love shown. The prayers, cards, flowers, gifts and phone calls continue to be a great comfort. — Linch Family

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Chasing Bubbles

By Sis. Lana Johnson

*A bubble is a pretty thing,
As it floats along and glows,
Like a prism in the sunshine,
With the colors of the rainbow.*

*Are you chasing pretty bubbles,
That shine and sparkle in the sun?
They appear but for an instant,
But then they are popped and gone.*

*There is nothing at all solid
For you to hold on to.
And chasing after this world
Will do the same for you.*

*Sinful pleasures of the world
Appear for a little while.
Then they leave you empty-handed,
And your soul has been defiled.*

*Sin, just like bubbles,
May look as pretty as can be
But it is of no value
When compared to eternity.*

*Don't chase the bubbles of sin
That so soon will go away.
Seek the blessings of salvation,
Pleasures that last an eternal day!*

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