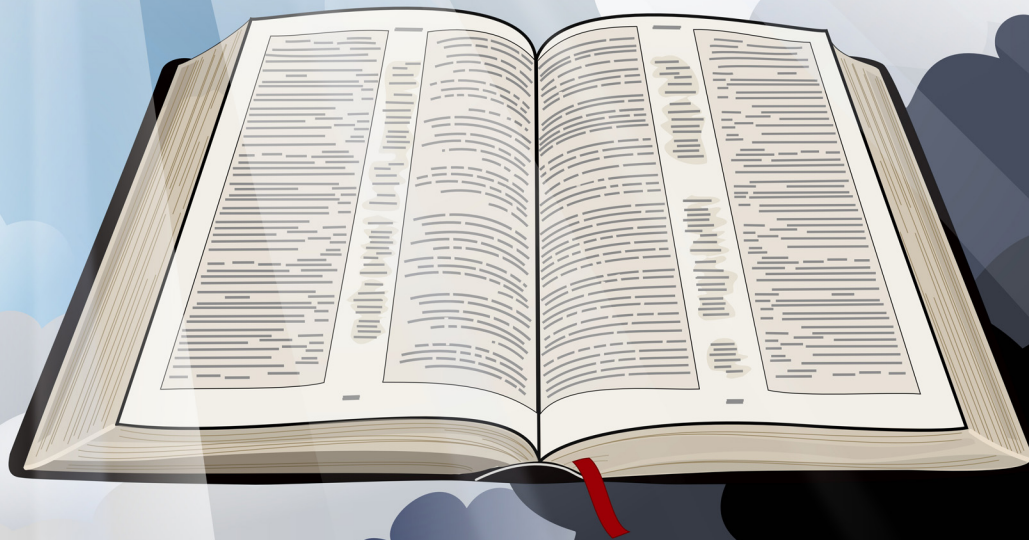


QUESTIONS & ANSWERS



**ANSWERS TO FREQUENTLY ASKED
QUESTIONS ABOUT SCRIPTURE AND
CHURCH OF GOD DOCTRINE.**

OSTIS B. WILSON

Questions & Answers

Ostis B. Wilson answers frequently
asked questions about Scripture and
Church of God doctrines



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Ostis B. Wilson

Preface

This book is a compilation of questions and answers by Bro. Ostis Benton Wilson, Jr., printed in the *Faith and Victory* magazine from February 1977 through February 1993. They can also be accessed on-line at www.faithpublishing.com and www.churchofgodeveninglight.com.

Ostis Benton Wilson Jr. was born December 23, 1908 in Beaver, OK to Ostis B. Sr. and Mattie (Boles) Wilson, pioneer ministers in the Church of God Reformation Movement. He died on February 18, 1993 at the age of 84.

Bro. Ostis preached his first message at the age of 21. He served as pastor to Churches of God in Anthony, Kansas; Perlita Avenue, Los Angeles; Pacoima, California; and Jefferson, Oregon. In 1964 he and his first wife, Opal, went to Nigeria, Africa as missionaries, where she died of pneumonia. He was active in the oversight of the Church of God in Shawnee, Oklahoma where he and his wife, Evelyn, lived until his death.

Brother Ostis spent his entire life preaching, teaching, and ministering in many congregations throughout the United States. He was gifted of God and an esteemed minister, noted for his in-depth knowledge of the scriptures and his ability to preach in a clear, straightforward, and effective manner. His life was one of service to others, and he did so with humility of spirit and magnanimity of heart. Whereas his messages covered a wide range of subjects, his overriding theme seemed to center around Christian conduct.

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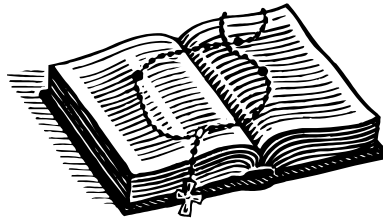
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TABERNACLE A TYPE/SHADOW OF NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH

Question: Where is the Scriptural proof that the tabernacle of Moses was a shadow or type of the New Testament Church and the steps by which one enters into it?

Answer: In the 9th chapter of Hebrews, the first eight verses give a detailed description of the Old Testament Sanctuary with its altars, furnishings and all the appurtenances thereto. Then in verse 9 it says, "Which was a FIGURE for the time then present." This makes it clear that the tabernacle of the First Covenant was a figure of something. But what? In Hebrews 9:24 it says, "...the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the TRUE...." In the 8th chapter of Hebrews, the 1st verse speaks of the High Priesthood of Jesus and then verse two describing this further says, "A minister of the sanctuary, and of the TRUE tabernacle, which the Lord pitched and not man." Further, Hebrews 9:11, "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." In Matthew 16:18 we see clearly what the greater and more perfect tabernacle was which the Lord pitched and not man and which was not made with hands. Here Jesus says, "...upon this rock I will BUILD my church...." Then it is clear that the tabernacle which the Lord pitched (built) is His church. You may ask: "Is the church referred to in the New Testament as a tabernacle?" It certainly is in a number of places. However, we must remember that the tabernacle was set up during the Israelite's wanderings in the wilderness and was of necessity a portable structure. When they became settled in the promised land and were permanently established, then the portable structure (tabernacle) was replaced by a permanent structure (the temple) which was identical with the tabernacle in its arrangements and served the same purpose in the exact same way. In the New Testament, the church is more generally referred to as a TEMPLE rather than a TABERNACLE. See Ephesians 2:19-22 and II Corinthians 6:16. However, it is also referred to as a TABERNACLE in Hebrews 8:2; Hebrews 9:11; and Revelation 21:3.

The steps by which we enter the tabernacle or temple of the Lord—His New Testament Church—are clearly typified in the Old Testament Tabernacle also. In the 38th chapter of Exodus, verses 1-20, is described the court surrounding the tabernacle, the brazen altar of sin, burnt offerings and the laver; all of which were outside the tabernacle proper, but necessary appurtenances to it; consequently typifying necessary steps to enter into the tabernacle or church. Into the court came the sinning Israelite with his sin offering to be offered on the altar of burnt offering. The court would typify the state of the convicted sinner. Just as this court was an

enclosure separated from the outside world and general activities of the people into which the Israelite entered to make his offering unto God for his sins; so the convicted sinner stricken with remorse and godly sorrow today becomes withdrawn from the world and reckless, sinful living. His state is described in II Corinthians 7:9-11 where it describes the person stricken with godly sorrow as having a great carefulness wrought in him—not sinning recklessly and with a high hand as before. Also, it speaks of him clearing himself and having a strong indignation against sin and wrong that has ruined his life. Also he has a vehement desire to be delivered and set free and a strong feeling for revenge against the works of the devil that has brought him to this ruined state.

Then as he follows these strong urges and impulses in his soul and approaches unto the altar of sin offering, which typifies Christ Himself (see Hebrews 13:10-12 and 16, together with I Peter 2:5, which presents Christ as our altar), and in deep penitence and humbleness of heart offers himself dead in trespasses and sins on the altar of Christ (His mercy and love manifested at Calvary), putting his faith in the merits of the shed blood of the son of God and that only for his pardon and forgiveness of sins, his sins are forgiven him for Jesus' sake.

Then he approaches the laver which stood just before the door of the tabernacle and was always filled with water in which the priests were required to wash their hands and feet before entering the tabernacle (this water typified the Word of God—John 15:3 and Ephesians 5:26 and I Peter 1:22, and the blood of Jesus, Revelation 1:5 and I John 1:7), and is washed from his sins and enters into the tabernacle of the Lord through Christ, the Door. John 10:9.

THE FIRST AND SECOND RESURRECTION

Question: I am confused and do not know what the second resurrection is.

Answer: The Bible teaches two distinct resurrections and there is a first and a second. John 5:24-29 discusses both of these resurrections and presents them in their proper order. In verse 24 Jesus said, "...He that heareth my word, and believeth on Him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life." Everlasting life and being free from condemnation describes a spiritual state and condition—salvation. Those who were passed from death unto life were those who were dead in their sins—Ephesians 2:1; Colossians 2:13 (this text makes it clear that this resurrection is brought to pass when one is forgiven all trespasses—saved). Then verse 25 says that the hour is coming and NOW IS when the dead would hear the voice of Jesus and live. It is clear that this being brought to life was a present reality and was to come also. In other words, this began to be realized in the ministry of Christ and His apostles and was to continue throughout this gospel dispensation wherever the gospel was preached and men believed it. This was the first resurrection—salvation.

Then in verse 28 Jesus said, "...the hour is COMING, in which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, (verse 29), And shall come forth...." This is clear reference to the resurrection of the dead at Christ's second coming when all shall come forth from their graves. Note it says in verse 28, "The hour is COMING," but did not say "NOW IS" as in verse 25. This second resurrection was not then; neither is it yet at this time, but is something altogether future and will come to pass when Jesus comes again. See I Corinthians 15:51-54; I Thessalonians 4:13-18; John 6:39-40, 44, and 54, and etc.

TABERNACLE OF DAVID

Question: In Amos 9:11 reference is made to "the tabernacle of David." What was the tabernacle of David and of what was it a type?

Answer: This verse in its entirety reads, "In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof; and I will raise up his ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old."

I will give you the best understanding I have on this text up to this time. I do not look upon this as a type of anything, but as a prophecy of the restoration of David's kingdom in the spiritual kingdom of Jesus Christ who came to sit on David's throne. It is evident that the Apostle James understood this text this way, too. In the council at Jerusalem regarding the matter of circumcision being imposed on the Gentile converts, as recorded in the 15th chapter of Acts, James reiterates in verse 14 how Simeon had declared how God had visited the Gentiles to take out of them a people for Himself. Then in verse 15 he says that the words of the prophets agree to this, and proceeds in verse 16 to quote this very verse. He applied it in that case to the establishment of Christ's kingdom and the coming of the Gentiles into it.

To the best of my understanding, the "Tabernacle of David" here is a figurative reference to the house, lineage, and kingdom of David. It is said in II Samuel 7:16 that his house and the kingdom shall be established forever; also that this throne would be established forever. Again in Psalm 132:11 it is said, "The Lord hath sworn in truth unto David; he will not turn from it; Of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne." But the kingdom and throne of David had fallen into decay and ruin, and there was a long breach in the wall of his "tabernacle" because there had not been one of his house and lineage sitting on his throne for a long, long time.

Amos 9:11 states that the tabernacle of David that was fallen would be raised and the breaches thereof closed. This was accomplished when Jesus Christ of the seed of David (John 7:42; also Acts 2:30) came to establish His own kingdom and to sit on David's throne. This reached clear back to David and consequently closed up that long breach of God's promise to him and fulfilled that promise. Jesus Christ sitting on David's throne established a kingdom of far greater glory, splendor and power than David ever ruled over—a spiritual kingdom of righteousness, joy, and peace in the Holy Ghost.

David ruled over the kingdom of Israel and Judah; and this kingdom reached the height of its glory and power in the reigns of David and his son, Solomon; but it was all contained within those borders. This kingdom over which Christ reigns from David's throne ruleth over all (Psalm 103:19). It contains all who have been converted through faith in the all-atoning blood of the Son of God out of every nation, kindred, tongue, and people (Revelation 7:9). It is a universal kingdom and shall never be destroyed.

GIFT OF MIRACLES

Question: What is the gift of miracles? Does anyone have it? Is it not the same as the gift of healing as recorded in I Corinthians 12:9, 28, 29?

Answer: *Miracle* in the dictionary is defined as "An extraordinary event manifesting the supernatural work of God." And, of course, healing of sicknesses in answer to the prayer of faith without the aid of doctors and medicines would fall into this category and be included in this definition. The fact that they are mentioned separately in the

scriptures referred to, seems to me sufficient evidence that the scriptures separate between healing and miracles and places them in different categories.

Sickness is defined as a disease, malady, disorder, illness, nausea, etc. This would include such things as tuberculosis, cancer, fevers of various kinds, polio, etc. Some sicknesses leave their marks and effects in the body such as blindness, deafness, deformed and undeveloped parts, as in the case of polio and various other weaknesses and disorders. Healing, it seems to me, would involve curing of the disease itself while it would involve a miracle to remove the effects of the sickness which remain in the body after the sickness itself is gone; such as restoring of sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf and restoring of the deformed and useless or crippled parts left as a result of polio after the polio is gone.

Miracles also reach out into areas beyond the category of healing, such as the expulsion of evil spirits (Acts 8:7 and 16:18); the controlling of the elements such as Jesus calming the storm—Mark 4:39; Peter's deliverance from prison—Acts 12:5-10; and the release of the other apostles from prison—Acts 5:17-23; feeding the multitudes with five loaves and two fishes—Matthew 14:15-21; and seven loaves and a few fishes—Matthew 15:32-38; raising the dead to life again—Matthew 9:18-26 and Acts 9:36-41; the numerous instances of restoring sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, making the lame to walk and the dumb to speak, etc., and such like: too numerous to mention.

And even though I may not know or be able to point out specifically someone who has this gift of miracles, yet I am sure there must be some who have it, as the church in the earth would be a crippled church operating without one of its parts without this gift. I urge that more of us would earnestly seek this gift as well as the others also. This is a gift of the Spirit given to the church and whoever will earnestly seek it and qualify for it may have it.

GAMBLING

Question: Where and what Scriptures are there to show that gambling is wrong? We know that it is wrong, but how can we pinpoint it out to others who do not see this?

Answer: I do not call to mind at this time any Scripture that actually spells it out in black and white that gambling is wrong, but I can give you some solid, scriptural principles to be guided by. In Romans 12:17 it says, "...Provide things honest in the sight of all men." II Corinthians 8:21 says, "Providing for honest things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men." I Peter 2:12 says, "Having your conversation 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."

Can anyone actually say that gambling in any of its aspects is an honest, upright business? Until this age of permissiveness, in which anything goes and there is hardly any such thing as sin anymore in the eyes of many, it was considered immoral and those who engaged in it were considered as an undesirable class by the society in general. Spiritual people still consider it in the same light. State after state has legalized it, but in such cases it has been bitterly and strongly opposed, and one of the major arguments in its favor where it has been adopted has been the sizable amount of revenue it would bring into the state's treasury through taxes. The fact that it has had to be legalized by legislatures and in some cases by the majority of voters in the state at the polls, and also that in some states it still is not legal, should convince any right thinking person that it is not an upright, honest, moral business.

The writer of the question referred to the professed Christians doing these things (wagering and betting) and seeing no harm in it. I would refer these people to the Christian code of ethics which is to govern Christian living as set forth in Colossians 3:17 which says, "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus,..." and also in I Corinthians 10:31 which says, "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or **whatsoever** ye do, do all to the glory of God." Could anyone actually say, when they place a bet on a race, ball game, card game, bingo game, or roulette, that "I am doing this in the name of the Lord Jesus and for the glory of God"? Certainly not.

Let these people take a second look at I Peter 2:12 and consider how far they think they would get in witnessing for Christ and talking to a person about Christ and salvation when that person knew they had been out there and engaging in such activities. It certainly is very clearly a thing for professed Christian people to avoid and not dabble with.

LIVING FREE FROM SIN I JOHN 3:9

Question: Please explain I John 3:9.

Answer: This text reads, "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God."

The first part of this verse interposes little or no problem. Numerous Scriptures make it clear and plain that one who is born again (born of God) is delivered from the power of sin and enabled through the power of God to live a holy life free from sin. Matthew 1:21 "...He shall save his people **from** their sins." Luke 1:73-75, "The oath which he swore to our father Abraham, That he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve him without fear, In holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life." Romans 6:14, "...Sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are...under grace." This makes it clear that the grace of God breaks the power and dominion of sin in the life of the person who receives it. Romans 6:17-18, "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..." This text makes it clear that when one obeys from his heart the Word of God and complies with its terms and conditions, he is set free from sin.

But the second part of this verse is a source of much controversy. We cannot interpret this to mean that one who is born again, saved, born of God, cannot possibly commit sin or even return to a life of sin if he so chooses. This would do violence to numerous Scriptures which teach to the contrary. II Peter 2:20-21, says, "For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have know it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them." II Peter 3:17 says, "Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own stedfastness." In II Peter, chapter one, beginning with verse five, a number of Christian graces are catalogued which the Christian is diligently to add to his Christian life. Then verse ten says, "Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall." Verse nine says, "But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins." These verses make it clear that only through diligent pursuit of the Christian life and cultivation of the Christian graces in one's life can he maintain his

experience and that one who fails to do this will fall from his own steadfastness and forget the experience he had with God at one time.

We are to understand this part of the text as applying to a present, up-to-date, continuing experience and relationship with God "Because he **IS** [present tense] born of God." He has the seed of God (God's Word and Spirit) abiding in him and he cannot sin as long as he is in this state. It does not mean that he does not possess the power, right or privilege to commit sin, but sin is contrary and repulsive to his nature and to the principles of light and truth that are in his soul and he cannot do it for that reason. It is the same as we would say about a man of irreproachable character and integrity: "That man cannot lie, cannot steal, cannot commit any of many other enormities in the catalog of sin and unrighteousness." Not because he does not have the power and ability to do such things even as other men do, but it is so foreign to his character and life and the way we know him. Perhaps that thought is best stated in the words of Joseph to Potiphar's wife in Genesis 39:9, "...How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" He had the power to do that thing even as other men, but it was so obnoxious and repulsive to his pure character that he just could not do it, but fled from it.

Also, it must be understood that he cannot purposely, knowingly do evil while the seed of God (the divine principle and truth) remains in him and he is born of God; for as soon as he consents to the evil and turns from the light and truth, this seed of God departs from him and he has departed from the holy commandment and is no longer a child of God.

EARNING OUR SALVATION/HEALING THROUGH WORKS?

Question: Are there "methods" of working for or earning our salvation and healing? I know a preacher who preaches this way strongly.

Answer: No, there are no "methods" of working for or earning our salvation or healing. Ephesians 2:8-9 says, "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." Again, Titus 3:4-7 says, "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 heirs according to the hope of eternal life."

These texts and many more make it clear that salvation is by grace through faith and not of works. I remember a day when God told me straight out that I would be worthy of His blessings only as long as I put my faith in the merits of the shed blood of His Son, and that only, for every favor I ever got from Him. And that as soon as I began to think that He was obligated to me or owed me anything or that I had earned or merited any blessing from Him because of any good thing I had done or any sacrifice I had made or any service I had rendered, that very moment I became unworthy of the least of His favors.

However, we must recognize that the promises of God for salvation or healing or any other favors are conditional promises; and the fulfillment of them is contingent upon our doing certain things and meeting certain conditions set forth in connection with the promises. To the sinner seeking salvation the requirements are: Confess and forsake his sins (I John 1:9, Psalm 32:5 and Proverbs 28:13), Repent (Acts 17:30, Luke 24:47, II Corinthians 7:10-11, Mark 1:14-15 and Acts 3:19), Forgiveness of those who have wronged him (Matthew 6:12, 14-15, Mark 11:25-26 and more), Restitution—making his wrongs right (Ezekiel 33:15 and Luke 19:8) and believe in

the Lord Jesus Christ as God's Son and his Saviour (John 3:16, John 5:24, John 8:24, John 20:31 and Mark 16:16). If a sinner does not do all of these things and meet Bible conditions, he can never be saved. It is the same with promises for healing or any other favor from God. Possibly the minister you refer to in the question may have been dealing with this angle. To teach a doctrine of salvation by works constitutes a corruption of the pure gospel of Christ and is contrary to the doctrine which we have learned and those who teach such things are in error and should not be accepted. (Romans 16:17).

HEALING BY USE OF PSYHCOLOGY/"PRAYER THERAPY"

Question: What part, if any, does God have in psychological healing or modern "Prayer Therapy"? I know this may help some people—neurotics, psychosomatics, etc., but it is hard for me to believe God works this way. Am I wrong?

Answer: No, you are not wrong. You are exactly right. God established His own method of working in the early church and has outlined it in the Bible for humble saints and humble ministers to go by. It has never changed. It was not and is not today through the human sciences or psychology, transcendental meditation, mesmerism, hypnotism, modern "prayer therapy" and such like, but is through obeying the plain, simple instructions of God's Word. Some of the aforesaid things are purely of human origin and some of just plain Satanic origin and relate to witchcraft and should be religiously avoided by Christian people.

In Mark 16:17-18 Jesus said, "And these signs shall follow them that believe;...they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover." We see this is something that accompanies the preaching of the pure gospel of Christ and is accomplished by the laying on of hands of holy, humble people of God who believe in Christ. Again, in James 5:14-16 we read, "Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and the 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. Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." Here again we see that God's method of healing is through the operation of His church by holy men of God under the anointing of His spirit and acting according to His Word and living holy, righteous lives.

God's Word and God's Spirit are the two agents through which all the work of God is being carried on in the world today, and God's people receive their healing, salvation and all other benefits for both soul and body through faith in Christ, obedience to His Word and the power of His Spirit.

"WHOSOEVER SHALL PUT AWAY HIS WIFE...."

Question: Please explain Matthew 19:9, "And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery."

Answer: The basic law for interpreting Scriptures—any Scripture and all Scriptures—is known as "Unanimity of Faith." This means there must be a complete accord and agreement of all Scriptures on any particular subject. To isolate one Scripture on any

subject and put a private interpretation on it which is contradictory to the general plain teaching of the Scriptures on that subject is to do violence to the Scripture which will destroy the validity of that doctrine or teaching. Charles E. Brown said, "Now we ought not to found a doctrine upon a text of Scripture of doubtful meaning. We ought to found all doctrine upon Scriptural texts of plain meaning and then interpret the difficult texts by the plain texts." I certainly agree with this statement, and failure to follow this rule in interpreting the above text has led to a general breakdown of standard on this very important doctrine.

Then what is the plain teaching of the Scriptures on the subject of marriage and putting away and remarrying etc.? Without question, it is that marriage is for life and there is only one cause for "putting away" (unfaithfulness to the marriage vow), and that if one marries another while the former spouse is still living, he is guilty of the sin of adultery before God. This is the teaching of all the plain texts in the Bible on this subject, as follows: Matthew 5:32, Luke 16:18, Mark 10:11-12, Romans 7:2-3, I Corinthians 7:10-11, 39, Malachi 2:14-16. All of these texts are plain and unmistakable in their teaching and definitely establish God's doctrine on this subject. Matthew 19:9 must be interpreted by them.

My understanding of this text is that it contains two parts. The Pharisees had asked Jesus if it were lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause—verse 3. This was the full extent of their question. They never asked anything about marrying another spouse after this one was put away. That was no question with them since that was common practice among them and divorce and remarriage was allowable under the law. They even had more than one wife and lived with them at the same time (polygamy).

In the first part of this verse, Jesus answered their question after discussing at some length God's original purpose and arrangement for marriage by saying that the only cause for which a man could put away his wife was for fornication. This relates to Matthew 5:32 where the same thing is stated and confirms the fact that a person has the right to put away a spouse for this cause because it is backed up by two witnesses and, according to God's Word, every word is established by two witnesses. Matthew 18:16 and John 8:17. "Putting away" is all that is under consideration up to this point. Then after He had answered their question He went ahead and introduced His own New Testament doctrine that if one marries another after that one is put away, he commits adultery. This, no doubt, shocked the Pharisees and it is certain it shocked Jesus' disciples by their response to that statement: "If the case of a man be so with his wife; it is not good to marry." Matthew 19:10. It is evident these chosen men understood from what He said that marriage was a binding thing, and if it were that binding and that difficult to get out of, it would just be better to not enter into it.

Therefore, I conclude that according to Matthew 19:9, a man is permitted to put away his wife for the cause of fornication and for no other cause, and that to marry another while that woman is still living is forbidden and to do so is adultery. In Matthew 5:32 Jesus comes out very strongly on this point and says if a man puts away his wife for any cause except fornication, he **causes** her to commit adultery. In other words, he is a contributor to her delinquency for putting her away from himself when she is a loyal and chaste wife. God would hold him responsible right along with her for having done this thing and exposed her to this condition.

QUALIFICATIONS FOR BISHOP SAME FOR ANY MINISTER? I TIM 3:1

Question: Does I Timothy 3:1 apply to any minister or just to bishops only?

Answer: This verse refers specifically to "bishops" and the following verses give a detailed outline of the qualifications of the man who is to fill that place. The New American Standard Version says, "If any man aspires to the office of overseer." Williams Version says, "...the office of pastor." King James says, "If any man desire the office of a bishop." This makes it clear that the "bishop" is the overseer or pastor in a congregation. The catalog of qualifications given in this case are strict and are calculated to protect and establish the bishop's (pastor's) right to speak on any and all matters even in dealing with members of his congregation on real close points as a pastor must do at times. But there may be those, and I am sure there are, whom God has His hand on and is using in a good way to proclaim His gospel and edify the church and win souls for Him whom we might not consider eligible to fill the responsible place of a "bishop"—pastor or overseer of a congregation. It surely would be clear to all that the pastor has a unique calling and fills a unique place in and to the church where he pastors and that his qualifications would be more strict than for a "lay preacher" or someone else working for God in other capacities.

CAN ONE WHO HAS TWO LIVING COMPANIONS TEACH/PREACH?

Question: Should anyone qualify to preach or even teach Sunday school, if he has two living companions even though he is not living with either of them?

Answer: On January 17 and 18, 1958, a ministers' meeting was held in Bakersfield, CA, which dealt principally with this same question and there were perhaps ten or eleven hours of discussion on it by a sizable group of ministers. Be it known that there was not a single minister in the group assembled who felt it would be all right for a person to preach at all if he had been married to two women and was still living with his second wife while his first wife was living, and that was not even considered part of the question.

There was a wide range of views in the beginning. Some felt that if a person had cleared up from his adulterous marriage and was living a life above reproach either with his own first wife or alone as a single person not attached to any woman at all, he would be as clean and clear as anyone else and eligible to fill any and all positions in the ministry. Others held that such a person would not be considered eligible to preach at all so long as both of those companions lived. But as the discussion went on and there was a mutual exchange of thoughts and points, the range of views narrowed, and finally at the close the group assembled concurred in the following resolution:

"BE IT RESOLVED that when a person has been involved in a plural marriage; even though he may now be cleared up from it, it is the advice of this group of ministers that because of the question such involvement would leave in the minds of the people, such an one could best serve the interests of the gospel and the church in other capacities than that of a minister to preach the gospel.

"BE IT ALSO RESOLVED that in the event the pastor of a congregation is confronted with such a case and the individual has cleared up from the adulterous marriage and is living above reproach either with his own wife or virtuously alone as a single person not connected with any women at all and it be well established in the mind of such pastor that the Spirit of God is working with the individual and that God would be glorified in his ministry; that it would be left to his divine leadings and judgment as to whether the individual in the case be permitted to preach at all in his congregation.

"BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that in general such person should be left free to work freely for God in other capacities outside of the ministry and should be

encouraged to live for God and be as useful as he possibly can for the glory of God and the good of the church." (End of resolution.)

In as much as the Word of God says, "...In the multitude of counsellors there is safety" (Proverbs 11:14 and 24:6), and in as much as there was a good number of ministers concurring in this conclusion and resolution; I feel it safe to accept this as a conclusion to this question.

MARK OF THE BEAST

Question: Is all this numbering system and everything and everybody having a number and the computerizing of all transactions, banking, etc., which seems to be coming in the near future, the mark of the beast spoken of in the Bible?

Answer: No. To my understanding it is not and for the following reasons. The "Mark of the beast" is referred to in Revelation 13:16-17. In this case the mark had a religious signification because those who received it were worshipping the beast—verse 12. Also, there were other things these people received besides the mark of the beast: Namely, the number and the name of the beast—it was all pertaining to the system.

The first thing to do in interpreting this text is to find out what the beast was. Also we must understand that the book of Revelation is written in symbolic language and the interpretation of it must be by analogy—that is; each thing mentioned is a drawn picture not of itself but of something analogous to it.

In this 13th chapter of Revelation there are two beasts mentioned, but it is clear that the first beast is the one under consideration here because the second beast caused the people to worship the first beast—verse 12.

Some of the identifying marks of this beast were seven heads and ten horns. There are others also but we use these marks for special identity. In the 17th chapter of Revelation we again see this same beast, having seven heads and ten horns, and with a glamorous woman riding upon him this time. This is important because it identifies a dual personality—a political-religious system. It is a false, apostate, corrupt system to be sure because this woman is described in verse one as "the great whore" and further in verse five as "MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH."

But this 17th chapter of Revelation proceeds to identify this beast religion in an unmistakable way. Verse nine says "The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth." Verse ten says, "And there are seven kings:..." The seven heads represented both the seven mountains and the seven kings. The city of Rome corresponds to this description because she is situated upon seven hills (mountains) and had seven systems of government during the time of her reign as a universal kingdom. The seven kings refer to these seven different systems of government she had. Verse 12 says: "And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet;..." This is a reference to the ten minor kingdoms which came out of the Roman Empire during its decline and fall. These are historical facts.

Rome has been the seat of two major systems of false religion—Paganism and Papalism. This is also an historical fact. Paganism is symbolized in the Revelation by a great dragon having seven heads and ten horns—Revelation 12:3. Papalism is symbolized by the first beast of Revelation 13:1 which also had seven heads and ten horns which identifies it as the same power but in a different form. It was the mark of this beast which is referred to in Revelation 13:16-17.

An illusion is made here perhaps to the custom of marking or branding slaves to identify them as belonging to certain masters. Also certain cults and groups marked

or branded their members. In many instances in the Bible illusions are made to general customs and practices of the time with which the people were familiar to illustrate certain truths.

God also seals or marks His subjects or saints. In Revelation 7:3 it is said "...Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have SEALED [marked] the servants of our God in their foreheads." In Revelation 14:1 we read, "And I looked, and, lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with Him an hundred forty and four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads." This company represented the great host of triumphant, overcoming saints (the entire company of the redeemed) because we read in Revelation 3:12, "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God,..." The votaries of this false religion received the name of the beast. The true people of God are all marked with His name in their foreheads.

"Forehead" is a symbol of intellect or mind and God marks all of His true followers with His law written in their minds and hearts—Hebrews 8:10. The members of this or any false religion are all marked with the laws, ordinances, doctrines, rituals and creeds of their respective religions in their minds and hearts—the "Mark of the beast." God seals or marks His true saints with His Spirit, the holy Spirit of promise"—Ephesians 1:13; Ephesians 4:30; II Corinthians 1:22. The Spirit of God with His fruits as described in Galatians 5:22-23 being manifest in the life is the identifying mark of all true Christians. So likewise the false and apostate religions mark all their subjects with their spirit and the fruits of it in their lives. God's Spirit is the Spirit of truth (John 14:7) and guides His followers into all truth (John 16:13) and writes the truth in their hearts (II Corinthians 3:3). The spirit of this false system of religion is a spirit of error and marks its subjects with error, superstition, and doctrines of men.

There have been three major systems of false religion dealt with in the Revelation. One is paganism or heathenism (the dragon). The other two are Papalism and Protestantism symbolized by the two beasts of Revelation 13. The same false spirit runs through the whole line and it is all God-dishonoring. In this way the second beast (Protestantism) caused its subjects to receive the mark of the first beast (Papalism) by injecting into them the same spirit of error, also by copying in their man-made creeds and disciplines some of the errors of the first beast. Also they patterned their system after the human system of man-rule and human government.

It is said that no man could buy nor sell if he did not have the mark of the beast. Buying and selling are symbols of the ordinary pursuits and privileges of an ordinary citizen in intermingling with society. To be forbidden to buy and sell would be equivalent to being banished from society. This same principle has been carried over into human religious systems that one who does not fellowship their spirit and subscribe to their creeds and doctrines of men have no rights or privileges among them. The true ministers of God are not permitted to give out or preach the gospel (sell) in their assemblies and wherever the true ministers of God are preaching the truth the votaries of these religions are warned to not go there or to be affected by their preaching (buy). This idea has been especially pronounced in the Papal system in so much that any of their members who ventured to attend a church service other than the Catholic are required to do penance for it and if they persist in such a practice they are renounced as heretics and excommunicated and consigned to hell and shunned by faithful Catholics as those accursed. I understand that in recent years the Catholic stand on this is being modified as an ecumenical move, but up until recent times one was severely dealt with for failure to recognize the church and its decrees as absolute. They could not buy nor sell—engage in the regular pursuits of life and mingle with society.

WHY GOD CREATED MAN

Question: A writer asks, "What is man's purpose in life? Why did God create man?"

Answer: The fact that God created man within itself would not necessarily tell us a great deal about man because God created everything else, too. But the time, manner and condition in which He created him tells us much about man. There is no other part of the entire creation like unto man. Because God created man last of all we conclude that He was preparing the world He had made with all its living things; animals, herbs, fruit bearing trees, etc., and with the sun, moon, and stars, etc., to light, warm and control the climate and atmosphere of the earth, etc., to be suitable residence for the tenant He was to make and place in it. It was out of special deference to man that He made all the rest.

In Genesis 1:26 we read: "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness:..." This was said of none of the other creatures God created but when it came to man He made him an intelligent, reasoning, spiritual, discriminating, free acting agent with the power and right of free choice. Holiness, righteousness, and truth were in his inward parts since he came fresh from the hand of God. All of these things were existent attributes in God and man must possess them also to be in the image and likeness of God.

God is love, but love is an attribute which can never be satisfied without a full return of affection from the object of its love. Hence, man was made with an inherent, built-in capacity for loving God and responding to Him. Man in his creative state fresh from the hand of God was perfectly fitted for an association with God. This was the prime objective God had in creating man—that they might associate together and love each other and hold communion and sweet fellowship together. In Genesis 3:8 we read, "And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day:..." It was, no doubt, common practice for God to walk and talk with the man He had made.

It seems also in Genesis 1:26-28 that God had in mind for man to be a kind of general manager and overseer of all the work of God's hands in the earth—he was to have dominion over every living thing that moveth upon the earth and was to subdue it—verse 28.

In Isaiah 43:7 we read, "Even every one that is called by my name: for I have created him for my glory,..." Ah! there we have it; created for God's glory.

Man lost all of this image and likeness of God out of his nature through the fall into sin which corrupted the entire human race. Consequently he had to be banished from the presence and fellowship of God. (Genesis 3:22-24.) God still loved man and had the same purpose and objective for him, so He devised a plan of salvation for him and sent Jesus to make an atonement for man's sin and to perfect an arrangement for restoring man back to his creative state in communion and sweet fellowship with God, by the sacrifice of Himself and the shedding of His own blood for our cleansing from sin.

In describing the work and effects of salvation the Apostle Paul said in Colossians 3:10, "And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him." He is then restored back into the image and likeness of God. Also Ephesians 4:24 says "And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." This puts man right back where he is qualified to associate with God and hold communion and sweet fellowship with Him as at the beginning. In fact we read in Ephesians 2:10, "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." This is an enlightening text pertaining

to the question under consideration. It makes it clear that God ordained before (even from the beginning) that we should walk in good works and be eligible for sweet fellowship with Him.

Again we read in II Corinthians 6:16, "...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." This text makes it clear again what God's real purpose and objective was in creating man—to dwell in them and walk in them and hold sweet fellowship with them. Job 7:17 says, "What is man, that thou shouldest magnify him? and that thou shouldest set thine heart upon him?" And verse 18 says, "And that thou shouldest visit him every morning,...?" This makes it clear that God loves man, has His heart set upon him, and desires to hold communion with him daily.

Then it is evident from these texts and many more that God made man that He might have a being upon whom He could bestow His love and who would be capable of responding to that love and returning it to Him by loving Him with all his heart, soul, mind, and strength and thus to glorify God.

CAPITAL PUNISHMENT

Question: Please explain why the Church of God does not believe in capital punishment. I have always believed the Bible plainly taught capital punishment and I would like to know your views concerning the same.

Answer: In the time of the Old Testament and the law dispensation capital punishment was not only taught but was required. There were a number of crimes for which the death penalty was required. Murder and adultery were punishable by death; also blasphemy, the doing of any work on the Sabbath Day (Exodus 35:2), a son who cursed (reviled) his father or mother was to be put to death, (Exodus 21:17) and if he smote his father or mother he was to be put to death (Exodus 21:15), a worshipper of strange gods (sun, moon, or any of the hosts of heaven) among the Israelites was to be put to death (Deuteronomy 17:2-7), a false prophet who enticed the people in idolatry was to be put to death (Deuteronomy 13:1-11), a stubborn, rebellious, disobedient son was to be put to death (Deuteronomy 21:18-21). Also various other sins and crimes were punishable by death as required by the law.

But when we pass the line into the New Testament dispensation, we read no more of such things. We have a case in the 8th chapter of John, verses 3-11, of a woman taken in adultery being brought to Jesus by the scribes and Pharisees. Now adultery was one of the crimes for which the death penalty was required under the law (Leviticus 20:10) and the scribes and Pharisees pressed this point with Jesus and inquired of Him what should be done with her. He never pronounced death upon her, but freely forgave her sin and told her to go and sin no more. This incident proves that Jesus was not going by and advocating the death penalty as required by the old law. Jesus Himself said in Luke 9:56 that He came not to destroy men's lives, but to save them. And according to the rule Jesus gave these scribes and Pharisees for executing a death sentence—"He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her"—it seems certain that no one out there in the world who supervises these things would be eligible to execute a death sentence.

In the biggest majority of cases a person who is executed is dropped right off into an eternal hell. Many of them are not prepared to go. I know how it makes me feel personally when I hear of people being snuffed out into eternity in accidents or shootings, disasters, etc., and know there is an overwhelming chance that they were not prepared. It makes me feel very bad and sends a shiver over me to realize that beyond all probability souls have just arrived in hell to never return back again. Then

if I endorsed and supported a law or helped by my vote and sanction, a law to execute men and beyond all probability drop them into an eternal hell, I would feel badly indeed to know I had that much personal responsibility in such a thing.

Also, there have been different cases of the wrong person being executed for a crime and it was later proven that someone else committed the crime and the one who was put to death was innocent of the crime for which he paid. Only God knows the hearts of all men and is qualified to judge righteously, and He says, "...Vengeance is mine; I will repay,..." (Romans 12:19.)

ROLE OF MAN AND WIFE IN THE HOME

Question: Are men supposed to be lords over women as we think of it today? Would you please explain the Bible version of a man and wife role in the home?

Answer: No, I do not think that men should be lords over women or that any person whatever his position is, should be lord over any other person. I do not feel that God has given to any person the right to dominate the life of any other person. He does not even allow a God-called, God-ordained pastor over a congregation to be lord over that congregation. (I Peter 5:3.) God did not permit Christian masters to be lords over their servants. (Colossians 4:1 and Ephesians 6:9.) Neither is a man authorized by God to lord over or dominate the life of his wife.

Let us make no mistake at this point. When two people enter into marriage, both are cast into a new role different from any role they have ever been in before and their respective roles are clearly defined and outlined in the Scriptures. Up to this time they have been just a man and woman like all other men and women. But now that man is no longer just a man but he is a husband with certain fixed and clearly defined duties and responsibilities toward that certain woman he has taken to be his wife. That woman is no longer just a woman but she is now a wife with clearly defined duties and responsibilities toward the man she has chosen to be her husband.

The Bible does not require you to marry. It just requires certain things of you if you do. If you do not want to come under these regulations you are perfectly free to stay out of marriage and that is what you should do. But the question has to do with those who have already entered into marriage and what the role of each partner is in that relationship. Once you enter into marriage you are no longer free to determine what you will or will not do. The terms are not optional but are clearly defined and outlined in the Scriptures.

In I Timothy 5:14 we read, "I will therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house, give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully."

The first thing mentioned here as a duty of a married woman (wife) is to bear children. If a woman does not want children and the responsibility of taking care of them, teaching, and training them, etc. she had better stay out of marriage because that is the natural fruit of marriage. The next thing mentioned is that she is to guide the house. Upon her is placed the responsibility by God to teach, train, and guide the lives of the children which God gives her and to manage her house and family well so that there will be no occasion for the adversary to speak reproachfully.

Titus 2:4-5 says, "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." Here the wife is commanded to love her husband. She must do this and in so doing support, comfort, console, encourage and stand back of him in his life's work, his burdens

and all of his doings. She is also commanded to love her children and in so doing she will properly care for them, guide, teach, and train them. She is also commanded to be a keeper at home and to be obedient to her own husband. The wife is to be the homemaker and to keep and maintain her house in a proper and attractive manner. If a woman does not maintain her home and herself in a proper manner and keep her house in order, her marriage is going to suffer and not be what God ordained it to be.

This text enjoins upon a wife to be obedient to her husband. If a woman does not want to be subject to her husband and have a man telling her what to do, she should leave marriage alone. The Bible is quite explicit on this point in numbers of texts. If a woman does not want to spend her time in her own home taking care of her house, she should not marry because the Bible is explicit on this point also. This is the course God set for women in the marriage relation and she cannot expect God's blessings upon her life, home, and marriage if she comes short of her obligations on these lines.

I said in the beginning of this discussion that I did not believe that a man (husband) should lord over a woman (his wife). I say the same again. Let us not be mistaken or overlook the fact that God's Word requires a wife to be in subjection and obedient to her husband. Ephesians 5:22-24 says, "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto 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 wives be to their own husbands in every thing." Colossians 3:18 says, "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord." I Peter 3:1 says, "Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands;..." It is unmistakably clear that a wife is to be in subjection to her own husband and obey him. There is a big difference between a wife being in subjection to her husband and being lorded over by him. This is God's Word. He wrote the Bible and set up this arrangement and we will just have to fall in line with it, if we want God's blessings on our marriage and in our lives.

A woman said to me awhile back that she did not think the women should be slaves, and that is exactly right. I agree with that statement one hundred percent and so do the holy Scriptures. The teachings in the Scriptures on this subject do not mean that, and do not give a man the right to reduce his wife to the position of a virtual slave by taking away her inherent rights as an individual and ruling over her with rigor. That word *rigor* is defined as "Severity or strictness in conduct, temperament or judgment: stiffness and rigidity." *Rigid* is defined as "Not bending, stiff, inflexible, rigorous, harsh, severe." It is hard to think of any man being this way with the wife of his bosom. Yet some are and even plead the Scriptures in support of their conduct.

I have news for you. The Scriptures do not support you in this kind of behavior toward your wife but rather condemn you. Any man who stretches the Scripture to cover that ground will surely miss the mark and cannot expect God's blessings on his marriage or in his life. Neither does he have a right to expect his wife to love, reverence, and respect him.

Have you ever heard the saying "Every man is a king and his home is his palace"? This may be true, but let us look at it a little. History, both sacred and profane shows us the records of many kings who have ruled over their kingdoms, some large and some small. Among them have been some who have ruled in righteousness, with justice and equity, and with consideration for the welfare of their subjects. These have been much loved and revered by their subjects and greatly mourned at their death. This is the way Christ rules over His wife, the Church, and this is the way the Scriptures teach a man to rule over his wife. In I Peter 5:7 we read, "Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you." This is a great and glorious truth picturing Christ as caring tenderly for His wife, the Church, in all of

her cares and burdens. This is the way and attitude in which Christ rules over the Church and is the way and attitude in which men are to rule over their wives.

In Ephesians 5:23 we read, "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." *Saviour* is defined as "A person who rescues someone from dire circumstances." This is applied principally to Christ; but in this text it is also applied to the husband with his wife. The way the husband is the saviour of his wife's body is by nourishing, strengthening, comforting her, supporting and upholding her, bearing her burdens, shouldering the long end of the burdens and responsibilities of the home and family, and by always standing by her as a present help in any time of trouble. This is the way Christ is with His wife, the Church, and this is the attitude in which He rules over her. In this 5th chapter of Ephesians, verses 22 and 23, an analogy is drawn between Christ and the Church and the husband and his wife and the teaching here is that the husband is to be with his wife in the same way Christ is with the Church, and is to rule over her in the same way and attitude in which Christ rules over the Church.

In Matthew 11:28-29, Christ is seen making the Church's burden light because she is yoked up with Him and He bears the big end of the load. This is the way the husband is to be with his wife and the attitude in which he is to rule over her.

In Songs of Solomon 8:5 we read, "Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness, leaning upon her beloved?..." Here in this love affair between the shepherd and the Shulamite woman, we have represented in a figure, Christ and the Church, His wife. She is leaning on Him as her strength and support. A husband is the symbol of strength and security for his wife.

In I Peter 3:1-7 we see that the first six verses are teaching how the wife would be submissive and obedient to her husband and be in subjection to him and manifest a meek and quiet spirit toward him, etc. God's ways are equal (Ezekiel 18:25) and His instructions are well balanced. In verse seven He turns to the husband and instructs him to dwell with his wife according to knowledge and to give honor to her as unto the weaker vessel, stating that they are heirs together of the grace of life. He closes this verse by saying, "That your prayers be not hindered." I know and you know also that many homes are not godly nor what they should be. Many spiritual lives are blighted and the prayers of many are weak and ineffectual. People are unable to maintain victorious lives all because there is an improper relationship between the husband and wife.

All of the instructions in these verses give the husband the advantage over his wife, but in verse seven the husband is admonished to not take advantage of the natural advantage that he has over his wife. I may not interpret the thought in this verse regarding the wife being the weaker vessel according to your thinking. Even though the woman is more delicately constructed than a man and may be weaker physically in some respects than men; I do not consider this text as referring to that. I consider this text as applying to just exactly what is being discussed in these verses and since God placed her in subjection to her husband and commanded her to be obedient to him, that weakens her vantage point in dealing with him and gives her husband a natural advantage over her. Thus she is referred to as "the weaker vessel" because of her natural disadvantage in this respect; the husband is commanded to not take advantage of this, but to give honor to her. And if the husband will be with his wife as Christ is with the Church and rule over her in the same spirit and way that Christ rules over the Church, she will naturally honor and reverence him and delight in submitting to him.

Also let us not overlook the clause in I Peter 3:7, "And as being heirs together of the grace of life." This makes it clear that in God's sight the husband and his wife are equal heirs together of God's blessings and of the grace of life. But for the

convenience of home management and family life, God placed the wife in subjection to her husband. Therefore as he exercises his authority, let him realize he is exercising authority over an equal according to God's will, and not over a person inferior to him. Take this woman out of the family relationship and she would be equal with the man who is now her husband and with anyone else and everyone else in the whole world in God's sight. Galatians 3:28 says, "...there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus."

To sum up let us conclude in regard to the husband and wife role in the home that "Home Making" is the grandest of all occupations for women and a "Fine Art" that should be mastered by all Christian women. I saw a sign in a restaurant once which read "Keep your wife for a pet and eat here." Sounds romantic indeed but the Bible does not teach that. To eat meals out is fine on occasion and should be. A dutiful wife and mother surely deserves a break occasionally. But in the overall picture, the Bible teaches that a husband is to provide a home and all the necessary things of life for his wife and children through his gainful efforts along whatever line he may be engaged. Then it teaches that the wife is to make that house a home.

Edgar A. Guest said, "It takes a heap of living in a house to make it home." Someone else said, "What is home without a mother?" This is very true and it is the duty and privilege of a wife and mother to make the house a home, and the more attractive she can make it for her husband and children, the better it will be. The wife should seek to make the home and herself as attractive as possible for her husband—make him always feel that he has a nice place to come and a nice person to come home to when the day's work is done.

I do not know why or where some women get the idea that they owe their husbands nothing, but they are his responsibility and he is to take care of them. A wife owes her husband just as much as he owes her, but just in a different category and in a different way, and he is her responsibility the same as she is his. Marriage is a partnership and the wife is just as obligated to fulfill her responsibilities as her husband is to "bring home the bacon." Neither a husband or a wife has any right to exact or expect more of the other than either he or she is willing to give in return in their respective roles. A wife has no right to require her husband to provide her with a living and support and maintain her, if she is not willing to properly maintain a nice home for him and take proper care of his children. Neither does a husband have a right to expect his wife to maintain his home and take care of his children if he is not willing to at least do his best to properly support her. The Bible does not teach any of us to expect something for nothing but rather the contrary.

II Thessalonians 3:10, I Timothy 5:8 and 14 combine to teach clearly that if either partner in a marriage does not creditably perform his or her part, it will bring discredit on the Christian profession and the gospel and give occasion to the enemy.

FRIENDS OF THE MAMMON OF UNRIGHTEOUSNESS

Question: Please explain Luke 16:9.

Answer: Luke 16:9 reads as follows: "And I say unto you, Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations."

There are several qualifying points in this text, but before we analyze them, let us notice some other similar passages. I Timothy 6:17-19 says, "Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; Laying up in

store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life." Again in Matthew 25:34-36 Jesus said, "Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me." Again Jesus speaking in Luke 12:33-34 says, "Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." In Matthew 19:21, Jesus said to the rich young man who came to Him seeking the way to obtain eternal life, "If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me."

All of these texts and others are parallel and identical in their message with the text of our question—Luke 16:9. They are all teaching the same thing but all of them together broaden the perspective of the thought more than any one of them would alone. All of these passages seem to teach the idea of being saved through our good works, benevolences, and charities. But that could not be true because such an interpretation would clash head-on with many other plain Scriptures pertaining to our obtaining salvation and eternal life. In Titus 3:4-6 we read, "But after 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." This passage makes it perfectly clear that it is a distinct work of God through the operation of the Holy Ghost in one's soul that saves him and not the works of righteousness one does. All the good works, benevolences, and charities spoken of in all the above texts are certainly works of righteousness and pertain to salvation, but that is not what saves one. Ephesians 2:8-9 says, "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." Here is another plain text which makes it plain that one is saved by grace and not by his works. Also II Timothy 1:9 says, "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." There are many other texts similar to these, but according to God's law every word is established by two or three witnesses, so I feel it unnecessary to multiply Scriptures and take more space on this point.

Now the question naturally arises, "If these Scriptures do not teach salvation by works of righteousness consisting of one's good deeds, benevolences, and charities, then what do they teach?" They certainly seem to teach this, I agree. As has already been pointed out; they could not teach this without clashing head-on with other plain Scriptures pertaining to obtaining salvation. This the Scriptures never do.

What we need to realize and recognize is that many specific scriptures have a specific objective and emphasize a certain point. Perhaps no one scripture covers all the conditions of salvation. Failing to recognize this, many in the religious world today have missed the mark and established wrong doctrines on certain scriptures. For example: In Acts 16:31 where Paul and Silas were giving instruction to the penitent, broken, contrite jailer inquiring the way to be saved, "...Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house." On a broad scale this scripture has been seized upon to establish a doctrine that all one has to do is believe on the Lord Jesus Christ to be saved. This doctrine overlooks and by-passes the ideas of repentance, restitution, confession of sins, forgiving others who have wronged us and seeking the forgiveness of those we have wronged, brokenness of spirit, contrition of heart, godly sorrow, etc. and just makes it a simple matter of

believing on the Lord Jesus Christ. This jailer had already reached this place and his works and attitude proved it. Paul and Silas recognized this and cried out to him exultantly, "Jesus is the one who can save you; believe on Him." That was all that was left to do in this case. Again in Acts 22:16 when God had sent Ananias to Saul of Tarsus to pray for him that he might receive his sight and be filled with the Holy Ghost, Ananias said to him, "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." On this Scripture and other similar ones the doctrine has been founded of being saved by baptism. Let us not overlook the fact that Paul had already repented and humbled his heart in surrender to the Lord and submission to His will and had been fasting and praying for three days and God made this known to Ananias. Now all that remained for him to do was to be baptized and put the seal on it.

Thus it is evident and plain to be seen that no one Scripture sets forth all the conditions of salvation but each has a specific objective and emphasizes a specific point according to its setting and related conditions. We are to view Luke 16:9 and all the parallel texts in this light. Certainly no one will be saved and obtain eternal life just because he did good works and because of his benevolences and charities. It is also certain that no one can be saved without this kind of a spirit and disposition. It is the spirit of Christ without which no one can be saved. Romans 8:9 says, "...Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." In Matthew 25:41-42 we read, "Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: For I was an hungered and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not." Here is a people being doomed because they had not the spirit of Christ and therefore neglected to help the needy people around them.

Now let us analyze Luke 16:9 specifically. The occasion of this statement is a preceding parable which Jesus had spoken concerning an unjust steward who was going to be dismissed from his stewardship because he had wasted his master's goods. When this was announced to him, he called in all of his master's debtors and discounted all their bills with the thought in mind that when he was put out of his master's house they would receive him into their houses in return for his favor to them. Jesus commended him for looking ahead and making provision for himself in the future, and then proceeds to instruct us to do the same thing. Not to defraud and embezzle as this man did, to be sure, but to look beyond this present world and present time and make provisions for everlasting habitations in the world to come. He also makes it clear that the proper use of our material substance in helping the needy people around us is a part of doing this.

In Matthew 6:20 Jesus instructs us to lay up for ourselves treasures in heaven; and in Matthew 19:21 He tells us how to do this: "...Go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven:..." Again, in Luke 12:33 Jesus said, "Sell that ye have, and give alms; provide yourselves...a treasure in the heavens that faileth not,..." This makes it clear that our good deeds, benevolences, charities, and help to the needy people around us are a part of the process of laying up treasures for ourselves in heaven. When a traveler arrives in a foreign country, he must go to the money exchangers and exchange his money for their currency which is legal tender in that country, so he can spend it there. God has His own currency exchange whereby when we perform our services, almsgiving, charities, and benevolences in the right spirit and in His Name and for His glory, He converts our material substance into spiritual substance which is legal tender in the heavenly country and becomes a treasure laid up in heaven for us.

The "mammon of unrighteousness" in the text is the material substance over which we are stewards, and we are instructed to use it in the manner outlined above.

The phrase, "When ye fail," refers to our death when we quit the walks of life. The last clause in the text, "They may receive you into everlasting habitations," could not be interpreted literally, and for the following reasons: The friends we make through the help we give with our material substance are not the ones who will receive us into heaven, but Jesus is the Judge and He will receive us when we pass His judgment. Also, we might die and pass on to our eternal home before those we have helped do and they would not be there to receive us. Also, many whom we help may not be saved in the end and consequently would not be there to receive us. It is all emphasizing that this is a part of the over-all process of one working out his own salvation and laying up treasures in heaven and obtaining eternal life.

Let us make no mistake about it. Salvation is not the result of our good works and charities; but these things are the result of our having salvation and part of the fruits of it, and are part of the process of maintaining our salvation and obtaining eternal life.

CHRIST THE FULFILLMENT OF THE LAW

Question: My question concerns the Old Testament Law. In Ephesians 2:15 it speaks of Christ "Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments." Also in Colossians 2:14, it speaks of "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances...nailing it to his cross." However, in I Timothy 1:8-10 it says, "But we know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully; Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient,..." Does this mean the law is still in use today to convict sinners of sin?

It also says in Galatians 3:24, "...The law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ." Galatians 3:25 says, "But after faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster." Is this speaking of humanity in general 2000 years ago, or does it mean the law is still bringing sinners to Christ today?

Now I have a more specific question which partly hinges on the former questions: In Deuteronomy 22:5 we read, "The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garment: for all that do so are abomination unto the Lord thy God." I am surely convinced that a woman should not wear slacks, so that is not the question. I Timothy 2:9 makes it clear that a woman should dress modestly, but what I want to know is: In dealing with others about this matter is it correct to refer back to the Old Testament Law?

Answer: In regard to the first part of this question the words, "In his flesh," in Ephesians 2:15 and "nailing it to his cross" in Colossians 2:14 are important key words. Many have difficulty in understanding that the Old Testament law was not carried over, at least in part, into the New Covenant of Grace because of the fact that there were many references to it in the New Testament and even in the ministry of Jesus, and He enjoined the observances of the law upon the people in numbers of instances. Jesus observed the law in many respects Himself. It must be remembered that the law was in effect until the death of Jesus. There was a lapping over of dispensations here and Jesus actually observed the law while teaching grace which was to come. John 1:17 says, "For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." That grace that Jesus brought was not fully given unto us until after the shedding of Christ's blood and the subsequent coming of the Holy Ghost.

In Matthew 5:17 we see that Jesus came to fulfill the law. It is also clear in the Scriptures that the law was not fulfilled until the death of Christ as the supreme sacrifice for sin. The Scriptures also make it clear that the law was a temporary

measure and that it had an end. In Galatians 3:19, we read, "Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made;..." This makes it clear that the law was to be in existence until the "seed" should come. Then we would conclude that after the "seed" came the law ceased to exist. Who was that "seed?" Galatians 3:16 says, "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." Then the law was to be in existence until Christ came. One of the Scriptures used in the question—Galatians 3:24-25—states that the law was our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ. The word *schoolmaster* was translated from a word which does not refer to the teacher but it means "pedagogue" which was a servant who escorted the children to school. He was not the teacher, but took the children to the teacher. Likewise, the law was not our teacher to teach us about Christ but was the agent which brought us to Christ, the great Teacher. Then this Scripture continues on to say that after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster. Consequently, when Christ came, the law (pedagogue) had done its work and served its purpose and brought us up to and delivered us to the great Teacher, Christ. When this was accomplished, then comes into focus the key words referred to in the first part of this answer: "In his flesh" and "nailing it to the cross." When Christ expired on the cross, He fulfilled the last jot and tittle of the law and finished it, and it had no further use or purpose in the plan of God as pertains to our salvation, but was totally abolished at Calvary. From that point on, everything pertaining to our relationship with God was on a different basis—faith in Christ instead of the works of the law—for both Jews and Gentiles. Accordingly, we read in Romans 10:4, "For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth."

No, the law is not still in use today to convict men of sin. That was its purpose in its time, all right. We read in Romans 3:20, "...for by the law is the knowledge of sin." Again we read in Romans 7:13, "...that sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful." and again in Romans 7:7, "...I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet." The bitter truth is that it convicted men of sin while providing no deliverance for them from sin, and consequently they lived in a state of continuous, perpetual conviction and condemnation with no means of escape until they became very wretched and miserable. (See Romans 7:24.) Today we have the Holy Spirit in the world to convict men of sin, so do not need the law for that purpose. John 16:8 says concerning the work of the Holy Spirit, "And when he is come, he will reprove [convince, "margin"] the world of sin,..." That is His office work now, and the glorious thing about being convicted by the Holy Spirit is that as we respond to that conviction and follow through and allow Him to perform His work of salvation in our hearts, He administers grace to deliver from the sin He has convicted us of and fills us with joy and peace.

As to the thought that the law is good if a man use it lawfully; that is, if he teaches concerning the law as for what it was and its purpose to give knowledge of sin and consequently to restrain sin until Christ should come and put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself, and when that was accomplished it had no further use in the plan of God and came to an end at Calvary; then it would be good and would enhance the gospel of Christ. Actually the law was good in its time and served as an effective restraint to sin and kept the Jews from falling into the same depths of degradation of the heathen nations around them. The only lawful use of the law now is as outlined here.

In regard to using Old Testament Scriptures to support New Testament truths I would say that at no time, and in no way, do saint ministers teach the law system as such and in no way do we teach anything as present day truth just because the law

said it. However, there are many things said in various parts of the law and Old Testament scriptures which contain principles of truth which are carried over and included in New Testament doctrine. For example: Jesus said in Matthew 5:27-28, "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart." Jesus taught very positively against adultery; not because the law had said, "Thou shalt not commit adultery," but because adultery is wrong and involves a wrong principle. He carried this right over into His teaching and expanded it to include mental adultery or a lustful disposition in one's heart. Several other similar examples could be given, but this will serve to establish my thought and I will move on.

I feel the text under consideration in Deuteronomy 22:5 falls in this category. At the time this text was written and in that land the garments of both men and women were close to identical. At least the outer garments were. Both wore long robes and the principle thing that distinguished the women's robes was a little decorative embroidery that was not on the men's robes. Consequently, I wondered for a long time why it would be so abominable to God if they should get them mixed up and one put on the other's garment. It came clear to me in my meditation at one time that there was a principle laid down here. God made both man and woman and established certain duties and courses of life for each of them. Here He lays down a principle to forever condemn any attitude on the part of either of them to want to be like the other and not be satisfied with the way God made them and the course He laid out for them. This principle is carried over into the New Testament also. We read in I Corinthians 6:9-10, among many other evil things, that effeminate persons shall not inherit the kingdom of God. I define effeminate as a womanish man; sissy. Webster is a little more sophisticated than that in his dictionary and defines it: "1. having unsuitable feminine qualities; unmanly; 2. marked by weakness and love of ease." Also in I Timothy 2:9-10 and in I Peter 3:1-6 and other texts, women are taught to be womanly. There are certain graces, refinements and delicacies which belong to womankind, and God's women are instructed and admonished to manifest these. In other words, God wants men to be real men, look like real men, act like real men, dress like real men and fill the place of real men. Likewise, He wants women to be real women, look like real women and dress like real women. In this country where dress is one of the principle distinctive features between men and women, this thought in Deuteronomy 22:5, which is carried over into the New Testament, comes strongly into focus. Accordingly, it is concluded that God's women must wear dresses (womanly apparel) and God's men must wear pants (manly apparel). The principle is forever the same. God still strongly condemns any attitude on the part of either women or men to want to be like the other.

No, we as saint ministers do not use Old Testament scriptures alone to establish any point. There must be scriptures or scriptural principles in the New Testament which relate to them to make their use permissible in establishing or confirming a doctrine. It is perfectly permissible, when a good foundation has been laid in the New Testament, to use Old Testament scriptures which relate to them and thus establish the fact that God's attitude has always been the same on any given point.

LORD'S SUPPER

Question: The Lord's Supper—How should it be done?—By each person breaking a small piece from a cracker or bread or what (?); by each person using a small individual glass for the fruit of the vine? Can the method as Christ did it in the Bible

be changed even though the meaning is the same? Some people dip bread in a glass of juice. Is this all right? How often should the Lord's Supper be taken?

Answer: First, let me say that we could not change the method as Christ delivered it to us in the Bible and the meaning still be the same. It is the most sacred and sublime of all the ordinances and should not be tampered with or changed in any manner. Every part of this ordinance signifies some particular part in redemption and we lose that signification and reality if we change any part of it in any way.

In I Corinthians 10:16-17 we read, "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread." It appears evident to me that the real communion of the body and blood of the Lord among believers could not be signified in any other way than by all of them partaking of one loaf and one cup representing the body and blood of the Lord. Paul makes it clear in I Corinthians 10:17 quoted above that all believers, though they be many, are one bread and one body because they are all partakers of that one Bread. A number of small individual glasses and a number of small individual wafers or pieces of bread may be a proper signification of sectism and division, or maybe of individualism, but not of the unity and oneness of believers as they partake of that one bread and one body.

In I Corinthians 12:13 we read, "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body,...and have been all made to drink into one Spirit." Again this can only be properly signified by our drinking of the one cup containing the emblem of Christ's blood.

In I Corinthians 11:23-24 we read, "....the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me." As Jesus held that bread in His hand and presented it to them, He announced that it was His body broken for them, which breaking took place only a few hours after that in His crucifixion on the cross. How could His body being broken be signified by a number of individual wafers or pieces of bread separated from the loaf by the minister and passed out to the communicants? It could not. When one bread (loaf) is passed and each communicant breaks off a bit he is reminded of the body which was broken for him. It is the same with the cup containing the emblem of the blood of Christ which was shed for the remission of sins; and we all drink of it together, and thus we have communion with one another in the Spirit as well as with Christ.

I know of no Scripture which tells how often we should observe the Lord's Supper. In I Corinthians 11:26 it says, "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come." It does not say how often; it just says, "As often." Acts 20:7 says, "And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread,..." Some have supposed from this that the Lord's Supper should be observed every Sunday when Christians come together to worship God. I do not see any particular point in this inasmuch as it is said in Acts 2:46 that they broke bread daily from house to house. Why then would we not conclude that it should be observed every day and from house to house because the early Jerusalem converts did that, as to say it should be done every Sunday because one Scripture says the disciples came together to break bread on the first day of the week? In John the 20th chapter we have two instances of the disciples meeting on the first day of the week (verses 19 and 26), but in neither of these instances does it mention breaking of bread. I agree that perhaps saints should observe this ordinance more often than we do in order to keep the sacrifice of Jesus in our behalf more fresh in our minds, but I know of no scripture which tells how often to do it.

As saints observe this holy, sacred, sublime ordinance in the Spirit, they are drawn closer to Christ and His sufferings and sacrifice than perhaps at any other time or in any other thing they do; and it all becomes more real to them. As a verse in one of our songs says, "Borne away in mind and spirit to that solemn awful scene of Mount Calvary's sacred summit where we see the crimson stream, flowing from the side of Jesus that has washed us snowy white; Here we seem in awe to compass round the reeking cross tonight." Not only so, but we are drawn closer to each other also as we in the Spirit partake of that one bread (the body of the Lord which was broken for us) and drink of that one cup (the blood of Jesus which was shed for the remission of our sins). As we all together partake of the body and blood of the Lord (in symbol), His grace and love flows from heart to heart and we are knit together in love in heart. "Our souls in fellowship embrace, And live in sweet communion." In this ordinance is represented to us one of the grandest themes of all Holy Writ—unity of God's people in the Spirit and the oneness it produces in them, and my exhortation to all saints is to observe it as often as they have opportunity and observe it in the spirit and just exactly like it has been given to us, for therein is the clearest representation.

PAYING OUR TAXES

Question: Because there are so many dishonest people all through our government "cheating the people," does this mean it's all right for us to claim "just a little" of our income? Many people are being paid in such a way as to avoid paying taxes. Will God "knit pick" when it comes to Hebrews 13:17?

Answer: The answer is "No." Absolutely not. The scriptural code that saints live by demands absolute honesty with God, with ourselves and our own souls, and with our fellow men. The Scriptures nowhere give us a right to "cheat" the "cheaters." If we cheat the "cheaters," we are "cheaters," too. The amount is not important whether it be large or small. To be dishonest in small matters or amounts indicates just as faulty a character as to be dishonest in large matters or amounts. It can be pretty accurately adjudged that one who is dishonest in small amounts would also be dishonest in large amounts if he were just in a position to do so. Let us be assured that "...God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil." Eccl. 12:14.

This question reminds me of the story I heard about a preacher who, in going back and forth from his home to his place of worship, passed by where a chicken pen was close by the side of the road. He had noticed a real fine rooster that roosted on the fence and how easy it would be for someone to just pick him off and take him away. On one of his trips past this place when the rooster was perched on the fence as usual, he stopped and said "Mr. Rooster, some old thief is going to come by here and get you some of these nights and I think I had better just take you home with me before some old thief does come by and get you." So he lifted the rooster and took it home with him to be cooked in his pot. But in the "rescuing" the rooster from "some old thief" he became the thief himself. So with those who "cheat" the "cheaters" on income tax or in any other way become cheaters themselves.

Also every person who files an income tax return must sign an oath or affirmation that the statements contained therein are true and correct to the best of his knowledge. It also says that the penalty for signing any false statement is a fine and/or imprisonment or both. How could a Christian sign this statement knowing he had held back something and had not properly reported all of his income? My

judgment is that he would suffer a worse penalty for perjuring his conscience before God than he would from the government for perjuring himself before them.

God's Word says in I Peter 2:12, "Having your conversation 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." "The Gentiles" in our case would include all unsaved people, which would include the "cheaters," too. We are instructed to have our conversation honest before them also. Let us realize that two wrongs never make a right.

Again Romans 12:17 says, "Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men." Also II Corinthians 8:21 says, "Providing for honest things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men."

I Corinthians 4:5 says, "Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God." I do not hesitate to say, in that day we will all want to receive praise from God and not condemnation. We can be assured, in that day, all the hidden things of darkness will be brought to light and the counsels of all hearts will be revealed. I Corinthians 3:13 says, "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." Also II Corinthians 5:10 says, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad."

Finally, let us conclude that we, as well as the writer of the Hebrew epistle, are "...In all things willing to live honestly." Hebrews 13:18. Let us realize that anything gained through fraud or dishonesty is not worth it in the end when every man will be rewarded according to his works. (Revelation 22:12.)

In Regard to God "knit picking" in reference to Hebrews 13:17, let me say that the answer is again "No." It is not God who "knit picks," but it is we who do the "knit picking" with ourselves, with our fellow Christians and fellow men and even with God Himself, sometimes trying to pick out the fine points to either justify or condemn as the case may be. God never "knit picks" but He searches the heart and tries the reins of every individual (I Chronicles 28:9; I Kings 8:39; Jeremiah 11:20; I Samuel 16:7). Therefore God sees and knows the true condition of all hearts. We only see the outcroppings of things but He sees the roots of everything and the true condition of everyone's heart. Therefore He is in a position to judge everyone clear, straight, and clean-cut according to what He sees in the heart.

However, Hebrews 13:17 does not refer to government authorities but to spiritual authorities in the church. After instructing us to obey those who have the rule over us and submit ourselves, it goes on to say, "...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." Surely this could not apply to politicians in government because many times they could not care less about our souls and the things pertaining unto our spiritual lives. It is the God-called, God-sent, God-appointed pastors, overseers, and ministers who care for our souls and watch out for our spiritual welfare.

However, there are several other Scriptures which teach us to be subject to the governmental authorities. I Peter 2:13-14 says, "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." In Romans 13:1-7 we read, "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God.... Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake (verse 5)...." Let us realize that God has ordained

governments, both political and spiritual, and for us to fail to be subject to either the governmental powers or the spiritual authorities in the church indicates a disposition of rebellion in the heart and God denounces rebellion as being equal to the sin of witchcraft. (I Samuel 15:23.)

Titus 3:1 says, "Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work." In the 8th verse of his epistle, Jude speaks of a degenerate class of people who "despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities." Then he continues in verse 19 to say, "These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit." Let us realize that the Spirit of God in men's hearts makes them different from that and makes them humble, submissive, and obedient to authority whether it be in the government or in the church.

Peter describes the same class of people as Jude and in II Peter 2:10 he says of them that they despise government, are presumptuous, self-willed, and are not afraid to speak evil of dignities. Saints who have the Spirit of God are not like these people in any respect and are inclined to honor rulers and those in authority whether they be righteousness or not, for the sake of their office and position.

I CORINTHIANS 13:5

Question: In the 13th chapter of I Corinthians where it gives the definitions of charity, one is, it "thinketh no evil." If I have known my loved ones to do evil and I think that they will or are doing wrong, does this mean I do not love them? Also could you tell me what it means, "Doth not behave itself unseemly?"

Answer: To think that the wrongs people do—our loved ones or anyone else—is evil is not what is covered in this text. Black is black and white is white. If the thing done is wrong it is just plain evil and we think it is evil and would not be justified in thinking anything else. Brother C. E. Orr said that God did not want us to be blind and not see anything as evil but He did want us to have grace and wisdom enough to know how to handle what we see in the right way. However, to think one is doing wrong, or will do wrong, because he has done wrong before could be mere suspicion or imagination inspired by what we know has been done in the past. It would not be charitable to do this unless the wrong has been repeated sufficiently to establish a pattern. Zechariah 8:17 says, "And let none of you imagine evil in your hearts against his neighbour;..."

Adam Clarke says that the original text here implies that he does not invent or devise any evil; or, does not reason on any particular act or word so as to infer evil from it. To do this would destroy his love for his brother and would be ruinous to charity and benevolence. A heart filled with and governed by this divine love could never think of evil only where evil was evident and would not ascribe a bad motive to a good deed. (End of quote.) Then for one to judge one by any particular act or word and say in his mind, "He meant this or that by that" because we just did not have a very good feeling toward him anyway, would be uncharitable and wrong. Again—to say when a person with whom one is at some variance does a good, kind deed toward us that he is just trying to gain some advantage now by doing this good deed is surely uncharitable and wrong.

Also some other translations present a pretty clear idea of what is here meant. One translation says, "It does not hold grudges and will hardly even notice when others do it wrong." The Amplified Bible says, "It takes no account of the evil done to it—pays no attention to a suffered wrong." Phillips' Translation says, "It does not keep account of evil." The 20th Century New Testament says, "Never reckons up her wrongs." The New English Bible says, "Love keeps no score on wrongs." All of these

translations carry the thought that a person who is actuated by love never allows his mind to think on the wrongs done to him and never wastes his time by thinking on these things.

There is also the angle of thinking and devising in one's mind evil things to do as people of the world sometimes do. Certainly no child of God, actuated by the love of God, would ever spend time thinking of such things for himself.

None of these things relate to the thought expressed in your question, so I conclude the statement regarding "charity thinking no evil" does not relate to what you mention in your question.

NEXT: "Does not behave itself unseemly." The word *unseemly* is defined in the dictionary as: 1. Not according with established standard of good form or taste. 2. Not suitable for time or place: Inappropriate, unseasonable.

Love never acts out of its place or character. Love observes due decorum (that is behavior conforming to and in accordance with the accepted standard of what is right, fitting, or regarded as good form) and good manners, and is never rude, brutish, or discourteous. To be rude, unmannerly or discourteous is entirely out of harmony with the Spirit of Christ and the love of God.

Christians are admonished in I Peter 3:8 to be of one mind, to love as brethren, to be pitiful, and to be courteous. Surely one possessed of this true love would always seek to avoid rudeness and brashness and seek to avoid paining, wounding, or offending any with whom they deal. A meek and quiet spirit is in keeping with the disposition and manners of Christ and to manifest anything of a boisterous nature or to be self-assertive and brash in one's behavior would surely be "unseemly" behavior for one who names His Name. We are to be like Him (Romans 8:29; II Corinthians 3:18; I John 3:2-3; I John 4:17) and anything not in keeping with the nature and disposition of Christ is unseemly behavior for a Christian.

Saints are instructed in Titus 2:10 to adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things. Again, saints are admonished in Philippians 1:27 to have our conversation as it becometh the gospel of Christ. In I Timothy 2:9-10 godly women are instructed to dress and behave in a manner becoming to women professing godliness. The immodest and indecent styles and dress prevalent in the world today and all the adornment with gold, pearls, costly array, fancy hair-does, etc. are all contrary to the pure, meek, holy, humble, quiet, reticent spirit of Christ and are unseemly and unbecoming to women professing godliness.

"Doth not behave itself unseemly" is rendered in Moffat's Translation as "Is never rude." The Berkeley Translation says "or unmannerly." Beck's Translation says "It isn't indecent." The Amplified Bible says "It is not rude (unmannerly), and does not act unbecomingly."

I conclude that anything we cannot do "to the glory of God"—I Corinthians 10:31; or anything which would be contrary to the nature and spirit of Christ and in any way or to any degree dishonoring to Him would be "Unseemly" (improper behavior) for saints.

RAISING OUR HANDS WHILE SINGING

Question: Why do the saints raise their hands while singing? I want to know so I can enjoy their blessing also; but first I need to know the reason.

Answer: You are entitled to know why the saints do anything that they do as a regular practice. The reason that saints raise their hands while singing the beautiful, inspired songs of Zion is that the inspiration in the song finds a response in their hearts and they express that by raising their hands. It is also a means of

testifying to victory in their souls along the line of truth being expressed in the song. Also it signifies an acceptance in their hearts of the particular truth in the song.

We read in Lamentations 3:41, "Let us lift up our heart with our hands unto God in the heavens." In this text is indicated that the lifting up of the hands has a direct connection with something transpiring in the heart, and in the case of singing indicates that one knows in his heart what it means and is accepting and experiencing in his heart what is being sung. This same thought in regard to the lifting up of the hand is expressed in Isaiah 49:22 in showing God's attitude of outreach to the Gentiles. It says "Thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I will lift up mine hand to the Gentiles, and set up my standard to the people:..." The lifting up of God's hand to the Gentiles signified His acceptance of the Gentiles into His salvation, the same as our lifting up our hands signifies our acceptance of the truth being expressed.

We have the same thought further expressed in Psalm 119:48, "My hands also will I lift up unto thy commandments, which I have loved;..." This signifies an acceptance and love for the commandments of the Lord.

In Lamentations 2:19 it says, "...lift up thy hands toward him for the life of thy young children, that faint for hunger in the top of every street." Here the hands were to be lifted up in entreaty and prayer for mercy from God in the time of extreme trouble and great need. Sometimes when a certain truth is being presented in song or preaching or however a person may feel a need of mercy and additional grace to fully measure to the standard on that line, he may lift his hand as a supplication from his heart for that mercy and grace while at the same time submitting to it that it is right.

Psalm 63:4 says, "Thus will I bless thee while I live: I will lift up my hands in thy name." Psalm 134:2 says "Lift up your hands in the sanctuary, and bless the Lord." These two texts carry the same thought which is that the raising of the hands is a means of expressing the individual's blessing and praise to the Lord. We have a song which says, "Lift up your hands and praise the Lord." When one lifts up his heart with his hand in this respect in praise, adoration, and blessing unto the Lord in the Spirit, it has an "electrifying" effect to inspire the whole congregation sometimes.

In former years there was much more of this than we see now and many times there were many hands up and much shouting and rejoicing and the spirit of the Lord would come down in great anointing, power and blessing. The word from here is that you just go ahead and raise your hand when you feel like it and know that you are on good scriptural grounds when you do it and enjoy the blessings along with the others.

GOD WAS MADE FLESH

Question: Is it scripturally correct to say that "God was made flesh and dwelt among men?" If this is correct, give the scriptures to prove the statement.

Answer: I do not know of any direct scripture that says this in these words. However, it seems to me this thought is inferred in a number of scriptures. What the scripture spells out in regard to this is, "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us,..." John 1:14. But John 1:1 says, "...The Word was God." This is the same Word which was made flesh and dwelt among us. I Timothy 3:16 says that "...God was manifest in the flesh." I John 5:20 says, "And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true

God, and eternal life." Also in Isaiah 9:6 we read, "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given:...and his name shall be called...The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace." Here the Son, Jesus, which was given, is called THE MIGHTY GOD. Truly, the Father and Son were one and in Him that part of the God-head; the second Person in the Trinity, took on human form and flesh and dwelt among men. God in Christ was clothed in mortal flesh. Evidently God the Father did not assume human flesh, but God the Son did. And we conclude that the Son is an equal part of the God-head along with the Father and the Holy Spirit.

All scriptures pertaining to the incarnation of Jesus Christ would have a bearing on this and be connected to this thought, but they are too numerous to insert here. Therefore, it seems to me it could be said that the scriptures say it in so many words that "God was made flesh and dwelt among men;" but it also seems to me that the whole tenor of the scriptures on this line teach that this actually happened.

BLASPHEMY AGAINST THE HOLY GHOST

Question: I do not understand Matthew 12:31-32. Please explain.

Answer: First, I will insert this passage: "Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come."

The first question to be determined to intelligently discuss these verses is, "What is blasphemy?" Webster defines "blasphemy" as "To speak in an impious or irreverent manner of; to speak ill or to the prejudice of; to use insulting or abusive language." Further Webster defines *blasphemy* as "evil or profane speaking and irreverence of God, derogating from His power or attributes; the expression of defiant impiety and irreverence against God or things held sacred."

Jesus discusses this matter of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit in Matthew 12:31-32, Mark 3:28 and Luke 12:10. The entire context of these Scriptures, which is helpful in understanding and would be good for the reader to read in this connection, is Matthew 12:22-33; Mark 3:22-30; and Luke 12:10. In all these Scriptures we find Jesus using this language, "He that shall speak a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him, but whosoever shall blaspheme the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world nor in the world to come." We see here that Jesus uses the terms "speak against" and "blasphemy" interchangeably, and this corresponds with Webster's definitions given above.

Then, to blaspheme the Holy Spirit would be to speak impiously or irreverently of Him and His power and operations or to hold that attitude toward Him. It is specified in Mark 3:30 that Jesus spake these words "Because they said, 'He hath an unclean spirit,'" thus downgrading and berating the Holy Spirit and attributing work which could only be done by Him to the devil. Adam Clarke says that it is evident that this and nothing else is what is meant here. I agree that it is.

Let us keep in mind all the time that we are discussing something very specific here and we should discuss it in a specific way and not in any general terms. If we speak in reference to "The sin against the Holy Spirit" let us specify it as "blasphemy" with an understanding of what that term means. All unrighteousness is sin and all sin is against the Holy Spirit and grievous to Him. The common category of sin such as pride, foolishness, an evil eye, uncleanness, backbiting, malice, evil speakings, tale-bearing, gossip, slander, deceit and all such else as may

be mentioned in the Word of God are against Him only in the sense that His nature is that of absolute holiness and consequently all unrighteousness and unholiness are grievous and a vexation to His holy nature.

Blasphemy against the Holy Spirit stands alone in a category all by itself and is declared to be the only unpardonable sin and, therefore, should be referred to in a very specific way and not be mentioned in connection with any of the common catalog of sins mentioned in the Bible. Blasphemous words against the Holy Spirit are the worst kind of sin and are unpardonable. Jesus said, "All manner of sin shall be forgiven unto men." Blasphemy against God, a sin immediately touching His name and honor shall be forgiven. Words spoken against the Son of man shall be forgiven even as it was to those who reviled Him at His death, many of whom repented and found mercy. "All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men," said Jesus, "but he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him in this world nor in the world to come."

What is meant here is the individual who knowingly, with a fixed purpose and full exercise of his own will, maliciously opposes, defiantly blasphemes and speaks impiously and irreverently of, and despises the person of the Holy Spirit and His operations.

Matthew Henry comments on this point: "It is adjudged in our law that an act of indemnity shall be construed in favor of that grace and clemency which is the intention of the act. Therefore the exceptions in the act are not to be extended any further than needs be. The gospel is an act of indemnity. It is necessarily construed in favor of grace and clemency and its terms are extended as far as they possibly can be without reacting against God's justice and holiness, in order to make room for everyone possible to be made partakers of its mercy and benefits, and the one and only exception is the person that blasphemes the Holy Spirit and should therefore be construed in the narrowest sense. This one exception, and it a somewhat narrow one, is made not because of any defect in God's mercy; not because He does not love those who are guilty of it; not because he who becomes a blasphemer of the Holy Spirit was originally overlooked in the "Whosoever will" invitation; not that he was one singled out by Almighty God as an object of contempt and one to be punished from the beginning; but because to be guilty of it inevitably leaves the sinner in infidelity and impenitence."

Now the question remains, "Why is the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit so eternally fatal when all other blasphemy can be forgiven?" Jesus said, "All manner of sin and BLASPHEMY shall be forgiven unto men." Note: this statement of Jesus included all manner of BLASPHEMY. Jesus moved right on to say in the same verse, "But the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men." Why this distinction? The answer is rather simple when we understand the nature of the God-head, the plan of salvation and the unfolding of divine revelation of Himself and His truth unto man.

The God-head is a Trinity composed of Three in One—God the Father, God the Son, (Jesus) and God the Holy Spirit. These three have all cooperated together in the plan of salvation in their various roles and capacities. God devised the plan of salvation and sent His Son into the world to confirm it and then sent the Holy Spirit into the world to execute it. God had a dispensation in which He dealt with man directly and personally. Men in general did not understand God and consequently were not true in their allegiance to Him. Then He dealt with men in a more indirect and impersonal way through the law and the prophets and in different types, shadows and figures tried to reveal Himself more clearly to men through the types and rituals of the law. Though they did not understand Him and love and serve Him as they should, He was merciful unto them and long-suffering with a purpose to send His Son, Jesus, into the world to reveal Himself fully in Him; and perchance

men would be convinced of their error and turn to Him. Hebrews 1:3 declares the Son to be the "...Brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person,..." Colossians 1:15 and II Corinthians 4:4 declare that Christ is the "Image of God." In John 14:9 Jesus said, "...He that hath seen me hath seen the Father;..." Colossians 1:19 says that all fullness dwelt in Him. Therefore it was a part of the mission of Christ to reveal God to mankind in a full and complete sense and to bring men to God.

Many were gained and brought to God through His revelation of God to them, but in general they did not understand Him nor believe in Him either. That was not necessarily fatal because there was still another Who was to come and reveal Christ to them in a full measure and convince them of the error of their ways. This was the Holy Spirit. Jesus said in John 16:14, "He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you." Also He said in John 16:8-9, "...He will reprove the world of sin,...because they believe not on me." We see here it was the work of the Holy Spirit to reveal Christ to men and convince and convict them that they had missed the mark and erred greatly in not believing in Him and accepting Him. All who accepted the witness of the Spirit and were convinced of their error and humbled their hearts to Him and acknowledged their sin were granted repentance and were saved. Paul was one who had been a blasphemer but obtained mercy when convinced of his error through the operation of the Holy Spirit. (I Timothy 1:13.) There were many more.

The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Trinity and completes the God-head. This is His dispensation in which we now live and it is the last one. God's Word said in Acts 2:17, "And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh:..." and Peter declared this that happened on the Day of Pentecost to be a fulfillment of a prophecy found in Joel 2:28. But the Holy Spirit was to be poured out upon all flesh in the LAST DAYS and the last dispensation of time. There is no other to come after the Holy Spirit to accomplish anything more in the salvation of men. This is IT! It is now or never! All who fail to be convinced of their error in rejecting Christ through the convicting power and influence of the Holy Spirit but continue on in their unbelief and blasphemy are now, and were then, sinning against the last remedy for sin and are left without pardon. The Holy Spirit is the last agent of conviction and the last means of access to God. Jesus said, "No man can come unto me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him:..." But the Holy Spirit is the agent through which God draws men unto Himself and without His drawing, convicting power we cannot get to God at all.

Since the Holy Spirit is the last remedy for sin and the last means of access to God, to despise and irreverence Him leaves one without any other source of help and means of access to God and consequently doomed. To blaspheme Him inevitably leaves one in total and permanent impenitence and consequently unforgiven and therefore eternally condemned.

SILENCE OF WOMEN IN CHURCH

Question: Please explain I Corinthians 14:34-35.

Answer: We will first insert the full text of I Corinthians 14:34-35. "Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law. And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church."

In answering this question it may be necessary to make a negative approach and discuss first what we feel it does not mean. We will insert a text from I Corinthians 11:5 by the same writer. "But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoreth her head: for that is even all one as if she were shaven." The fact that Paul here specifies the condition or attire the woman should be in when she prays or prophesies is sufficient evidence that what he said in I Corinthians 14:34-35 was not referring to her participating in the worship of God along with others, both men and women. Again in Acts 21:8-9 we read of Paul and his company going to the house of Philip the evangelist and verse nine says, "And the same man had four daughters, virgins, which did prophesy." Again we read in Acts 2:17, "And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,..." God said this and we would surely not debate with Him regardless of what tradition we may have come under. Again in Philippians 4:3 we read, "And I intreat thee also, true yokefellow, help those women which laboured with me in the gospel,..." This is Paul again and he mentions that he had women laboring with him in the gospel.

All this sums up to the fact that when Paul wrote I Corinthians 14:34-35 he had no intention of excluding women from participating in public worship in whatever way or capacity the Spirit led and inspired them to do, but he was speaking in this place of something specific.

Before we pass on from this point let us consider one other thing. What is prophesying? In I Corinthians 14:3 we read, "But he that prophesieth speaketh unto men to edification, exhortation, and comfort." Surely we could not identify this with any other activity than the preaching of the gospel. And when God said (Acts 2:17) that in the last days (this last age of time or the Holy Ghost dispensation) He would pour out of His Spirit upon all flesh and the daughters would prophesy as well as the sons, we conclude that it was in the mind of God to make use of the women in preaching the gospel as well as the men in this dispensation of time.

I will insert some quotations from the comments of Adam Clarke on I Corinthians 14:34-35 as to what it means and what is under consideration in this instruction.

"It is evident from the context that the apostle refers here to asking questions and to what we call dictating in the assemblies. It was permitted to any man to ask questions, to object, altercate, attempt to refute, etc., in the synagogue; but this liberty was not allowed to any woman. St. Paul confirms this in reference also to the Christian Church; he orders them to keep silence: and, if they wished to learn any thing let them inquire of their husbands at home:... This by no means intimated that when a woman received any particular influence from God to enable her to teach, that she was not to obey that influence; on the contrary she was to obey it, and the apostle lays down directions in Chapter 11 for regulating her personal appearance when thus employed. All that the apostle opposes here is their questioning, finding fault, disputing, etc. in the Christian Church, as the Jewish men were permitted to do in their synagogues; together with the attempts to usurp any authority over the man, by setting up their judgment in opposition to them; for the apostle has in view, especially, acts of disobedience, arrogance, etc., of which no woman would be guilty who was under the influence of the Spirit of God.

"To be under obedience, as also saith the law is a reference to Genesis 3:16. '...Thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.' From this it is evident that it was the disorderly and disobedient that the apostle had in view; and not any of those on whom God had poured out His Spirit."

CARNAL MAN VS BABES IN CHRIST

Question: Please explain I Corinthians 3:1 and Romans 8:6. How can these two Scriptures be harmonized?

Answer: Let us first insert these texts in full. I Corinthians 3:1 reads thus, "And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ." Romans 8:6-7 reads thus, "For to be carnally minded 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." The thought in the mind of the questioner seems to be "How could people be brethren and babes in Christ and still be carnal when it is plainly stated in Romans 8:6 that to be carnally minded is death?"

I will say at the first that this is a fair question and a good one and I will do my utmost under God to answer it as clearly and as understandably as is possible for me in my own limited understanding.

We will first consider the CARNAL MIND as mentioned in Romans 8:6-7. Matthew Henry says of it "(1.) It is death. It is spiritual death, the certain way to alienation from God, in union and communion with whom the life of the soul consists. (2.) It is enmity to God, and this is worse than the first. The former speaks the carnal sinner a dead man, which is bad; but this speaks him a devil of a man. It is not only an enemy but enmity itself. It is not only the alienation of the soul from God, but the opposition of the soul against God; it rebels against His authority, thwarts His design, opposes His interest, spits in His face, spurns at His bowels. Can there be a greater enmity? An enemy may be reconciled, but enmity cannot."

Let us look a little closer at this carnal MIND. First of all, bear in mind that it is the carnal MIND that is under consideration. Confusing the carnal MIND with the carnal NATURE or native depravity has led some to a conclusion which has fed error rather than truth and that one who possessed this carnal mind could not live a justified life before God, free from committing sin; because the Bible said that the carnal mind was not subject to the law of God and could not be. They conclude that the carnal nature is removed in justification because one could not live justified with it because it was not subject to the law of God. This mixture of identification leads to confusion and error in the light of all the general tenor of Scripture.

"Carnal" is used in the Scriptures in contradistinction to "Spiritual" and pertains to the things of the flesh in contradistinction to the things of the spirit. The dictionary *carnal* is defined as "Of or pertaining to the body as the seat of appetites. Fleshly. Lacking spirituality, unregenerate, worldly." In Romans 8:6 "To be carnally minded" the margin says, "Minding of the flesh." Therefore the carnal MIND would have reference to the thoughts, plans, schemes, connivings and meditations of the mind for ways and means to satisfy the desires of the flesh.

Ecclesiastes 7:29 says, "...God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions."

First of all this text carries the thought that man's inventions have off-set his uprightness and led him away from God. *Invention* is defined as "fabrication of the imagination—a device, contrivance or the like originated after study and experiment." Again *invent* is defined as "To fabricate mentally—create or devise in the imagination." Thus we see that in this text man's inventions would refer to his studying and experimenting, creating and devising in his imaginations and fabricating mentally (in his mind) devices and ways and means to glorify himself and satisfy the desires of his flesh (natural man).

Lest we overlook some of the emphasis of this, let us go a little farther with it. *Invention* is defined as a "fabrication of the imagination." But *imagination* is defined

as "a scheme, plot or project, especially of evil—a mental image—a creation of the mind." In Genesis 6:5 it says that God saw that "...every imagination [creations of men's minds] of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." In other words, men were continually creating in their minds schemes, plots and projects of evil to satisfy the desires of their flesh according to their depraved natures.

Also the word *Imagine* is defined as "To form a mental picture of:—to produce by the imagination; to contrive in purpose, to scheme; to fancy, think, suppose." One of the definitions of the word *imagine* is "to fancy" and *fancy* is defined as "the object of one's interest." Projecting this thought into the text of Genesis 6:5, it indicates that these people were primarily interested in evil and in devising ways and means to execute their evil plots, plans, and schemes.

In Psalm 36:4, speaking of the wicked it says "He deviseth mischief upon his bed;..." Again speaking of the wicked in Proverbs 6:14 it says, "...he deviseth mischief continually;..." In these texts and several more it speaks of DEVISING mischief. Cruden's Concordance says that in the Scriptures *mischief* is very frequently used to denote wickedness and iniquity. *Devise* is defined as "to form in the mind by new combination of ideas. Invent, contrive, to plan for." Further, *contrive* is defined as "to devise, plan, to form schemes or designs." In other words, this makes it plain that those who devised mischief were planning, scheming, designing and seeking, even by new ideas in their minds, how to accomplish their evil, fleshly desires.

Now all of this shows the disposition of the carnal MIND; that it is continually inventing, fabricating, imagining, studying, experimenting, creating, devising, scheming, plotting, contriving, purposing, etc. for projects of evil and fleshly indulgence. Of course, such a mind would produce spiritual death and would be enmity against God and would not and could not be subject to the law of God and no person could be a child of God and be governed by such a mind. Let me emphasize that it is the carnal mind under consideration and the not the carnal nature—native depravity. There is a difference.

The term *native depravity* indicates a depravity of nature at birth. Then it is something in the nature of the infant child. "The Scriptures conclude something about sin being hereditary, a depravity of nature to be handed down through the generations of mankind from the original parent." Romans 5:12-17 declares all men to be under the dismal sway of sin and further proves that they are thus affected because of one man and his sin and also declares that one man to be Adam who was the royal head of the human family. This could not be true unless there is something hereditary about sin.

For a thing to be hereditary it must be inherent in a child at birth and not something acquired later on in life. Hence; this depravity of nature must be in the infant child at birth. I believe that in general we would all agree with this. But the carnal mind could not be existent in an infant child at birth because he would not be capable of exercising his mind to invent, study, fabricate, imagine, scheme, plot, purpose and create projects of evil and fleshly indulgence. Thus we see that the carnal mind could not possibly be identical with the carnal nature but is a product of it and is acquired by those who are more advanced and developed in capacity and ability and established in the practices of carnal, fleshly desires and is therefore more attached to the actual fleshly life than to the nature only.

Colossians 2:18 mentions man as "...vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind." "Fleshly mind" and "Carnal mind" are one and the same thing and belong to the fleshly life. When one puts off the deeds or works of the flesh which are cataloged in a general way in Galatians 5:19-21 and repents of his sins and, through faith in Christ, is saved (born again) and receives the Christ life into his soul which is called "Newness of life" in Romans 6:4; he also receives a renewing in the spirit of his mind

(Ephesians 4:23). In other words, the disposition and tendencies of his mind are changed to conform to the change in his heart and life. Therefore, the mind of one who is saved is not scheming, planning, plotting and inventing projects for satisfying fleshly desires, but rather thinking, planning and meditating on ways and means whereby he may maintain and improve his spiritual life and better please God and may have more time and opportunity to engage in His service.

In this 8th chapter of Romans, Paul is pointing out a line of distinction between the flesh and spirit and in the course of the discussion deals with the fleshly or carnal mind and the spiritual mind. In fact, the major portion of the Epistle to the Romans is dealing with such distinctions and opposites—law and grace, Jews versus Gentiles, and works of the law versus faith in Christ, flesh and spirit, etc. These people are not charged with having or manifesting a carnal mind but are just admonished or warned of the consequences of following such a mind. In fact, we would judge from this epistle that in the main thought the Church of God at Rome was quite spiritual, prosperous and thriving.

In the 3rd chapter of I Corinthians the case is different. No mention is made here of a carnal mind but the church at Corinth is complained against and is definitely charged with being carnal. However, Paul addressed them as "Brethren" and as "Babes in Christ;" and it is evident that they were alive and could be fed because Paul said he was feeding them with milk and not meat. This would be true of all babes. In their baby state they could not digest solid food; and Paul complained of these folks at Corinth that they were not able to bear meat (the strong, deep truths of the gospel) but must still have milk (the very simple, elementary truths and instructions of Christian living).

These folks were not charged with being activated by the carnal mind (scheming, imagining, contriving, devising and dreaming up ways to satisfy the fleshly desires and appetites). Their situation was that they were all new converts to the Christian faith and were in a baby state in their Christian experience, and had no degree of advancement in the things of God and had not learned the ways of God and how Christians behave. These folks were still possessed of the native depravity of mankind perhaps without even knowing it, or anything about the need of entire sanctification which eradicates that principle. Perhaps they did not even know they were supposed to resist such tendencies as they were manifesting here and did not know what was prompting them and they were just behaving like natural men behave. However, it was not the satisfaction of evil and sinful pleasures and lusts of the flesh they were seeking after here, but just to have their own way and likes which is the predominant characteristic of the carnal nature or native depravity. The extent of the thing manifested here was that they became activated by a party spirit and preference of preachers and continued in it to the point of factions and divisions.

We may condemn them for that and certainly they should not be commended for it because it was wrong and still is wrong today. Let us not overlook the fact that there are not just a few among us today who are well instructed in the truths of justification and sanctification and how saints should behave themselves and be in unity and be one in Christ Jesus and in all the truths of the gospel who are guilty of this same thing and have to have their own way and still profess to be saved and sanctified. Some who contend that these folks could not possibly be saved at all on this account are guilty of the same thing, too, and tear the body of Christ in sunder because the saints do not accept their position.

Let us look well at these folks. True, they did not behave themselves as more mature saints would, because they were not more mature than they were and were not established in the ways of the Lord. There were many irregularities in that Corinthian church. There is much reproof and even some rebuke given them for

their errors throughout the first epistle Paul wrote to them. It becomes evidently certain that these people had no evil intent or purpose and were not controlled by a carnal mind which was inventing, contriving, imagining, planning, plotting, purposing to discover ways and means to satisfy the desires of the flesh. It is evident and clear, I say, because when Paul had written them and reproved them for their errors and irregularities, they accepted that and moved up and measured up and in Paul's second Epistle to them, he commended them and told them in chapter 7, verse 11 "...In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter." This would certainly prove that those folks were intent upon growing spiritually, advancing, and increasing in the things of God which could never be true of people dominated by the carnal mind.

BATTLE OF ARMAGEDDON

Question: What is the Battle of Armageddon? What is its nature, its beginning and its ending?

Answer: Let us first consider the term "Armageddon" and its significance. In the dictionary *Armageddon* is defined as: "1. The scene of a final battle between the forces of good and evil, prophesied in the Bible to occur at the end of the world. Revelation 16:16. 2. Any decisive conflict. It is taken from the Hebrew word "har megiddon" referring to the mountain region of Megiddo, site of several great battles in the Old Testament."

—Taken from the *American Heritage Dictionary*

Then the *Zondervan Pictorial Bible Dictionary* in its article on Armageddon says the Greek is "Armageddon" but the Hebrew is "Har Magedon" (Mount Megiddo), a word found only in Revelation 16:16 for the final battleground between the forces of good and evil. It says further, "The valley of Jezreel and the Plain of Esdraelon at the foot of Mount Megiddo were the scene of many decisive battles in the history of Israel." It was here that Israel completely annihilated the armies of Sisera to the last man. (Judges 4:16 and 5:19-20.) Here Gideon defeated the hosts of the Midianites. (Judges 6:33 and the entire 7th chapter of Judges.)

We will here insert the text of Revelation 16:16 which is the only place in the New Testament where the word is found. "And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon." The New Testament in this place gives the Greek rendering of the word "Armageddon." The fact that it is mentioned, "Which is called in the Hebrew tongue," indicates that Jesus wished here to connect up what He is saying with the Hebrew "Har magedon" (Mount Megiddo) in the history of Israel.

Israel after the flesh (natural Israel) was a type of Israel after the spirit (spiritual Israel). In Romans 2:28-29, Paul says, "For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh: But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God." Here is the comparison of literal Israel and spiritual Israel. Therefore we conclude that "Armageddon" in the New Testament has the significance for the Church of God, the people of God in this gospel age of time, or spiritual Israel, as Mount Megiddo had for literal Israel in Old Testament times—a place of very great and decisive battles.

This is described as the "Battle of that great day of God Almighty." I surely recognize that there has been a continual battle or warfare between good and evil, light and darkness, truth and error throughout this dispensation of time. This passage in Revelation 16:13-16 seems to be focusing right down on these closing

days of this dispensation in which we are now living and to the final climactic battle which will terminate in "That great day of God Almighty"—the judgment day—Revelation 16:14.

Neither would we suppose this great battle to be confined to Mount Megiddo, or Israel, or Turkey, or Russia, or any particular geographical location because it is said in Revelation 16:14 that they went "...forth unto the kings of the earth and of the **whole world**, to gather them to the battle..." Again in Revelation 20:9 it says, "...They went up on the breadth of the whole earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about,..." This features it as a general, worldwide, world-encompassing thing.

The kind of weapons and armor provided for the saints as described in Scripture and the general tenor of the Scriptures covering the whole scope of this subject precludes the idea of this being a carnal warfare or a battle fought with swords, spears, shot, shell and bombs. The very nature of the Kingdom of God as described in the Holy Scriptures throughout preclude this idea also. Let us look at it a little.

In I Timothy 1:18-19, we read, "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,..." Here Timothy's warfare was to be carried on by faith and a good conscience. These were his weapons of warfare. I Timothy 6:12 says, "Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life,..." In II Timothy 4:7 Paul said concerning himself, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith." We have no record that Paul ever used physical violence or carnal weapons against any person in his whole Christian life. This was not the kind of fight he fought and that is not the kind of fight Christians fight today, nor will it ever be. He spells it out specifically in Ephesians 6:12 that "...we wrestle not against flesh and blood,..." Again in II Corinthians 10:3b he spells it out, "We do not war after the flesh." There is no indication in Scripture anywhere in the New Testament that this has ever changed or ever will.

It says in II Corinthians 10:4-5, "For the weapons of our warfare are **not** carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds; Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." This text plainly states that our weapons are not carnal, and who would assume that carnal weapons could bring about what our weapons are described here as doing—casting down imaginations, bringing our thoughts into captivity and controlling our minds? The weapons which accomplish this are faith, love and the power of the Holy Spirit, and this is what we fight our warfare with. Again Ephesians 6:12 says, "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." The same weapons outlined above accomplish this warfare and there is no place in the New Testament Scriptures which indicates this has ever changed.

Revelation 12:11 says that the saints overcome by the blood of the Lamb, and the word of their testimony. The weapons here are described as faith in the all-atoning blood of Jesus and an open confession or witness of that.

In Matthew 26:51-52 it says, "And, behold, one of them which were with Jesus stretched out his hand, and drew his sword, and struck a servant of the high priest's, and smote off his ear. Then said Jesus unto him, Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword." Peter told Jesus in John 13:37 that he would lay down his life for His sake and now he demonstrates his willingness to do that by drawing his sword and starting a fight. But Jesus quickly made it clear that that was not what He wanted and rebuked Peter for using His sword and told him to put it up because those who used it would perish with it. It was perhaps in the mind of Jesus to lay the foundation for this declaration of His will for His people when He instructed His apostles in Luke 22:36

to provide themselves with swords and they told Him in verse 38 that they had two swords and He told them that was enough. He probably knew that if they had a sword handy when trouble started someone would use it and He would have an opening then to pronounce His denunciation of the use of carnal weapons by His disciples.

In John 18:36, Jesus told Pilate, "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." We read in Isaiah 9:5-7, "For every battle of the warrior is with confused noise, and garments rolled in blood; but this shall be with burning and fuel of fire. For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder:... Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever..." We see here that the kingdom of God is not established and maintained on the battlefield as other kingdoms of this world are. This was to be established by the giving of a Son, Jesus Christ, who was to assume the reins of government in His kingdom and the means of its establishment were to be burning and fuel of fire.

Accordingly, we have this only begotten Son of God, Jesus, appearing on the scene to set up and establish His kingdom, and John the Baptist bore witness of Him in Matthew 3:11-12 saying, "...He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire: Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire." Here we have the burning and fuel of fire spoken of in Isaiah 9:5. This was the operation of the Holy Ghost, and Paul said in Romans 14:17, "The kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." It is declared here that the kingdom of God is not meat and drink (not literal and material; not of this world as Jesus stated in John 18:36), but consists in the elements of the Holy Ghost. Consequently, on the Day of Pentecost when the Holy Ghost came in the form of "cloven tongues like as of fire" (again we have here the burning and fuel of fire spoken of in Isaiah 9:5) on all the disciples of Christ (about 120 at that time), the kingdom of God was established and set in operation right then and has continued in operation until now, and is declared to be forever in Isaiah 9:7. Then the very spiritual nature of the kingdom of God precludes any carnal warfare to establish it or to defend and maintain it.

The armor provided for soldiers of Jesus Christ also precludes any idea of carnal warfare. There is not one piece of it that would in any way be usable in carnal warfare. Let us look at it. Ephesians 6:11 says, "Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil." We see here that the armor which God provides for His army equips us to stand against the war with the devil, not man.

Ephesians 6:13-18 describes this armor piece by piece. "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." There is not one thing mentioned here that would have any value at all in warring after the flesh, and note that the only offensive weapon supplied here is "The sword of the Spirit, which is the **Word of God.**"

I Thessalonians 5:8 says, "But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation." Nothing here for carnal warfare but contrariwise, "the breastplate of faith and love" would forever eliminate fighting carnally with men and seeking to destroy them. Romans 13:12 says, "The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light." Where would an armor of light have any place in a carnal warfare? But it is highly important in "wrestling against principalities and powers, the rulers of the darkness of this world and spiritual wickedness in high places." Ephesians 6:12. In II Corinthians 6:7 Paul speaks of "...The armour of righteousness on the right hand and on the left."

Now these Scriptures sum up in all of its entirety the armor provided for the soldiers of Jesus Christ and it is nowhere intimated in the entire New Testament that this has ever changed or ever will. This is still the armor for saints today and will ever be.

I will now come to the point of considering the specifics of the Battle of Armageddon. All that has been said up to now has dealt with what it is not. We turn now to what it is. In Revelation 16:13-14 and 16 we read, "And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs come out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet. For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. And he gathered them together into a place called in the Hebrew tongue Armageddon." Note: the principal agents in this operation are three unclean spirits which are called in verse 14, "The spirits of devils." Verse 16 says "he" gathered them together etc. "He" in this case is the devil himself marshaling his unclean forces for battle under the generalship of these three unclean spirits. This would identify this whole operation as a spiritual operation. We wrestle against the rulers of the darkness of this world (Ephesians 6:12.). In John 14:30 Jesus referred to the devil as "The prince of this world." In II Corinthians 4:4 Paul refers to him as the "God of this world." In Ephesians 2:2 Paul spoke of him as "The prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience." He is the one spoken of as "The ruler of the darkness of this world" in Ephesians 6:12. Also it is said in Ephesians 6:12 that we wrestle against "spiritual wickedness in high places." The marginal reading is "heavenly places." It is evident on the face of it that "spiritual wickedness" would be connected with the spiritual realm. Heavenly (high) places here refers to the ecclesiastical, spiritual, religious or church heavens. Therefore it is entirely clear that a spiritual operation and battle are under consideration here. We read in the history of carnal warfare of any number of **religious** wars between different nations and kingdoms of men, but we have never read of one that could be classed as a **spiritual** war. That is just not the way that spiritual warfare is carried on. This warfare is in the spiritual realm.

In Revelation 20:7-8 we read, "And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea." Note: This power was to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth. This corresponds with what was said in Revelation 16:14 of the three unclean spirits like frogs which went forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world. Yes, it is the same power in both texts marshaling its forces for the same purpose—to do battle. It also names the principal agents in this operation as Gog and Magog and says their numbers are as the sand of the sea. Gog, the land of Magog, is mentioned in Ezekiel 38:2 as the enemies of ancient Israel (read the entire chapter), and in verse nine it says, "Thou shalt ascend and come like a storm, thou shalt be like a cloud to cover the land, thou,

and all thy bands, and many people with thee." Here the enemies of Israel had "many people" with them. Their modern counterparts in Revelation 20:8 had numbers "as the sand of the sea" with them. As has already been observed, ancient, literal Israel was a type of spiritual Israel. Just as Gog and Magog were the enemies of ancient Israel; so here the same names are used to identify the entire combine of the enemies of the people of God and of His truth.

Adam Clarke in his commentary on Revelation 20:8 under Gog and Magog says, "Under these names the enemies of God's truth are generally intended." The *Zondervan Pictorial Bible Dictionary* says in its article of Magog, "Gog and Magog (Revelation 20:8) means all the ungodly nations of the earth who oppose the people of God." F. G. Smith in his book, *The Revelation Explained*, is more specific in identifying them and says, "The original signification of the terms Gog and Magog is difficult to ascertain, as all known accounts are conflicting. The terms occur in Ezekiel 38 and 39. In the Revelation, however, it is clear that these terms are applied to Romanism and Protestantism, and under the special leadership of this spirit of antichrist they are gathered together to battle against the saints of the most High."

This great combine of antichrist consists of the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet. According to Revelation 12:3-4 the dragon was the first formidable foe of Christianity. He was in existence when Jesus Christ appeared on the scene and viciously opposed the Christian religion throughout the morning time of the Christian era. This was Pagan Rome, heathenism, idolatrous worship which was the prevailing religion throughout the world at that time. Through the power of the Word of God and the bright shining light of the gospel, the saints of the most High were finally able to expose his deceptiveness and overcome him and cast him down and bind him. (Revelation 12:8-9 and Revelation 20:1-3.) Then following the dragon came the beast of Revelation 13 which had the same identifying marks as the dragon before him, "seven heads and ten horns." He occupied the same territory and possessed the same power as the dragon—the Roman Empire. The universal religion that followed paganism was papalism; Roman Catholicism. This was the second great opposer and persecutor of true Christianity. This was a false, apostate institution.

Then in Revelation 13:11 there is a second beast introduced and he had all of the power of the first beast before him (verse 12), and he caused his followers to make an image to the first beast (verse 14), etc. It was a universal religious system like the beast before it (Catholicism), and was a human system with human headship, human organization, etc., just like the first beast and in this was made an image to the beast. This was the third religious system which opposed the truth and the true people of God. They set up human creeds and disciplines instead of accepting the whole word of God as the true people of God do. This was Protestantism.

These three major universal systems of false religions have been on the scene, one at a time, throughout the history of the church of God in this Christian era. As we approach the time of the end and the final conflict and stage of action at the same time and forming one great combine, the number of which is as the sand of the sea, to go up on the breadth of the earth and compass the camp of the saints, and the beloved city (Revelation 20:9)—"...The city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem,...the...church of the firstborn which are written in heaven,..." Hebrews 12:22-23.

There is a world-wide ecumenical movement gathering momentum in the world today and it is making great strides toward combining all the world's religions, including so-called Christianity with its multiplicity of churches and movements, into a general world church—Gog and Magog. Much could be said on this, but space will not permit here. I will make this observation here. When the first world's

Parliament of Religions met in Chicago in 1893, including all the heathen religions of the world and Catholics and Protestants in all their varied forms, creeds and denominations, the President of this Parliament said in his opening address, "For when the religious faiths of the world recognize each other as brothers, children of one Father, whom all profess to love and serve, then, and not until then, will the nations of the earth yield to the spirit of concord and learn war no more. We meet on the mountain of absolute respect for the religious conviction of each other. This day the sun of a new era of religious peace and progress arises over the world, dispelling the dark clouds of sectarian strife. It is the brotherhood of religions." The dragon, the beast, and the false prophet had met in "mutual confidence and respect, a brotherhood of religions." Other similar congresses have been held since that time, and in recent years there have been different ecumenical councils held which are all beating the march right on down the same road—gathering Gog and Magog and an innumerable company with them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.

While this is all going on, Christ is also marshaling His forces (army) and maneuvering them into position for this gigantic and climactic conflict which is to terminate the great day of God Almighty. We read in Revelation 19:11-16, "And I saw heaven opened, and behold a white horse; and he that sat upon him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness he doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns; and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself. And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood; and his name is called The Word of God. And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horses, clothed in fine linen, white and clean. And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God. And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS."

The rider on this white horse could not possibly be identified as any other than the Lord Jesus Himself. No one in all Holy Writ has borne the names mentioned here but He Himself. And let us note that He had only one weapon, which was a "sharp sword," which came out of his mouth. Surely, we would all recognize that men of war (carnal) do not carry their swords in their mouths. "For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword,..." Hebrews 4:12. It is by the Word of God and the power of the Spirit that Jesus carried on His warfare. The Word of God is called "the sword of the Spirit" in Ephesians 6:17. It is by the Word of God that sin is exposed and people are convicted of sin and through obedience to the Word they are saved; and those who fail to obey the Word are destroyed (slain). (Revelation 19:21.) This same Jesus appeared riding on a white horse in the beginning of this gospel age of time. (Revelation 6:2.) In that case He had a bow which was equivalent of the rainbow God placed in the sky to confirm His promise of mercy to humankind in Noah's time. The bow in this case is significant of God's promise of mercy and salvation to the human family in Jesus Christ. Now He appears again in the closing out of the age on the same white horse and riding at the head of a great army. This army is composed of an innumerable multitude out of every nation, kindred, tongue, and people. (Revelation 7:9), representing the redeemed of the gospel era. They followed Him on white horses and they were clothed in fine linen, white and clean. This fine linen is declared to be the "righteousness of saints" in Revelation 19:8. The innumerable company of Revelation 7:9 are said to be clothed in "white robes" (verse 13), and verse 14 says they had "...washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." The armies that followed Him, then, are the bloodwashed throng who have been redeemed through faith in the all atoning blood of the Lamb.

Note in this case that instead of having a bow representing His promise of mercy, pardon, and redemption, He has a sharp sword in this instance, signifying that He is on a mission of judgment and vengeance against sinful men and false and apostate religions this time.

In Revelation 18:1-2 and 4, we read, "And after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory. And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, 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. And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues."

The angel coming down from heaven and lighting the earth with this glory seems to me to be the symbol of the "Evening Light" Ministry which restored the full light of the gospel which had not shown in its fullness since the time of the apostasy of the morning church about 270 A.D. Ministers are referred to as angels sometimes in God's Word. In the 2nd and 3rd chapters of Revelation, we find recorded the messages of Jesus Christ to the seven churches in Asia; the minister in charge or overseer of each church is addressed as "the angel of the church which is at," etc. Here an angel represents a body of ministers rather than just an individual minister.

The fall of Babylon is mentioned in connection with the preaching of the "Evening Light" Ministry. This last particular phase of Babylon (Protestantism—denominationalism) had not always been fallen. In its time it was much used of God, and God worked mightily with them producing great revivals in which multitudes of souls were saved. Now the time had come that God wanted to restore the Body of Christ as a visible, unified, operating body in the earth as it was in the morning time of this gospel era, free from human rule and government, with Christ as its Head and it being operated through the guidance of the Holy Spirit. This was the message of the "Evening Light" Reformation—the unity of God's people and the one true church divine. It was by rejecting this message and holding on to their human institutions and creeds that the Protestantism phase of Babylon fell and went into darkness.

Then followed the call to God's people in verse four, "...Come out of her, my people,..." and they came. In John 10:27, Jesus said, "My sheep hear my voice,...and they follow me." In John 10:16 He said, "And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd." Those who were truly saved and knew God in sectism, when the "Evening Light" Message began to sound forth under the anointing of the Holy Spirit, heard the voice of the true Shepherd and recognized it and followed it, forsaking the human sects and creeds they were in and coming to the one true Body of Christ. Thus, Christ has been gathering together in one the true people of God and maneuvering them into position for the great and final conflict. The gathering began when the "Evening Light" Reformation broke in 1880 and has continued on and will continue until the final end of time. So we see that just as Gog and Magog, consisting of the dragon, the beast, and false prophet, are all being gathered together under the spirit of antichrist; so the true people of God are being called out and gathered together under the Spirit of God to the battle of that great day of God Almighty.

The Battle of Armageddon is going on now and has been throughout this gospel dispensation, but more particularly in this period incorporated in the "Evening Light" Reformation time when the gathering of forces on both sides is going on in dead earnest, but it will wax hotter and hotter as we approach nearer to the end, and the forces and kinds of deception multiply and abound more and more. The

Bible says, "Evil men and seducers will wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived." II Timothy 3:13.

Dear brethren, this is not a time to play around. We are in this time right now and the powers of deception are increasing and the kinds of deception are multiplying and many are being deceived who once knew God and enjoyed His blessings in their lives, and the love of many is waxing cold today who were once fervent in spirit, serving the Lord. Let us all fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life and follow the Captain of the Lord's host into the battle wherever He may lead.

I want to discuss one more thing as we come to the close. In Revelation 14:18-20 we have described the harvest of the world which could cover the same period of time I have been discussing, only by different symbols. In verse twenty it says, "And the winepress was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the winepress, even unto the horse bridles, by the space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs." A tremendous thing is described here and it would be a gruesome thing indeed to think of it in literal terms. It could not possibly refer to anything literal because all of the four billion plus people that are in the world today do not have that much blood in their bodies. Then what does it mean?

In Ezekiel 33:1-6 we have set forth the matter of an enemy coming against the land of Israel and the duties of the watchman who has been set by the people. He was to sound the trumpet and warn the people. It is said that if he sounded the warning and they failed to take heed and perished, their blood would be upon themselves. Also, if he failed to sound the warning and the enemy came upon them and destroyed them, their blood would be required at the watchman's hand. Then in verses 7-9 this same thing is carried over and applied to God-called, God-sent ministers and overseers in this gospel age. Hebrews 13:17, speaking of overseers of congregations, says, "...For they watch for your souls, as they that must give account,..." This also would apply in a way to any minister of God who deals with the souls of men. Paul said in Acts 20:26-27, "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."

Now what this all sums up to is the situation we are face to face with today. On the one hand, we have many ministers in Christendom today who are so compromising and fail to tell the people the consequences of the things they are doing and excusing things in people's lives which are destroying their souls and are failing to declare the full council of God to the people so that the blood of many souls is on their hands. On the other hand, we are in a time which is characterized by free thinking and everybody thinking for themselves, and when ministers of God are faithful to declare the full council of God and deal pointedly with souls about the things they are doing which will destroy their souls; many times they just pass it off and say, "I don't see it that way. I have my way the same as he has his, and I have just as much right to see it my way as he does to see it his way." So they just go on their merry way, failing to give heed and to measure up and be doers of the Word, and become deceived. Their blood is on their own hands because they were faithfully warned by the minister God had given them.

But in either case, whether it is on the people's part or the minister's part, there is a great failing today and the blood of souls is running real deep right now. We are in the vortex of the Battle of Armageddon and much soul blood is being shed right before our eyes. This Scripture in Revelation 14:20 gives us an idea of how tremendous this thing is now and it's getting worse. So, let us fear God and keep His commandments and walk humbly before Him, lest our soul blood be mingled with the soul blood of the multitudes who are failing of the grace of God. Let us be

assured that this great conflict is going to end in "victory for him to whom all triumph belongs" and if we continue faithful unto death we shall be saved eternally.

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN AFFLICTIONS & SICKNESS

Question: I would like to have an explanation of what is the difference between *sickness* and *afflictions* in James 5:13-14. I would like to know what all *afflictions* take in. I have several afflictions on my body, but I don't consider myself sick, so I just pray for myself.

Answer: I will insert here the full text of James 5:13, 14: "Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms. 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."

The dictionary defines "afflict" as: "To give pain which is continued or of some permanence to body or mind; to trouble, grieve or distress. (To persecute). One can be afflicted with a disease or with melancholy, losses or misfortunes." It lists synonyms as: "Torment, distress, trouble, grieve, harass, pain, disquiet."

Disquiet is defined as "Uneasiness, restlessness, want of tranquility in body or mind, disturbance, anxiety."

Distress is defined as "To afflict greatly; to afflict with pain or anguish, to harass, to oppress or crush with calamity, to make miserable."

Grieve is defined as "To feel pain of mind or heart; to be in pain on account of an evil; to sorrow or mourn, to grieve for a dead friend or grieve at a calamity that befell him."

All of this ground is covered in the term *afflict*. Some of these things also overflow into the dictionary definition of the term *sick*. It might be a little difficult to draw a sharp line of distinction between *affliction* as it might affect the physical body and the term *sickness*. It seems in a general sense, any physical ailment or disorder would come under the heading of *sickness*, while *affliction* would more generally apply to one's being troubled, distressed, burdened, grieved, offended, persecuted or, etc. The Scriptures also generally agree with this.

In Genesis 41:52 we read where Joseph named his second son Ephraim and said, "...For God hath caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction." His affliction in this case was his slavery and separation from his family in a strange land. In I Samuel 1:11, we read where Hannah, who was barren, but afterward by a direct miracle of God, became the mother of Samuel, was praying and said, "...O Lord of hosts, if thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of thine handmaid, and remember me, and not forget thine handmaid, but wilt give unto thine handmaid a man child, then I will give him unto the Lord all the days of his life,..." Eli, the priest, saw her lips moving as she prayed but heard no sound coming from her lips, so reproved her for being drunk. Hannah answered him thus in verse 15, "...No, my lord, I am a woman of a sorrowful spirit: I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but have poured out my soul before the Lord." In this case her affliction was her deep sorrow and grief of heart because of being barren and having no children.

In II Kings 14:26 we read again, "For the Lord saw the affliction of Israel, that it was very bitter: for there was not any shut up, nor any left, nor any helper for Israel." In II Kings 13:4 we see that Israel's affliction was their oppression by the King of Syria. Again in Exodus 3:7 we read, "And the Lord said, I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows." In verse 8, God continues speaking, "And I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians,..." It is clear

in this case that Israel's affliction was their severe oppression by the Egyptians, and their abject slavery unto them, and God came down to deliver them by the hand of Moses.

In Isaiah 53:4 we read of Christ as a man who was afflicted. I know of no Scripture referring to Jesus ever being sick, but He was "...A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief:..." Isaiah 53:3. He was persecuted, despised, rejected. As the weight of the sins of all mankind, including our own, fell on Him, His soul became exceeding sorrowful unto death. (Mark 14:34.) He bore a great weight of grief because of the unbelief and hardness of the people's hearts and the severe burdens and troubles they were in on account of this. (Mark 3:5, Matthew 9:36, Mark 6:34, Matthew 14:14.) On one occasion when Jesus came near to Jerusalem and beheld the city, He wept over it because of realizing the great calamities which would befall its people, not far hence. These were the afflictions of Christ.

Concerning the time of these severe calamities, Jesus said in Mark 13:19, "For in those days shall be affliction, such as was not from the beginning of the creation which God created unto this time, neither shall be." In this case their affliction was to be the great tribulation they were to suffer. In II Corinthians, chapter 4, Paul speaks of his being troubled, perplexed, persecuted, cast down, bearing in his body the dying of the Lord Jesus, and in verse 17, he says, "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment,..." In this case all of these things constituted his affliction. In II Corinthians 8:1-2, Paul speaks of the brethren of Macedonia, "How that in a great trial of affliction the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality." Their affliction was deep poverty and great material need. Also Paul said in Philippians 4:14 in regard to a financial contribution the Philippian brethren had sent him, "...ye did communicate with my affliction."

I could go on extensively with such texts, but it is not necessary. These texts surely confirm the scriptural use of the term *affliction*, and I find no place in this whole chain of scriptures where affliction refers to physical or bodily ailments. The terms used to describe these in the Scriptures are "sickness, disease, plague, infirmity."

Therefore, it is concluded that one's wounds, bruises, hurts, offenses, griefs, sorrows, troubles, burdens, persecutions, tribulations, and such like are afflictions about which one should pray until he has prayed out from under them and triumphed over them; until he can be merry and can sing psalms. Neither is it forbidden to them to seek agreement of prayer from others in whom they confide, but these are things in which the individual needs to pray through for himself and gain his own victory. Also, any physical ailment or disorder that a person may have (including arthritis, eczema, nerve disorders, and anything which causes pain, discomfort or torment)—things which we ordinarily think of as afflictions—should be anointed with oil by the Elders of the church and prayed for with the expectation of being healed according to James. 5:14-15 and Mark 6:13.

“APPEAR NOT UNTO MEN TO FAST”

Question: What is the meaning of Matthew 6:17, "But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face; That thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret: and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly." Matthew 6:17-18. Does the clause "anoint thine head" refer to a literal interpretation?

Answer: The whole major thrust of the first eighteen verses of the sixth chapter of Matthew is aimed at getting true Christian people away from the idea of seeking any

praise, commendation or reward from men for what we do in service or worship to God and doing whatever we do in these areas "...heartily as to the Lord, and not unto men" Colossians 3:23. We see in these verses how that the serpentine influence of self interest and self promotion and aggrandizement can creep into and slither across our deepest acts of devotion and charity—giving alms, praying and fasting.

Jesus presented these whole ideas as hypocritical acts. They were doing these things and announcing their doing and sounding their trumpets so that men would be sure to notice and give them credit and praise. This is all a very destructive thing to one's relationship with God and to Christian living. Jesus said these people had their reward—that men would see them and praise them—but they had no reward from God. This is an attitude to be religiously avoided by true Christian people.

Jesus said, "How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only?" John 5:44. We are certainly not to seek praise and commendation from men for what we do for God and for our acts of devotion and worship to God.

In the particular part of this over-all teaching on this subject—the matter of fasting and how to carry it out—we are instructed in general to do nothing special to let men know we are fasting. The anointing of the head (one translation says "pour perfume on your hair" and another translation says "brush your hair"), was a normal part of Jewish grooming but it was forbidden by their canon in times of fasting and humiliation. But what Jesus seems to be teaching us here is that when we fast we should groom ourselves as usual and dress ourselves as usual and not in any special garment of mourning as those people did, that we might not appear unto men to be fasting.

It is evident and clear that this is no part of the fasting itself because Jesus continues on to say "That thou appear not unto men to fast."

True Christians should always avoid any tendency to vaunt themselves in anything they do for God and not seek credit from their fellow men for those things. Let us be satisfied with the credit and reward that God gives unto those who serve Him in the right attitude of heart. This will help our "togetherness" with God which is a very precious thing with the child of God. It is a very rewarding and enriching thing to one's life when God rewards Him for doing something as unto Him. We are taught by Jesus to "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.) Truly, all glory belongs to God and let us be satisfied for Him to get it from our lives.

SHOULD WOMEN BRAID THEIR HAIR?

Question: Should women braid their hair? I believe it is wrong to bind ornaments in the hair, but some saints tell me that it is all right to braid the hair. What do you think?

Answer: I Timothy 2:9 and I Peter 3:3 are the two Scriptures in the New Testament which refer to women's hair with reference to its arrangement, etc. I Timothy 2:9 says, "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." I Peter 3:3 says, "Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel."

It is important to the thought to note that both of these Scriptures have the emphasis on ornamentation and adornment. The doing of the hair is mentioned in these texts right along with gold, pearls, costly array and different adornments and

ornamentations. Therefore the particular method of fixing the hair in these verses is to be identified with ornamentation and adornment. This could hardly be said of just the plain braiding of the hair as we know it today and as the saint women do it. It is just another way of fixing the hair. Some do their hair up in a "bun" on top of their heads; some in a similar way but wear it on the back of their heads; some put it up in a figure eight on the back of their heads; some wear it in a French roll down on their necks; some (especially the younger sisters) just let it hang full length; some braid it and let it hang or put it up in different arrangements on their heads. Of all these ways the women arrange their hair, I do not see that any one of them could be singled out as worldly adornment anymore than any other. No doubt, each sister tries to fix her hair in the way that is most becoming to herself.

But in the Bible times it was different from the common braiding that saint sisters use in our day, and with which we are familiar. In the Scriptures it refers to something directly identified with worldly adornment and therefore something to be avoided by saints. Let us look at what was under consideration in these Scriptures and why such was written in the Bible at all.

I Timothy 2:9 refers to "Broided" hair (the margin says "Plaited") and I Peter 3:3 refers to "Plaiting" the hair. "Broided" and "Plaited" hair involves more than the common braiding with which we are familiar today.

In the article on dress in the Zondervan Pictorial Bible Dictionary edited by Merrill C. Tenney we read these words: "Women often added to their adornment by an elaborate 'plaiting' of the hair. I Peter 3:3 finds it necessary to warn Christian women against relying upon such adorning to make themselves attractive." It is clear here that this writer at least, connects the statement in I Peter 3:3 with worldly adornment and ornamentation.

Smith's Bible Dictionary in the article on hair says, "The women wore their hair natural, but braided, and dressed with strings of silk with ornaments." Also in the article on dress it says, "Jewesses did not veil their faces but covered the hair only. Women wore the hair long, braided, curled, etc., and decorated with jewels and coins...there were many ornaments in use for the hair, head, ears, nose, and neck..." All that is said here concerning the hair is in regard to adornment and ornamentation.

I Timothy 2:9, "...Not with broided hair, or gold,..." is variously translated in other translations of the New Testament as follows: "Not with braided hair, and gold"—American Standard Version; "And not with wreaths of gold ornaments for the hair"—Twentieth Century New Testament; "Not with plaitings and ornamentation of gold"—Rotherham; "Not with (elaborate) hair arrangement of gold"—New English Bible; "The adornment of a Christian woman is not a matter of an elaborate coiffure"—Phillips.

Adam Clarke comments on I Peter 3:3 as follows (in part). "Plaiting the hair, and variously folding it about the head, was the most ancient and simplest mode of disposing of this chief ornament of the female head... Thin plates of gold were often mixed with the hair, to make it appear more ornamental by the reflection of light and the solar rays. Small golden buckles were also used in different parts; and among the Roman ladies, pearls and precious stones of different colours."

The word found in I Timothy 2:9 is "broided" hair. "Broided" is defined in the dictionary as, "To ornament with needlework; embroider." The thought here is the imposition of ornamental work on an already existing cloth or fabric. Then to "broider" hair would suggest the thought of imposing ornamental substance onto the already existing hair in whatever way it might be arranged.

Nothing that is said above by the various writers, dictionaries, and various New Testament translations could refer to the plain common braiding of the hair as we know it in our day, but would involve the addition of ornamental and adorning

substances and material with it. The ornamenting of the hair, or any other part of the body to create eye appeal or invite admiration is branded in God's Word as evidence of pride in the heart and is forbidden for all saints, both men and women.

As far as I know this has been the position of the saints and early ministers of the Evening Light Reformation from as far back as I can remember and still is, as far as I know.

DOCTRINE OF ELECTION & FREE WILL

Question: Among the many doctrines in the Bible are the two dealing with salvation—the doctrine of election and the doctrine of free-will. There are many passages in the Bible on both of these doctrines and many books written, etc.

Now my question is simply this—How can we fit these two opposing doctrines together so as to form a reasonable part of the whole? The entire Bible must somehow fit together as God's whole Word. So there should be some logical answer here to this confusing matter. Frankly, I don't see how both of these doctrines can be in the Bible. But they are, and how do we explain them?

Answer: In the first place, let us recognize and be persuaded that there cannot possibly be two mutually contradictory doctrines in the Bible. For such a case to exist would certainly raise questions in our minds about God Himself and doubts as to the credibility of the Bible as God's Word. Mutually contradictory doctrines may arise, and often do, out of men's interpretations of the Bible, but they never exist in the Bible itself when properly interpreted and understood.

I see the two doctrines as being mutually compatible, blending into each other and each incorporating the other and the doctrine of *free-will* enveloping the doctrine of *election*. The doctrine of *free-will* is so definitely and so broadly established in the New Testament that it could not possibly be questioned as pertaining to the plan of salvation and the economy of God's grace. We are told in John 3:16 that "...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 3:14-15 says, "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." Revelation 22:17 says, "...And **whosoever** will, let him take the water of life freely." II Peter 3:9 says, "The Lord is...not willing that **any** should perish, but that **all** should come to repentance." This would certainly destroy the idea of God's electing (choosing) certain ones to be saved and excluding others from being saved by an act of His own will and sovereignty. This thought is further emphasized in I Timothy 2:1 where we are exhorted to pray for all men, and verse four says that God would have **all** men to be saved. I Timothy 2:6 says that Christ gave himself a ransom for **all**. I Timothy 4:10 says that God is the Saviour of **all** men. Hebrews 2:9 says that Jesus by the grace of God tasted death for **every man**.

I have referred to several Scriptures and could go on and on with many more to show that salvation in its provisions is universal and available to all men, but in its application it is individual and on a **whosoever will** basis. Anyone who is saved must be willing to be saved within the scope of the economy of God's grace, to come under the covenant provisions in the terms of the gospel and meet the demands of God's Word. Anyone who will do this will be saved.

Now I have stated that the doctrine of "Free-will" envelops the doctrine of "Election." But how? The term *Elect* is used a number of times in the Old Testament in reference to ancient Israel, who in that time were the chosen people of God. God had elected (chosen) them as a peculiar people, separated unto Himself from all the

other peoples upon this earth that in them He might reveal His glory, power and holiness; to whom He could deliver the oracles of God (the law), extend and perpetuate the covenant and promises made to Abraham, the originator of their race, and through them bring Jesus Christ into the world.

Therefore they are referred to as the *Elect* in different places throughout the Old Testament. But in the New Testament the term *Elect* or *Election* is extended beyond the limits of the Jewish nation to include all, both Jews and Gentiles, who are redeemed from sin through faith in the merits of the all-atoning blood of Jesus Christ.

In the first four verses of the 11th chapter of Romans, the Apostle Paul argues that God has not cast off His people, Israel, and confirms it with the fact that he himself was an Israelite and had obtained mercy and been saved by faith in Christ. Also, he refers to the time of Elijah when a remnant was reserved unto God in a time of Israel's deep apostasy and idolatry. Then in verse five he says, "Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace." Note on what grounds the election of this remnant was reckoned. It was not by virtue of being the children of Abraham according to the flesh, nor by the keeping of the law, neither by circumcision, nor by any of the conditions on which the election of ancient Israel was predicated. It is on an entirely different ground—"According to the election of grace." But there are only eleven references to "Grace" in the Old Testament. Two of them are prophetic—Zechariah 4:7 and 12:10: one referring to God's mercy in a time of deep trouble (Ezra 9:8); and the Psalmist spoke of grace being given to his lips in prayer (Psalm 45:2). All the others refer to the grace of one person to another, or of the king to individuals, etc. The Old Testament was not an age of grace, but it is said in John 1:14 that "Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ."

Therefore the election spoken of in Romans 11:5 was not an Old Testament kind of election, but it was the "Election of grace" through Christ which only a remnant of the Israelites obtained. John 1:11-13 says, "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: Which were born,...of God." Those among the Jews who received Jesus Christ when He came and believed on His name constitute this "Remnant according to the election of grace." Adam Clarke in his comments on Romans 11:5 says, "The election of grace simply signifies God's gracious design in sending the Christian system into the world, saving under it all those who believe in Christ Jesus, and none else. Thus the believers in Christ are chosen to inherit the blessings of the gospel, while those who seek justification through the works of the law are rejected." Again he says in his comments on verse six, "And this is done according to the election of grace, or the rule of choosing any persons to be the people of God upon the footing of grace, which takes in all that believe in His Son Jesus Christ."

To this the Scriptures bear conclusive evidence, for it is written "...**whosoever will**, let him take the water of life freely," (Revelation 22:17); and "...**whosoever** believeth in him should...have everlasting life." John 3:16.

Romans 11:7 says, "...Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for;..." They desired to continue as the chosen people of God with all the power and glory of their kingdom which had been in times past. But they did not recognize the Author of eternal salvation when He came, so did not accept Him, but rejected Him, therefore failing to obtain what they desired. This verse says further, "...but the election hath obtained it,..." We have seen that the election where those who believed in Jesus Christ and received Him, thus were born of God, became His children in reality. Therefore they inherited all the blessings of the gospel, entered into the spiritual

kingdom of God (righteousness, joy and peace in the Holy Ghost—Romans 14:17), and obtained the fullness of what they sought after.

This group of Israelites, who were elect according to grace received Christ and believed in Him, were born of God, and became children of God in reality. This great, majestic company of faith champions survived the complete spiritual collapse and downfall of the Jewish people and came through with faith and belief in the promises, looking for the Consolation of Israel. This group came through, merged into, and blended with the spiritual body of Christ and entered the spiritual kingdom of God. It was absorbed into a much greater and broader "Election" which included all of those from every nation under heaven (both Jews and Gentiles) who believed in Christ and received redemption by faith in His blood.

The term "Elect" means *chosen, selected*. Several translations drop the term *elect* and insert the term *chosen* in its stead in all texts where "Elect" is mentioned. The Amplified Bible retains the term *Elect* but in each case inserts in parenthesis the terms *chosen, select*. Then we read in Ephesians 1:4, "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." The choosing or electing here does not refer to particular individuals, but that God had chosen or selected a plan for people (all people) to be saved, and this was through Jesus Christ and Him only, by believing in Him and yielding themselves to Him for salvation. Thus it is said that we (all the people of whatever nation, kindred, tongue or people) are chosen (elected) in Him, for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved (Acts 4:12).

Now let us look at a very important text regarding "Election." In II Peter 1:10 we read, "Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall." This Scripture teaches us that we have a part in our election. Someone said a long time ago in regard to the "Election," that "God has a vote, the devil has a vote, and I have a vote, and whichever way I vote is the way the election is going." In Romans 6:16 we are told, "...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." Again Romans 6:13 says, "Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God,...and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God." Thus we can see that the yielding of ourselves to one master or the other is in our own hands, subject to our own will; and our yielding determines our election one way or another.

II Peter 1:10 also teaches us that our election can be lost after it has been gained. "...If ye do these things, ye shall never fall." The inference here is that if we fail to do these things and give diligence to this, we will fall.

This is exactly what happened to Israel. They were the elect of God, but they lost their election status and were cut off because of unbelief. (Romans 11:20.) Verse 17 speaks of the Gentiles being grafted in and verse 20 says they stand by faith. Then verse 22 says, "Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off." This all makes it very clear that our election is determined by us and how we yield ourselves, that our election can be lost after we have obtained it, if we do not diligently work out our own salvation with fear and trembling.

NEW TESTAMENT TEMPLE-- THE CHURCH

Question: When and where was the prophecy of Malachi 3:1-4 fulfilled and which temple did Jesus come to—the Old Testament or the New Testament Temple?

Answer: It seems clear to me that the New Testament Temple, the Church, was not in existence during the life and ministry of Jesus on this earth. Jesus Himself said in Matthew 16:18, "...upon this rock I will build my church;..." Note, He said He would build it. It was not yet built. He was, during His life and ministry, confirming the truth upon which it was to stand and was gathering out material for building His New Testament Temple, the Church; but the Church was purchased with His own blood (Acts 20:28). The blood was shed at Calvary at the completion of His earthly ministry.

It is said in John 1:11, that He came unto His own. That would have been the Jews which were the chosen people of God until the close of the Old Testament dispensation. His ministry was centered mostly in the Jews and when He sent His twelve Apostles forth He told them, "...Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." (Matthew 10:5-6.) It was after His death and resurrection that He said unto His disciples to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature, but during His earthly ministry His disciples were restricted mainly to the people of Israel.

Jesus lived under the law while preaching grace, but the law was not fulfilled until Jesus made the supreme sacrifice and gave His life and shed His blood as the great sin offering for all mankind at Calvary. Consequently, the law was still in force and the Jewish religious system was still in vogue during the life and ministry of Jesus, and the Old Testament Temple was the center and focal point of the religious system. Jesus recognized this and was often in that temple teaching and carrying on His work. In Matthew 26:55, Jesus said, "...I sat daily with you teaching in the temple,..." Note that He said He was there daily. In John 2:13-17, we find Jesus purging the temple of the illegitimate business being carried on there and in verse 16 He said unto them, "...make not my Father's house an house of merchandise." It seems from this that the Old Testament Temple was still God's house during the life and ministry of Jesus and that Jesus had an all-consuming zeal for its sanctity.

It is said in Matthew 27:50-51, that Jesus yielded up the ghost (died), and behold the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom. That veil had separated between the holy and most holy places in the temple for 1400 years, and God had dwelt between the cherubims on the mercy seat in that secluded and secret place behind that veil all that time so that He might be among His people. But when Christ died on Calvary, the old law was completely fulfilled, its religious system abolished forever, and God moved out of that temple that day never to return to it.

Therefore, I feel it proper to say that Jesus came to that Old Testament Temple in His first advent to this world. He observed its sanctity and taught within its walls throughout His ministry. Then after the New Testament Temple was built and set in operation on the day of Pentecost, He moved into that holy temple there to abide throughout this gospel and Holy Spirit age of time.

In Ephesians 2:20-22, we read, "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." As already observed, Jesus said in Matthew 16:18, that He would build His church. This scripture in Ephesians makes it clear that the church He built was the holy temple

of the Lord in which He dwells through the Spirit. In John 14:18, Jesus said, "I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you." And in John 14:23, "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." John 14:26 clearly states that the Comforter is the Holy Ghost and Ephesians 2:22 confirms that God inhabits or indwells the Church, His holy temple, through the Spirit (Holy Ghost). Therefore, when the Holy Ghost was given and filled all the believers on the day of Pentecost, the Church was established, set in operation, and Jesus and His Father moved into it.

Acts 2:1-4, says, "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost." The Church was built that day out of about 120 believers. It began to function in a powerful way and about 3000 souls were added to it that day. From that time forward the Lord added daily to the Church those who were being saved (Acts 2:47). God the Father, God the Son (Jesus), and God the Holy Ghost moved into that holy temple that day to abide there forever.

In Matthew 3:11, John the Baptist said of Jesus that He would baptize with the Holy Ghost and fire. But He did not baptize with the Holy Ghost until after His death, resurrection and ascension to heaven, when He sent the Holy Ghost back to stay. Then verse 12 says, "Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather the wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire." According to Acts 2:2, this was a sudden thing as the disciples of the Lord waited and tarried before Him waiting for the promise of the Father, and, to the best of my light and understanding, constitutes a fulfillment of Malachi 3:1-4.

I will insert here the full text of Malachi 3:1-4. "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 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. Then shall the offering of Judah and Jerusalem be pleasant unto the Lord, as in the days of old, and as in former years."

This clearly corresponds with what John the Baptist said of Jesus in Matthew 3:1-11, and the description of what happened on the day of Pentecost in Acts 2:1-4. If it would seem to be a stumbling block to some that this is all mentioned in connection with the coming of John the Baptist to prepare the way of the Lord before Jesus and then immediately says, "The Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to his temple"; I would say that the building of the holy temple in the Lord (the Church) began in the life and ministry of Jesus—He was laying the foundation of it and gathering material for it. But it was fully built and established on the day of Pentecost when the Spirit came to stay and Jesus suddenly came to His temple and moved into it by the Holy Ghost that day.

CHURCH ELDERS

Question: Who are the elders in the Church? When are they elders? Does ordination have anything to do with being an elder? What is a bishop and what is a deacon? If a minister has a rebellious child, does that take away his gift?

Answer: We have several questions in one here, but they are all related, so maybe we can discuss them all together.

It seems apparent from the Scriptures that the term "Elder" and the term "Bishop" are used interchangeably and apply to the same officer in the Church. We are not to confuse the present use of the term "Bishop" with what it was in the early Church of the Apostolic period. F. G. Smith in his book *The Revelation Explained*, on page 94, quotes from the historian Waddington who says, "...and it is even certain that the terms 'Bishop,' 'Elder' and 'Presbyter' were, in the first instances, and for a short period, sometimes used synonymously, and indiscriminately applied to the same order in the ministry." On page 95 of the same book he quotes from the historian Milman who says, "The earliest Christian communities appear to have been ruled and represented, in the absence of the apostle who was their first founder, by their elders, who are likewise called bishops, or overseers of the church." Further he quotes from D'Aubigne's *History of the Reformation* on page 96, "The church was in the beginning a community of brethren, guided by a few of the brethren." And again, "All Christians were priests of the living God, with humble pastors as their guides."

It will be noted in all these quotations from these historians that they are going back to the beginning and describing how it was then. That is what we must do to get a proper understanding of these officers in the Church and their functions. We can certainly be sure that when the Church was brand-new and fresh from the hand of God that it would be perfect and exactly like He wanted it. As it was then, so must it be now. We must go back to the beginning of the New Testament Church for our pattern and not allow our vision to be clouded by all the paraphernalia that has been attached to these terms by ambitious and aspiring men down through the apostasy and the Dark Ages and their present day usage which has come on down to us from that time.

The Holy Scriptures also attest to this. In Titus 1:5 we read Paul's instruction to Titus, "...set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee." Then verse seven says, "For a bishop must be blameless, etc." It is clear here that the terms "Elder" and "Bishop" are used interchangeably.

We find in Titus 1:6 that the qualifications for an "Elder" (Bishop) is that he must have faithful children not accused of riot or unruly, and in I Timothy 3:4 we read, "One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity." But these are conditions that change. Sometimes unruly children through the prayers of their parents and the saints, settle down and behave better. Sometimes they become more rebellious and leave home. In different ways these conditions may change. Also, they have been known to get saved, shape up and do well. So, let us not give up on them, but pray for them and be all the help to them and their parents that we can. Perchance God may undertake in the matter and solve the problem in the best way and to the best interest of all parties involved.

I would hesitate to say that a minister having a rebellious child would cause his gift to be taken away. However, if conditions became bad enough it would perhaps shut him down in the exercise of his gift for the time being until conditions changed to clear him for going ahead in his calling.

In Acts 20:17 we read concerning Paul, "And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church." We see here that at least some congregations had a plurality of elders—more than just one. Also, in verse 28 of this chapter we learn something else about the elders—the most important thing. That is that they were divinely appointed and qualified by the Holy Ghost and that they were the overseers of the Church of God. Their specified duty in this verse was to "...feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood." Also in the next three verses they are warned about some who would come in among them, and some of

their own number who would break rank, and draw away disciples after them. These elders are charged with the responsibility of watching and standing guard over the Church and protecting it against schisms and divisions, false and erroneous doctrines. In I Peter 5:1-3, Peter is exhorting the "Elders" (it is important to note that he also classifies himself as an "Elder" even though he was an "Apostle") and he exhorts them to "feed the flock of God" and take "the oversight thereof." Verse three, "Neither as being lords [not overruling—margin] over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock." Paul declared in II Corinthians 1:24 that he did not have dominion over their faith, but was a helper of their joy. Some unwise and overruling pastors require things of people which are beyond their faith, light, understanding and experience to which they have attained, and discourage them and crush their spirits. Instead, they should teach them in love and sympathy and set a good example before them of those things to which they desire them to attain. Again in Hebrews 13:17 we read, "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give an account,..." Where this text says "Rule over you," the margin says, "Guide." One of the principal ways that a pastor rules over his congregation is in teaching them from God's Word in precept and then showing them how it works by a good example of what he is teaching. These texts all set forth the work of an "Elder" and his responsibilities and duties and also his authority.

It has already been noted that an "Elder" is appointed, qualified and empowered by the Holy Ghost. But a recognition of his call and qualifications for this work which is known as "ordination" is also taught in the Scriptures. This is usually done by the laying on of hands of other ministers. Paul wrote to Titus to "...Ordain elders in every city,..." Titus 1:5. Paul also wrote to Timothy to stir up the gift of God which was in him by the putting on of his hands. II Timothy 1:6. I Timothy 4:14 says, "Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery." In Acts 13:2-3 we read, "As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away." Then verse four says, "So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost,..." All these texts make it clear that the Holy Ghost is the One who calls, sends, endows with gifts and qualifies "Elders," and also that the Holy Ghost Himself wants the other ministers to recognize what He has done and to signify it by the sign of laying on of their hands. It is certain that any minister can feel freer in the exercise of his ministry and work more effectually when he knows that he has the recognition, support, backing and approval of the other ministers among whom he works and of the saints. For one to successfully fulfill the office of an "Elder" or "Overseer" in a congregation in all its aspects he should be ordained by the laying on of hands of other ordained ministers. He may preach just as well and feed the flock just as well without it, but when it comes to exercising authority and dealing with problems which may arise in the congregation, he will be much more effective and respected in his judgment if he has the recognition and backing of the ministry and the people he is dealing with know it. So I would say that one is a full-fledged "Elder," eligible to fulfill all the aspects of his office, when he is ordained by the laying on of hands of the presbytery.

In the early Church there were two classes of officers—"Elders" and "Deacons." The "Elders" were in charge of the spiritual oversight and operation of the Church, while the "Deacons" were in charge of the temporal affairs of the Church and the administration of its charities, etc.

In the first four verses of the sixth chapter of Acts, we have the introduction of the office of "Deacon" into the Church. In this case a murmuring of the Grecians

against the Hebrews because their widows were neglected in the administration of the charities and care of them by the Church was taking place. In other words, they felt they were being discriminated against and that partiality was being shown. It is altogether possible that this was the case, since the Jerusalem Church was predominantly Jewish and they had not yet learned that all men were equal in God's sight and that there was neither Jew nor Greek in the body of Christ. When this murmuring reached the apostles, they called the whole company together and instructed them to choose out from among them seven men filled with the Holy Ghost and wisdom, and they would appoint them over this business, but they would give themselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the Word. That was their job and they did not have time to attend to the administration of temporal matters. Verse six says that when these men were chosen and brought to the apostles they prayed and laid their hands on them. These men were ordained to administer in the office of a "Deacon" in that Jerusalem Church.

In the third chapter of I Timothy we have set forth the qualifications of a "Bishop" or "Elder" in the first seven verses. Then verses 8-13 set forth the qualifications of a "Deacon." You will notice there are some strict requirements on the "Deacon" as well as on the "Elder," and some of them are the same. God is very particular about any person who administers in any office in His Church. The deacons were required to be filled with the Holy Ghost the same as the elder was required to be Spirit filled. All who administer any office in the Church or occupy any position of leadership in the Church are to be Spirit-filled people.

“HE PREACHED UNTO THE SPIRITS IN PRISON”

Question: Please explain I Peter 3:19.

Answer: This text says, "By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison." In order to get a proper understanding of this verse we must consider it in connection with the preceding verse (18) and the following verse (20) which cover the entire thought. The 18th, 19th and 20th verses read: "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: 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."

These three verses belong together to form the complete thought, and to separate any of them from the others will leave us adrift with not certain direction. The 19th verse is the difficult one, but it does not make any sense at all with relation to the other scriptures if it is singled out and separated from the 18th and 20th verses. Taken by itself it would seem to teach something which is entirely incompatible with the general, overall teachings of the Scriptures in regard to Christ and to God's dealing with and attitude toward mankind.

The closing phrase of verse 18 says that Christ was quickened by the Spirit. Then the first two words of the 19th verse are "BY WHICH." Here is the key to understanding verse 19. "BY WHICH"—by what? By the same spirit and divine operation that quickened Christ and made Him alive again after He had died for our sins; it was the same Spirit and Divine Operation that carried out the action described in verse 19.

Let us realize that the Holy Spirit didn't just become operative in this New Testament Dispensation. He was operative in a lesser degree in Old Testament times, but operative nevertheless. Peter says in II Peter 1:21, "For the prophecy

came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." This was true of all the prophets of Old Testament times. In Acts 1:16, Peter said: "Men and brethren, this scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas,..." Here he declares that the Holy Ghost spake by the mouth of David. This was true of Noah also. Peter called him a "Preacher of righteousness" (II Peter 2:5), and the Holy Ghost spake through him as he preached righteousness to the people while the ark was preparing.

Verse 20 identifies the time of this action—"...When once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing,..."

If the phrase, "The spirits in prison," is a sticker to you, just realize that the souls of men in sin are bound in prison. A prison is a place where a person's liberty and freedom are taken away from him and he cannot do as he would. Describing the condition of the sinner, Jesus said in John 8:34, "...Whosoever committeth sin is the servant [bond slave] of sin." Again He said in John 8:44, "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do...." The devil is the master of the sinner and rules his life and his activities. 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?" So we see that the person who has yielded himself to sin is the servant of sin and is not free to do righteousness. Again Paul said in describing his condition in his law experience when he could not be free from sin, "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." (Romans 7:22-23.) He was not free to do what he wanted to do because in his mind he wanted to do right and serve God; but he was captivated by sin and was a servant of the devil and could not do what he wanted to do. This made him a miserable, wretched person, and he cried out for deliverance in verse 24 and found his deliverance through Jesus Christ in verse 25.

Jesus said in John 8:32, "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." Again He said in John 8:36, "If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." Hebrews 7:25 says, "Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost [completely, entirely, through and through] that come unto God by him,..." Matthew 1:21 says, "...Thou shalt call His name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins."

The Psalmist said in Psalm 142:7, "Bring my soul out of prison,..." Note, he was talking about his soul being in prison. In such a state and condition his freedom and liberty was taken away. This is just the condition in which these ungodly sinners were in Noah's time when God determined to destroy them all. In Isaiah 42:7, which is contained in a prophecy concerning Christ and His work and ministry and the effects of salvation, we read: "To open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house." It was to people in this condition that the Spirit of God through Noah preached while the ark was a preparing. All souls in sin are in the prison house, and it is the work of Christ through His salvation and saving grace to liberate them and set them free from the bondage and slavery of sin by saving them from their sins, and this is just what He wanted to do and would have done for those people in Noah's time if they would have believed and obeyed the preaching of Noah.

Hebrews 11:7 says that Noah condemned the world. How did he do it? He condemned the world by preaching righteousness to them in the power of the Spirit of God and then by believing and obeying it himself. The preaching of righteousness by the Holy Ghost had the same effect then that it does now—either condemns or saves—either a savor of life unto life or death unto death. It was a savor of life to

Noah and his family (eight souls) because they believed and obeyed. It was a savor of death to all the others because they did not believe and obey.

They had their chance, and God waited on them for 120 years to repent and turn from their evil ways. Why would it then be thought, as some say, that people were supposed to be imprisoned and preach to them and give them a second chance for salvation? He does not do that for people now, so why should He be partial to this people who had a chance for saving themselves the same as people do now and turned it down as people do now? It is not so.

COUPLES LIVING TOGETHER WITHOUT MARRIAGE VOWS

Question: There appears to be a need for the Church to take a firm stand on a couple of related questions. When couples live together as man and wife without having taken marriage vows, does God consider them married? Should we tell young people that after they have lived together after this fashion for a time, they are now free to walk out and enter into marriage vows with another because there had been no vows taken in the first instance? If a couple lives together without marriage for any time, long or short, and introduce each other as "my wife" or "my husband," are they then married in God's sight? What if one of the people living in this condition and introducing someone as "my husband" or "my wife," has been married and divorced, is the other party then free to marry after having lived for a time with a partner as husband and wife without marriage.

Answer: In the first place, I would advise this inquirer that the Church already has a strong stand against this abominable practice, and that stand is solid. I am certain that not one minister could be found among us that would approve it.

Also, let us recognize that the drift is always downward and the trend away from God and right. All righteous and clear thinking people will surely recognize that moral standards in the world are at this time very low and terrible. But they did not get this way all at once. There has been a gradual decline from one step to another over a period of many years until in these later years the decline has been sharper and more rapid. I would say that evil and moral corruption reached a kind of "sub saturation" point and the bottom fell out and the world took a plunge into low depths of evil and moral corruption. I do not say it would be proper to say it reached a saturation point. It did not. Because when it reaches that point and the cup of iniquity is filled up, then judgment will come. Things will get worse yet, much worse. So we can only say that the point reached which precipitated the sharp, steep decline into low depths of moral corruption was a "sub saturation" point.

This will give us some insight into this abominable practice we are now discussing. I can remember when I was a boy there were comparatively few separations in married couples. If a couple did separate, it was the common talk of the community. It was looked upon as something that ought not to be. If a couple got a divorce, they were just about black-listed. At that time moral standards in general were high, and the general populace demanded high standards and upright behavior out of everybody if they expected to be respected by the people. In those days people got married to stay married and had no thought of divorce. That arrangement produced a solid and wholesome society with marriage as a basis and the home as the corner stone. The female partner in the marriage accepted her proper place in the home as wife, mother and homemaker. The male partner accepted his responsibility as husband, father and provider for his family. Since divorce was a rather rare thing, the couple felt secure in each other's love, and their children felt secure in their parents' love and supervision. The parents dedicated

themselves to the rearing, training and guidance of their children to make them grow up to be honorable and upright people as the major priority of their lives.

At the time of the First World War, women left their homes in large numbers to take work in the war plants and other places which had been vacated by men going off to war. This was an evil within itself and produced other evils along with it. It was a severe blow to the home and family life which was the corner stone of the society. Women worked among groups of strange men which led to improper familiarities and behavior. Also, it created an atmosphere of independence, and the woman no longer felt dependent upon her husband for support because she was earning her own income. This led to unrest, dissatisfaction and conflict in the home, and divorces became more common. Moral standards fell a considerable degree under this onslaught. The whole thing was entirely out of God's order, and His blessing was not upon it. The devil and forces of evil won a great victory.

At the time of the Second World War moral standards plummeted again to a new low and for the same reasons. Since that time the decline has continued sharply and rapidly, and the home and family life has lost its place at the head of the list of priorities, and divorce is almost as common as marriage. Oh, how different this is to what it was in the time of my boyhood and youth. It is all grossly immoral and contrary to God's law. This prevalence of divorce destroys the sanctity of marriage, which is THE basis of a good home and family life, which is the corner stone of any solid, upright, and honorable society.

Because the sanctity of marriage has been largely destroyed by this condition, the way has been opened for this that we are discussing here—"shacking up" or living together without marriage—which is the most abominable of all up to now, and if carried to its ultimate would be a fatal blow to the basis of our institutions. Even the upright and honorable people of the world frown darkly on this practice. I say without fear of successful contradiction that this thing is Communistic in principle and spirit, and it is aimed at undermining and destroying the home life and family ties. It is another BIG step of man's departure from God and charting his own course according to his corrupt and depraved nature. It is another step toward an atheistic and godless society. It is tantamount to man shaking his fist in God's face and telling Him, "I don't like your way, it is too restrictive; I am taking my own way from here on."

God ordained marriage for the good, happiness, and welfare of mankind. He Himself performed the first marriage and pronounced His blessings upon that first pair—Adam and Eve. Right and proper marriage has always had God's sanction and blessings upon it, and Jesus gave considerable dignity to it by using it to represent the relationship between Himself and His church. Read Ephesians 5:21-32, Romans 7:4, Revelation 19:7-8, Revelation 21:9-10, II Corinthians 11:1-2 and more.

But the God who gave us the grand institution of Christian marriage and established the society of mankind upon it as a foundation, has also placed certain restrictions and bounds on it. In the first place, it is for the duration of life for the contracting parties. The death of one of the parties is the only thing that can dissolve it. Romans 7:2-3 says: "For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man." Again in I Corinthians 7:39, we read: "The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord." These two texts make it perfectly clear that a couple is bound by their marriage vows as long as both of them live. Jesus said in His teaching in Luke 16:18, "Whosoever putteth away his wife, and marrieth

another, committeth adultery: and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from her husband committeth adultery." So we see that God is very specific and positive in His instructions and rules governing marriage.

Also, He has set forth in His Word very specific rules and instructions regarding the lives and duties and responsibilities of a married couple. To the wives He said, "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.) In Ephesians 5:22-33 we read again, "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.... Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;... 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;... For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh.... Let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband." Also, read I Peter 3:1-7, which is a very pertinent Scripture in this connection, but which I will not take the space to insert here. There are others along this same line. Oh, the dignity, honor and virtue God has attached to Christian marriage!

In order to avoid the scriptural restrictions of a proper marriage and to escape from the binding obligations and duties associated with marriage vows, many today are following this practice of living together without marriage. This is an arrangement whereby a couple may enjoy all the benefits and conveniences of marriage without being married. It is a kind of walk-in and back-out deal. The parties are free to dissolve their relationship and enter into a similar arrangement with someone else at will. And that is just what many are doing. It is a rebellious spirit, rebelling against restrictions and directions. It is producing a wicked and adulterous generation, an unstable and irresponsible society, and a society with little regard for law and order in any area of life and behavior.

As to the question of whether a couple would be considered married in God's eyes if they have lived together for two or three years and introduced each other as "my wife" or "my husband"—of course, not. And if they lived together for 50 years without marriage they would still not be married in God's sight. It would be an adulterous relationship all the way through, and sooner or later the judgments of God will fall upon this thing and all who participate in it.

As to the question of whether we should teach our young people that if they have lived this way they can walk away from it any time they choose and be free to marry some good person, no, I do not feel that we should teach such a doctrine. We should try earnestly to get our young people to see the evil of this, and avoid it by all means, and if perchance some are already in it, try to persuade them to forsake that way of life and break off that relationship and to come clear of it. I suppose I could not say that such a person could not possibly be eligible for marriage. The condition in which they have lived could not be classed as a marriage because the basic elements of a Christian and Scriptural marriage are lacking. There have been no pledges given and no vows taken. Therefore, there is no breaking of a pledge nor violating of binding vows when the relationship is broken off. There is no betrayal of confidence because such arrangements are not entered into with confidence and assurance. However, I would say that such a person has already manifested a spirit of rebellion against the "establishment" and against God and His plan and arrangement for men and women, and has declared by his actions that no one is going to prescribe any pattern of life for him, but he is going to do his own thing and live by his own rules regardless of established customs and the feelings of other people. Furthermore, he has manifested a principle and has identified himself with

a segment of society which is unstable, undependable and irresponsible. Therefore, I would consider such a person poor marriage material and a poor risk unless he had obtained a good, solid experience of salvation—saved and sanctified—and has been manifesting the fruits of the Spirit over a suitable span of time.

IS IT POSSIBLE TO RECOVER AFTER BACKSLIDING?

Question: Please give a full explanation of the meaning of the scripture in Hebrews 6:4-6.

Answer: Hebrews 6:4-6, reads thus: "For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, And have tasted the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted of the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame."

Adam Clarke restricts the application of the terms in these verses to one class of individuals, and only one, and them of the very worst kind—apostates from the Christian faith. He says this has no reference to anyone professing Christianity, nor to any backslider, but that it applies to apostates from Christianity; those who reject the whole Christian system and its author, the Lord Jesus.

He further restricts this to only that particular class of apostates who join with the blaspheming Jews, call Christ an impostor, and vindicate His murderers in having crucified Him as a malefactor; and thus they render their salvation impossible by willfully, maliciously rejecting the Lord that bought them (II Peter 2:1) and bring upon themselves swift destruction. Adam Clarke further says, "No man believing in the Lord Jesus as the great sacrifice for sin, and acknowledging Christianity as a divine revelation, is here intended, though he may have unfortunately backslidden from any degree of the salvation of God."

Many who may read this knew and will remember Brother Sam Barton. I knew him well and when I first met him he was a backslider from a high degree of grace. I was holding a meeting about 20 miles or so from his home. He took my wife and me and our three children home with him and maintained us throughout that meeting, and took us to meeting every night that distance in his car and attended every service himself. I left him sitting on his front porch crying when I left that time. He would go about to the various camp meetings, taking his wife to the meetings and helping in the meetings with money, labor, etc. The saints were his people and he revered the truth and never wanted to see it tampered with or compromised even when he himself was outside of its covenant provisions. But he obtained mercy and found favor with God after twelve years as a backslider, and no one among the saints ever questioned the genuineness of his conversion or his sincerity in Christ. He obtained grace from God to prove himself a real champion of faith in the closing months of his life when he suffered very greatly from cancer. Never once did he complain against the Lord in all this.

We see from this experience that a full and complete recovery is possible for one who under some peculiar circumstances or combination of circumstances may be overcome and go down in defeat and fail utterly of the grace of God, and yet maintain a right attitude of reverence toward God and His truth and His people. This man and others have been reclaimed and recovered and used mightily of God after having suffered crushing defeats.

Also, I heard Brother I. C. Chandler bring out this observation which is worthy of note. He said he had seen numbers of people recovered after they had been overcome and lost the victory if they had maintained an attitude of reverence for

God and His truth and the saints. He also said that he could only remember a very few, if any, that ever lost their experience with God and began to fault find, criticize, brow-beat, and chastise the saints and blame them and seek to modify or change the principles and standard of the truth that ever got back to God. To receive a hard and wrong attitude when one has been overcome and to lose his hold on God is a dangerous thing to do, and if persisted in, could bring him to the condition covered in this passage we are considering.

We learn from this scripture that it is possible to apostatize from the highest degree of God's grace, and that those who are highest in the favor of God may lose it and perish everlastingly; and we are warned to never be led away from the truth, either by the persuasions or persecutions of our fellows.

The people referred to in this passage have been "once enlightened." They have been thoroughly instructed in the Word of God and the ways of the Lord, and have received the knowledge of the truth which has convinced them of sin, righteousness and judgment to come (John 16:8) and led them to Jesus Christ, the only Saviour of sinners and the Light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world (John 1:9). And the God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness has shined in their hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ (II Corinthians 4:6). They had given heed to the more sure word of prophecy until the Day Star had arisen in their hearts (II Peter 1:19).

They had "tasted of the heavenly gift." They had tasted that the Lord is gracious (I Peter 2:3). They had received that bread of life which came down from God out of heaven to give life unto the world (John 6:51). They had received into their hearts the gift of God's love—Jesus Christ (John 3:16). Through Him they have received the knowledge of salvation through the remission of sins and witnessed the full effects of salvation and the Christian religion.

They had been "partakers of the Holy Ghost." They have been blessed with the full witness of the Holy Spirit as to the fullness of God's mercy toward them. Also they have the witness of the complete soul-saving, sin-purging efficacy of the atonement, and have been filled with the Spirit which is the greatest and crowning grace of heaven upon any individual.

They have "tasted the good word of God." They have actually experienced the gospel of Christ which is the power of God unto salvation (Romans 1:16) working in them and have received the engrafted word which is able to save their souls (James 1:21). They have found the Word of God to be good and sweet to the taste of their souls. The Psalmist speaks of the sweetness of God's Word to him in Psalm 19:10 and 119:103. And Job said, "...I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food." Job 23:12. It is the good word of a good God and by it we are warned, admonished, instructed, corrected and thoroughly furnished unto every good work (II Timothy 3:16-17). Peter exhorts us to desire the sincere milk of the word that we may grow thereby. (I Peter 2:2.)

They had also tasted "the powers of the world to come." Adam Clarke says that the Greek word here translated "taste" signifies to experience or have full proof of a thing. The same word is translated in Hebrews 2:9 in respect to Christ's death, "He tasted death for every man." And surely no one would question but that Christ actually experienced death to the full extent and died just as fully as it would be possible for a man to die. Also, the same word is translated in I Peter 2:3, "...ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious," and no one would surely question that this would refer to one actually receiving and experiencing the graciousness of God in salvation and the "...things that accompany salvation,..." (Hebrews 6:9), which God has prepared for them that love Him.

Adam Clarke further says, "Accordingly, the statement here would refer to something these people had actually already experienced and received the full

benefits of and consequently 'the world to come' in this case would refer to this gospel age which was just being ushered in at that time."

It could also refer to the eternal world. But let us realize that one who receives salvation in its fullness receives a foretaste of that heavenly world. The elements of heaven are imparted to him and he receives an earnest of his eternal inheritance when he receives the Holy Spirit (II Corinthians 5:5 and Ephesians 1:13-14). So it is clear that "the world to come" could and does refer to both this gospel age and the eternal world depending upon the context.

The "powers of the world to come" would, no doubt, refer to the signs, wonders, miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit by which God witnessed to the preaching of His gospel in the early church and by which He confirmed His Word (Mark 16:20 and Acts 2:22). Throughout the writings of the prophets there are prophecies of the coming of Christ and the miraculous powers which would accompany His ministry, among which was specified the healing of the blind, deaf, dumb and lame. All these things Jesus did and His apostles after Him which gave definite witness and proof from heaven of His true Messiahship and of the genuineness of the gospel message. Peter said in Acts 2:22, "...Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know." Jesus said if He had not come and done among them the works which no other man did they would not have had sin (John 15:24). He said, "...The works that I do...they bear witness of me." (John 10:25.) Again He said, "...Though ye believe not me, believe the works:..." (John 10:38.) These people had witnessed and experienced all these things, and the gospel had been confirmed to them by these means.

Then it says, if these people "shall fall away." Adam Clarke says that the Greek word translated here signifies a happening already past and that the proper rendering here would be "having fallen away," signifying a thing already done. This would signify that the people who had experienced all these things and had been actually confirmed in this faith had fallen away from it or apostatized, and that to the extent they had "crucified to themselves the Son of God afresh and put Him to an open shame." In their apostasy, they do in themselves what the Jews actually did to Christ, and reject Him as an impostor, and justify His death on that ground. They hereby show that if they had been present when Christ was crucified they would have joined with the murderers in the actual deed.

Adam Clarke says further that the Greek phrase which is here translated, "Put him to an open shame" properly means, "And have made Him a public example;" or the entire thought would mean, "Crucifying unto themselves and making the Son of God a public example." In other words, they show openly that they judge Jesus Christ to have been worthy of the death which He suffered, and was justly made a public example by being crucified. Thus, it is clear that final apostasy by the total rejection of the gospel and the blasphemy of the Saviour of men is what is referred to in this passage.

But why no repentance? Repentance is the first step a sinner must take to return to God. But true repentance is based on a genuine godly sorrow for sin. To whatever extent a person may be sorry for his sins it is utterly useless unless there be a proper, efficacious sacrifice for sin. The only sacrifice for sin now standing and valid is Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Since these people had utterly, willfully, maliciously, and finally rejected Christ as the acceptable sacrifice for sin and the author of salvation, it rendered their salvation permanently impossible because there is salvation in no other (Acts 4:12).

NOTE: These last three or four paragraphs are taken mostly, if not in their entirety, from Adam Clarke's comments on this passage, and there are other thoughts of his interspersed throughout the discussion which I have altered some to

fit in with my channel of thought and discussion which accounts for the absence of quotation marks in some instances.

THE PERSON OF CHRIST

Question: Just what is meant by the expression, "The Person of Christ?" We see it in many articles, but the scriptural meaning is not always clear.

Answer: First, I will insert the dictionary definitions of the word *person*. 1. A living human being, especially as distinguished from an animal or thing. 2. The composite of characteristics that make up an individual personality. 3. An individual of some specified character. 4. The living body of a human being. There are several others which clearly do not apply in this case and No.'s 1 and 4 do not closely apply as pertains to this discussion—No. 1 not at all. But we will note No. 8 as appears in the dictionary. In theology: the separate individualities of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, as distinguished from the Godhead that unites them.

The term "Person of Christ" appears only one time in the Holy Scriptures. In II Corinthians 2:10 Paul said, "To whom ye forgive any thing, I forgive also: for if I forgave any thing, to whom I forgave it, for your sakes forgave I it in the *person of Christ*." The margin here says, "In the sight of Christ." The Amplified Bible says, "In the presence (and with the approval) of Christ." Phillip's Translation says, "As before Christ." Another translation says, "By the authority of Christ." Forgiveness is one of those characteristics which make up the individual personality of Christ, and God be praised that it is. In our forgiving of another, we do so in the presence of Christ by His approval and instruction, by His authority and grace, in conformity with His doctrine and in keeping with His example which is full of mercy and kindness toward the penitent. Let us never forget this and in all our dealings and relations with our fellowmen remember that we are in the presence of Christ. We are to act under His authority, by His approval, conform to His doctrine, and follow His example. This is said in this case to be done "In the *person of Christ*."

While the expression itself only appears one time in Scripture, its equivalent is widespread throughout the New Testament and is a major element in our relationship with Christ. In II Corinthians 5:20 Paul says, "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." In other words, Paul and every other God-called, God-sent minister of the gospel is a representative of Christ doing business for Him as an ambassador, in His name, and by His authority and commission—in the *person of Christ*.

All true saints live their lives in all of their aspects in the *person of Christ*. We are all representatives of Him to manifest His glory and likeness to the world. Paul said in II Corinthians 3:2-3, "Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men: Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us,..." Colossians 3:17 says, "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of our Lord Jesus,..." This text covers every phase and area of the life, and it is all to be done in His name, under His supervision, by His authority and grace, and in keeping with His example—in the *person of Christ*.

In Mark 16:18, "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." All the work of God in all its phases is to be done in His name, as His representative, in His stead, under His authority, commission, and power. In other words, in the *person of Christ*.

Although Christ was a human being among men in the likeness of man and in the form of a servant; yet He possessed within Him the full composite of divine characteristics that made up a personality that set Him apart from all other men. This was His real person. Saints are to conform closely to that pattern of divine characteristics which made Him what He was. And as we do this we manifest the *person of Christ*. Christ was "...the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person,..." (Hebrews 1:3.) This text refers to the relationship between Christ and His Father. Christ manifested the complete image or likeness of his Father. Colossians 1:15 declared Him to be the image of the invisible God. Jesus said in John 14:9, "...he that hath seen me hath seen the Father;..." All that God was in His divine attributes, Jesus revealed and manifested to mankind in His life. This is said to be the "Express image of His *person*. In other words, Jesus lived and acted in the *person of God*. Jesus never departed from this at any time, but He said, "...The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do:..." In all His doings and teachings He was acting in compliance with His Father's will and under His direct authority, power, and commission.

Now the saints maintain this same relationship with Christ. II Corinthians 3:18 says, "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." Romans 8:29 says, "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son,..." We are to become the image of His Person and reflect His glory and manifest His characteristics to the world. Paul said in II Corinthians 4:10, "Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body." In Philippians 1:20 he says again, "...Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life or by death." Let us realize that nothing unlike Christ is ever going to get into heaven. He is the model, and we must conform to His likeness if we have this hope in us. Just as Christ's relationship with His Father was declared to be the express image of His person (in the *Person of God*); so our relationship with Christ is declared to be the image of His Person—in the *Person of Christ*.

Of course, the *Person of Christ* as He is distinguished from the Father and the Holy Spirit is glorious in His own right if no one loves and serves Him and manifests His likeness to the world. To describe His glory and majesty would defy all human wisdom and rhetoric. Glimpses of His glory, majesty, power and strength are given in Revelation 19:11-16, Revelation 1:13-16, Matthew 17:1-8, Timothy 6:14-16 and other texts.

WHAT KIND OF BODY DID THE RISEN CHRIST HAVE?

Question: What kind of body did Jesus have when He arose from the dead?

Answer: In regard to this question, I am reminded of what I heard a prominent Bible teacher, conference speaker, and preacher say a while back. He said that as a Bible teacher and conference speaker, he had many questions put to him and he always had an answer for every question. Then he went on to say that many times his answer was, "I don't know." That is my answer to this question: "I don't know." And I can add to that, "I don't know how or where to find out."

Since the question is presented and we are into it, I might notice a few points in regard to it which do not in any way answer the question as it is phrased. The text in I Timothy 3:16 is pertinent to the discussion. It reads thus, "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." The incarnation of Jesus Christ (God manifest in the flesh) is a great mystery. Likewise is the resurrected body of Christ a great mystery. It seems to me that just as it was necessary for Jesus to possess a dual nature (both divine and human) in carrying out the phase of His ministry and redemptive work down here upon the earth and introducing God to man; so it would still be necessary for Him to possess the same dual nature yonder in heaven where He has gone to engage in His intercessory ministry and represent man to God and make intercession for us. In order for His intercessory ministry to be effective in a full measure with the Father, it would be necessary for Him to have a body with the scars and marks on it (nail prints in His hands and feet, and the spear gash in His side) which He received at Calvary where His redemptive work was fully accomplished and fulfilled to show before the Father as He interceded and pled for mercy for sinful men.

Many times when praying for people who are critically ill and need special mercy from God, I say to God the Father in my prayer, "Father, please look upon your Son as He stands in Your presence right now to intercede for us and plead with you for mercy and look especially on those stripes on His back and remember that they were placed there for the healing of the people." (Isaiah 53:5 and I Peter 2:24.) This thought has often added inspiration and faith to my prayer in urgent cases.

We know for certain that the body of Jesus arose and came out of the sepulchre. It was the same body that was buried that arose. When certain of His followers came to the sepulchre on the morning of the resurrection with spices to anoint His body they found the stone rolled away and they went into the sepulchre and "found not the body of the Lord Jesus." His body had gotten up and walked away from there alive, and the tomb was empty. That resurrected body had the wounds and marks in it that caused His death, and He drew special attention to this when He appeared to His disciples and told them to, "Behold my hands and my feet,..." (Luke 24:39), and proceeded to say, "...handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have." He convinced Thomas of His identity in the same way (John 20:26-30). He ate fish and honeycomb in their presence (Luke 24:41-43).

This body was different from what it had been during the time of his ministry and work with His disciples. In this body He could appear, disappear and reappear. In Luke 24:31, He just vanished out of their sight. In John 20:26, He appeared to His disciples right through a closed door. This was a spiritual body, but it was not a spirit as Jesus Himself declared in Luke 24:39. His body was sown a natural body; it was raised a spiritual body. (I Corinthians 15:44.)

According to Acts 2:27, the body of Jesus never saw any corruption. God never allowed it to stay in the tomb long enough for decomposition to set in. But in the process of resurrection, His body underwent a change. The glorious thing about all this for us is that the same change will happen to us in the morning of the resurrection on that last great day. "We shall rise and be like Him, when we see Him as He is." Philippians 3:21 says, "Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body,..." I Corinthians 15:51-52, says, "Behold, I shew you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed."

In the last great day every living saint upon the earth shall be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, and put on that same kind of body Christ had when He arose from the dead. In that body we will rise right up from the earth just like He did, and straight upward we will fly to meet the Lord in the air to forever be with Him. Inspiring, glorious, and wonderful thought!

All of this, both His and ours, is a mystery and called so in the Scriptures. It is all in the hands of God, and both Christ's resurrection and ours are works of the

power of God. The nature of the resurrection and the changes that are to take place are reserved with God, only to be revealed to us in that day. As far as I can see from here on, we will just have to leave it that way with the Lord and in that day we will understand it all. I John 3:2 tells us that it does not yet appear what we shall be, but that when He appears we shall see Him as He is and be like Him. Only if we could tell what we shall be, would we be able to tell how Christ was at His resurrection and how He is now, for we will be just like Him, but the Scripture states plainly that we do not know that. It is all reserved with the Lord Himself until then.

WHY ARE NOT MORE PEOPLE GETTING HEALING?

Question: Why are not more of God's people getting healing for their bodies? Is it not His will to heal them? In the early days of the reformation they had some really outstanding healing services. Also, I read in the account of S. O. Susag of the miracles God performed at the hands of His servants, such as cancers healed, dead raised to life, insane people returned to their right minds, etc. So many are in need of these same works by the hand of God today. In Isaiah it says, "With his stripes we are healed." Surely the Lord did not suffer those stripes in vain.

Answer: Of course, the Lord did not suffer those stripes in vain. He never did anything at any time in vain. Those stripes purchased healing for everyone who will receive it. We must recognize that there are some conditions to receiving healing, or any other blessing from the Lord, and those conditions must be met. Before considering any of those things, I would first hasten to remove any stigma from God or His Son, Jesus Christ, for having changed His mind or altered His purpose or will. He said in Malachi 3:6, "...I am the Lord; I change not;..." Again in Hebrews 13:8, we read, "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and forever." We must believe this and stand firmly upon it or we will have no way of knowing where we are. If He were to vacillate or change or waver in any degree from any of His plans, purposes, or promises on any point, we would never know if we could trust Him securely on other points. The Bible says that in Him is no variableness nor shadow of turning (James 1:17). That has to be so in all His plans, purposes, and promises. I believe and teach the people that whatever we read in the Bible that Christ was when He lived and walked among men in this world, He is that now. Whatever the Bible says He did when He was here on the earth, He does that same thing now. If He healed all manner of sicknesses and diseases when He was here, He heals all manner of sicknesses today, too. We see this going on around us and rejoice in it. But I hasten to say that it is not on as big a scale or as general as I would like to see.

I also hasten to add that if we allow the enemy to get our minds on this and our eyes on cases that have not been healed and get to wondering about that, we will rob ourselves of our own personal victories and blessings. I believe and teach the people that if all the cases they know of were not healed and they never knew or heard of anybody anywhere ever being healed, they still have a right to look to God and His Word and be healed of whatever sickness or disease they have if they will earnestly seek Him and believe His promises.

As to the *whys* and *wherefores* for any lack along this line of healing, I would say the causes could be as numerous as the cases. Every case is determined upon its own merits. We may not be able to discern the cause in every case. But God, who searches the heart and tries the reins of all, and who works according to certain fixed objectives, will determine what to do or not do in every individual case

according to His own will and wisdom and whatever objective He is striving for. God deals with every person as an individual and not according to groups. So I say to every individual saint to just look straight to God and His Word and expect it to be fulfilled and verified to you.

I am reminded of when I was in Junior High school. At one time we had a problem in algebra which was quite complicated and a little tricky. I worked on it until a late hour at night and finally got it solved (so I thought) and came up with an answer. I was eager to go to class the next day because I did not think many would get that problem, and I had it (so I thought). Sure enough, I was called on the next day to work that problem out on the board and explain it to the class. I went forward with all confidence and put the problem on the board and began to explain it. The teacher interrupted me before long and wanted to know where I got all of that. I started over, thinking I might show him a thing or two, and got to about the same point when he stopped me again and said, "Where in the world did you get that?" By that time I began to lose my confidence. Then I discovered that this problem was contingent on the one before it, and we were to take the figure that we got in a certain step of solving that problem before it for a beginning point for this problem. Well, I had not solved the problem before it, so I did not have a proper beginning place for this one; therefore, all my working it out meant nothing.

We may in some sense have a situation like that to consider here. Individuals may have spiritual problems in their lives and the Church may have its problems also. But if we are passing over all of that and trying to solve this problem of healing and miracles, etc., it just will not work; we will not get the right answer. I say that healing and miracle-working power are just natural outflows of a Church in an up-tight spiritual condition, and the problems of lukewarmness, carelessness, indifference, laxity, and shabby living among many professed saints in our time must be solved before we have a proper beginning point to solve this problem. In the second verse of III John we read, "Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth." We see here that our health and other prosperities are contingent upon our spiritual condition and prosperity.

As to the things that were done in the early days of this reformation: I know of them principally from readings and writings of those early saints and ministers, and by word of mouth from older ministers that I knew in growing up. But along with that, I read in those early writings of the simple, consecrated, dedicated, holy lives those people lived in those days—saints as well as ministers. In general they lived really close to God, and God shone forth the perfection of beauty out of Zion through them. In this age of affluence and easy credit when money is of such importance and people have to work all they can (overtime and sometimes two jobs) and in many cases husbands and wives both have to work in order to keep up all their payments and have money for living expenses, God is crowded too much out of too many people's lives, and many have no time, or very little time, for God. You can see that we have a different situation than prevailed in the early days of this reformation. So we are not seeing healings on as broad a scale as in the early days of this reformation; but we are thankful and rejoice for what we are seeing, and recognize that God is doing a great deal for faithful saints in this day, too.

This may be a little severe, and it is; but you asked the question and I am answering it according to my best perspectives, and I doubt if many, if any, will gainsay it.

SHOULD WE NOT MAKE AN EFFORT TO GET BACK WHAT WE ARE OWED?

Question: Please comment on Luke 6:30-35. If someone steals from us, should we make no effort to get our possessions back? Also, "And lend, hoping for nothing again"; is this talking about not receiving interest on what we loaned, or that we should not look to receive back what we loaned?

Answer: I will first insert the text of Luke 6:30-35." "Give to every man that asketh of thee; and of him that taketh away thy goods ask them not again. And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise. For if ye love them which love you, what thank have ye? for sinners also love those that love them. And if ye do good to them which do good to you, what thank have ye? for sinners also do even the same. And if ye lend to them of whom ye hope to receive, what thank have ye? for sinners also lend to sinners, to receive as much again. But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil."

I acknowledge that for a long time, I myself stumbled at this passage and mulled around over it quite a little. But I think the reason I did was because I was taking it out of context. Any time we do this, we are likely to be thrown into confusion and wonderment as to the meaning of any specified text. I am reminded of a time when Bro. Gene Harmon was on the ground cutting rafters for the roof of a house he was building, and two men were on top putting them up. One of the men called down to Brother Harmon and said, "Here is one that doesn't fit." And Brother Harmon, without stopping his work or looking up, called back and said, "Put it where it belongs and it will fit." Sure enough, it was so. The men on top were trying to put it in the wrong place. Many are doing this with the Scriptures, and making them mean something which they do not mean at all. Scriptures have their place and proper setting, and in that context mean exactly what Jesus had in mind for them to mean. Taken out of context, those same Scriptures can be made to mean something far different from what Jesus had in mind.

The passage under consideration here is a part of a more extended passage, and in connection with the other part of the passage comes out with clear and balanced meaning. This passage begins with verse 27 and ends with verse 36, and the part involved in this question is sandwiched between the first and the last. I do not have the thought now, though I did to some extent for a long time, that Jesus in these verses is teaching indiscriminate giving or indiscriminate lending or just general, promiscuous, wholesale charities and benevolences on any line to just anybody and everybody that asks of us.

Verses 27-29 say, "But I say unto you which hear, Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you, Bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you. And unto him that smiteth thee on the one cheek offer also the other; and him that taketh away thy cloke forbid not to take thy coat also." Taken in this context the statement in verse 30, "Give to every man that asketh of thee;..." seems to teach that if an enemy or one that hates me or has just cursed me and despitefully used me and has smitten me in the face and taken away my cloke (or possessions) or whatever, if he turns up in need of some help and comes to me for help, I am not to withhold from him help which I could give, because he is an enemy or has done these evil things to me. But I am to return good for evil (Romans 12:20-21) and help him just as I would a friend. I recall a time when I was praying and meditating over the text, "Love your enemies"; the Lord spoke straight out to me and told me my enemy was just the same to Him as my friend was, and that I was to see all men through His eyes and serve Him in kindness and in benevolence toward my

enemies as well as toward my friends. When Jesus said, "every man" in this text, I interpret it that way, rather than to a general, wholesale, promiscuous giving to anybody and everybody whom I might know were going to gamble with it or buy liquor or narcotics with it. I cannot feature Jesus teaching any such thing and making us helpers of the evil deeds.

When Jesus spoke of "...him that taketh away thy goods ask them not again," He was not referring to a person's outright stealing from us. But this is in connection with the last part of verse 30, and is made a little clearer maybe in Matthew 5:38-41, and more particularly verse 40 which reads, "And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloke also." This is clearly not a man (a thief) stealing from you, but a man who has some complaint against you sufficient to make a case out of, and he sues you and wins the suit in court and takes away your cloke (or some of your possessions), give him more than he asks. This whole passage in Matthew 5, is teaching us away from the old law, "eye for eye and tooth for tooth"—tit for tat and giving back just what we received concept, and teaching us to give full satisfaction to anyone who has a complaint against us. Instead of asking a return of what they took away, give them even more than they ask, if necessary, to satisfy the complaint.

In verse 35, Jesus said, "...Lend, hoping for nothing again;..." The Scriptures teach us to "Owe no man any thing,..." (Romans 13:8). In other words, pay our obligations. Also, in Romans 12:17 we read, "...Provide things honest in the sight of all men." Psalm 37:21 says, "The wicked borroweth, and payeth not again:..." In other words, he does not pay his debts. This is God's teaching for our financial dealings with our fellowmen, and God surely expects people to pay back what they borrow. We have a right to expect that, too. But what the Spirit and disposition of God is against is our doing good and being helpful and benevolent and lending as a Christian person, but at the same time having the sneaking idea in the back of our mind that some time we may get a pay back on that by exacting some favor from the borrower in return. True Christians never do a favor to another person with the idea in mind of obligating that person to return the favor. This idea is covered in Luke 14:12-14, "Then said he also to him that bade him, When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen, nor thy rich neighbors; lest they also bid thee again, and a recompense be made thee. But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind: And thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just."

The extended passage of Luke 6:27-36 closes by saying, "Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful." The overall passage teaches us to be merciful unto all men whether friend or foe. This is really the crux of the whole matter here.

ENDING OF OLD COVENANT/BEGINNING OF NEW

Question: When did the old covenant end, and when did the new covenant begin?

Answer: Perhaps we can collect a few scriptures which will answer this question to the inquirer's satisfaction. But we must remember that all Scripture must be applied and interpreted according to the established law of "Unanimity of faith" which means that any particular text on any given subject must be applied or interpreted in harmony with all other scripture texts in the Bible on that subject. We cannot take any single text and interpret it privately without consideration for other texts on the subject and ever get a proper understanding of any given subject.

If we vary from this law, there are some scriptures which might throw us off course in the particular question we are considering now.

For example: Luke 16:16 says, "The law and the prophets were until John: since that time the kingdom of God is preached, and every man presseth into it." To interpret this text privately would seem to indicate that the kingdom of God came in with John the Baptist. But there are other scriptures which prove this could not be. John preached saying, "...Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." (Matthew 3:2.) Jesus preached this same thing saying, "...The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel." (Mark 1:15.) Note they both said, "The kingdom of heaven is at hand." It was just about to break in upon them, but it had not yet broken forth and been set up. Also, Jesus said in Mark 9:1, "...There be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power," which would seem to make it clear that the kingdom of God had not come yet, even though John had preached it and was even then preaching it. But Jesus said in Matthew 12:28, "...The kingdom of God is come unto you." It had come unto them in the person of Christ, but it was not in full operation yet. Again Jesus said in Luke 17:21, "...The kingdom of God is within you." Surely we would not conclude that He was saying to those self-righteous Pharisees that the kingdom of God was within them. It could not have been in them, because they rejected the Lord of Glory Who brought it. Neither was it yet within His own disciples at that time. But He was merely stating the nature of the kingdom of God and that the place of its establishment was in the hearts of (within) the people of God who would be saved through His blood.

Jesus' ministry was a preparatory ministry and work for what was to come. He observed the law and customs and practices of the Israelites in many respects, while at the same time preaching grace. We might say there was a little overlapping of dispensations during the life and ministry of Jesus between law and grace. The law still had a standing until grace was brought in fully.

Romans 10:4 says, "For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." But at what point was Christ the end of the law? Was it at His birth; during His life and ministry, at His death, or when? In Matthew 5:17-18, Jesus said, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law till all be fulfilled." But Jesus didn't fulfill the law until the time of His death, so the law still had a standing during His life and ministry.

In Hebrews 10:1, it says that the law had a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things. Colossians 2:17 makes it clear that the shadow of things contained in the law, (in this case it was the Sabbath, but the same principle would apply to all the shadows contained in the law) found their body, substance, reality, or fulfillment in Christ. Colossians 2:13 says that Christ has quickened us together with Himself, having forgiven us all trespasses, and verse 14 says, "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, **nailed it to his cross.**" This text makes it clear that all the carnal ordinances, rituals, and ceremonies pertaining to the law were taken away when Christ was nailed to the cross. Hebrews 10:8 says that God had no pleasure in the sacrifices and offerings for sin which were offered by the law. Then verse nine says, "Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second." Thus, it is clear that Christ removed the old covenant to make place for the new covenant, and verse ten says that this was through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. Hebrews 9:11-12 makes it clear that Christ became a high priest of good things to come (the new covenant) by His own blood.

All of the above texts make it clear that the fulfillment of the law was not complete until Christ died. As Jesus hung upon the cross, He said, "It is finished." These were His dying words—His last utterance. The law age with its daily and yearly sacrifices for sin was ended and completely fulfilled in Him Who said He came not to destroy the law but to fulfill it. (Matthew 5:17.) The last, final, permanent, and continuous sacrifice for sin had been offered, and was now complete. The plan of salvation was completely executed and the dispensation of grace had been ushered in. All things were now ready for all to come into the kingdom of God (Matthew 22:2-4).

Matthew 27:50-51 says that when Jesus yielded up the ghost (died), the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom. That veil divided between the holy place and most holy place in the temple. Behind this veil in the most holy place is where God Himself chose to dwell on the mercy seat between the cherubims (Exodus 25:22.) Read verse 22 in particular. I Samuel 4:4 says that God dwelt between the cherubims Hebrews 9:7 says that the high priest was the only one ever permitted in this most holy place, and then only one time each year, and he was to sprinkle the blood of the sin offering as he went. Then verse 8 says, "The Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing." But when died, the veil was rent, and God moved out of that place, never again to dwell in a temple made with hands (Acts 17:24). He was through with that temple and its religious system forever, and it was left desolate without its inhabitant (God). Luke 13:35.

Thus, we see the law was not abolished and ended until Christ's death. It came to its end then. However, the new covenant was not fully established until some 52 or 53 days later, when the Holy Spirit came and filled the hearts of believers, and set the Church in full operation under the new covenant.

SIGNS IN THE HEAVENS

Question: Please comment on Luke 21:25-27. Is this speaking literally or spiritually? Also Mark 13:19-20.

Answer: Luke 21:25-27 reads thus: "And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory."

Mark 13:19-20 says, "For in those days shall be affliction, such as was not from the beginning of the creation which God created unto this time, neither shall be. And except that the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh should be saved: but for the elect's sake, whom he hath chosen, he hath shortened the days."

It must surely be evident that some very cataclysmic and catastrophic things are being set forth here. Let us at once drop the idea of any literal interpretation on these scriptures. But in a very real sense, spiritually and figuratively, this scripture spoken by Jesus Himself has been fearfully and wonderfully fulfilled and these things have come to pass. Both of the passages incorporated in this question are a part of Christ's discourse to His disciples concerning the destruction of Jerusalem, the complete overthrow of the Jewish polity, the end of the world, and of the signs of His second coming. Luke merely refers to signs in the sun, moon, and stars; but Matthew goes a little further in describing those signs. I wish to insert here Matthew 24:29 which says, "Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be

darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken." Since Matthew identifies those signs in more detail, I would like to transfer the emphasis to Matthew 24:29 for the time being.

We must recognize that many prophecies have a twofold fulfillment, especially prophecies concerning the Jews and ancient Israel. The reason for this can be easily explained because literal Israel was a type of spiritual Israel, and some of the things which happened to them have been repeated in the history of the Church in this age of time.

This scripture probably had its primary fulfillment in the destruction of Jerusalem and the Jewish nation, and Adam Clarke applies it totally to that, excluding all other explanations. He says, "In the prophetic language, great commotions upon earth are often represented under the notion of commotions and changes in the heavens. The fall of Babylon is represented by the stars and constellations of heaven withdrawing their light, and the sun and moon being darkened—Isaiah 13:9-10; the destruction of Egypt, by the heavens being covered, the sun enveloped with a cloud, and the moon withholding her light—Ezekiel 32:7-8. The destruction of the Jews by Antiochus Epiphanes is represented by casting down some of the host of heaven, and the stars to the ground—Daniel 8:10." He further says in regard to this particular scripture, "The Jewish heaven shall perish, and the sun and moon of its glory and happiness shall be darkened—brought to nothing. The sun is the religion of the church; the moon is the government of the state; and the stars are the judges and doctors of both."

I will not make any argument with this, as the applications seem to fit all right. But I do not at all consider that to be the end of this prophecy. If it had a fulfillment at that time, the historic annals of the Church in this age of time surely show a terrible fulfillment of it in the Church. However, I agree that it had a very catastrophic fulfillment in the Jewish nation. I want to discuss it now as it pertains to the history of the Church.

In Isaiah 21:11-12 we read, "The burden of Dumah. He calleth to me out of Seir, Watchman, what of the night?... The watchman said, The morning cometh, and also the night: if ye will enquire, enquire ye: return, come." The reference here is to a time of night and darkness—a time when men groped for the Word of God and could not find it—Amos 8:11-12. Dumah means "silence" and, no doubt, refers to the period of about 400 years between Malachi and Christ when there was no prophet or voice from God; just silence. When the call came to the watchman, "What of the night?" or what time of night is it? The answer came back, "The morning cometh." Surely that was a comforting message for night and silence-weary Israel. Accordingly, the morning came, the gospel day dawned and Jesus, the Sun of righteousness arose with healing in His wings (Malachi 4:2), and "The people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up." (Matthew 4:16.) Jesus is the Light of the world (John 8:12). The dawning of the gospel day was a great event to the human race, and Jesus during His ministry healed their dread diseases, cast out the devils, bore the burdens, and alleviated the sufferings of those who came to Him. His apostles and the early Christian Church continued the same work and manifested the power and glory of God and the light continued to shine for a considerable period of time.

After he had announced the coming of the morning, the watchman followed up by saying, "And also the night." There was another night coming after the dawning of the morning. In Amos 8:9 we read, "And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord God, that I will cause the sun to go down at noon, and I will darken the earth in the clear day." The term, "In that day," was often used by the prophets to signify this gospel day in which we live. In this day, right at noon when the sun was

at its zenith and shining in its glory and brilliance, it would suddenly drop out of sight, and the clear day would become dark. Read Micah 3:5-7, telling that the sun would go down over the prophets, and it would be dark unto them and they would have no vision.

In Isaiah 63:18 we read, "The people of thy holiness have possessed it but a little while: our adversaries have trodden down thy sanctuary." This actually came to pass in the great apostasy from the truth which came in about 270 A.D. About this time a worldly and ambitious spirit began to work in many of the ministers. Instead of the humble, lowly ministry which characterized the early Church, ministers began to strive and compete one with another for power, position, preeminence, and worldly gain. Some became exalted above others and still others became exalted over them, and this trend finally resulted in the establishment of the Pope of Rome as the universal head of the church.

Paul wrote in II Thessalonians 2:3-4 about the falling away which would come after his time and the revealing of the man of sin, the son of perdition "Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God." In verses 9 and 10 he says, "Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved." In verse 7 he spoke of the "mystery of iniquity" and said it was already working. This "mystery of iniquity" was the worldly, ambitious, striving, competing spirit for preeminence and position which laid the groundwork for this "man of sin" to be exalted to his supreme position.

The historian Mosheim wrote of these men that they "Imperceptibly extended the limits of their authority, turned their influence into dominion, and their councils into laws; and openly asserted at length, that Christ had empowered them to prescribe to his people, authoritative rules of faith and manners."—Taken from page 106 of *The Revelation Explained* by F. G. Smith.

F. G. Smith again quotes from D'Aubigne's History of the Reformation on page 195 of *Revelation Explained*. "Salvation no longer flowing from the Word which was henceforward put out of sight, the priests affirmed that it was conveyed by means of the forms they had themselves invented, and that no one could attain it except by these channels.... Christ communicated to the apostles, and these to the bishops, the union of the Holy Spirit; and this Spirit is to be procured only in that order of succession.... Faith in the heart no longer connected the members of the Church, and they were united by means of bishops, archbishops, popes, mitres, canons and ceremonies."

One more quotation from D'Aubigne from page 185 of the same book, "The living church retiring gradually within the lonely sanctuary of a few solitary hearts, an external church was substituted in its place, and all its forms were declared to be of divine appointment."

When the "man of sin" exalted himself above all that is called God, this pushed Christ into the background and put Him out of sight. When these exalted men declared they had authority to prescribe authoritative rules of faith and manners for the people of God, that pushed the Word of God into the background and put it out of sight. Jesus was the Sun of righteousness; the Light of the world. He was darkened. The stars, which symbolize ministers (Revelation 1:20) and those who apostatized and departed from the true faith, fell from their high and heavenly position.

This is my understanding, and so far as I know the understanding of my brethren in general of this text of Scripture.

My understanding of Mark 13:20, "And except that the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh should be saved:..." is this: The passage was in reference to the destruction of Jerusalem and the overthrow of the Jewish nation, and this statement referred specifically to them. The destruction of human life was so extensive (Josephus, a Jewish historian accounts for at least 1,357,000 that perished in the conquest of Judaea) that had it gone on much longer, perhaps not a single Jew would have been spared. The "...tribulation of those days..." in Matthew 24:29 and the severe affliction spoken of in Mark 13:29 refer to the extremely severe conditions prevailing with the Jews during the time of the destruction of Jerusalem and the overthrow of the Jewish nation. The detailed description of this given by Josephus is terrifying and sickening. Jesus said there had never been anything like it from the beginning of the creation and never would be anything to match it again. The wrath and vengeance of Him to Whom vengeance belongs against sin, rebellion, and rejection of His Son is a dreadful thing. Hebrews 10:31 says, "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." I urge all who read this to flee from the wrath to come.

It was soon after these things that the conditions began to develop which plunged the world into the Dark Ages referred to in figure in Matthew 24:29.

FORNICATION AS IT PERTAINS TO DIVORCE

Question: I do wish that you could clarify the meaning of "fornication" as it pertains to divorce in Matthew 5:32. Also, other scriptural references to "fornication," such as I Corinthians 5:9-11 and 6:13, and Matthew 19:9. I feel that some sound teaching in this area is needful at this present time.

Answer: I wish I could clarify the meaning, too, but all I can do is to try, and that I will do as much as God will help me. Matthew 5:32 reads, "But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery."

Fornication and adultery refer to the same act only under different conditions. Fornication is defined as "Sexual immorality between two people not married to each other." It applies to single people principally. Adultery is sexual immorality between two people of whom one or both are married but not to each other. Adam Clarke says at this place, "As fornication signifies no more than the unlawful connection of unmarried persons, it cannot be used here with propriety, when speaking of those who are married." He says, therefore that instead of "fornication" in this place, it would be translated, "on account of whoredom." Other translations of the New Testament agree with this. Rotheram translates it, "unfaithfulness." Moffatt renders it, "For any reason except unchastity." The New Testament in Basic English says, "For any other cause but the loss of her virtue." The Olaf N. Norlie Translation says, "For any reason other than adultery." All of these translations sum up to the same thing—sexual immorality. Matthew 19:9, where the same statement is made again, follows this same list of translations.

In I Corinthians 5:9 Paul says, "I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators." Beck translates this, "Not to mix with those who live in sexual sin," and another translation says, "—stop associating with sexually immoral people." Paul says further in verse 11, "...if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator,...with such an one no not to eat." I Corinthians 6:9-10 makes it very clear that people in this classification—fornicators and adulterers; sexually immoral people—shall not inherit the kingdom of God. Ephesians 5:3 spells it out

that fornication should not even be mentioned among us as becometh saints. Hebrews 13:4 pronounces the judgments of God against all sexually immoral people. I Corinthians 6:18 says, "Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body." I Corinthians 6:19 says, "...your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost...", and I Corinthians 3:17 says, "If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are." God is very severe against all types of sexual impurity.

I Corinthians 6:13 says, "...Now the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord;..." True, God put within the human body the urge and desire for sexual fulfillment, but, according to this text, that is not to be used promiscuously. It is provided for the satisfaction, pleasure, and fulfillment of married partners and when properly exercised between married partners and confined there, it is a beautiful and beneficial thing in nurturing and maintaining the love, harmony and tenderness between the two people. There is nothing unclean, nor taboo, nor dishonorable about sexual contact between married partners, and we should never think of it as such. God's Word declares it to be honorable and undefiled (Hebrews 13:4). I Corinthians 7:2 says, "Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband." God gave humankind this urge and appetite and then provided the proper place for its use—in marriage.

In this day in which we now live, there is such a broad scale of permissiveness in this area that just anything and everything goes, and every type of moral perversion is so general and widespread that people pay less attention to it and are less shocked by it than in former times. As a result, this moral impurity gains more ascendancy, and as a result of this the moral standards of our society are disintegrating and the moral fabric of our society is "coming apart at the seams." Let us be certain that God's Word still stands and the Scriptures cannot be broken, and even now God's judgments are being poured out upon our nation to a considerable degree because of its moral degeneracy, and more judgment is to come. In the last great day of final judgment His wrath will be poured out without mixture upon a sin-ruined world. The promises in God's Word which have not been fulfilled yet are just as sure to come to pass as if they had already happened, and we can count on them with certainty. This is true whether they be of judgment and wrath, or blessings. So, I earnestly admonish every reader of this article to "flee fornication" (Flee from it just like you would from a venomous serpent) as well as all other types of moral impurity.

Homosexuals are staging demonstrations in divers places and clamoring for recognition and equal rights, and I will have to say they are getting too much recognition. They say that is just their preference and way of life, to which they have as much right as other people do to their preference and way of life. The sad fact is that many people who are not of that persuasion themselves are coming to look at it that way, too. What they fail to recognize is that if it were not for the mercy and long-suffering and forbearance of God in Christ, they would all be dead as soon as they were discovered. That was a capital crime punishable by death in God's law (Leviticus 20:13). Also the penalty for adultery and other forms of moral impurity was death (Leviticus 20:10-16).

God has not changed His attitude toward these things in any measure. Malachi 3:6 says, "For I am the Lord, I change not;..." James says that there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning in Him. (James 1:17.) Numbers 23:19 says, "God is not a man, that he should lie; neither the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?" This all sums up to the fact that God's attitude is just the same now as then. But He has mercy, long-suffering, and forbearance in Christ today, so that

the penalty is being delayed—a stay of execution. When this mercy period expires and Christ comes to judge the world, God's sentence of death (yea, even eternal death) shall be executed upon all who are partakers of these moral impurities.

THOUSAND YEAR REIGN OF CHRIST

Question: Please explain Revelation 11:15.

Answer: I will explain this text to the best of my understanding, but I promise you that it will not be according to the general interpretation of this text in most religious circles. I do not understand this text to refer to a future time when Jesus Christ will come back to this earth and establish a universal kingdom which shall reign over all the kings and kingdoms of this world.

Before going further, I will insert the text which is to be the center of this discussion. "And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever." Please note that this was a permanent, eternal, unending reign (for ever and ever) referred to here; not just a thousand years nor any other measured duration.

This verse of Scripture refers to the glorious triumphs of the gospel of Christ over the entire world and in all nations. Paul said in Romans 10:18, "But I say, Have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world." Jesus gave the commission in Matthew 28:19, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations,..." The commission of Jesus is recorded by Mark in Mark 16:15, "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." As this commission has been executed and the gospel has been proclaimed throughout the world and to all nations, it has had a profound effect and influence, and there have been converts to the Christian faith in all nations and among all people.

When John had a vision of the entire redeemed company in Revelation 7:9, he said: "After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands." In I Peter 2:9 Peter referred to the people of God as "an holy nation." The "Holy Nation" of God is composed of the saved people out of all of the nations. In Ephesians 2:14-15, we read, "For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us;...for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace." The "both" and the "twain" here refer to the Jews and the Gentiles, and the converts from among both of them constituted "one body" (verse 16) and make up the "one new man"—or one holy nation, or one kingdom. In other words, the kingdom of God spread over the whole earth and to all nations and people through the effects of the gospel and there being converts to the Christian faith among all the nations.

The conversion of the Gentiles and their influx into the Church or Kingdom of God was prophesied throughout the Old Testament. God told Abraham in Genesis 22:18, "And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed;..." Paul refers to this covenant between God and Abraham in Galatians 3:16, "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." Therefore, it is evident that this covenant was confirmed in Christ, and He fulfilled it and through Him the Kingdom of God extended over all the world because He tasted death for every man.

Isaiah 49:6 says, "And he said, It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth." In Isaiah 42:6 God was speaking to His Son, Jesus, and said, "I the Lord have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles." Isaiah 60 contains a prophecy of the glories of the Church of God in this gospel age of time, and in verses 3-5 we read, "And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising. Lift up thine eyes round about, and see: all they gather themselves together, they come to thee: thy sons shall come from far, and thy daughters shall be nursed at thy side. Then thou shalt see, and flow together, and thine heart shall fear, and be enlarged; because the abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee, the forces of the Gentiles shall come unto thee."

In the 2nd Psalm, all of which is a prophecy of the coming of Jesus and the attitude of the people toward Him, and the effects of His work, etc., verse 1 says, "Why do the heathen rage,...?" It has been the general pattern of the heathen throughout their history to "rage" against the true and living God Who gave them their being, by living in open rebellion against Him and His holy will by not honoring Him as God but setting up their own idol gods and worshipping them instead of the true God. By this means, they fell into the deepest depravity and degradation possible. Paul describes the depths of their degradation and the cause of it in Romans 1:21-32. Please read this entire passage. Psalm 2:8 says, "Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession."

When the Jews at Antioch rejected the preaching of Paul and Barnabas concerning Christ, they turned to the Gentiles saying (Acts 13:47), "For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth." In Daniel 7:14, when Daniel had a vision of the kingdom of God, he said concerning Christ, "And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed." In a prophecy concerning Christ's kingdom in Psalm 72:8 it says, "He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth." Paul declares these prophecies to be fulfilled in his ministry.

The Kingdom of God was set up, set in order, and established on the Day of Pentecost, and soon afterward the gospel was preached unto the Gentiles and there were very many converts among them, and the Gentiles were received into the Church of God. So, it is evident that this was all fulfilled in the atonement of Christ and the ministry of the early Church and the converts to the Church throughout the succeeding generations, and that the kingdoms of this world became the Kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ through the effects and influence of the gospel.

ARE WE OK AS LONG AS WE ARE SINCERE IN WHAT WE BELIEVE?

Question: We often hear it said that it does not matter what people believe if they are sincere in it. Is this so? Would you give some comments on this?

Answer: No, it is not true, and it is possible for people to be just as sincere in error as to be sincere in truth. God's Word says, "...God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth." II Thessalonians 2:13. We see here that "belief of the truth" is an essential part of the

way and plan God has for us obtaining salvation. II Thessalonians 2:9-12 says, "Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." Note: In this passage we see a class of people who did not love the truth, and consequently did not believe it. Because they did not love and believe the truth, God permitted them to believe a lie and be damned. This passage also makes it clear that the reason these people did not love and believe the truth was because they had "pleasure in unrighteousness." Now if a person loves unrighteousness, it is easy for him not to believe the truth which is contrary to that particular kind of unrighteousness which he loves and to believe a lie that will support it. II Timothy 4:3-4 says, "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." We are certainly in that time now when sound doctrine is not countenanced among the masses of modern Christendom, but they are listening to fables and doctrines of men in which is no salvation, spiritual blessings nor strength. Some of these people are just as sincere and zealous and devoted to their belief as people who are believing the truth are.

We have a clear example of this in II Corinthians 11:1 and 4. In verse 1 Paul is pleading for them to bear with him in his teaching them the way of salvation, and said, "Would to God ye could bear with me a little in my folly: and indeed bear with me." Then in verse 4 he said, "For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him." Again Paul said in Galatians 1:8-9, "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed." This is certainly strong language, and whatever else it may teach, it certainly teaches that what the Christian believes must be well based and rooted in truth, and that it must be circumscribed by truth and must never go beyond truth nor accept any false thing.

In II Corinthians 1:12 Paul speaks of his "...simplicity and godly sincerity,..." A person may be as sincere as he will in any belief or project or undertaking; but it is only godly sincerity that is going to bring him salvation and establish him in God. Paul himself was an outstanding example of this. He mentions as one of the things that he has in which to glory in the flesh was that in the Jewish religion he was very zealous for the traditions of the Jewish fathers, and being so, he persecuted the Church of God and wasted it. Philippians 3:4,6; Galatians 1:13-14. In Acts 26:9-10, Paul said, "I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. Which thing I also did..." Surely, no one could possibly question Paul's sincerity in doing this, but with all of his sincerity he would surely have missed salvation if he had not submitted to Christ and believed in Him when he met Him face to face on the Damascus road. I do not consider Paul to have been one bit more sincere for the truth and his Christian faith than he had formerly been in his Jewish religion and for the traditions of his fathers. It was the same Paul with his characteristic zeal and sincerity, but it was a change of allegiance. Without question, there are some people today who are just as sincere and zealous and would make just as great sacrifices in gross errors which actually deny some of the basic essentials of salvation, as true Christians are for Christ and truth. Remember, it is not just sincerity, but godly sincerity that counts.

Also let us consider that if every man's belief of whatever kind or in whatever thing was valid and acceptable for him just as long as he was sincere in it, this would set up any number of standards to live by, but God only has one standard and calls all men to come to it. Ephesians 4:5 says there is "...one faith,..." God is calling all believers to the "unity of the Faith" and has made provision for bringing us all to this if we will all believe the faithful teaching of God's Word.—Ephesians 4:11-13. Also read I Corinthians 1:10.

There are some things a person MUST believe in order to be saved at all. There are other things that a person might be saved without knowing and believing, but which would certainly be a great enrichment to his life if he did know and believe them. One cannot possibly be saved if he does not believe in the virgin birth of Christ. Why? First, because the Bible declares it to be true, and we must believe God's Word to receive the benefits of it. Second, because if Jesus were born by natural means and had an earthly father, He would have been a partaker of the sinful nature which all of Adam's posterity received from him. In such a case, He could never have made an acceptable sacrifice for sin because it was required that the sin offering be perfect without spot or blemish. A large percentage in modern Christendom does not believe this. Consequently, they have no salvation, no matter how sincere they may be.

One must believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, the Saviour of the world, the Redeemer and "that prophet" in order to be saved at all. In John 8:24 Jesus said, "...if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins." In order for a person to be saved he must believe that he is a sinner and needs to be saved and that Jesus Christ can save him and He is the only One who can save him. Acts 4:12 says there is salvation in no other. We must believe that Christ became our substitute at Calvary, dying in our stead, and died for our sins according to the gospel—I Corinthians 15:3; Romans 10:9; Romans 4:25. We must also believe that Christ arose from the dead. I Corinthians 15:17. Many do not believe this today, and consequently cannot be saved.

CONTRADICTION REGARDING "LOVE OF THE WORLD"

Question: Please explain Ecclesiastes 3:11. One statement in this verse, "Also he hath set the world in their heart," certainly seems to contradict and conflict with some passages in the New Testament; viz: "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." I John. 2:15. Also, "Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God." James 4:4. Also, in John 15:19, Jesus said, "...because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you." I cannot see how God's Word could make such strong statements as this regarding the world and then "set the world in men's hearts."

Answer: Yes, there seems to be a strong contradiction here, I agree. But actually there is not. There is no part of God's Word which contradicts any other part of it when properly understood. Now God's attitude toward the world is forever the same and there has never been any more friendship between God and the world than there is now. But, you may say, "God so loved the world," etc. Yes, He did. But in this case, it was the world of mankind (humanity) and not this physical, material world with its fashion, elements, and way of life. God makes it clear in I John. 2:16 what the world was, against which He laid such a strong indictment in the above texts when He said, "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." But the question still hangs, "What did God mean when He said, 'He set the world in their heart'?"

I will here insert the full text of Ecclesiastes 3:11. "He hath made every thing beautiful in his time: also he hath set the world in their heart, so that no man can find out the work that God maketh from the beginning to the end."

Adam Clarke says the word from which "world" is translated here applies to the "Hidden time," the period beyond the present—Eternity. He further says the proper translation here would be, "Also that eternity hath He placed in their heart; without which man could not find out the work which God hath made from the commencement to the end." The Amplified Bible translates this text thus: "...He also has planted eternity in man's heart and mind (a divinely implanted sense of purpose working through the ages which nothing under the sun, but only God, can satisfy)."

Let us consider how God made man to have dominion over the material creation of earth. He then commanded him to subdue it with all of its vast resources. He put deep in man's heart and nature the intellect, power, ingenuity; also the urge, outreach and curiosity to delve into, to explore, to experiment and to probe the elements of the natural creation—to discover and appropriate these things to human needs for the betterment of the race. We would certainly marvel if God made man a spiritual being and didn't put this same thing deep in his inner being to reach out for, explore, and discover the spiritual and eternal things of God. God certainly has not overlooked this, but has deeply rooted the idea of eternity in every human heart. Psalm 42:7 says, "Deep calleth unto deep..." Deep down in the inner being of all mankind is a deep yearning and crying for the deep things of God and the spiritual and eternal things.

Marjorie Holmes said in the introduction to her book, "How can I find You, God?", "People are hungry for God. We are searching for Him. Sex trips, drug trips, mind trips, the whole sensitivity bag are manifestations." This is possibly true. All these things and more are just the devices of Satan to throw people off course in their quest for satisfying the hunger of their souls. Only Christ can fulfill this desire, and all these things are miserable substitutes pawned off on humanity by the devil himself. The same is true of all other substitutes for Christ—wealth, fame, honor, pleasure, self, fleshly indulgences and the like. All too many people are buying them and trying vainly to satisfy the spiritual hunger of the inner man with these things.

Marjorie Holmes continues, "The hunger is innate. Man is born with an insatiable curiosity about the source of his own being." What this means in other words is that this hunger is inherent, exists in us at birth, that it is unquenchable, and cannot be satisfied outside of the One who put it there. Someone made the comment long ago, "My soul was made for thee, O God, and will not rest until it rests in Thee." Marjorie Holmes says further, "Often the greater the material and intellectual achievements, the more we are haunted by this sense of vacancy; this need for spiritual fulfillment." This is certainly true. It is the natural reaction of the inner being to frustration and disappointment. When one has reached and obtained what they trusted in for satisfaction and fulfillment, still the hunger is there and the vacancy exists; the void is more pronounced than ever. In Haggai 2:7 we read, "...And the desire of all nations shall come:..." This "Desire of all nations" (every individual of the human race) is Christ Himself. All this is focusing right down on the text we are discussing, "He hath set the world in their heart."

In the natural, material world there are individuals and teams of individuals who are constantly engaged in medical research and experimentation and scientific research and experimentation to discover new cures for diseases and to discover ways and means to add to and improve standards of living for the race. In Ecclesiastes 7:29 Solomon said, "Lo, this only have I found, that God hath made

man upright; but they have sought out many inventions." This is certainly evident in this time in which we are living and it is also evident that many of man's inventions have only led him farther away from God and more off course. There are important prizes given each year for outstanding accomplishments and contributions in each field of research and endeavor.

If all humankind would give vent to the God-given, deep-rooted instinct and urge for the spiritual and eternal things of God, and not allow the less important things of time and sense to dominate their thinking and occupy their time, there would certainly be a worldwide race on for the discovery of deeper, richer, more marvelous and more glorious truths and graces which would add to the spiritual betterment of the race.

In Philippians 3:13-14, Paul said, "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." Again, in Acts 20:23-24, Paul said, "Save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me. But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God." And again, in II Corinthians 4:17-18, this same man said, "For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal." These are all graphic expressions from a man who had the eternal world in his heart and a good, clear vision of the spiritual things of God. Finally, when his time had come to depart out of this life via martyrdom for Christ, his vision expanded and broke forth in a blaze of glory giving this classic expression of his fully redeemed soul in II Timothy 4:6-8, "For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."

SEVEN WOMEN SHALL TAKE HOLD OF ONE MAN

Question: I would like for you to explain Isaiah 4:1, "And in that day seven women shall take hold of one man,..."

Answer: The full text of Isaiah 4:1 reads thus: "And in that day seven women shall take hold of one man, saying, We will eat our own bread, and wear our own apparel: only let us be called by thy name, to take away our reproach."

I will first refer to Adam Clarke on this text. He says that this verse belongs with the last two verses of Chapter 3 which read, "Thy men shall fall by the sword, and thy mighty in the war. And her gates shall lament and mourn; and she being desolate shall sit upon the ground." He says that this is describing a great destruction and desolation in Jerusalem (her and she) and Judea with the number of slain in battle being so great that seven women shall be left to one man. He quotes from Kimchi who says that this took place in the days of Ahaz, when Pekah the son of Remaliah slew one hundred and twenty thousand men of Judea in one day. (II Chronicles 28:6.) Jeremiah describes such a situation in Jeremiah 15:8, "Their widows are increased to me above the sand of the seas:..." Adam Clarke's application of this text is totally literal.

However, there are many texts connected with the history of Israel which have a two-fold meaning applying first to Israel after the flesh and then finding a spiritual fulfillment in Israel after the Spirit (spiritual Israel, or New Testament saints; the Church). I feel that this is one of those prophetic texts which applies to both literal and spiritual Israel, and that we have a condition equivalent to this right before our eyes today in modern Christendom.

First, let us consider that we are looking at a very desperate situation here when the male population is so depleted by war that there are seven women to every man. But even so, it indicates a great depth of moral degeneracy when women are willing to share the rights of marriage with several other women in order to take away their reproach of virginity or of widowhood, as the case may be, and just to have a man whose name they bear and refer to as their husband. They were willing to eat their own bread and wear their own apparel (work and support themselves) if they could just be called by a man's name as their husband. This is surely a low degree of moral degeneracy. Also, the women were willing to take the initiative and do the soliciting and courting in this case which was totally taboo in their society. This is a really desperate situation.

In the New Testament, the Church of God is referred to as a woman, and not only a woman but a bride, "...the bride, the Lamb's wife" (Revelation 21:9). Revelation 21:10 refers to her as "...that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God." This is that spiritual Jerusalem from above which Paul refers to in Galatians 4:26 as "...the mother of us all." This holy Jerusalem is a woman, also a wife, also a mother with children—many of them. Read the following texts which confirm this: II Corinthians 11:2, Ephesians 5:22-33 (all), Revelation 19:7-8, Revelation 21:2 and 9-10; also these texts speaking prophetically of the church: Isaiah 61:10-11, Isaiah 54:5-10, Isaiah 66:7-14. All of these texts refer to Christ and His love and blessings for the Church, His Bride.

But there are many human institutions in the world today called churches and they are depicted in the Scriptures as women also. In Revelation 17 we have a description of a woman which is called in verse one, "...the great whore that sitteth upon many waters." In verses 3 and 4 she is called "a woman" and "the woman," and a description of her vileness is given. The description is given of her as riding upon a scarlet-colored beast having seven heads and ten horns (verses 3 and 7), and in verse 9 the seven heads are identified with seven mountains on which the woman sitteth; this all sums up to a description identifying the city of Rome. It was situated upon seven hills and it had seven kings or seven different forms of government as described in verse 10. Verse 12 identifies the ten horns as ten kings which had not yet received a kingdom, but these did receive kingdoms in the decline and fall of the Roman Empire when it broke up into ten minor kingdoms. The waters upon which the woman sat are described in verse 15 as "...peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues." With all this description before us we have this woman clearly identified as the Roman Catholic Church. But that is not all; she was a mother of daughters who were harlots, too (verse 5). These daughters represent the multiplicity of Protestant denominations which have come out of but have their roots in the Mother Church of Rome.

It is a case of "like mother, like daughter." They are all (mother and daughters) human institutions governed by men through boards, synods, conferences, presbyters, etc., and all sailing under the banners of their own creeds, disciplines, and the like. There is not a single one of them which takes the whole Word of God for its creed, because to do so would entirely destroy and obliterate its God-dishonoring sect. The Word of God lays a strong indictment against the entire sectarian, denominational system.

Wait a minute now. You say, "What does all of this have to do with Isaiah 4:1 and how does it apply?" The answer to that question is easy and clear. All these women from the mother (Roman Catholicism) on down through the daughters (Protestant denominations) are nominally Christian and take hold on Christ and want to be called by His Name to take away the reproach of their spiritual fornication. They eat their own bread—their own doctrines of men which they mill out in their theological seminaries and their own beliefs whether scriptural or not. One of our brethren asked a member of one denomination if they practiced foot-washing in that church. The answer was, "no." Then the brother asked why. The answer was "because it is not in our discipline." The brother read him the description and command for this ordinance from the Scriptures. He still insisted it was not in their manual so they did not practice it. Then the brother asked if they would practice the ordinance if it were in their manual. He agreed that they would in such a case. Shame! Shame! They would do a thing if it were incorporated in their discipline, but it being spelled out in black and white in the Scriptures did not make it binding upon them to obey. This is a simple, isolated illustration of this point, but shows clearly how they "eat" their own "bread." This is true in many other points and doctrines which I do not have space here to go into.

They also wear their own apparel—self-righteousness, salvation through their own good works, church membership, and benevolent and charitable deeds, etc.

In the first 12 verses of Revelation, chapter 11, we have a clear picture of God's two witnesses in the earth and their activities, their death, and their resurrection. These two witnesses are God's Word and God's Spirit. They are the two vicars of the Son of God in His church on earth. For 1260 years they are featured as having a limited prophecy in sack cloth. This was during the reign of the Mother (Catholicism), and it was true that the Word and Spirit had a limited operation during this time because there were many, many saints who did not identify with the human system of Catholicism but remained separate unto God and worshipped Him in Spirit and in Truth. They paid with their lives, but were true and faithful to the Word and Spirit anyway.

In verse 7 the Mother's daughters (Protestant denominations) came on the scene and took the prominent place in the religious world, and through them the two witnesses (Word and Spirit) were slain and put clear out of operation. This was true because under denominationalism in those early days there were great religious awakenings and "earth shaking" revivals and the true people of God who had been standing separate and clear during the reign of the Mother were now drawn into this system because they saw the spiritual manifestations of it. But these were all human institutions, too, operating under their own programs and man-made doctrines instead of giving God's Word and Spirit free course among them. Consequently, during that time when there was no separate body of people who worshipped God in Spirit and in Truth only, the two witnesses are represented as being killed.

Note in verses 8 and 9, they let their dead bodies lie in the street and would not permit them to be buried in graves. Say to any of these people who exalt their disciplines above the plain Word of God, "Well, we don't go by the Bible anyway so let us just throw it away and go on with our disciplines." They will immediately remonstrate against that and class you as a reprobate for suggesting such a thing even though it does not mean all that much to them. In other words, they are saying, "We will eat our own bread and go by our own rules and creeds, but let us hold onto our Bibles to give a degree of credibility to what we are doing."

Then we see in verse 10 how the people made merry and sent gifts one to another while the two witnesses were dead. They could do this and feel comfortable and find pleasure in it because the Word was not condemning them and the Spirit

could not convict them ("torment them") because He only works in conjunction with the Word. There is a great deal of having a form of godliness but denying the power thereof in these days. And this is manifest in people who are nominally Christian (holding onto Christ and naming His Name to take away their reproach), but are going on "eating" their own bread, wearing their own apparel, and doing their own thing in their own way nonetheless.

MELCHIZEDEK AS HE RELATES TO CHRIST

Question: Please explain about Melchizedek. Who was he? Was he Christ in the flesh, or do we have any record of Christ being manifested in flesh in Old Testament times?

Answer: Melchizedek appears one time only by way of identification in the Old Testament (Genesis 14:18-20). "And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high God." This is all the introduction we have to him and no details are given, so I suppose it would not be possible to know very much about him or comment on him extensively. However, this text describes him as "king of Salem," and in Hebrews 7:2 this is interpreted as "King of peace." It also specifies that he was "the priest of the most High God." In other words, his priesthood was of divine appointment direct from God and not by appointment or election of men.

The writer of the Hebrew epistle enlarges a little on this man's identity in Hebrews 7:2 where he says, "...first being by interpretation King of righteousness, and after that also King of Salem, which is, King of peace." It is widely believed that this man was of the Canaanites, and because of his superb righteousness, justice, and judgment among men, was singled out by God as a king and ordained as a priest to represent God before men. Adam Clarke in his comments on Genesis 14:18 refers to him as a "Canaanitish Prince." Matthew Henry also refers to him as an outstanding person among the Canaanites.

At first we might challenge this and wonder how God would reach down among the Canaanites, a people slated for destruction because of their idolatry and wickedness, and pick out a man to represent His Son Jesus Christ as a type. But we should bear in mind that at this time there were no established people of God in the world as there were later on, and God could freely choose whomsoever He would among men of whatever nation to be His priest and represent Him before men. In fact, Abraham whom He called to head a new race of people (the Jews) who were to be His chosen people throughout the Old Testament times, and with whom He established His covenant of salvation and blessings to all the nations of the earth and who became the "Father of all who believed," was from an idolatrous people and an idolatrous family (His father served other gods, Joshua 24:2). Therefore it is not altogether unlikely that Abraham practiced some idolatry himself in his youth. But God's eyes were running to and fro throughout the whole earth to show Himself strong in behalf of those whose hearts were perfect toward Him of whatever tribe or nation they were; so it should not be thought a strange thing if He chose a Canaanitish man of outstanding righteousness and made a great man out of him. These men may have been idolaters or they may not; but in any case, God saw into their hearts and saw they had qualities He could use in a great way.

In my present thinking, I do not think of this being the Son of God in flesh. In fact, I do not at this time think of any instance where He appeared in flesh in the Old Testament. I Peter 1:19-20 says, "But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot; Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you." This was something

reserved for "these last times." Hebrews 1:1-2 says, "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, 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." The manifestation of His Son in the flesh and speaking unto the people by Him directly, seems to have been reserved for these last days—this last and glorious age of time. John 1:14 says, "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us,..." To further emphasize this point, Paul says in I Timothy 3:16, "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." This was clearly Jesus, but Peter says this was in "these last times," and Hebrews 1:2 says it was in "these last days."

In Hebrews 2:1-18 Christ is presented as taking on Him the seed of Abraham and flesh and blood as were His brethren and being made like unto them in all things. It was specified in verse 14 that this was so He could be made subject to death. He was to die for sin and to shed blood to make an atonement for the sins of the people, and that is the only cause I can find for His taking on flesh and blood at all.

In Philippians 2:6-8 we see that Christ was in the form of God and equal with God; but He laid this all aside and took on Him the form and fashion of man (took on flesh and blood), and in this form and state He died on the cross. This was all for the purpose of accomplishing the work of redemption.

Now let us return to Melchizedek. Hebrews 7:3 says of him, "Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God; abideth a priest continually." This verse would be quite baffling without some explanation. First, if we accept the statement, "abideth a priest continually" as a literal fact, it would mean the priesthood of Melchizedek would have continued right on and would still have been in effect when the Levitical priesthood was set up and the law was given, and this would have meant a dual priesthood running throughout the law age for 1400 years. This could not be possible. In Hebrews 7:12 we read, "For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law." In other words, there could not possibly be a dual priesthood in the scope of God's plan. The law made the Levitical priesthood, but Christ was not of the tribe of Levi but of Judah. Therefore He could not be established in His priesthood as long as the first covenant with its Levitical priesthood had a standing. It was necessary that the first be abolished to make room for the second. So then it is recorded of Christ in Hebrews 10:9, "...He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second." This was necessary for Him to enter into His God-appointed, God-ordained Priesthood because it could not be in the plan of God that a dual priesthood exist. I have dealt with this point here to establish what God's plan and attitude were regarding a dual priesthood, and also to confirm the fact that Melchizedek's priesthood could not literally have continued on perpetually without running head-on into this kind of situation with the Levitical priesthood.

We conclude that the priesthood of Melchizedek never continued on. If it had, there would not have been any need nor any place for the Levitical priesthood of the family of Aaron which was established under the law. Actually, this man only appears this one time in the Old Testament Scriptures and passes right on out of the picture at this point and no more is known of him. Neither is there any reference to any priesthood existing between this time and the anointing of Aaron and his sons to the priesthood 422 years later. I will say, however, that his name is mentioned one more time in the Old Testament (Psalm 110:4), but this is not in connection with anything he did or with his person, but it is a prophetic sense connecting him up with Christ and His priesthood. In fact, I feel we may safely

conclude that God injected this little episode in the Scripture for the express purpose of establishing a fitting type of Christ and His priesthood and that Melchizedek was a type of Christ.

Further, in Hebrews 7:3 the sacred writer makes other statements about this man that shrouds him in deeper mystery and makes him more controversial. He says, "Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God;..." This would certainly seem to identify him as an eternal being such as Christ Himself.

Now in discussing this part of the Scriptures concerning him, I would first point out the fact that not one of the things mentioned here concerning him is mentioned in Genesis 14:18-20 where he is introduced for the first and only time in the Scriptures. Not one other thing by way of description is said about him in the Scriptures other than he was the King of Salem and Priest of the most high God. Then where did Paul get this information he inserted here?

First, let us realize that the principal subject in the seventh chapter of Hebrews is the priesthood and here he is speaking more specifically of Melchizedek's priesthood rather than the man himself. Therefore we conclude that the things said here are not to be interpreted as meaning that the man himself was not born and did not die and he had no father nor mother literally; but this is all said concerning his priesthood. Adam Clarke in his comments on Hebrews 7:3 refers to one Suidas who recorded concerning Melchizedek that, "After he had reigned in Salem for 113 years, he died being a righteous man and a bachelor." I do not know who Suidas was, but I feel that a man of Adam Clarke's stature would have made no reference to him had he not been a noteworthy historian.

Then let us realize that between Melchizedek and Christ much has happened and that in the interim the law has been given and with it a priesthood established of the tribe of Levi and of the family of Aaron. Also, let us realize that the requirements for the priesthood were very strict and that any man with a physical defect or flaw in his record or background was not eligible for the office. Therefore the Jews kept a very close record and strict genealogy on every man in the line of Aaron. Whenever it was necessary to appoint a new priest, they searched the records diligently to see if the person being considered was eligible to be appointed—who his parents were and if there was anything in his background to render him unfit.

Melchizedek had none of these. He had no genealogy (descent), no father nor mother nor lineage through which he inherited his priesthood. "...He was the priest of the most high God"—Genesis 14:18—divinely appointed and ordained of God. Since there was no genealogy on him, there was no record of his birth or death. Therefore, he was without beginning of days or ending of life according to the common method of establishing these things by established records. Melchizedek was without any formal or legal credentials at all to qualify him as a priest, but was just appointed and ordained as a priest by God Himself.

Now, as already mentioned, he was a type of Christ and these things being said concerning his priesthood were necessary to qualify him as a true type of Christ's perpetual priesthood. It has already been established that the priesthood of Melchizedek could not have continued on perpetually and for reasons already given. But because there is no record of his birth or death, it is said that he had no end of life; that is, so far as record was concerned. This leaves a kind of open end there, which would seem to indicate his priesthood continued on perpetually. This is the way Christ's priesthood actually was, and this picture further identifies Melchizedek's priesthood as a true type of Christ's priesthood.

In Psalm 110:4 we read, "The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek." This is a prophecy concerning Christ

and His priesthood and links Him clearly with Melchizedek's priesthood. Again in Hebrews 7:11 we read, "If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, (for under it the people received the law,) what further need was there that another priest should rise after the order of Melchisedec, and not be called after the order of Aaron?" This is another link between the priesthoods of Melchizedek and Christ. And in the mouth of two witnesses shall every word be established. There are several more scriptures witnessing to this in the Hebrew Epistle also. Also in this text (Hebrews 7:11) two orders of priesthoods are mentioned, "...After the order of Melchisedec,..." and "...After the order of Aaron." One of these, "The order of Aaron," was made under the law of a carnal commandment (Hebrews 7:16). The other which pertains to Christ which would of certainty be a higher order of priesthood "after the order of Melchisedec" was by the power of an endless life (Hebrews 7:16) which was directly appointed and ordained by God Himself.

Christ being come of the tribe of Judah and not of the lineage of Aaron and of the tribe of Levi, renders Him ineligible for the priesthood according to the law and casts Him in the same category with what is said of Melchizedek's priesthood—"Without father, without mother, without descent." He was not of the lineage of Aaron to be qualified as a priest under the law. He was after the order of Melchizedek receiving His priesthood by divine appointment and ordination direct from God. Therefore it is said in Hebrews 7:12, "For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law." What he is saying here is that the law under which the Levitical priesthood was established had to be abolished and taken away that the second (New) covenant might be established under which Christ serves in a perpetual priesthood—"a priest FOR EVER after the order of Melchisedec." Note: This does not speak of Melchizedek's priesthood and it being forever. But it speaks of Christ's priesthood and it being FOREVER; and that it was after the ORDER of Melchizedek in contradistinction to it being after the ORDER of Aaron.

SIN OF DIVISION

Question: Please discuss the sin of division; or is it actually all that much sin?

Answer: The basic principle of sin is rebellion against God and His expressed will; disobedience to His Word—a transgression of His law. Hence, division is obviously a very grave sin because it is in total contradiction to the whole of the teachings of the New Testament regarding the relationship of the children of God with one another. We read in I John 3:4, "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law." Since division is a total transgression of the whole basic law governing the relationship of saints with one another (unity and oneness), it is unquestionably a sin.

Paul said to the Corinthian Church, "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.) Division is a contradiction of this scripture.

Romans 15:5-6 says, "Now the God of patience and consolation grant you to be likeminded one toward another according to Christ Jesus: That ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." Division violates this scripture; hence, it is sin.

In John 17 we have recorded Jesus' high priestly prayer for His disciples and their successors down through this age of time—the Church of God. In verses 21 and 23 we read, "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.... and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me." This was Christ's last prayer for His church before He suffered. He went from the place where He prayed this prayer directly to the Garden of Gethsemane; from there to judgment, and from there to Calvary.

Since this was the last prayer He would ever pray for His church while in His flesh, we can be assured He was praying for the things which lay the closest to His heart, and this matter of the unity of believers lay on His heart to the extent that He devoted three entire verses (90 words) to this matter. Therefore, division manifests a blatant, flagrant disregard for the burden and will of God for His Church as expressed in His tenderest moments. Therefore, it is not just an ordinary sin among sins, but is a flagrant affront to God; hence a sin of great magnitude.

Also, we see in this prayer that the relationship of believers with one another is the same as the relationship of believers with God and Christ. Jesus said in verse 21, "...as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us:..." I Corinthians 6:17 says, "But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit." Now if all believers who are joined unto the Lord are one spirit with the Lord, how could there possibly be anything other than one spirit among the true children of God? There couldn't. We read in I Corinthians 12:13, "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body,...and have been all made to drink into one Spirit." We see here that becoming members of the body of Christ is a spiritual process, and the maintaining of the unity, or oneness, in the body of Christ is by a continual drinking into the one Spirit. Hence, there could not possibly be any division in the body of Christ unless some cease to drink into that one Spirit and imbibe another spirit. There is a spirit of division, and it is a bad one. Division is in total violation of this whole scope of teaching, and hence is a transgression of God's law and is sin.

I Corinthians 12:27 says, "Now ye are the body of Christ,..." The Church, composed of true believers, is the body of Christ. Therefore, any division within it would constitute a dismembering of Christ's body, which could not possibly be looked upon as a light thing by anyone with a conscience. Anyone would have to have his conscience seared to feel comfortable in a division.

We read in Romans 16:17-18, "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple." We see here that those who engage in such practices are serving their own interests and have some personal ends to gain—"They serve their own belly." I have never seen one who gets off course and takes up with a doctrine contrary to what we have learned, but that he has a proud, exalted spirit and feels he is out a jump ahead of all the others. I have had them tell me, "I got this light by earnestly praying and seeking God; you just pray some more and you will come to it, too." That is far from the humble, lowly Spirit of Christ.

Divisions usually come about over points of doctrine; but sometimes they develop through a party spirit—lining up behind different leaders, and affected by individuals and personalities. But there is a very strong indictment laid down in God's Word against all who would assay to preach another gospel (doctrine). In Galatians 1:8-9 we read, "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed." The advocates of new and strange doctrines argue, "We have *new* light now and have discovered that the doctrine we once believed in was not correct, and we have the right doctrine now." My answer is that the doctrine I believe in and wherein I stand is the doctrine this

Evening Light Reformation was built on, and God has set His seal to it, confirmed it with signs following and mighty signs and wonders were wrought in the Name of His holy child Jesus, and I will just continue in it and advise all the other saints to do the same.

In II John 10-11 we read again, "If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds." Paul said in Acts 20:30-31 that right among themselves men would arise speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after them, and urged them to watch, and reminded them that for three years he had not ceased to warn everyone with tears. We see here that seducers and division makers are to be warned against and avoided.

In I Corinthians 3:1-9 we see that Paul's comments to them who divide over individuals and personalities are not very complimentary either. There is just no place given in the Scriptures for any schism in the body of Christ. In I Corinthians 12:25 we read, "That there should be no schism [division] in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another."

THE CHILDREN OF THIS WORLD ARE WISER THAN THE CHILDREN OF LIGHT

Question: Would you please comment on Luke 16:8-9?

Answer: Luke 16:9, was the subject of a previous question and was discussed at an earlier time in this column so I will not take time and space to rehearse it here again. But I will comment to the best of my ability and understanding on Luke 16:8, which reads thus: "And the Lord commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely: for the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light."

Now it must be evident unto all that any scripture must be interpreted and discussed within the scope of its setting and context in order to be properly understood. Jesus is by no means teaching here that the children of light should take the world's management of its affairs, business, and manner of life as a pattern of their own just because the world's wisdom exceeds that of the saints. The last half of the first chapter of I Corinthians draws a clear distinction between the wisdom of God and the wisdom of men of the world. I will insert a few verses here. "For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Where is the wise? where is the scribe? where is the disputer of this world? hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? 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 stumblingblock, 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;...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;..." I Corinthians 1:19-27. And I Corinthians 1:30, says that Christ, "...is made unto us wisdom,...." He is the source of all true wisdom.

And again, James draws a striking comparison between the wisdom of the world and the wisdom of God in James 3:13-17. Verses 14 and 15 say, "But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth. This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish." Verse 17 says, "But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to

be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy."

The book of Psalms opens with this statement, "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly,..." There may be intellectual giants in the world, and there most certainly are, but some of them are ungodly men and their counsel would not do to follow. I Corinthians 2:14, says, "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." The "natural man" is the fleshly, carnal, unregenerate man and Paul says in Romans 8:5, "...They that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh;..." They are of the flesh and they think and speak in terms of the flesh which corresponds to the wisdom which James describes in James 3:15, as being "earthly, sensual, devilish." These people are very versed in worldly matters and the things of this present life and are able to give good counsel in this area, but as to the things and course in life which will lead to peace with God and bring His blessings into your life and eternal life in the end, they know very little or maybe nothing. They may give good advice in things pertaining to the world and this present life, but confront them with some of the plain wisdom of God in the Scriptures and they will guffaw at you and tell you that in this enlightened age we are smarter than that and have better ways of handling these matters and that those things just simply do not work out to the best advantage.

In II Timothy 3:15, Paul says that the holy Scriptures "...are able to make thee wise unto salvation..." This should be the desire and purpose of heart of every humble child of God—to be made wise unto salvation. In verses 16 and 17 we are told that in the holy Scriptures is everything necessary to perfect us in Christ and thoroughly furnish us unto every good work. The child of God has the Scriptures to instruct him and the Holy Spirit to guide him and teach him, and that is the place I would advise him to go for all of his instructions in all his affairs of life. God has placed in the Church certain God-called, God-gifted, God-qualified, Spirit filled men (ministers and established saints) who are skilled in interpreting scriptures and scriptural principles which would apply to any situation in life. My advice would be to all the saints to seek to this source to be directed in your affairs of life (any or all of them) rather than seeking guidance from worldly wise men.

The apostle Paul urged this idea in rather strong language in the 6th chapter of I Corinthians This was in regard to saints going to law with saints. In verses 5 and 6 he says, "I speak to your shame. Is it so, that there is not a wise man among you? no, not one that shall be able to judge between his brethren? But brother goeth to law with brother, and that before the unbelievers." In other words, they were using the world's method instead of God's method of settling differences. While this particular case involves the matter of going to law to settle disputes, the principle would cover any case where counsel and guidance are needed. In James 1:5, we read, "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."

This all points to the fact that God has His own provisions for all the affairs in the lives of the saints. The Church of God is self-contained and every provision for regulating the lives and affairs of the saints is in it. The Psalmist said concerning Zion, "...All my springs are in thee." (Psalm 87:7.) I promise that all who will observe this principle of truth will prosper more spiritually, materially, and physically.

Now, let's return to the text presented in the question. Referring to the premise we've already laid down that a text must be interpreted and discussed within the scope of its setting and context, let us go on from here. The verses, leading up to this statement Jesus made in Luke 16:8, were regarding a steward who was being dismissed from his stewardship because he had wasted his master's goods. When

he learned he was to be dismissed, he called in his master's debtors and discounted every man's bill. His objective was to lay a foundation and prepare the way for these men to favor him and take care of him when he was put out of his stewardship. Jesus commended him because he had done wisely. He did not commend him for being unjust and dishonest. He did not commend him for his embezzlement. It is such absurdities as these we run into when we try to extend a scripture beyond its proper use or to interpret a text totally in every detail that is being used for a specified purpose and to illustrate a particular point such as this text is. What Jesus commended this man for was that he looked ahead and made provisions for his future. The lesson He is teaching us here and which is brought out in a few verses following this one, is that while we are living in this life we should be looking ahead to the end of life and so ordering all of our affairs in every phase and area of our lives so as to make our calling and election sure with God and secure us a place in the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

The lesson of this particular text is for us to follow this man's pattern in so managing all of our affairs to assure us a place in God's heavenly kingdom and nothing else.

CAIN'S REJECTED AND ABEL'S ACCEPTED OFFERINGS

Question: Can you explain why Cain's offering was rejected and Abel's offering was accepted as in Genesis 4:3-5?

Answer: I do not know if I can explain this to anyone's satisfaction other than my own, but I will try according to my best understanding. The scripture referred to read thus: "And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord. And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the Lord had respect unto Abel and to his offering; But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell."

It seems evident that the practice of making offerings to the Lord had already been established at this time and a time appointed for them because the text reads, "In process of time" this happened. And it seems to indicate that both Cain and Abel showed up at the place at the same time as if by appointment. Cain was a tiller of the soil (farmer) and he brought an offering of the produce from his labor (the fruit of the ground). This has always been an acceptable offering to God, and He commanded the children of Israel at the time of their harvests to present the first fruits of their wheat, barley, olives, and the like to the Lord, and said in Numbers 18:12-13, that the best of these things which the children of Israel offered to the Lord was to be given to the priests as their portion. So it would appear that up to that point the offering itself was not the problem. This was a thank or gratitude offering.

Hebrews 11:4 mentions Abel's "gifts" (plural). Abel, no doubt, brought the same kind of thank or gratitude offering as Cain. But he **also** brought a lamb from his flock in addition to this. A lamb was always a sin offering, typical of "The Lamb of God" Jesus Christ, our great sin offering. In bringing a lamb, Abel acknowledged himself to be a sinner in need of an atonement and redemption, and offered it for his sins. Cain's sacrifice lacked this and showed an attitude in him not to recognize himself as a sinner and showed a lack of penitence and humility, and light consideration of the promise of a redeemer. There are many such as he today who make a sacrifice to the Lord but don't go far enough, and therefore the sacrifice they do make is not acceptable.

But let us look a little farther into this and see how it may affect us and apply to us today. The text says that to Abel **and** to his offering God had respect and to Cain **and** his offering he did not have respect. Let us notice that God connects the offering right up with the offerer, and if He cannot respect the offerer, He cannot respect his offering. John mentions Cain in I John 3:12, and says he was of that wicked one and his works were evil. No doubt his attitude was defective in that he showed no penitence and recognition of sinfulness and need of an atonement and redeemer and did not include in his offering a suitable sacrifice for this purpose. But beyond that, he had evil works in his life and evil in his heart which God knew; and this all together rendered him unacceptable to the Lord and consequently his offering was not acceptable.

Let us pursue this idea a little farther and see if that is always God's attitude toward people. In Isaiah 1:13-15, we read, "Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I can not away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting. Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth: they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear them. And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you; yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood." Here is described an outline of the very system God ordained for the children of Israel to worship Him. But also here is a strong indictment He laid against them in their backslidden and corrupt state. And He makes it very positive that it is all an abomination to Him and He hates the whole thing—all the rituals and ordinances and observances which He Himself had commanded being carried on by a backslidden and corrupt people. He could not respect them so could have no respect for their offerings.

Proverbs 15:8 says, "The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord:...", and Psalm 66:18 says, "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me." God will not even hear and respect our prayer unless the heart is right toward Him and we are acceptable to Him.

In the first chapter of Malachi, God is pronouncing some pretty strong judgments against the children of Israel for their wrong doings and their insincerity in their offerings and service to Him, and in the latter part of verse 10 we read, "...I have no pleasure in you, saith the Lord of hosts, neither will I accept an offering at your hand." Again we see He would not accept their offering when He could not respect them. Proverbs 28:9 says, "He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination." God requires strict reverence and obedience to His Word, and if one fails to honor and reverence God's Word, his prayer will be abominable unto God. This all is emphasizing the fact that if God cannot respect us, He cannot respect our offering. This is forever His attitude.

In Malachi 3:3, speaking of the work of Jesus Christ in salvation, it says, "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." Mention is made here of the "sons of Levi" because the priests were of that tribe, and the entire tribe was set apart to take care of the tabernacle and minister about the holy things. They were typical of the redeemed ones in this dispensation who are a "royal priesthood" (I Peter 2:9), and are made "kings and priests unto God." (Revelation 1:6; 5:10; 20:6). The tribe of Levi with its priesthood was a special, particular type of the New Testament priesthood (the saints who are a royal priesthood) and whose duty and responsibility is to minister about the holy things of God.

We see in this text that they had to be saved, redeemed, purified, purged, cleansed from their sins and made holy before they could be acceptable to God and offer an acceptable sacrifice to Him. Let us face up to it and accept it; God cannot

have respect to our sacrifices, service, and worship to Him until He can have respect unto us.

The real clincher text in regard to Cain is I John 3:12. "Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous." There is no itemized statement of the evil works which he did, so we don't know. It is just merely stated that "his own works were evil." Even by the standards of that period he was a villain, and God could not respect him; hence, could not respect his offering.

Perhaps some in our day are doing much work for God and making great sacrifices for Him whose hearts are not right in His sight, and who have attitudes, feelings, resentments, affections, motives, and desires in their hearts which are not acceptable to Him and their lives are not clear before Him. Consequently, they are not receiving God's approbation and blessings upon their lives which would ordinarily be experienced if they were in a condition where God could have respect to them and then to their sacrifices.

WHEN WAS OLD TO NEW TESTAMENT FULFILLED?

Question: At what point in time was the Old Testament (Law of Moses) fulfilled and the New Testament put in force?

Answer: Romans 10:4 says, "For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." But at what point was Christ the end of the law? Was it at his birth; or during His life and ministry; or at His death; or when? In Matthew 5:17-18, Jesus said, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled." We see here that the law had to be fulfilled in all of its details (sacrifices, sin offerings, ordinances, and everything connected with it) in Christ. But numbers of scriptures make it clear that Jesus never fulfilled the law until the time of His death so the law still had a standing throughout the life and ministry of Jesus. In Luke 5:12-14, we read of Jesus healing a leper and in verse 14 He instructed him to "...Go and shew thyself to the priest, and offer for thy cleansing, according as Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them." So we are sure the law was still in effect and Jesus recognized the validity of it at this point.

In Hebrews 10:1, it says that the law had a shadow of good things to come and not the very image of the things. Colossians 2:17 makes it clear that the shadow of things contained in the law (in this case it was the Sabbath but the same principle would apply to all the shadows contained in the law) found their body, or substance, or reality, or fulfillment in Christ. Colossians 2:13 says that Christ has quickened us together with Himself, having forgiven us all trespasses, and verse 14 says, "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." This text makes it clear that all the carnal ordinances, rituals, and everything pertaining to the law were taken away when Christ was nailed to the cross. Hebrews 10:8 says that God had no pleasure in the sacrifices and offerings for sin which were offered under the law. Then verse 9 says, "Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second." Thus, it is clear that Christ removed the Old Covenant to make place for the New Covenant. And verse 10 says that this was through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all. Hebrews 9:11-12 makes it clear that Christ became a high priest of good things to come (the New Covenant) by His own blood.

All the above texts make it clear that the fulfillment of the law was not complete until Christ died. Yea, as Jesus hung upon the cross, He said, "It is finished." These were His dying words—His last utterance. The law age with its daily and yearly sacrifices for sin was ended and completely fulfilled in Him Who said He came not to destroy the law but to fulfill it (Matthew 5:17). The last and final, and permanent, continuous sacrifice for sin had been offered and was now complete. The plan of salvation was completely executed and the dispensation of grace had been ushered in. All things were now ready for all to come into the kingdom of God. (Matthew 22:2-4).

Thus, we see the law was not abolished and ended until Christ's death. It came to its end then. However, the New Covenant was not fully established until some 52 or 53 days later when the Holy Spirit came and ushered in the Kingdom of God with power, filled the hearts of all believers on the Day of Pentecost, and set the Church in full operation under the New Covenant.

SIGNIFICANCE OF VEIL BEING RENT IN TWAIN WHEN JESUS DIED

Question: What was the significance of the veil in the temple being rent in twain from top to bottom when Jesus died on the cross?

Answer: It is clear that the temple, which was the center of the Jewish religious system and of their worship stood complete and intact with both of its veils right up until the time Christ yielded up the ghost (died) on Calvary's cross. Therefore, it is further confirmed that the Jewish system had its standing and was valid until then, and that it ended abruptly right there.

Matthew 27:50-51 says that when Jesus yielded up the ghost (died) the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom. That veil divided the holy Place from the most Holy Place in the temple. Behind this veil in the most Holy Place is where God Himself chose to dwell on the mercy seat between the cherubims (Exodus 25:17-22). Read verse 22 in particular. I Samuel 4:4 says that God dwelt between the cherubims. Hebrews 9:7 says that the high priest was the only one ever permitted in this Most Holy Place. He could only enter one time each year, and he was to sprinkle the blood of the sin offering as he went. Then verse 8 says, "The Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing." But when Jesus died, the veil was rent, and God moved out of that place never again to dwell in a temple made with hands (Acts 17:24). He was through with that temple and its religious system and worship forever, and it was left desolate without its inhabitant (God)—Luke 13:35. It would dwell in the "Greater and more perfect tabernacle which the Lord pitched and not man." (Hebrews 8:2 and Ephesians 2:20-22.) Also, He dwells in the individual hearts of true believers (read I Corinthians 6:19-20 and II Corinthians 6:14-18, especially verse 16).

Also, there is another very significant point to consider in this. Those two compartments in the temple which were divided by this veil signified two experiences of divine grace in the hearts of believers in this New Covenant: namely, justification and sanctification. The second compartment represented a second experience or work of grace in the heart (sanctification). But Hebrews 9:8 says that the way into this part of the temple was not made manifest while the first tabernacle was still standing. In other words, it was not possible for people to obtain an experience of entire sanctification and perfected holiness under the law, nor by its sacrifices. But when Christ died, this veil was rent and the way was opened up for all true believers to enter right on into this experience and be filled with all the

fullness of God, and have the love of God shed abroad in their hearts by the Holy Ghost, and to be perfected in holiness and to live this life in the constant and continuous presence of God. Hebrews 13:12 says that Christ suffered, died, and shed His blood that He might sanctify the people with His own blood. Since the price has been paid, the provision has been made, and the blood has been shed for this purpose, we are admonished in Hebrews 4:1, not to come short of it. So let us all not loiter around nor hesitate, but move right on in and possess the promised land and obtain the fullness of the blessings of the gospel of Christ.

WILL JESUS SET HIS FEET ON EARTH WHEN HE RETURNS?

Question: Will Jesus set His feet on the earth when He comes again.?

Answer: According to the way I understand the Scriptures, the answer is "No." But that will, no doubt, require some projection and explanation, and I do not guarantee that I can explain it to everyone's satisfaction.

In Revelation 20:11-13, we have a description of the judgment scene in these words: "And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the EARTH and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. 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. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works." Note, it says in this passage that the EARTH fled away from the presence of Him Who sat on the throne. The earth was corrupt and cursed because of sin (Genesis 3:17, 6:12, and Isaiah 24:5-6). When Jesus came the first time, He came clothed in a fleshy body, "...In the likeness of sinful flesh,..." (Rom 8:3), and He walked on earth here among men and identified with men and took their sins on Himself that He might bear them to Calvary and there make an atonement for them. Now that has been accomplished. When He comes again "...without sin unto salvation" (Hebrews 9:28), in complete holiness and in the naked, unsheathed glory of the Father and surrounded with all the holy angels, He will not count the corrupt and defiled earth as a suitable and fit place for Himself and those who will accompany Him to come in contact with. He will be through with the earth forever, so He will just banish it from Him as He approaches.

Peter wrote, "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up." II Peter 3:10. Paul declares that this will be "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye,..." and that it will be "...at the last trump:..." And Paul describes this coming of the Lord and sounding of His trumpet in these words in I Thessalonians 4:14-17, "For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

Now I am somewhat familiar with the doctrine of the "Rapture" which is read into this passage and so generally taught in Christendom today. But I do not identify

with that teaching, and for the simple reason that this passage makes no reference at all to the saints coming back here at the end of seven years to reign in Christ's kingdom here on the earth for a thousand years or any length of time. Quite the contrary. It says they will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall they **EVER** be with the Lord up there. This is further proof that Christ will not touch His feet upon this earth again, but will come in the clouds of heaven and catch His saints up to meet Him in the air.

I Corinthians 15:52 is speaking of the same thing as I Thessalonians 4:14-17, and there this trump is called the last trump. Also, Jesus said that saints would be raised on the last day (John 6:39-40, 44, and 54.) Can you see the folly of trying to believe or prove there will be a thousand years or any number of days at all after the **last day** or the **last trump** to call forth the wicked dead for judgment after the righteous dead have been resurrected to reign with Christ in His kingdom on the earth? The holy Scriptures do not teach such a thing, and neither do they teach that Christ will ever set His feet upon this earth again.

Now we will look at a text in Zechariah 14:4, which is strongly set upon by advocates on the Millennium doctrine. It reads: "And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleave in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, and there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south." This chapter opens with the statement, "Behold, the day of the Lord cometh,..." Verse 3 says, "Then shall the Lord go forth,..." Then verse 4 says, "And his feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives,..." Then it is clear that it is the Lord's feet that will stand there and that it will be in THE DAY OF THE LORD. Several times in this chapter reference is made to "IN THAT DAY" (verses 6, 8, 13, and 20, besides this verse 4 which we are considering). These references all refer to the DAY OF THE LORD (verse 1). No doubt, this 14th chapter of Zechariah is referring directly to events pertaining to literal Israel. Many scriptures and prophecies that pertain to literal Israel also have a clear fulfillment in spiritual Israel (the church in this dispensation).

I feel that Zechariah 14:4 is in this classification as well as several other verses in this chapter. We know that Jesus often went to the mount of Olives and spent considerable time there with His disciples when He was here upon the earth. In fact, it was the last place on earth that His feet touched and He ascended to heaven from there. Jesus Christ ushered in the gospel day (the DAY OF THE LORD) and shed abroad the burning, shining light of the gospel in the world. At that time He stood on the mount of Olives time and again. But the scriptures referred to above strongly infer that He will never touch foot on any spot on this earth again.

However, I feel that Zechariah 14:4 is prophetic and figurative and refers to spiritual truths in Christ's kingdom. This mountain stood on the east side of the city of Jerusalem and afforded a commanding view of the city and the temple. The city and its temple were both types of the Church of God. Then figuratively Jesus stands on the mount of Olives overlooking and observing all the operations of the Church. The mountain cleaving in the midst and forming a very great valley between, some have interpreted as the atonement of Christ extending back to include people in the law age and extending forward to cover this grace dispensation. There is some basis for this, inasmuch as Christ was a Lamb "...slain from the foundation of the world." (Revelation 13:8.) Others have interpreted it as referring to the removing or breaking down of the mountain or barrier or "middle wall of partition" (Ephesians 2:14-15) of the law system with its ordinances and rituals which stood as an insurmountable barrier to the Gentiles and opening the way through faith and grace for the Gentiles to have an access and entrance into the Church. I can see good basis for this also, since the mountain cleaved to the

east and to the west and also removed to the north and to the south, which would include all the cardinal points of the compass and signify the gospel to the whole world and the bringing in of every nation, kindred, tongue, and people (Revelation 7:9.) I correlate or parallel this with what is said of the ministry of John the Baptist in Luke 3:4-6, "...Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways shall be made smooth; And all flesh shall see the salvation of God." In other words, it signifies the coming of Christ, the establishing of His kingdom and the effects of His gospel to all people.

GOD'S HARDENING OF PHARAOH'S HEART

Question: Will you please discuss the matter of God's hardening Pharaoh's heart and how God could do this and why?

Answer: The time of the Israelite's deliverance from Egypt was at hand and the hour of Egypt's judgment was about to strike according to God's promise made to Abraham in Genesis 15:13-16, and God was marshaling the principals into position for the impending drama.

God had arranged for Moses to be spared at the time of his birth even though a decree had gone forth from the king for all male babies born to the Israelites to be slain at birth. Further, God had arranged for Moses to be brought up in the king's court as the son of Pharaoh's daughter and to be learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians. Also, he was well trained in the Egyptian army, learned all the arts of war, and became mighty in deeds. Further, he was placed as a commanding officer in the army where he learned well the arts and skills of leadership. God had far-ranging plans for Moses' life from the start and put him through all this grooming and preparation and now he was God's man and ready to be put in the position of leader and ruler of God's people, Israel.

But just so, Pharaoh was God's man as ruler of Egypt for the coming drama. God said to Pharaoh in Exodus 9:16, "And in very deed for this cause have I raised thee up, for to show in thee my power; and that my name may be declared throughout all the earth." Let us not forget that "The most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will"—Daniel 4:25b. He brought Pharaoh to the Egyptian throne for this very purpose, and the proceedings and facts will prove that He had the right man for the purpose and had made no mistake in His choosing. For all the major events of the Bible God brought forward selected men whose peculiar characteristics and dispositions fitted them for what He wanted them to do in that particular case. It was so here—Moses for the Israelite's leader and Pharaoh for Egypt's ruler.

There was a long line of Egyptian rulers in the Pharaoh dynasty. All of them were not like the Pharaoh of the Exodus—strong-willed with an obstinate determination and a bitter, hard, unrelenting disposition—perfectly fitted for the operation at hand. In fact, the ruler just ahead of him was of a mild, generous disposition even toward the Israelites and made their burdens lighter. God could not have carried out the full scope of His judgments upon Egypt with a ruler like that, because that ruler would, no doubt, have capitulated before it was finished. But God had decreed judgment upon the nation of Egypt (Genesis 15:14), and also judgment against all the gods of the Egyptians (Exodus 12:12). But this Pharaoh of the Exodus was proud, haughty, defiant, unrelenting and showed no signs of capitulation until the judgments were complete and the land of Egypt was destroyed, and in the process, judgment had been executed against all the gods of the Egyptians.

Now let us consider that God was preparing to bring out the Israelites from Egypt and establish them as a people for Himself. Let us also consider that the Israelites of that generation were 430 years down the line from Abraham. That generation had come up in Egypt among the Egyptians, and had only a faint knowledge of Abraham's God but were deeply involved with the Egyptians in the worship of their gods; they were pretty much idolaters themselves. Therefore, it was very much necessary that all the gods of the Egyptians, with whom the Israelites were familiar and participated in the worship of, be judged and proved to be impotent, powerless, and worthless, and He Himself established in the minds of the Israelites as the true and living God, possessing all power and superior to all other gods.

All the plagues poured out on Egypt were directed against their gods one at a time. The Egyptians worshipped the serpent in the temple of Uraeus. The first miracle was directed against this god—Aaron's rod becoming a serpent. The Egyptian magicians did the same thing, but Aaron's serpent devouring theirs proved their serpent god to be impotent and the true God superior. The Nile River was also held sacred and revered as a god and its fish regarded as holy. When its waters were turned to blood and all its fish died and became putrefied and stank, they loathed their god and fled from his banks in horror. The Egyptians also worshipped the frog, unclean mammal that he was. The plague of frogs turned their god into a curse to them. They dared not kill them because they were sacred; hence they became to them a terror and disgust.

The plague of lice brought to an abrupt and total halt all of their religious rites for its duration. It was directed against their priest and temples. Their law forbade any priest to approach to the altar with this loathsome insect on his body. To protect against any chance accident of this kind, they wore white linen and shaved their heads and bodies every day. But now there was no escape; the lice were everywhere and on the bodies of every Egyptian.

Baal-zebul was the Egyptian god of flies and had the reputation of protecting them from the swarms of flies which at certain seasons infested the air throughout all Egypt. The plague of flies proved the inability of this god to ward off the infestation of flies, and the inability of the Egyptian magicians to remove the flies proved the superiority of the true God over their false god or idol.

The plague of rain, hail, thunder and lightning, such as they had never seen nor heard of before, was directed against the worship of Isis, or the moon, who controlled the seasons, clouds and weather. When all the prayers to Isis failed to stay the fearful tempest of God's wrath, it surely proved the folly of idolatry and trusting in an idol god that could not protect them against the power of the true God.

The god Serapis was regarded by the Egyptians as their protector against the devastating power of locusts. There was quite an elaborate and sophisticated system of worship to him. The plague of locusts was directed against this idol god and his system of worship and proved his inability to do what they credited him with doing.

The plague of darkness was aimed at the universal worship of Osiris, or the sun. It served to show that the true God was superior to their "lord of the sun" and could veil his splendor any time He chose and for as long as He chose.

The plague of the very grievous murrain upon all the cattle of the Egyptians which produced the death of all their cattle was directed against their system of brute worship. This system prevailed throughout, and they had a large image of the sacred bull at the entrance of some of their temples.

It was customary for the priests at their heathen altars to take some of the ashes of the sacrifice and throw into the air. They believed this would protect them from and ward off any evil. When Moses, at God's command, took ashes and cast into the

air, it became a very fine dust throughout all Egypt and produced boils on the bodies of all the people of the Egyptians, thus turning what they believed to be their protection from evil into a very painful and grievous torment to them.

Thus the whole idolatrous system of the Egyptians with all of its gods was judged in this operation as well as the nation of Egypt who had oppressed and afflicted the Israelites being judged and destroyed. At the same time, a separation was made between the Egyptians and the land of Goshen where the Israelites dwelt, and none of these things were happening over in Goshen, but the Israelites were only beholding these things with their eyes. This surely should have confirmed to them that their God was above all other gods and there was none beside Him, and that the true God of their fathers was their refuge, strength, defense and protector.

Suppose this chain of events had been interrupted at any point and not have been carried through to its conclusion. There would have been some of the idol gods who would not have been judged, and therefore the Israelites would have come out with perhaps as much reverence for them as the true God of their fathers. Therefore, it was absolutely imperative that Pharaoh remain adamant throughout the entire operation and not capitulate at any point.

Therefore, God kept hardening his heart that he would not surrender until God's work was finished and His objective gained. God had raised up Pharaoh for this special time and purpose (Exodus 9:16). Again, God said He would have mercy on whom He would have mercy and whom He would He hardened (Romans 9:18). But let us not make the serious mistake of questioning God's sovereign rights to deal with every individual as He sees fit because He is the One Who searches all hearts and tries all the reins and knows exactly what is in men's hearts, and we don't. And He possesses the power and ability to make even the wrath of men to praise Him; and when he is dealing with someone who is obstinate, rebellious and defiant against Him, He can use him in whatever way necessary to accomplish His purposes and be justified in it.

THE SAINTS SHALL JUDGE THE WORLD

Question: What is the meaning of I Corinthians 6:1-3? Especially deal with Paul's statement, "The saints shall judge the world." How much territory does this cover, and what does it not cover?

Answer: I Corinthians 6:1-3 reads, "Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust, and not before the saints? Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life?"

The apostle here is giving out a strong reproof against the saints at Corinth for going to law one against another in the common courts of the land before the unbelieving (heathen) judges and putting on display their strifes and disagreements before the world, whereas they should be showing to the outside world the picture of love, mercy, long-suffering and forbearance, charity and unity. He calls this a shameful thing, and surely it is a shameful thing and a reproach to the Christian profession. He argues that all their disagreements and differences should be tried before a select group of saints or even one who would have divine wisdom and be able to judge between his brethren. This is still good advice for saints today. We should never carry our affairs of any nature before the outside world to judge. A person who would not submit to the judgment of qualified Spirit-filled men of God would be wrong at heart even before he filed a case in court. Of course, it is a

different matter if a saint is drawn into court by someone of the outside world through circumstances over which he has no control and should not be condemned by other saints for being in such a case unless he has given some occasion for it. If he has given such occasion or been at fault in the matter, then he would strive by all means available to him to correct his fault and settle the matter before it gets into court.

In verse 3 it says, "...We shall judge angels." Apparently the apostle here is referring to himself and his brother ministers in this case and not the saints in general as in verse 2. I have not had any very good explanation or understanding on this statement. However, Adam Clarke says that "Angels" here is generally believed by Bible scholars and commentators to refer to devils. This interpretation has a foundation in the Scriptures in II Corinthians 11:13-15, "For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for 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; whose end shall be according to their works." Also in Revelation 12:7 of the dragon (Paganism; heathenism) which is also called the Devil and Satan (that great opposer of the truth, the gospel of Christ, and believers in Him) and his angels. This text makes it clear that Satan has angles the same as God. Adam Clarke further says that it was through the preaching of the gospel by Paul and his brother ministers (Holy Spirit-filled men) that these satanic angels (false apostles and prophets that spoke contrary to the truth) and also evil spirits of all kinds were exposed and judged and cast out. Thus "we" (the Holy Spirit-filled ministers of Christ) judge angels (the evil spirits and agents of Satan). I have followed Adam Clarke at this place and have no better explanation that I can give at this time.

Now, in I Corinthians 6:2 it says, "...The saints shall judge the world." This is where the special emphasis is in the question. Again Adam Clarke says that, "the world" is a term in the Scriptures which generally refers to the Roman Empire or sometimes to the Jewish State. But in my discussion here I prefer to extend it beyond those borders to the whole wide world, even though in its direct meaning it may refer to a more restricted area. This is because I see it applying to our times also and in about the same way. In other words, the same Scriptures would apply in either case.

All will agree, no doubt, that the preaching of the gospel under Holy Spirit anointing and power is a judgment against all sin and unrighteousness. In Romans 1:16 Paul says that the gospel is the power of God unto salvation. In verse 17 it says that in the gospel is revealed the righteousness of God, and in verse 18 he says that in the gospel is revealed the wrath of God against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men. The judgments of God through His Word liberates and saves all who will accept His judgments. They also condemn all who refuse to accept them. I Peter 4:17 says "...The time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God:..." Isaiah 1:27 says "Zion shall be redeemed with judgment, and her converts with righteousness." Isaiah 4:4 says Jerusalem shall be purged "...by the spirit of judgment, and by the spirit of burning." Isaiah 9:7 says the kingdom of God shall be ordered and established with judgment forever. Isaiah 58:1 says, "Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins." All these scriptures refer to the preaching of the gospel and its effects, and that the same judgments that will condemn and destroy some will liberate, establish, purge and save others. It all depends on our response and attitude toward it.

The 149th Psalm is a psalm about the saints and their joyful habitation and their position of holy power. They possess in their hand a two-edged sword (the Word of God—Hebrews 4:12). "...To execute vengeance upon the heathen, and

punishments upon the people; To bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron; to execute upon them the judgment written: this honor have all his saints." This is exactly what they did when through the preaching of the gospel the works of the devil were exposed and the dragon bound and cast out. Devils were cast out of many by those whom Jesus sent out to preach and their successors after them. The kings and priests of the heathen world and pagan religions lost much of their influence with the people. It is also the same today where the pure Word of God is preached. He still honors His saints and confirms His word with signs following. In Isaiah 2:3, concerning the kingdom of God and its establishment, it says, "...for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." This describes the Church of God in action, executing the judgment written, and in this sense the "saints judge the world."

Psalms 1:5 says that sinners shall not stand in the congregation of the righteous. This introduces the thought that when sinners come into a congregation of the righteous where the saints are filled with the Holy Ghost and fire, and the Holy Spirit is anointing and reigning supremely, sinners and lukewarm professors are not able to stand there. They will be very uncomfortable and strongly convicted of their sins and lukewarmness. I Corinthians 14:24-25 says, "But if all prophesy, and there come in one that believeth not, or one unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all: And thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so falling down on his face he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth." The results of a good, spiritual service is a judgment against all unrighteousness and a conviction of sinners. In this way also the saints judge the world.

Also, individually a person who is filled with the Spirit of God and manifesting a holy life will be a sharp rebuke and bring a conviction against the frivolous, foolish, and evil ways of the world when he is in the presence of worldly people. In this way also the saints shall judge the world.

John 5:22 says that the Father has committed ALL judgment unto the Son. Hence, the statement, "The saints shall judge the world" could not possibly refer to the saints participating in the general judgment on the last day. Jesus Christ Himself will be the one and only Judge on that day, and will judge all men including the saints. But the saints do stand in a very particular relation to this world and in a very unique relation with Christ and the Father. God has chosen to carry on His work and promulgate His gospel in the world through the Church, the body of Christ. The Bible says that the saints are "workers together with God" (I Corinthians 3:9 and II Corinthians 6:1), and Jesus commissioned His apostles and also their successors throughout this age of time to "Go...and teach all nations,..."—Matthew 28:19—and again, "...Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." Mark 16:15. Incidentally, here is the answer to that part of the question, "How much territory does this cover?" That is, the entire world, all nations, and every creature.

You may ask, but what does all this have to do with the saints judging the world? Simply this: The proclamation of the gospel of Christ is a judgment against sinful men, and Jesus is with those who go forth with it (Matthew 28:20) and works with them, confirming the Word with signs following (Mark 16:20). Jesus said in His commission in Mark 16:16, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; and he that believeth not shall be damned." Thus, a judgment (preliminary) is going on continually by the faithful giving forth of the pure gospel from the Church and its God-called, God-sent, God-qualified, Spirit-filled and anointed ministry.

In Matthew 18:15-18, where Jesus is giving step by step instructions on how to deal with an offending brother, the final step is to take the matter to the Church and let them judge; then He said in verse 18, "...Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in

heaven." This makes it clear that God works in and through the Church and backs up and confirms its judgments when done in the Name of Jesus through the divine anointing of the Holy Spirit.

Paul wrote in II Corinthians 2:15-16, "For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish: To the one we are the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life. And who is sufficient for these things?" This makes it clear that those who go forth in Jesus' name carrying on the work of God are a sweet savor unto God regardless of the people's response to the gospel. It also makes it clear that the results are entirely in the people's hands as to how they respond and react to the gospel. Then the very solemn question: "Who is sufficient for these things?" Obviously the answer is, "Only those who are living victoriously and triumphantly." They only will be sufficient to execute judgment against sin of all kinds. II Corinthians 10:6 says, "And having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience, WHEN your obedience is fulfilled." In some instances judgment against evil is rendered ineffective when people who are not fulfilling these requirements get into it and endeavor to execute judgment. This only complicates things for those who are qualified and endeavoring to work out a problem.

Now let us look in upon a church (a congregation of saints) who is up to this standard and fulfilling these requirements and see how it works. If all the saints are on fire for God and full of zeal and fervency of spirit, and a lukewarm professor comes in among them, he will soon recognize that he does not fit in that atmosphere and become convicted of his need. If all the saints are manifesting an attitude of mutual concern for one another's welfare, bearing one another's burdens, and showing a disposition to help and encourage one another, and a self-loving, self-centered person comes in among them, it will be the same. If all the saints are joyful, happy and cheerful and manifesting a positive outlook on life; and some person who is glum and down in the dumps and with a sour disposition toward the world and everybody in it comes in, he will soon recognize that all that negativism does not fit in this positive crowd and will become convicted. If all the saints are full of expressions of appreciation for one another and for God and His blessings, and a habitual, chronic critic comes in among them, he will soon recognize that his criticism does not fit in that atmosphere and will be put to silence. If a covetous person comes in among a generous, liberal, free-hearted, big-hearted bunch of saints, it is not likely he will feel very comfortable and snug among them. In these ways and many more "The saints judge the world" by their outflow of godliness and manifestation of abundance of grace on every line.

In Matthew 24:14 Jesus said, "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come." Note: He said the preaching of the gospel was FOR A WITNESS. In Isaiah 43:10 and 12 God says to the Church, "Ye are my witnesses,..." God will surely execute judgment upon all sin and all sinners; but He must be justified when He speaketh, and be clear when He judgest—Psalm 51:4. Therefore He wants His truth preached unto the glorious end of time as a witness even though it may prove a savor of death to everybody. He also wants the gospel lived and practiced by the Church as a witness unto the world. Therefore, He could clearly state to the condemned when pronouncing judgment upon them, "Here are my prophets who preached My gospel unto you and preached unto you the way of salvation and you rejected and refused them and would none of their reproof; and here are My saints who lived and practiced the principles of My truth right among you to show you the way; you made light of them, persecuted them and they were down-graded among you; and now you can only go your way to your own place." Of course, all of this speech will not be necessary and will not be said. Just seeing the saints whom they knew in

this world, who manifested unto them the Spirit of Christ, the glorious life of the gospel, its standards of truth and holy living and let their light shine unto them, will be sufficient to condemn them in their own conscience and cause them to go away. In this very real sense, "The saints will judge the world."

CAN SAINTS BE ANGRY AND BE CLEAR IN IT?

Question: Please discuss Ephesians 4:26. Can saints be angry and be clear in it?

Answer: Ephesians 4:26 says, "Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath."

The very wording of this text implies that anger is something not to be tampered with or to take lightly. It indicates that sin is at the door wherever anger is.

Weymouth's Translation says: "If angry, beware of sinning."

Williams' Translation says: "If you do get angry, you must stop sinning in your anger."

Knox's Translation says: "Do not let resentment lead you into sin."

Ephesians 4:26b says, "Let not the sun go down upon your wrath."

Knox's Translation says: "Never go to bed angry."

The New English Bible says: "Do not let the sunset find you still nursing it."

This all sums up the fact that it is very needful for the saints to pray out from under their hurts, wounds, bruises, agitated feelings, "disgust" and all unholy and improper tendencies, dispositions, and attitudes, and to do it quickly. It is a certain fact that if we do not do this and allow those things to linger, they will produce roots of bitterness and result in sin in our hearts.

When discussing a word or given phrase or principle connected with a particular dominant word, we must endeavor first to discover the varied meaning of that word.

Anger is defined in the World Book Dictionary of which Clarence L. Barnhart is Editor in Chief, as the feeling one has toward something or someone that hurts, opposes, offends, or annoys; strong displeasure. Another definition which is classified as obsolete is "grief, trouble."

Webster's Dictionary of Synonyms defines anger as denoting the emotional excitement induced by intense displeasure. It refers only to the emotional reaction; the word itself suggests no definite degree of intensity and carries no necessary implication of outward manifestation.

Ire is given as a synonym of anger. It suggests greater intensity than anger, unqualified, and usually, but not necessarily, a display of that feeling in looks, acts or words.

Rage is another synonym. It adds to anger the implications of lost self-control and of violent boiling over of feeling; it often connotes a sense of frustration, or temporary derangement of the mind, or determination to get revenge.

Fury is another synonym. It indicates overmastering destructive rage verging on madness.

Indignation is another synonym. It implies depth and intensity of anger, often righteous or generous anger, aroused by that which one considers mean, shameful, or otherwise unworthy of a man or men.

Wrath is another synonym. It may imply either rage or indignation as its emotional basis; but in addition to either of these, it also often implies a grievance and a desire or intent to avenge or punish, or to get revenge.

In Romans 12:19-21 we read, "Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in

so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good." We see here that where one's anger runs into some of these unholy tendencies and reaches the point of frustration, vengeance or desire for revenge or to see one punished; it is already out of bounds for a Christian and running into sin. We are instructed here to just keep our hands off and let God have His way in the execution of vengeance upon evil doers. But as for us, we are to show kindness and do good unto our enemies and just let God decide who deserves vengeance and to what extent.

Phillip's Translation says: "Never take vengeance into your own hands, my dear friends."

Moffit's Translation says: "But let the wrath of God have its way."

Goodspeed's Translation says: "But leave room for God's anger."

Montgomery's Translation (The New Testament in Modern English) says: "But leave the field clear for God's wrath."

Knox's Translation says: "Allow retribution to run its course."

All of this makes it clear that there is a line beyond which Christian people must not go, and to go beyond that line is certainly sin. Also, we can stand in the way and hinder God in executing judgment on evil doers by taking things into our own hands and executing vengeance upon an individual in our own behalf. What we should do in such cases is follow the example of our Master and commit ourselves into the hands of Him who judgeth righteously—I Peter 2:23.

However, in all the various degrees of anger and the different definitions of the word *anger*, there is a place for saints to exercise anger and we would not be worth much to the cause of God and right without it. But we are admonished in the text to be careful in such cases not to go beyond that range of *anger* that is suitable for saints and give place to the devil and run into sin.

Again the World Book Dictionary draws a distinction in the use of the term *angry*. 1. When the angry feeling is stressed, and 2. When the directing of the anger upon a person is stressed. This is an important difference in this discussion.

One may feel highly displeased and deeply grieved and much troubled (angry) over some meanness, injustice, harshness, or cruelty in word or action by one person toward another. This would be justifiable and we should feel grieved and displeased (angry) at those things. One would not be worth much to God who would not be exercised in grief and displeasure by such things. But when one turns this same disposition toward the individual who did the wrong and burns in their resentment and anger toward the person until wrath is kindled and we desire to see him punished or vengeance executed upon him; that is a destructive anger and we should rise up in opposition to it and cast it from us before it be our ruin.

In Proverbs 24:17-18, we read, "Rejoice not when your enemy falls, and let not your heart be glad when he stumbles or is overthrown; lest the Lord see it, and it be evil in His eyes and displeases Him, and He turn away His wrath from him (to expend it upon you, the worse offender)—" Amplified Bible. Adam Clarke says this appears to be the sense of this text and also quotes another eminent authority, Cloverdale, as applying it in the same way. so, it appears evident that we can hinder the execution of judgment and vengeance by God Himself and even bring judgment upon ourselves by holding a wrong attitude toward any person. An anger of this kind will breed malice and bitterness which are strongly condemned by God's Word.

Some may say, "I have a righteous indignation against the principle of the thing but not toward any person." Well, good. That is right and justifiable. But let us apply a little test to that and see. If it is the principle of the thing you are offended at, you will feel just as grieved and hurt (angry) when you see some mean or unjust thing done to another person as if that thing were done to you. But if you can see someone do a mean or unjust thing to another person and just pass it off and say,

"I am not going to meddle with anything that does not concern me," then let someone do the same thing to you and get all agitated about it, upset, and your peace disturbed; that is just your feeling sorry for yourself. It is not the principle or thing at all, but this is ME and they just ought not to do ME this way.

In conclusion, let us summarize. It seems certain from the Scriptures that there is a certain kind of *anger* that is justifiable and we could not be true to right principles without being stirred at certain things in certain ways.

In Mark 3:5, we read of Jesus, "...When He had looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts,..." Here Jesus had *anger*. But we could never imagine His having carnal resentment and behaving according to the way some humans do when they become angry. Just try to imagine His getting red in the face, shouting obscenities at the people, and throwing His hands around and threatening the people. We could not even imagine such a thing. His anger in this case consisted in His being grieved, or hurt, at the hardness of their heart, obstinacy and unbelief. This should affect all of us in the same way.

In Colossians 3:8, we are commanded to "put off anger, wrath, and malice."

Ephesians 4:31 says, "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger—be put away from you."

Ephesians 4:27 is the finish or conclusion of verse 26. It says "Neither give place to the devil."

The 20th Century New Testament says, "And give no opportunity to the devil."

Goodspeed's Translation says, "You must not give the devil a chance."

Phillip's Translation says, "Don't give the devil that sort of foothold."

The New English Bible says, "Leave no loop-hole for the devil."

If we allow the sparks of displeasure, anger, and indignation to linger in our hearts and minds and smolder there until some circumstance or provocation fans them into a flame, we certainly are giving place to the devil; and sin lieth at the door and will rise up and take us and cause us to act or speak in unkind, bitter and hurtful ways. The only safe way for us is to commit our ways unto God and pray out from under our hurts, wounds, and offenses quickly; cast out all anger and have victory over every unkind feeling and thought toward any person. Our attitude must be love toward all men—including our enemies. But at the same time we are to have and hold a resentment and anger toward the devil and all of his works.

THE KEYS OF THE KINGDOM GIVEN TO PETER

Question: Please explain Matthew 16:19. What does it mean when Jesus said to Peter that He would give him "the keys of the kingdom of heaven"?

Answer: Matthew 16:19 reads in full, "And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." Such a glorious and awesome truth is expressed here! Let us examine it a little.

"Keys" would be an instrument by which an entrance would be unlocked and opened into the kingdom of heaven. This is evidently the WORD and the SPIRIT of God. Jesus said in John 3:7, "...Ye must be born again" and in John 3:5, "...Except a man be born of the water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." How is a person born again? I Peter 1:23 says, "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the WORD OF GOD, which liveth and abideth for ever." James 1:18 says, "Of his own will begat he us with the WORD OF TRUTH, that we should be a kind of first fruits of his creatures." In I Corinthians 4:15 we read, "...For in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel." John

1:13 declares that those who receive Christ are born of God. In Romans 1:16 Paul says that the GOSPEL OF CHRIST is the power of God unto salvation.

All the above scriptures make it clear that access into salvation or the kingdom of God is through the gospel. But the gospel is a two-pronged thing. In Zechariah 4:6, we read concerning the two olive trees in Zechariah's vision "...This is the word of the Lord unto Zerubbabel, saying, 'Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.'" So the Gospel of Christ must be composed of both the WORD and the SPIRIT—the Word anointed and empowered by the Holy Spirit. In John 6:63, Jesus said, "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." Paul said in I Corinthians 2:4-5, "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." God help us all at this point. II Corinthians 3:6 says, "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." So we see the Word alone is not sufficient but it must be accompanied by the Spirit and backed by Holy Spirit anointing.

Therefore, we conclude that God's Word and His Spirit are the keys to the kingdom of heaven and open an access into Christ and salvation. Hebrews 5:9 says that Christ "...became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him." So we see that as one obeys God's Word and meets the conditions laid down therein for being saved—confession of sin (I John 1:9), repentance (II Corinthians 7:10-11; Acts 3:19; Luke 24:47; Mark 1:14-15), restitution (II Corinthians 7:10; Luke 19:8; Ezekiel 33:15), and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and the merits of His shed blood, the door swings wide open to him and he is accepted into the kingdom of God.

This is exactly what Jesus gave to Peter in this text and also to all the apostles, and further to their successors throughout this gospel age of time; even NOW to the holy, God-called, God-qualified, Holy Spirit filled ministry which God has in the Church and in the world at this present time. They also possess these keys to the kingdom of heaven.

In Matthew 28:19-20, Jesus said to His disciples, "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 alway, even unto the end of the world." It is evident here that Jesus ordained and commissioned a perpetual ministry who would have the same power and authority (the same keys of the kingdom—God's Word and Spirit) as those early ones had. This was to last unto the end of the world and just as God encouraged Joshua by telling him, "...As I was with Moses, so I will be with thee," (Joshua 3:7) he says the same to His true ministers today, "As I was with Peter, James and John and their immediate brethren, so am I with you." His promise was, "...I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." (Matthew 28:20.) That reaches to us down here in this end of the gospel age the same as it applied to those disciples in the early beginning of this gospel age.

SAINTS WHO CAME OUT OF GRAVES AFTER JESUS' RESURRECTION

Question: In Matthew 27:52, it says the saints rose and "came out of the graves after his (Jesus') resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many." Where was this holy city; and how long did these saints remain alive?

Answer: It seems according to the way these verses read that at the death of Jesus the rocks were rent and the graves were opened at that time. Graves at that time

were hewn out of rocks and the bodies of the dead were placed in them and they were sealed with a stone at the entrance. The earthquake which occurred at the time of Jesus' death and rent the rocks would naturally open graves which were in those rocks. However, the arising of the saints to life and coming out of their graves did not occur until after Jesus' resurrection. Apparently their dead bodies just lay there in open graves until Jesus' resurrection, then they came forth to life, left their graves, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many.

Jerusalem is the city that was called the "Holy City" in that time. We read in Nehemiah 11:1, "And the rulers of the people dwelt at Jerusalem: the rest of the people also cast lots, to bring one of ten to dwell in Jerusalem, the holy city, and nine parts to dwell in other cities." The first 19 verses of the 11th chapter of Nehemiah gives a list of the dwellers in Jerusalem and the remainder tells of those living in other cities. In verse 18 it says, "All the Levites in the holy city were two hundred fourscore and four." These two verses (1 and 18) make it clear that Jerusalem was known as the holy city. Psalm 48:2 says, "Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is mount Zion,...the city of the great King." "In Matt 5:35, Jesus said that Jerusalem is "...the city of the great King." Psalm 46:4 says, "There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacles of the most High."

It was in Jerusalem that the temple (tabernacle) of God was built. Regarding the tabernacle which was the forerunner of Solomon's temple, God said in Exodus 25:8, "...Let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them." During the forty years the Israelites spent wandering in the wilderness and moving about with no certain dwelling place, God's sanctuary was a portable tabernacle which could easily be moved with them. When they became established in their own land and their wanderings were over, then the tabernacle was replaced by a permanent, magnificent temple which was God's dwelling place among His people. This temple was built in Jerusalem, and I Kings 14:21 tells us that God chose Jerusalem out of all the tribes of Israel to put His name there. His name was there, He dwelt there in the most holy place of the temple, and this was the city of the great King—the holy city.

It was on the outskirts of this city on Golgotha's Hill where Jesus was crucified. Near that place was a garden with a tomb in which He was buried. After His resurrection, these saints arose and went into the city (Jerusalem) and appeared unto many bearing confirmation of the resurrection of Jesus.

If you are thinking of the "holy city" which John saw coming down out of heaven from God (Revelation 21:2), I would remind you that that city, which is the New Testament Church, was not yet in existence at that time so it could not have been that city these resurrected saints went into. That city was not established and set in operation until the Day of Pentecost about fifty days after this.

The last part of this question (How long did these saints remain alive?) has me totally stopped. I know of no other reference to them in the Scriptures. If anyone out there who reads this has any scriptural information concerning this point, I would appreciate hearing from you. I am sorry I cannot give the inquirer a better answer and more satisfaction than this on this part of the question.

However, while this question is up, there are some interesting observations that I might point out. First: these people were saints—Old Testament saints—not born-again saints according to New Testament standards to be sure. That had not yet come to pass when these people lived and died. But all through the Old Testament times there were many who loved God and had faith in the promise made by God Himself of a coming Messiah, Redeemer, and Saviour, and these people God loved and respected. His power worked mightily in them. The writer of the Hebrew Epistle gives a long list of these champions of faith and what they accomplished under God

through faith; it was wonderful, illustrious, and glorious. In chapter 11, verses 32 through 35 give a description of the glorious victories many obtained; verses 36 and 37 describe bitter and severe persecutions and experiences many went through, and verse 38 says the world was not worthy to have such people as these in it. Verses 39 and 40 say of this whole company from one end to the other of the list, "And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect." The promise these folks did not receive was the promise of the Messiah who was to bring a full and free and uttermost salvation—saved from sin and sanctified holy and wholly; with the power and dominion broken and destroyed out of the life and in which salvation we could live victoriously and triumphantly over all sin. Actually Christ was a "...Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" (Revelation 13:8), and His redemption reached backward as well as forward. Those of the Old Testament times who believed in God's promise of a Redeemer were people of God. Hebrews 9:15 says that the death of Christ was "...for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament,..." So we see the atonement of Christ covered them as well as us.

The second observation is that these people did not only confirm the resurrection of Jesus, but attested to His power to resurrect all the rest of us. Jesus said, "...Because I live, ye shall live also" (John 14:19), and here is living confirmation and proof of it. Paul said to Agrippa in Acts 26:8, "Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?" There was definite, unimpeachable proof of this which even this heathen king could not doubt. And surely we who have the first fruits and earnest of the Spirit in our hearts should be firmly established in this faith and live out our lives in the strong hope of this consolation.

WHATSOEVER IS BOUND ON EARTH SO IN HEAVEN

Question: Please explain the part of Matthew 16:19 that says, "Whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."

Answer: Matt 16:19 reads in full, "And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." II Corinthians 5:19 says that God "...hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation." Mark 16:16 confirms this by saying that he who believes the gospel and is baptized shall be saved. But to God's true ministers is also committed the ministry of condemnation and Jesus confirmed that, too, in this verse where He said, "...He that believeth not shall be damned." Paul said in II Corinthians 2:15-16, "For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish: To the one we are the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life. And who is sufficient for these things?" Surely, only those whom God has called, qualified, filled with His Spirit, commissioned and sent forth would be sufficient for this responsibility of loosing and binding souls for the judgment.

In this grant to the ministry from Jesus Himself is also included the power and authority of the ministry under God through the divine unction and anointing of the Holy Spirit and in strict accordance with God's Word to govern, execute discipline, and maintain order in the Church of God. In the teachings of Jesus in Matthew 18:15-18, in the matter of dealing with a trespassing brother, He gives a step by step procedure for dealing with this. If the trespassing brother was obstinate and

could not be gained through the first two steps, then it culminated in taking the matter to the Church. If he refused to accept admonition from the Church, then he was to be counted as a heathen and a publican. Then follows in verse 18 the same statement as given in Matthew 16:19, "Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven:..."

Thus we see that the "keys of the kingdom" are also used by the true ministers of God in exercising government, discipline, and keeping order in the Church in binding or loosing certain things and people. When these things are carried out through the leading of the Holy Spirit and according to God's Word all the way, even to our attitudes, feelings, purposes and motives, God in heaven will back it up and count it the same way in heaven. Remember, God's Word is forever settled in heaven and it is the same down here as it is up there, and when it is strictly observed down here it will register up there just the same.

In the 5th chapter of I Corinthians Paul is dealing with the matter of an incestuous person in the Corinthian Church and he instructs them in verses 4 and 5, "In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus." Here they are instructed in the power and authority of Christ through the Spirit to excommunicate or cast out of the Church (bind him according to our text). He gives the reason for this in the next verse: "...A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump." In other words, if that person stays among you in that condition, the infection will spread and more will be affected by it, so purge out the leaven and save the Church. This is one purpose of discipline in the Church—to save the Church and keep it clean.

Discipline remained strict in the Church through those early years as the ministry used the keys that God had given unto them—God's Word and God's Spirit—to administer discipline and government in the Church. God put His seal of approval on this and through it kept the Church clean and pure and made it a light to the world, a city on a hill that could not be hid. He continued to confirm His Word with signs following among them and to show forth the glory of God and the perfection of beauty in it. But down in the third century discipline became more slack, and foreign elements began to creep in. God never stopped this trend because He had given unto His ministry in the Church the keys of the kingdom and the power and authority to bind all evil elements and to loose all right and good things. He never interfered with this trend, but as evil elements were allowed to come in and continue there, He Himself just moved on out and left it with them. The result was the great apostasy was set up and established in the earth. The true Church was lost sight of for a long period of time.

UNDER WHAT NAME IS BAPTISM CARRIED OUT?

Question: In the book of Acts when they baptized, they simply stated: "In the Name of Jesus" and in some cases no name at all is mentioned but just merely states that they were baptized. Now why did Jesus say plainly "In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost" and then in the Acts it is not specified that way and no explanation is given? Do you think that in the actual baptizing ceremony they used the name of Jesus only?

Answer: No, I do not believe that the men who administered the ordinance of baptism in the Acts used the name of Jesus only in their ceremony for the following reason. In Matthew 28:19, Jesus Himself gave the commission to His apostles in

these words: "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 Jesus says anything, that seals it forever as a positive truth. This was the last thing He said to them before ascending to heaven. About ten days later the New Testament Church was born and set in operation on the Day of Pentecost and numbers were being converted through the preaching of the gospel, and were baptized. The history of that first church began about ten days after Jesus issued this command and approximately 3,000 souls who were born again and became the first converts and members of the Jerusalem Church were commanded by the apostle Peter, who was one of those who received the commission direct from the mouth of Jesus Himself, in Acts 2:38, "...Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ...."

It seems to me an incredible thing to suppose that within this short time this apostle who remembered the command of Jesus to baptize believers of the gospel would have forgotten how He said to do it. So it is to be assumed that all who participated in that baptismal service included the "Father, Son and Holy Ghost" in their ceremony. Again this same apostle, Peter, in Acts 10:48, commanded the household of Cornelius the centurion, "...to be baptized in the name of the Lord...." Note that in Acts 2:38 he said, "...in the name of Jesus Christ..." and in Acts 10:48 he said, "...in the name of the Lord...." Then again, in Acts 19:5, referring to the disciples that Paul found at Ephesus on one of his missionary journeys, "When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus." It seems evident to me that the terms used in the above three scriptural references: "In the name of Jesus Christ, in the name of the Lord, and in the name of the Lord Jesus," could not be a part of any commonly accepted baptismal ceremony as there is no uniformity in them. The question then, would naturally arise, "Which is correct?" Then in Acts 8:12 and 8:38, it merely states that the people were baptized, with no name mentioned.

Now there is a reason for this. The sender of this question stated that he had been giving out the answer that these "name terms" were to emphasize Jesus in contradistinction to John the Baptist who had been baptizing people before Jesus came on the scene. This is exactly right as I see it. John the Baptist baptized with water unto repentance (Matthew 3:11) and Jesus came to Jordan to be baptized of John Himself (Matthew 3:13-17). John was the forerunner of Jesus Christ to prepare the way for him. But now John has passed off the stage of action and Jesus has ushered in the gospel day and He is the principal One and all the work of God is being carried on in His Name.

This is made clear in a careful reading of Acts 19:1-6. In this case Paul has encountered twelve disciples at Ephesus and as he talked with them they told him that they had been baptized unto John's baptism (verse 3). Then Paul explained to them that they should believe on Him which should come after John; that is, on Christ Jesus (verse 5); that is, in the name of Jesus instead of in the name of Paul.

Here is a thought that makes the point clear to me. In II Corinthians 5:20, Paul declares that the ministers of God are ambassadors for Christ and that we beseech people in Christ's stead. We know that an ambassador is a government man sent by the government of one nation to another nation to represent their nation in all its dealings with the nation to which he is sent. He is commissioned with certain powers and authority to do business in the name of the government that sent him. It is a similar case here. Jesus is the King of kings, the Lord of lords, and King of the saints in the kingdom of God. He sends forth His ministers as ambassadors to represent Him to the people of this world in preaching to them the gospel of the kingdom, baptizing believers, healing the sick, casting out devils, etc. This is all done through the power and authority He gives and everything, including baptism, is done in His Name in the same sense that an ambassador sent by a nation to

another nation does all his business in the name of the nation that commissioned and sent him; that is under the authority of the commission given him by those who sent him. In this case the baptizing was all being done under the authority of the commission given them by Jesus Himself. Therefore it is said to be done in the name of the Lord Jesus but the proper terminology in the baptismal ceremony is forever the one that Jesus Himself gave: "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

SIGNS & SYMPTOMS OF SELF

Question: What are some of the signs or symptoms of "SELF" and how does it manifest itself?

Answer: **SELF** is a predominant part of the depraved nature which our father Adam received because of his disobedience to the direct commandment of God. By this means he lost the image of God (righteousness and true holiness) (Colossians 3:10; Eph 4:24). The image of God was defaced and in its place Adam received a fallen, depraved, sinful nature. Not only was this so, but all his posterity received the same nature that Adam had. Romans 5:12, says, "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." This text proves sin to be a universal thing and that is so because of one man's sin. Romans 7:14 says, "For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin." But how did this come about? Who sold him under sin? The answer is clear from the above text (Rom 5:12); it was Adam. Paul refers to himself (I) here, but actually he stands as a representative of the whole human race. We are all in that same condition—depraved in our nature. This depraved nature has a side loaded toward **self** and that is the side that keeps turning up in all unregenerated men.

Self and the depraved, sinful nature are so intertwined together that one cannot be destroyed without destroying the other also. They must go together. Let me give you an example. I knew a man who had a brain tumor. Surgeons opened up his head and performed an operation, but they reported that the roots and runners of the tumor were so intertwined throughout the brain that they could not possibly get it all without completely destroying him as a person and reducing him to a mere "vegetable." Therefore they just took off the top of the tumor, and as it grew and built up pressure in his head, they repeated the operation in the same way. The man underwent nine of these operations before his death. I once saw an advertisement of a cold medicine which said, "Kill a cold where a cold lives." Another place in the ad said, "A cold is an internal infection."

This is the way with the self-life. You have to kill it where it lives—in the depraved nature. It is all intertwined in there and one has to have that nature destroyed in order to get it. Rom 6:6 says, "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." The "old man" in this text refers to that depraved, sinful nature. Romans 6:11 says, "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord." Galatians 2:20 says, "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." Here is expressed life without the "I" or "self" in it. Galatians 5:24 says, "And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts." All of these texts refer to the old depraved, sinful nature and the self-life which is an integral part of it.

This experience (crucifying or dying out to self) is obtained through consecration and faith; in the Scriptures this is called "sanctification." Romans 12:1-2 says "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." And I Thessalonians 4:3 says, "For this is the will of God, even your sanctification,..." Rom 12:1-2 explains how one is sanctified.

Self is something we cannot serve God with. Jesus knew this; the very first condition of discipleship that He laid down was to deny one's self. In Matthew 16:24, he said, "...If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." The self-life is so opposite to the Spirit and nature of Jesus Christ that it is obnoxious to Him and we just cannot serve Him with it.

This all being true, let us look at some of the signs and symptoms of **self**:

1. It will seek its own (its own way, profit, welfare, pleasure, comfort, and satisfaction) rather than deny itself. In Phil 2:21, Paul said this by way of lament, "For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's." In I Corinthians 10:24, he said, "Let no man seek his own, but every man another's wealth." In Philippians 2:4, he said, "Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others." We see in these texts that self-seeking, self-promotion, and self-pleasing have no place in the Christian life.

2. **Self** will demand the uttermost farthing (Matthew 5:26) rather than go the second mile (Matthew 5:41). Try to straighten up anything or seek a reconciliation with a man who has been hurt or offended and is dominated by self and you will find him "slapping you in the face" instead of turning the other cheek (Matthew 5:39). He will be very exacting, demanding, and hard to deal with. This is just the way **self** behaves itself.

3. **Self** will contend for its own way and if not pleased, just plain won't play rather than submitting and cooperating to make any given project a success. In Ephesians 5:21, Paul says, "Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God." This is the way of the Spirit and the way **Christians** are to behave, but **Self** will never behave this way.

4. **Self** will get its feelings hurt and pout when crossed, disappointed, or its proposals rejected, rather than crucifying **self** and manifesting the Spirit of Christ who pleased not Himself (Romans 15:1-3).

Self was manifested in the prodigal son in his seeking his own way, personal interests, and freedom to do his own thing with utter disregard for the feelings of his father and his father's household. The prodigal's brother sought to promote his own interests in another way, but showed the same contempt for his father and his father's feelings; in the end he was as obnoxious as his brother. He missed the kingdom of God, too. Self is always obnoxious, and all who follow its pernicious ways will miss the kingdom of God.

SELF thrives on attention and will pay any price to get it—whether good or bad. Sometimes when things have been going rather smoothly for a time, a self-dominated person who has been starved of attention will "throw a spell" or "act up," and create a commotion, or act naughty in order to get the attention he craves.

Now I will identify **SELF** as a murderer and insurrectionist. He may not like that exactly, but he will pay that price, too, in order to draw attention to himself. Barabbas was a murderer and insurrectionist and he stands as a topnotch type of **SELF**. He stood directly opposed to Christ in Pilate's judgment hall that day. Pilate, in his effort to release Jesus and save Him that day, picked out the worst prisoner he had and set him up against Christ and said to the Jews, "Which one of these two shall I release unto you?" It would appear obvious, so Pilate thought, that the choice

here would be an easy one—that the Jews would choose Christ rather than Barabbas. But they didn't. They said, "Crucify Jesus and give us Barabbas." In the anti-type of this, the SELF-LIFE stands directly opposed to the Christ-life in the hearts and lives of many people. SELF will murder the Christ-life in your soul. There is no possible grounds for coexistence of the two in the same heart. Jesus said, "No man can serve two masters:..." Matthew 6:24. Folks, when Jesus says a thing cannot be done, we should just as well accept it that it can't be done and quit trying. A choice must be made: We must in our hearts either say to give us SELF and let the Christ-life die; or say to give us Christ and let the SELF-LIFE die.

SELF is also an insurrectionist and will be continually and perpetually rising up in rebellion against the laws of the kingdom of God and the kingship of Jesus Christ. Jesus knew that no man could serve Him while SELF was prevalent in his life, so He just said for us to unload it at the start if we intended to follow Him. In Matthew 16:24, He said, "...If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me." Self-denial is the first condition of discipleship.

We have another good example in type of SELF—the Gibeonites. They dealt wittingly and deceitfully with Joshua and the elders of Israel and tricked them into making a league with them. (9th chapter of Joshua.) Joshua and the elders very soon learned that they had been tricked and deceived by the Gibeonites but because of the league between them they could not destroy them. But they were reduced to perpetual bondage and servitude to be hewers of wood and drawers of water for the Israelites. SELF must be put under. Paul expressed it this way: "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. Paul knew the destructive power of the self-life and of the flesh so he just put it down, kept it down, and never gave it a chance to assert itself at all. God help you and me to do the same thing with this pestilent fellow.

When a person actuated by SELF is hurt, he will go about seeking someone to tell his hurt to in order to receive their sympathy. Every person actuated by SELF relishes sympathy. They feed on it and are nurtured by it. But the sad part is that they will not shrink from destroying by slander and gossip the person nearest to them in order to get sympathy. The saddest part of all is that he is actually destroying himself while, at the same time, being deceived into thinking he is building himself up because of the sympathy he is receiving from another. This makes the one extending sympathy in such a case a contributor to the delinquency and destruction of the one seeking sympathy.

This course of action is only feeding and nourishing that which one should be seeking to mutilate and destroy. God permits hurtful things to happen to us to give us an opportunity to further destroy the self-life out of us. If we cooperate with God at this point, humble our hearts and submit to Him, the desired end will be obtained. But if we resent, buck up against it, and go the sympathy seeking route, we will feed and nourish that self-life with all of its destructive powers within us and weaken ourselves to meet our problems in life.

The courses we should follow in such cases are these: (1.) When you are hurt and feel starved for sympathy and feel you must get to some certain individual as soon as possible to talk things over with him, just remain separate and aloof from him and refuse to discuss your problem even if you are with him. (2.) When you feel that you just have to say something and if you don't say something you will burst, that is the best time in the world to just keep quiet and say nothing. (3.) When you feel strongly inclined to pout, just get more talkative and more involved than usual in the activities going on around. (4.) When you feel that you just want to give someone a good "letting alone," just get closer to him and become more conversant and friendly with him than ordinarily. By these means and more we are cooperating

with God in those times to destroy the self-life and increase the Christ-life within us.

We are told by the experts that self-preservation is the first law of nature. The Bible verifies this, too. In Job 2:4, we read, "...All that a man hath will he give for his life." Therefore, I conclude that if you could only see the power of SELF to destroy your health and happiness here and your eternal life hereafter, you would be inclined to resent, reject, and stoutly resist it by every effective means available to you.

To all the readers of the "Question and Answer" column I send greetings. I am not dealing with a particular question this time, but as we have just crossed the threshold of a new year, I feel impressed to insert here for this time a treatise on TIME. True, when this article appears in the *Faith and Victory* more than one month of the year will have already passed, and it might be thought by some to be a little late to be giving a New Year's message. But at the time of writing we have just crossed the line only a few days ago. So let us earnestly consider "Time"—its value and importance.

A famous artist was once asked which of his paintings he considered to be the best. His answer was simple and direct: "My next one." Here was a professional man who felt he possessed the potential of constant and continual improvement and that each production would be better than the one before. This is a grand outlook for life, too. Let us adopt it for ourselves. We have just entered into a new year. Let us look forward by faith to it being our best year yet in serving God and in our spiritual lives. Let us resolve that it **shall** be, by the grace of God, and labor earnestly to develop the potential within us, and make it our best year of spiritual development and growth.

A year is a distinct segment of time and of our lives. Each year contains 365 1/4 days. Each day is a complete package within itself. Let us learn to live one day at a time. Let us not be foolish in trying to live our life by the year; let us live it by the day. It is very important that we get settled down to dealing with the time at hand and not try to relive yesterday nor live tomorrow in advance. One Greek philosopher said, "Perform thy worst tomorrow for I have lived today." Jesus warned us very faithfully about getting our days mixed up or intermingled. He taught us to pray in Matthew 6:11: "Give us THIS DAY our daily bread." Again in Matthew 6:34, He said, "Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." Let us grasp the importance of what Jesus said here. Each day we will have sufficient problems, duties, responsibilities, privileges, and opportunities to keep us busy. It is worrying over the forebodings of the future and lamenting over the mistakes of the past that mar the present and render us less capable and efficient to cope effectively with the situations and problems of today. George McDonald said, "No man ever sank under the burden of the day. It is when tomorrow's burden is added to the burden of today that the weight is more than a man can bear. Never load yourself so. If you find yourself so loaded, at least remember this: it is your own doing, not God's. He begs you to leave the future with Him and mind the present." Let us break this year up into 365 units (days) and face them one at a time. Let us face each day with full confidence in the promise of God's Word: "...As thy days, so shall thy strength be." Deuteronomy 33:25. Let us face the future in the confidence that God has it in His hands and when we get there He will be there and have everything under control. Let us move forward in this year with optimism, hope, strong faith, and courage. Let us be joyful and jubilant; let us be exuberant and excited in the anticipation of the possibilities each of the days which lie ahead will bring to us. The Psalmist said in Psalm 68:19, "Blessed be the Lord, who **daily** loadeth us with benefits,..." And again

in Psalm 118:24, he said, "This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it." Then Ecclesiastes 9:11 says, "...Time and chance happeneth to them all." Let us believe this, and that as the days come and go we will have our share of "time and chances" right along with all the others; let us keep ready and prepared to seize them and make the most of them as time brings them to us.

But all folks do not do this. How sad but alas, 'tis true. We read in Hebrews 5:12, "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." These folks were not making the best use of their time and chances, and were not growing and prospering spiritually as they should. But they were the losers when time had passed them by with all its opportunities. This is indeed sad but, alas, how many there are like this. Oh, let us all be awake and alert to grasp those chances and opportunities as they are brought to us on the stream of time, because they will not wait and they may not pass our way again. The chorus of one song says, "Those golden hours will never wait; We must seize them as they come, or forever be too late; Oh, do not wait for something great; Do whatever you find to do and do it right." Fenelon said, "God, who is liberal in all His other gifts, shows us, by the wise economy of His providence, how circumspect we ought to be in the management of our time, for He never gives us two moments together." Frederick William Faber said, "The surest way of arriving at a knowledge of God's eternal purposes about us is to be found in the right use of the present moment. Each hour comes with some little fagot of God's will fastened upon its back." Legh Richmond said, "There is a time to be born and a time to die, says Solomon, and it is the momento of a truly wise man, but there is an interval between these two times of infinite importance." This is very true and let us all grasp its import. This intervening time is our lives which we are now passing through and using or wasting as the case may be.

My father used to say to me, "Son, live every day just like it was the last day you had to live." With the passing of years and as the advancing of age brings me nearer to the end of my life, I value and appreciate that admonition more and more. On Jan. 30th this year, my father will have been gone 34 years; but that admonition is still with me in a very distinct and real way, and comes into focus more clearly and with greater force with each passing year.

There is an old cliché which says, "Never put off until tomorrow what should be done today." The wisdom of this can be clearly seen. But, alas, there are too many today living by the modern version of "Never do today what you can put off until tomorrow." But all who live by this code (and many do) are sure to find themselves loaded up somewhere down the line and unable to cope with an accumulation of situations and problems and will go under. Proverbs 27:1 says, "Boast not thyself of tomorrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth."

THE MOTE IN THY BROTHER'S EYE

Question: "And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam is in thine own eye?" Matthew 7:3-4.

Answer: The question of this article is one Jesus Himself asked. Jesus asked a number of very pertinent and thought-provoking questions to which He did not directly give the answers. This is one of them. He put forth this very straightforward question to faultfinding, nit-picking, judging, criticizing people and did not give the

answer to it. But there are some answers to it and Jesus left us to find them. Surely every earnest, honest, sincere person who is endeavoring to serve and honor Christ will search out the answers and seek to avoid the causes they discover.

The very setting of this text and the principal objects in the text will be sufficient to convince any of us that Jesus was not commending this kind of behavior, but rather condemning it and warning us against it. One object in the text is a man with a **mote** in his eye; the other object is a man with a **beam** in his eye. Now, to be fair we will have to acknowledge that there is an extraneous, foreign substance in the eyes of both men; something in their lives that needs to be corrected. But a man with a beam in his eye (a log or big timber; a glaring fault) is not the man to try to extract the mote out of his brother's eye.

If this little story were reversed, it would make better sense; if the man with the mote in his eye were trying to help the brother get the beam out of his eye, he could probably see sufficiently well to get hold of the beam and extract it. But Jesus did not set it up that way; He did not intend to. In setting it up this way, He was trying to make faultfinding, mote hunting, nit-picking, and criticizing appear just as ridiculous as possible and something to be laughed out of court at the very outset. In verse 5, He declared the man with the beam a hypocrite. He instructed him to get the beam out of his own eye (straighten out his own life) before going after the man with the mote. Note: Jesus nowhere intimated that the man with the mote did not need to get rid of his mote but indicated that he might need some help to do it. But He did make it unmistakably clear that the man with the beam was not qualified to do it as long as he had his beam. However, verse 5 does indicate that this very same man with the beam could turn out to be the man who could help the man with the mote if he got rid of his beam and got his life straightened out. It is remarkable to note how effectively God can use a person in helping others who have been way out and far off course, if he will just see **his** need, confess it, humble his heart, repent, straighten out his life, and just come clear and clean with God.

In verse 6, Jesus speaks about not giving the holy things to dogs nor casting pearls before swine. So it is evident that in these verses He is not forbidding us to properly evaluate the worth of other people. How could we avoid giving holy things to dogs and casting pearls before swine if we had no God-given ability to discern who was swinish or doggish? But what is actually involved here is a rebuke of an attitude on anyone's part to look for the worst instead of the best. Blindness to his own faults has overtaken the man who is looking for specks. My father used to say that mote hunters got their hunting licenses from the devil. A person would not likely see a mere speck unless he was actually looking for it. The person who is a perpetual faultfinder and chronic critic is usually anxious to find something wrong because the attitude of his heart renders him unwilling to give a clear bill of health to the one criticized. Herein is one of the answers to the question in the text: the person's attitude and motives are not right and cause him to do this.

In some cases this thing is done with an objective of salving one's own conscience. If we have glaring faults in our lives, somehow it seems to help us feel a little better if we can make someone else look bad along with us. We somehow get a false and mistaken idea that we won't look quite so bad if someone by the side of us can be made to look bad, too. But let us take no comfort in this. If you were dying with some malady, what comfort would it be to you for someone to come visit you and say, "Oh, brother, be of good courage and don't worry about a thing; hundreds of people out there are dying with the same thing you have." What comfort could it possibly be to you just to know that many others were being destroyed right along with you?

Another answer is that some people seek to build up themselves by tearing down others. They reason thus: God is blessing and using this person in an unusual way,

and he is having strong influence among the people. If I can point up enough faults about him, criticize his methods, point out something that has not been accomplished, and downgrade him in the eyes of the people, then I can stand forth as a paragon of perfection in their eyes by just comparing myself in his trimmed down size.

Another answer is *envy*. Envy is the most malignant of all vices; a child of hate with a long, ugly, criminal record—Cain, Saul, the Prodigal's elder brother, the Jews against Jesus, the 70 princes of Babylon against Daniel, and on and on. Cain envied Abel because God respected Abel and accepted his sacrifice and did not respect Cain and accept his sacrifice. Cain never bothered to check into the cause of this, but just saw that it was that way and flew into his brother in a rage of envy and slew him. Saul became envious of David because the people ascribed to David ten thousands and to Saul only thousands, and from that time on eyed him and sought opportunity to destroy him. The Prodigal Son's elder brother became envious of his younger brother because of the graciousness of his father to his brother when he returned from his wanderings. The prodigal's brother found fault with his father for receiving him back and refused to go in and share in the bounties of the banquet and the rejoicing of the occasion. He wound up on the short end and in worse shape than his prodigal brother, and deprived himself of many bountiful benefits that he could have had and enjoyed. We always do when we give place to envy in our hearts toward another person. Pilate discerned that the Jews delivered Jesus to him to be crucified because of envy. We sometimes inflict the pangs of crucifixion upon our fellows with our tongues of envy; and, oh, the terrible loss we suffer on account of it. The 70 princes of Babylon were moved with envy against Daniel because they saw him being favored by the king and promoted above them and concocted a scheme to destroy him. And so He does all those who humbly submit themselves and trust Him in those times. He says in Psalm 31:20, "...Thou shalt keep them secretly in a pavilion from the strife of tongues."

FOREVER MEANS THE END OF TIME

Question: In the light of such scriptures as Revelation 20:11, II Peter 3:7-14, and Mark 13:31, please explain Psalm 104:5, which says, "Who [God] laid the foundations of the earth, that it should not be removed for ever."

Answer: First, let us get these scriptures set forth. Revelation 20:11 says, "And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them." I will not insert all of II Peter 3:7-14, but just the verses that apply directly to this question. Verse 7 says, "But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men." Verses 10-12 say, "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness, Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?" In Mark 13:31, Jesus said "Heaven and earth shall pass away:..."

There is one established law for interpreting Scripture which is known as "The unanimity of faith." What that means is that any text on any given subject must be interpreted in harmony with every other text in the entire canon of Scripture on that

same subject. If we find any text on the subject which contradicts our interpretation of a given scripture, we can be sure we have missed the mark somewhere. There are certainly no contradictions in the Scriptures when we understand them properly. II Timothy 2:13 says that God remaineth faithful and cannot deny Himself. And that is just exactly what He would be doing if He taught one thing in any part of the Scripture and a contradictory thing in some other part.

In this question we do have an apparent contradiction. Mark 13:31 says that "Heaven and earth shall pass away:..." and Psalm 104:5 says the earth shall "...not be removed for ever." Mark 13:31 is a direct statement of Jesus Himself; therefore, it cannot be gainsaid or tampered with. I therefore set upon it as an anchor text and that it establishes beyond all doubt that the earth will pass away. Then applying the fixed law of "Unanimity of faith" we will have to find grounds for making Psalm 104:5 harmonize with what Jesus said in Mark 13:31.

In *Cruden's Concordance*, at the top of his references of "for ever" he inserts this note: "Many believe that the words for ever or everlasting are not to be taken as synonymous with eternal, as being without end, but to be understood merely as meaning a very long time, to be left indeterminate. There seems to be a considerable amount of argument in favor of this in many cases, but it is not safe to conclude that it always should be limited." Matthew Henry, in his commentary, comments at this place, "To the end of time." With us in general and from time immemorial, the term "for ever" has been used as applying to the duration of a thing or to its termination.

I will insert some Scripture where "for ever" is used which in no way possible could be interpreted as referring to eternal or without end.

In Genesis 43:9, Judah said to his father, Jacob, concerning his youngest brother, Benjamin, "I will be surety for him; of my hand shalt thou require him: if I bring him not unto thee, and set him before thee, then let me bear the blame **for ever**." Again in Genesis 44:32, Judah said to his brother, Joseph, in regard to Benjamin again, "For thy servant became surety for the lad unto my father, saying, If I bring him not unto thee, then I shall bear the blame to my father **for ever**." In both of these texts referring to the same thing, it is clear beyond question that the term "for ever" could not possibly refer to eternal or without end, because neither Judah nor his father would live that long or be bearing blame in eternity.

In Exodus 21:5-6, it says, "And if the servant shall plainly say, I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free: Then his master shall bring him unto the judges; he shall also bring him to the door, or unto the door post; and his master shall bore his ear through with an awl; and he shall serve him **for ever**." This would clearly refer to the remainder of his life and not eternally without end.

Leviticus 25:23 says, "The land shall not be sold **for ever**..." Again "for ever" in this text would refer to the termination of a specified period because land is not bought and sold in eternity.

This could go on and on with this kind of scripture, but it is not necessary. This is sufficient to establish the fact that the term "for ever" is used quite generally throughout the Old Testament scriptures as referring to the duration or termination of any specified period of time, or a very long time.

But what about Psalm 104:5? It says the earth shall not be removed **for ever**. Well, when it runs head-on into our anchor text that the earth shall pass away (Jesus Himself said this in Mark 13:31), then we have to make Psalm 104:5, agree with what Jesus said because He is the supreme authority. But in view of the above texts and the general, common use of the term "for ever" in the Scriptures, this is not a very big problem. It will only be a problem to some folks who are hung up on some private interpretation to support some private doctrine. And all of these texts,

and many more, give support to Matthew Henry's commentary at this place (Psalm 104:5) that "for ever" means "To the end of time."

JEPHTHAH'S VOW TO GOD

Question: In Judges 11:29-40, we have the account of a vow that Jephthah made to God; my question has to do with how he performed this vow. Did he actually put his daughter to death, or was she dedicated to the service of the Lord for life?

Answer: I may be in over my head in regard to this question and may only be able to add little if anything to the questioner or to any reader out there. There are notable Bible scholars and commentators on both sides of this question. Adam Clarke and Matthew Henry (both notable commentators) both have rather lengthy comments in their commentaries at this place, and they do not agree on it. And each of them quotes from notable Bible scholars who do not altogether agree with them. I am sure there will be people among my readers on both sides of the question, so I am certain that I will not be able to answer it to everybody's thinking; however, I will do my best to set forth my thinking and why. I will have to confess that I have had to revise my own thinking some in regard to this since I have been looking diligently into it, which I had never done before.

The first thing I encountered in my research, which crossed my own original thinking at this place, was that God strictly forbade human sacrifices of this nature. Leviticus 18:21 says, "And thou shalt not let any of thy seed pass through the fire to Molech,...I am the Lord." "Pass through the fire" is a term applying to a burnt offering which Jephthah vowed to do (Judges 11:31). This was strictly forbidden by God. Deuteronomy 12:31 says, "Thou shalt not do so unto the Lord thy God: for every abomination to the Lord, which he hateth, have they done unto their gods; for even their sons and their daughters they have burnt in the fire to their gods." Deuteronomy 18:10 says, "There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire,..." II Kings 17:17-18 says, "And they caused their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire,...and sold themselves to do evil in the sight of the Lord,... Therefore the Lord was very angry with Israel,..." This was actually Israel that did this in their practice of idolatry. Human sacrifices of this nature were strictly an idolatrous and heathenish practice. Read also II Kings 23:10; II Chronicles 33:6; Jeremiah 7:31; 32:35; Ezekiel 20:26, 31, all of which reiterate the same denunciation of this practice.

II Kings 3:27 gives an account of where the king of Moab lost a battle with the Israelites, took his eldest son and offered him as a burnt offering upon the wall. And it says "...there was great indignation against Israel:..." (meaning the Israelites were filled with great indignation at this thing.) Another translation says, "Then he took his oldest son,...and to the horror of the Israeli army, killed him and sacrificed him as a burnt offering upon the wall. So the army of Israel turned back in disgust to their own land." It horrified and disgusted them because they were not accustomed to any such practice. It was forbidden among them.

God told Abraham to take his son, Isaac, and offer him as a burnt offering. Abraham went forward to do this thing, but God stopped him and would not allow it to be done. When God saw that Abraham feared Him and would obey Him even to that extent, He stepped in and intervened in the matter, stopped the procedure, and would not allow it to go through. It seems reasonable to me to conclude that if Jephthah would have gone forward to slay his daughter and offer her as a burnt offering, God would have interrupted and not allowed it to be done because it would

be directly opposed to His own nature and will, and also a direct violation of His strict command.

In regard to Judges 11:31, where Jephthah's vow is actually spelled out thus: "Then it shall be, that whatsoever cometh forth of the doors of my house to meet me, when I return in peace from the children of Ammon, shall surely be the Lord's and I will offer it up for a burnt offering," Adam Clarke says in his commentary that the translation according to the most accurate Hebrew scholars is this: "I will consecrate it to the Lord, or I will offer it for a burnt offering." That is, if it be a thing fit for a burnt offering, it shall be made one; if fit for the service of God, it shall be consecrated to Him.

Adam Clarke further says, "From verse 39 it appears evident that Jephthah's daughter was not sacrificed to God, but consecrated to Him in a state of perpetual virginity; for the text says, 'she knew no man,' for this was a statute in Israel, that persons thus dedicated or consecrated to God, should live in a state of unchangeable celibacy."

I think this way, too. Verses 37-39 seem to answer this question this way to me. It is difficult maybe for us in our day to understand the sorrow and trouble to a Hebrew woman in that time if she were not married and had no children. It was a stigma on them as well. That is why Jephthah's daughter bewailed her virginity. But why all that if she were going to be killed and offered as a burnt offering? That would have been no item in such a case. She seemed to have a clear understanding that she was being consecrated to God in a state of perpetual virginity and unchangeable celibacy, and that she could never be married nor have any children; she bewailed that.

PREACHING TO SPIRITS IN HEAVEN

Question: I am confused as to the meaning of the following scriptures: I Peter 3:19-20; Jude 6; and II Peter 2:4. As I look up cross-references, I find nothing that is very explanatory. I had always thought that heaven or the angel's abode was completely holy and there would be nothing to tempt angels. Also, that anyone dying in sin was lost; so I can't understand Jesus preaching to spirits in prison. Nothing in the gospels seems to mention any such or else I've missed it.

Answer: I Peter 3:19-20, reads: "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 thought really begins in verse 18, and this verse holds part of the key to interpreting the other verses. Verse 18 reads, "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." The "S" in the word "Spirit" here is capitalized, indicating that it is the Holy Spirit, the third person of the triune God-head that is meant here. It was through the power of the Holy Spirit that Christ was raised from the dead. Then verse 19 says, "BY WHICH also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison." Then it was through the power and operation that He preached unto the spirits in prison. Then verse 20 tells when it was—"...When once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing..."

The preaching to the spirits in prison here was done in the days while Noah was building the ark and all the while preaching righteousness unto them—the people in the prison house of sin. Peter said in II Peter 1:21, "For the prophecy came not in

old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." It was the same Holy Spirit that raised Christ from the dead that preached through Noah in his day warning the people to turn from their wickedness and flee from the wrath of God which was to come. It was the same Holy Spirit then in Noah, or preaching through Noah, as in the Holy Spirit-filled ministers today through whom Christ is preaching His gospel of salvation and warning sinners to repent of sin, believe the gospel, and thus flee from the wrath of God which is to come.

These spirits are called "spirits in prison," and rightly so. Prison is a place where one's liberties are taken away. Spirits who have yielded themselves to the devil forfeit their liberties and become slaves to Satan and the power of sin. Those souls in Noah's day, who had their imaginations of the thoughts of their hearts only evil continually, were whipped and lashed by a relentless, tyrannical master (the devil), and had no power or liberty of their own. Jesus Himself said in John 8:34, that he that "...committeth sin is the servant [slave] of sin." But Jesus again said in John 8:32, that you "...shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." It takes the power of the gospel of Christ to free men from sin. Paul said in Romans 6:17-18, "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." Any person who will obey the gospel and believe in the merits of the blood of Christ to redeem them from sin shall be made free from sin. Being a servant of righteousness is much different from being a servant of sin, because when one is a servant of righteousness, he is living according to the nature God placed in man in the beginning, which is liberty and freedom in the fullest degree. Sinful man has had a sinful, fallen, corrupt nature imposed upon his true nature. This nature tends to rebellion against God and right, and consequently robs him of all his liberty and freedom. This is what Jesus came to free men from by His sacrifice and the power of His blood, and to restore him back to his true nature (the divine nature) in the image and likeness of God and thus to full freedom and deliverance.

The prophet Isaiah, in Isaiah 42:7, said that one of the particular functions of the ministry of Jesus was "...to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house." Even those in solitary confinement or the dungeon—even the worst of them were to be brought out also. Again, Isaiah 61:1 says, "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me...to proclaim...the opening of the prison to them that are bound." In Luke 4:18-19, Jesus read this very prophecy in Isaiah 61:1 concerning Himself, and then said to them in verse 21, "...This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears." Jesus, the great liberator, had come to open the prison houses of sin and let the prisoners come out free men. Ephesians 4:8 says that when He ascended up on high "...he led captivity captive,..." The margin here says, "A multitude of captives." Jesus led a great multitude which no man could number out of the kingdom of darkness and sin, and translated them into the kingdom of God's dear Son through the abundance of His grace and the power of His blood.

This does not mean that He opened up the prison and penitentiaries and turned the criminals loose on society. No, not at all. But the psalmist said in Psalm 142:7, "Bring my soul out of prison,..." So we see that souls can get in prison the same as bodies and men can be imprisoned spiritually as well as physically. And it was to those who were imprisoned spiritually that Jesus in Spirit preached to through Noah, and it is to those who are imprisoned spiritually today to whom He preaches in His Holy Spirit-filled ministers, and to whom He opens the prison doors to liberate them when they obey from the heart that form of doctrine delivered unto them.

Jude 6 says: "And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day."

I have mulled over this and wrestled around with it at different times, but never came up with anything that was satisfactory even to myself. Finally, I came across Bro. C. E. Orr's interpretation of this text. He said that the angels referred to in this text were Adam and Eve. That seemed plausible and correct to me when I considered that they were created beings just like the angels, and designed for everlasting life just like the angels so long as they ate of the tree of life. Before they sinned they were holy just as the angels. When they sinned, they lost their righteous estate (kept not their first estate), and were driven from the garden (left their own habitation). This is the best I have to offer on this text as of now.

PREACHING TO SPIRITS IN HEAVEN

Question: Does God's Spirit dwell within the heart of a justified believer to any degree before he is sanctified (baptized with the Holy Ghost)? In what manner does Christ come into the heart of a person when he gets saved, or does He? Please comment on Romans 8:9, in regard to this.

Answer: Romans 8:9 is a key text for this whole question and perhaps a proper understanding of this scripture will satisfy the mind of the questioner so I will proceed to discuss this verse in detail in the main to cover the entire question. This verse reads thus: "But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his."

This scripture has proved a stumbling block to some in that they identify the Spirit of Christ as the Holy Spirit and conclude that one could not be saved without possessing the Holy Spirit—hence the conclusion is that a complete salvation is obtained at one time and one receives the Holy Spirit when he is saved. But I do not interpret this scripture in this way and for the following reasons:

We would certainly agree that Christ's spirit was holy. "...Who [Christ] knew no sin;..." II Corinthians 5:21. "Who [Christ] did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth...." I Peter 2:22. He "...was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." Hebrews 4:15. Hence He was holy and possessed the spirit of holiness. Also, He possessed the Holy Spirit within Him (He came upon Him in the bodily form of a dove at His baptism) the same as we possess Him when we are sanctified or baptized with the Holy Spirit. BUT the Holy Spirit is a definite, distinct, and separate person in His own right and is always identified in His own person the same as Jesus the Son, and God the Father.

The Holy Spirit is a member of the triune God-head and is co-existent with God, the Father, and Jesus Christ, the Son. In Hebrews 9:14 He is called the eternal Spirit, and He is as distinct a person as the other two. Therefore it would be no more proper to refer to the spirit of Christ, meaning the Holy Spirit, than it would be to turn it around and say the Christ of Holy Spirit. In either case we would be failing to observe the proper distinction between distinct persons.

Now let us look at some other Scriptures which use the term "spirit of." In the one referred to in our question (Romans 8:9), reference is made to the "Spirit of God" and the "Spirit of Christ." In the first part of this verse reference is made to the "Spirit of God" dwelling in us. This could possibly refer to the Holy Spirit (I hardly think so for the reasons given above) because that is the name of the entire God-head—God (God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit). Then the last

part of the verse refers to all saved people having the "Spirit of Christ." The objective of this entire discussion is to explain this. The last part of this verse (9) says, "...Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." Then the next verse (10) says, "And if Christ be in you,..." It seems clear to me here that the "Spirit of Christ" in the last part of verse 9 and Christ Himself in the first part of verse 10 are used interchangeably.

This seems to me to correspond quite well with a couple of texts in II Corinthians 3. Verse 6 says that God has "...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." Verse 17 says, "Now the Lord is that spirit:..." Here it is declared that the Lord is that Spirit and it is clear that it is not the Spirit of Christ but Christ Himself is the spirit, or heart, or life of the gospel message. Surely there would be no question in anyone's mind but that the spirit and the Lord are used interchangeably in these two texts.

But let us go farther in considering texts which make reference to the "spirit of." In Ephesians 4:23, it says, "And be renewed in the spirit of your mind." I Corinthians 2:11 says, "For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him?..." I Corinthians 2:12 says, "Now we have received, not the spirit of the world,..." In all the above texts we read of "Spirit of God, Spirit of Christ, spirit of man, spirit of the world, spirit of the devil, and spirit of your mind;" but nowhere do we read of the spirit of the Holy Spirit. Again I say that He is a definite personage and is always identified in His own person and this distinction must be maintained to produce proper sense.

It would, no doubt, be easy for us to understand that the "spirit of your mind" would refer to the tendencies, disposition, nature, actions, and controlling influences, and behavior of the world. Then the "Spirit of Christ" would refer to the nature, disposition, tendencies and behavior of Christ.

In I Corinthians 6:17, it says, "But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit." This corresponds with Romans 8:9, which says, "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." Surely all who are saved and joined unto Christ are made partakers of His Spirit, which, as has already been observed is His nature, disposition, and characteristics of life and behavior.

The Spirit of Christ is declared to be the "Spirit of liberty." (II Corinthians 3:17.) It is a spirit of obedience—Philippians 2:8, Hebrews 10:9, Matthew 26:39, Matthew 26:42, John 4:34, John 8:29. We receive that same spirit of obedience when we get saved. John 14:15 says, "If ye love me, keep my commandments." John 14:21 says, "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me:..." And Hebrews 5:9 says that Christ became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him. The Spirit of Christ is a spirit of humility. Philippians 2:5-8, Matthew 11:29, and many more. But we are instructed in Philippians 2:5 to let this same mind or disposition, or nature, or characteristic be in us. Jesus said (Matthew 5:3), "Blessed are the poor in spirit [humble spirit]: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Again, Peter says, (I Peter 3:4), "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,..." The Spirit of Christ is a spirit of mercy. Matthew 12:20. This same spirit is to dwell in them who are joined to Him. In Matthew 5:7, Jesus said, "Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy." Again, in Luke 6:36, Jesus said, "Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful." This comes in line with the very same thought as is dealt with in the 5th chapter of Matthew which concluded in verse 48 with these words of Jesus: "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." It is the same thought and sums up to us being perfect in mercy and in our attitudes toward our fellow men. Jesus forgave His enemies and died to save them, praying, "...Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do...." Luke 23:34. We must possess this same spirit of forgiveness to be a child of God because Jesus said, "For

if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." Matthew 6:14-15.

In Malachi 4:5, there is a prophecy concerning John the Baptist which comes in good place here. It says, "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord." To prove that this was John the Baptist we refer you to Matthew 11:10-14. "For this is he, of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee. Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force. For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John. And if ye will receive it, this is Elias, which was for to come."

Now someone may say, "How could John the Baptist be Elijah or Elias?" Granted that in physical actuality he was not; but figuratively and in spirit he was. This is clarified in the statement of the angel to Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist in Luke 1:17—"And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children,..."

This makes the point clear and throws some light on the text in Romans 8:9. John came at a time of deep apostasy and great spiritual darkness such as at the time of Elijah, the most outstanding of all the prophets. He came to Israel and turned the hearts of the people to God as Elijah had done in his day, and manifested the same vehemence against error and the same zeal and boldness for truth that Elijah had shown. It brought a great spiritual awakening such as Elijah's work had brought. So it is said that he went in the spirit and power of Elijah in so much that he was called Elias.

This is the way I see us having the Spirit of Christ. It is in us possessing within ourselves that same vehemence and righteous indignation against sin and error, the same zeal and boldness for truth and righteousness, the same humility, meekness, gentleness, mercy, obedience, behavior, and every other characteristic of Christ Himself and doing His work.

Colossians 1:27 says, "...Christ in you, the hope of glory."

Ephesians 3:17 says, "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith;..."

John 6:56 says, "He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him."

The way, then, that I interpret having the Spirit of Christ is to have Christ living within us and the Christ life predominant in all of our behavior because "the Lord is that Spirit." (II Corinthians 3:17.)

This happens when an individual complies with all the conditions of God's Word for salvation, properly repents of all sin, believes the promises of God, and accepts and receives God's forgiveness for all his sins; Jesus Christ comes into his heart then to direct his life and give him power over sin to live a holy and righteous life free from sin. This is what constitutes conversion, being saved, being born again, born of the Spirit, etc. This experience is described by all these terms and maybe others in the holy Scriptures.

Then as one walks in the light as he is directed and led by the indwelling Christ in his heart, he comes to the point to present his body a living sacrifice to God and consecrate and dedicate his whole life and being to God for divine service and sacred use. When that consecration is complete ("When thy soul the perfect price hath paid; God will send the holy fire"), he is filled and baptized with the Holy Spirit, (wholly sanctified) who applies the blood to his heart, purging out that old depravity of nature received from Adam with which he was born, and purifying his heart by

faith (Acts 15:9), is made holy in heart as well as in life. This is called, in the scriptures, the baptism of the Holy Spirit and also sanctification. This is the perfection, completion, or fulfilling of one's salvation. (Hebrews 10:14.)

In summing up, let me emphasize that in order to have a clear understanding of what Romans 8:9 is actually saying and teaching, we must maintain a clear distinction between the "Spirit of Christ" and the "Holy Spirit." The Holy Spirit is not the spirit of anyone or of anything but is identified by His own name and in His own right. Jesus told His disciples in Acts 1:5, "...ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence." Note Jesus said, "the Holy Ghost," (not the Spirit of Christ). On the day of Pentecost the disciples were all filled with the HOLY GHOST (Acts 2:4)—not the Spirit of Christ. When Peter preached Christ to the household of Cornelius, while he was yet speaking, the HOLY GHOST (not the Spirit of Christ) fell on all them who heard the Word. In the 19th chapter of Acts when Paul found certain disciples at Ephesus, (Acts 19:2) he asked them, "...Have ye received the HOLY GHOST (not the Spirit of Christ) since ye believed?..." Note that in all these cases the Holy Spirit is identified by His own name and in His own right as a distinctly authoritative person and not as the spirit of anybody or anything. We must render Him this same reverence.

PASTOR LORDING OVER THE FLOCK?

Question: Please explain I Peter 5:1-3; especially verse 3 which says, "Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock." How could a pastor or minister be a lord over God's heritage?

Answer: I Peter 5:1-3 reads: "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."

The reference here to "elders" refers to the office in the church (pastor, bishop, presbyter, overseer). The first thing I wish to notice is how different this actually is from the claim of the Catholic church that Peter was the first bishop or pope (official head of the church). He presents himself here as just an elder among other elders, and makes no ambiguous claim to any special position among them at all. His only claim of distinction is that he was a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed. This was the requirement for apostleship (Acts 1:21-22), and Peter was one of the twelve apostles. Perhaps the other elders he addressed here were not, which gave him a degree of distinction among them. But it still remains that he presented himself as an elder among elders and made no reference to his being an apostle. There was an humble quality among those first ministers of the Christian church. Jesus taught His disciples this. In Matthew 20:25-27 we read: "But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. 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." Then in verse 28 He presents Himself as the pattern, example, or model and said, "Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." The idea of promoting one minister above others and attaching clerical and ecclesiastical titles to his name was reserved for the apostate church in a later time as it slipped into apostasy on its way into the dark ages and the establishment of the "man of sin" (II

Thessalonians 2:3-4) as the universal head of the church. Exalting of ministers above other ministers was the path that led to this. Paul referred to it as "the mystery of iniquity" in II Thessalonians 2:7. John referred to one, Diotrephes, who loved to have preeminence in the church (III John 9), and denounced him for this.

In I Peter 5:2, Peter gives this charge to these elders: "Feed the flock of God which is among you,..." It is the duty of all pastors to feed the souls of his congregation on the pure, unadulterated Word of God. In John 21:15-17, Jesus charged Peter three times to feed His sheep and His lambs. In Acts 20:28, Paul charged the elders of Ephesus, "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." Therefore, it is clearly the pastor's duty and responsibility to feed the souls of his congregation.

Continuing on in verse 2, Peter states that the pastor or elder is to accept his office and responsibility of the congregation not by constraint (coercion or pressure), but willingly (God loves willing service). They are not to have money as a prime objective but are to serve with a ready mind. Paul also gives this as a required qualification for a bishop (I Timothy 3:3) or elder (Titus 1:7). ("Bishop" and "elder" are interchangeable and the same scripturally). In these two texts Paul says they are not to be given to or greedy of filthy lucre (money).

Then verse 3 says, "Neither as being lords over God's heritage [the margin here says "overruling"], but being ensamples to the flock." The pastor is not to be a tyrant, despot or overlord, but is to be a shepherd, feeder, and helper of his flock. Paul says in II Corinthians 1:24, "Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy: for by faith ye stand." We see that we are not to domineer over them or dominate their lives and faith but are to faithfully teach them the standards of God's Word. We are to help them by every means available to us to grow and mature in their faith and experience; but in the meantime, while they are coming to the full standard, not be chastising them all the time for not being up to it.

The true pastor will teach his congregation the principles of truth in the New Testament. Then he will say to them, "This now is the instruction and this is how you do it. Just watch me now and see how it works." He is to be the example for them. Paul said in Philippians 3:17, "Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample." Again in Galatians 1:15-16, Paul said, "But when it pleased God, who...called me by his grace, To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen;..." What a great truth is expressed here! Paul realized that he was not qualified to preach Christ until he could reveal Christ. Neither is anyone else. Again in Philippians 4:9, Paul says, "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." Note: They had seen in him what they had heard from him. If a minister preaches a standard that he cannot produce a good example of but, at the same time, chastises his congregation if they are short of it, is an example of one of the ways in which he overrules or exercises lordship over them.

Read Ezekiel 34:1-10, and get a good, clear, concise picture of an unfaithful minister (pastor) who is a lord over God's heritage. Verse 3 says the shepherds eat the fat and clothe themselves with wool but feed not the flock. Verse 8 says they feed themselves but feed not the flock. Verse 4 says they have not strengthened the diseased, healed the sick, bound up the broken, brought back those who were driven away, sought the lost; but they have ruled with force and cruelty. What a sad state for a congregation who has a pastor who does not take care of their needs and is always demanding more of them but actually doing less for them.

How different this is from the true, humble pastors whom the Holy Ghost appoints as overseers of congregations. They rule over them by guiding them (Hebrews 13:17) and showing them how the gospel works out in their own lives.

WHERE DID JESUS GO WHEN HE DIED?

Question: Often the question is posed, "Where did Jesus go when He died?" When I read Ephesians 4:9, where it says, "...He also descended first into the lower parts of the earth," it seems to be talking about hell. Where do we go when we die? I know it's supposed to be a resting place (Abraham's bosom), but what about the scripture which speaks of Jesus returning with His saints on the last day? I had assumed that the unsaved would go straight to hell; but it speaks of the ocean, etc., giving up its dead, and the dead being judged, and then put into hell. I would appreciate any ideas or scriptures on the above.

Answer: First, it is my understanding that Ephesians 4:9 does not refer to Jesus going into hell or even to the grave. Let me insert the full context here. "Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. (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 4:8-10. This passage refers to Jesus ascending into heaven. But it also states that He first descended into the lower parts of the earth. It must be evident that He would have to descend before He could ascend into heaven because He was in heaven as the eternal Word of God before He came down to earth at His incarnation. This passage refers, as I understand it, to the condescension and exaltation of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The "lower parts of the earth" in this text would refer to the depths of His condescension down to the poorest of the poor and the lowest of the low that His redemption might reach all people from that level clear on to the top. He did not come to a king's palace; He did not sit upon a king's throne; He was not arrayed in royal robes. But He was born in a stable, cradled in a manger and during His lifetime here had no place to lay His head, nor possessed anything of earth. Surely this could be described as the "lower parts of the earth."

I Corinthians 15:47 says, "The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven." The first man was Adam; the second man was Jesus and the text says He was from heaven. John 3:13 says, "And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven." Jesus said again in John 6:38, "For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me." But Jesus also said in John 6:62, "What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before?" All these texts and others teach us that Christ was in heaven before He came to earth; that He came from heaven to earth and when His mission on earth was accomplished, He returned to heaven from earth and the One who descended is the same One who ascended.

Philippians 2:7 declares that Jesus totally divested Himself (emptied Himself) of all His glory and oneness with the Father and became as a servant and was made in the likeness of men. This was truly a great descension for the Lord of glory. But verse 8 says He humbled Himself even more and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross which was very ignominious. But verses 9-11 declare how God highly exalted Him because of this and set Him at His own right hand far above all others. (Ephesians 1:20-21.) Paul was speaking of the same condescension and exaltation of Christ in Philippians 2:6-11 and Ephesians 4:8-10, as I see it.

Now we will notice some scriptural references to hell whereby we may be able to answer two questions in one—where Jesus went when He died and where the unsaved go when they die. "Hell" in the New Testament, is translated from two Greek words—*Hades* meaning "not to see," and refers to the unseen or spirit world which is the place of departed spirits after death; and *Gehenna* which refers to the lake of fire or eternal abode of the damned. In Acts 2:27 Peter referred to a prophecy concerning Jesus in Psalm 16:10. "Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption." Some have supposed from this statement, together with I Peter 3:19 where it mentions preaching to the spirits in prison, that at the time of Christ's death He descended into hell and preached to the souls there and offered them a chance of salvation. But do not be misled. Had that ever happened, there would not have been a single soul left in there. Every soul there would escape from that place if they had opportunity. Here *Hades* is the word from which "hell" is translated and refers to the place of departed spirits after death and it was into this invisible spirit world (paradise) that Christ entered at the time of His death. He said to the penitent thief on the cross, "...To day shalt thou be with me in paradise." Luke 23:43. Another reference is made to this same thing in Acts 2:31. "...His soul was not left in hell,..." (*Hades*).

In Luke 16 we have the story of the rich man and Lazarus. In verse 23, it is said that the rich man lifted up his eyes in hell being in torments, etc. Again the word here is *Hades* signifying the place of departed souls after death and not *Gehenna* which refers to the eternal abode of the damned. He was to be cast into that place later on after the judgment. There are four places in the book of Revelation which mention "Death and hell," and in each case the word is *Hades*. They are: Revelation 1:18; 6:8; 20:13; and 20:14.

In the following texts, the word "hell" is translated from the Greek word, *gehenna* meaning the lake of fire and eternal abode of the damned; Matthew 5:22; 5:29; 10:28; 18:9; 23:15; 23:33; Mark 9:43; 9:45; 9:47; Luke 12:5; and James 3:6. However, since all the questions at hand have to do with the term *Hades*, and can be answered within that framework, I will not take up time and space with this phase as it lies outside the area of the question and is not necessary.

It seems that *Hades* (the unseen, invisible spirit world; that place of departed souls after death) has two parts to it which are equivalent to the "right hand" and "left hand" (Matthew 25:33)—a place for the saved and a separate place for the unsaved, and the term is used without respect to misery or happiness, peace or torment.

Let me say in regard to Jesus bringing all the saints who sleep in Jesus with Him when He comes to judgment (I Thessalonians 4:13-18); that the same power of God who brought the soul of Jesus Christ back from paradise to enter the resurrected, glorified body of Jesus; that same power can gather out the departed souls of all the saints who are there and bring them to enter their resurrected, glorified, spiritual bodies and then catch them away to meet the Lord in the air and so shall they ever be with Him. In fact, that world will be entirely vacated and emptied at that time and both the righteous and wicked, saved and unsaved will be gathered out and brought to judgment, and everyone will receive the reward of his deeds. *Hades* will have no more purpose then and will utterly be destroyed and pass out of existence.

SILENCE OF WOMEN IN THE CHURCH

Question: What is the biblical explanation of I Timothy 2:11, and I Corinthians 14:35?

Answer: I Timothy 2:11 says, "Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection." Verses 12-15 need to be included here to establish the context and complete the thought. These verses read thus: "But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression. Notwithstanding she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety."

In his book *What the Bible Teaches*, F. G. Smith observes on this passage that it refers to a woman's proper relationship with her own husband, and is not related to the other texts concerning the official position of women in the Church. Adam Clarke sets forth the same thing in his commentary at this place. F. G. Smith further says that this is evidenced by the example given—Adam and Eve—and its connection with childbearing. Adam Clarke inserts a quote from Dr. Macknight which reads thus: "However, though Eve was first in the transgression, and brought death on herself, her husband, and all her posterity, the female sex shall be saved (equally with the male) through childbearing—through bringing forth the Saviour", etc.

Hence it is evident that this entire passage has reference to a woman with her husband and not to any public relationship. In the proper domestic relationship the wife is to recognize her own husband as her head and be subject to him (Ephesians 5:23 and numerous other texts). However, in spiritual things, the woman's husband is not her head. She is a separate, distinct individual before God and is personally responsible to Him the same as is her husband. To make the wife subject to her husband and him her head in spiritual things would fix it so a woman with an unsaved husband could not live a saved life. The answer of Peter to the magistrates who had commanded them to teach no more in the name of Jesus (Acts. 5:29, "...We ought to obey God rather than men") is applicable to any case where one is required to be subject to and obedient to another. Consequently, we conclude that a married woman is to obey God rather than man even if that man is her husband. It is therefore evident that a husband is not given to be the head of his wife in spiritual things but only in domestic and temporal things.

The reference to the woman learning in silence in verse 11 I would not interpret as meaning that the woman has no voice at all in the affairs of the home, business affairs, and plans for the future and welfare of the family. I feel there should be a generous and free exchange of views between a husband and wife on all important matters, but in the final analysis the decision is in the hands of the husband, and the wife is to accept it without contention, argument, or back talk.

I Corinthians 14:35 says, "And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in church."

The position of women in the church is an age-old issue and has never been settled to the complete satisfaction of all. I have no idea at all that what I say here will satisfy the minds of all who read it. But the question is a persistent one and keeps popping up, so we have to keep dealing with it.

First, I would say that any scripture on any subject must be interpreted according to the rule of the unanimity of faith. What this means is that any scripture on any subject must be interpreted to harmonize with every other text in the entire New Testament on the same subject. Therefore, if this were the only scripture in the New Testament we would just have to accept it as the norm. Then we could allow women to attend church services but require them to be silent and say nothing while there. But it is not the only scripture on the subject, and I say we would surely lose a lot of fine talent to enforce it that way.

In *What the Bible Teaches*, F. G. Smith says that the idea of male superiority and female inferiority in the human race has its roots in paganism. Christianity is the

only religion in the world that recognizes the equality of men and women. Paganism regards women as greatly inferior to men, and they have very little part in religion. Among the Jews, even under the law, special provisions were made for women and they were honored and respected. Some of them even rose to positions of prominence. Deborah was a prophetess and a judge in Israel (Judges 4:4). In her position as judge she would have been her husband's judge, too, if she were a married woman. Barak refused to go to battle with Sisera unless Deborah went with him (Judges 4:8). She went with him, and God gave them a great victory.

In John 4, Jesus delivered one of His greatest sermons to a lone woman of Samaria. Then the woman took the message to the men in the town and many of them became believers. Paul recognized the equality of men and women in Christ in Galatians 3:28—"There is...neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus." In Acts 21:9, it is recorded that Philip had four daughters which did prophesy. In the second chapter of Acts where the initial outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the Church is recorded, Peter said in verses 14-18 that this was what was prophesied by Joel (Joel 2:28-29). And he said in verses 17-18, "...I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,... And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy."

Prophecy or to *prophesy* primarily means to speak forth, to tell out the mysteries of God. It is to proclaim the mysteries and knowledge of God. Paul declares that redemption itself is a mystery (I Corinthians 2:7-14). To preach the gospel of Christ, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, is to proclaim the *mysteries*, the *hidden wisdom* of God—to prophesy. Both men and women participated in this according to the above scriptures.

This is the general teaching of the New Testament scriptures; other cases could be cited if space permitted. But there were necessary exceptions to this because of the different customs of the Gentile people among whom Paul labored, and I Corinthians 14:35 is such a case.

The following quote is from F. G. Smith in *What the Bible Teaches*. "Paul was the Apostle to the Gentiles and, as such, was engaged in planting the gospel among various nations and peoples with different customs and social conditions. He found it necessary to identify with them in many of these respects in order to gain them. This is shown in his own writing in I Corinthians 9:20-23. Paul said in some of his instructions to this Corinthian Church in I Corinthians 7:26, 'I suppose therefore that this is good for the present distress.' In such cases, those instructions would not be a standard for all people and for all time. This would be true concerning women's silence in the Church because to interpret it otherwise would create a contradiction in the Scriptures which cannot be. The Corinthian Church was in a heathen environment so all he could do was accommodate himself to their custom."

THE 1230 AND 1335 DAYS IN DANIEL

Question: Please comment on Daniel 12:11-12.

Answer: I will first look at Daniel 12:11-12. The full text of these verses is as follows: "And from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days. Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days."

Frankly I have not studied a great deal on these verses and may not be able to give much satisfaction to the inquirer on it. However, since this question has come

in, I have done considerable research on this and have come up with some points which I hope will be some help to the inquirer even if they may not entirely satisfy him.

The time elements here date from the time the daily sacrifice was taken away and the abomination that maketh desolate was set up. There were 1290 days and 1335 days both dating from this same beginning point. In the 8th chapter of Daniel, verses 8 through 26 give a vision Daniel had of a "little horn" that came up out of another horn and waxed "exceeding great" and tells what he did, etc. In verse 11, it speaks of him taking away the daily sacrifice and casting down the place of his sanctuary. In verse 13, he speaks of the daily sacrifice and the transgression of desolation. It is from the time that this happened that we have the key to the two time periods in the verses in question. Therefore I shall endeavor to establish the identity of this king of fierce countenance and when he did his dirty work against the people of God.

In the book, *The Cleansing of the Sanctuary*, by D. S. Warner and H. M. Riggle, Bro. Warner deals at considerable length with this prophecy of Daniel 8 and inserts lengthy quotes from Josephus and the Maccabees. Josephus was a highly accredited Jewish historian of the first century and quite contemporary with Christ and the apostles. The Maccabees lived and wrote at an earlier period before Christ and furnished much valuable information and history of the Jews that was not available from other sources.

On page 29 of *The Cleansing of the Sanctuary*, is a quote from *Josephus' Wars for the Jews*, Chapter 1, Book 1, describing a king by the name of Antiochus Epiphanes and described his doings like this: Antiochus "came upon the Jews with a great army, and took their city by force, and slew a great multitude.... He also spoiled the temple, and put a stop to the constant practice of offering a daily sacrifice of expiation for three years and six months....

"Now Antiochus was not satisfied either with his unexpected taking of the city, or with its pillage, or with the great slaughter he made there; but being overcome with his violent passions, and remembering what he had suffered during the siege, he compelled the Jews to dissolve the laws of their country, and to keep their infants uncircumcised. Also in a quote of Josephus on page 31, it is said that Antiochus emptied the temple of its secret treasures and left nothing at all remaining which cast the Jews into great lamentation and that he forbade them to offer those daily sacrifices which they used to offer to God according to the law."

If further says that he built an idol altar upon God's altar and offered swine upon it which was neither according to the law, nor the Jewish religious worship in that country. He also compelled them to build temples, and raise idol altars in every city and village, and offer swine upon them every day. This all makes it clear that Antiochus Epiphanes took away the daily sacrifice and set up the abomination that maketh desolate. If we can find out when he did this, we'll have the key to Daniel 12:11-12.

According to I Macc. 1:54-55: "Now the fifteenth day of the month Casleu, in the hundred and forty-fifth year, they set up the abomination of desolation upon the altar and builded idol altars throughout the cities of Judah on every side; and burnt incense at the doors of their houses and in the streets." According to I Macc. 4:52, Casleu is the 9th month.

Therefore the taking away of the daily sacrifice and setting up of the abomination that maketh desolate occurred in the 145th year, 9th month, and 15th day of the Grecian empire. 1290 from this date would bring us to the 149th year, 4th month, and 15th day. Counting 30 days to the month, these years contain just 360 days. According to I Macc. 6:1-16, it was in the 149th year that Antiochus heard of the defeat of his armies of Israel and he took sick and died. According to I Macc. 6:1-13,

and II Macc. 9:1-17, Antiochus heard of the defeat of his armies by Israel in the 149th year, 4th month, and 15th day at which time he fell sick and repented of all the evil he had done against Judea and Jerusalem. This measures the 1290 days from the 145th year, 9th month, and 15 days when the daily sacrifice was taken away—the starting point for this calculation.

Then measuring from the same stake, 1335 days (Daniel 12:12) would bring us to the 149th year, 5th month, and 30th day which was the date of Antiochus' death (he was sick many days). I Macc. 6:9. That was the end of this bitter episode in the history of the Jews.

Daniel 11:31 is another reference to the taking away of the daily sacrifice and the abomination of desolation. This was by another power; the Roman Empire which was ruling the world in Jesus' time. This came to pass in the destruction of Jerusalem and the fall of the Jewish polity. This was an exact carbon copy of what happened in the days of Antiochus, and was carried on in the same way and so needs no further comment here.

THE FLOOD

Question: Please comment on II Peter 3:6, which says, "Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished."

Answer: In the first place, let us notice that it was the "world" and not the "earth" that was overflowed with water and perished. There is a difference. The earth is this terra firma on which we live. The people who live on this earth constitute the world which God loved and gave His Son to save. II Peter 2:5 says, "And spared not the old world,...bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly." The term *world* is also used to designate the system under which the unsaved portion of humankind operates. When Jesus said "Ye are not of the world," He did not mean that His disciples were not "of the earth, earthy" the same as other people were, but they were not dominated by the spirit, pattern of life, and mannerism of worldly, unsaved people. When Paul said, "Be not conformed to this world," he meant for saints to not follow the course of the unsaved portion of mankind and imitate them in our lives. All these texts as well as others which refer to the "world" have no reference to the "earth," but to the people on it and their manner of life.

In Genesis 6:5 we read, "And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth,..." Genesis 6:12-13 says, "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." Where this text says "with the earth," the margin says "from the earth." This latter is clearly the correct rendering which is evident from what follows. In fact, Genesis 7:23 says, "...and they were destroyed *from* the earth:..." In Genesis 6:17 God told Noah, "...Every thing that is in the earth shall die."

The seventh chapter of Genesis gives an account of the flood and a description of it. Verse 17 says, "...the flood was forty days upon the earth;..." Verse 19 says, "And the waters prevailed exceedingly upon the earth; and all the high hills, that were under the whole heaven, were covered." None of these texts mention the earth being destroyed. In verses 21-23, it says, "And all flesh died that moved upon the earth, both of fowl, and of cattle, and of beast, and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth, and every man: All in whose nostrils was the breath of life, of all that was in the dry land, died. And every living substance was destroyed which was

upon the face of the ground, both man, and cattle and the creeping things, and the fowl of the heaven; and they were destroyed from the earth:..."

All this makes it clear what the destruction and the extent of it was at the time of the flood, and is an answer to II Peter 3:6. It was not the earth that was destroyed, but the living creatures including man upon the earth. The verses quoted from the seventh chapter of Genesis make this entirely clear.

Let us, however, make no mistake about it—the day of this earth and all appurtenances to it will surely be destroyed by fire in that day. Going on from II Peter 3:6, Peter presents the truth regarding the future of the heavens and the earth. "...The heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up." This will be the complete and total dissolution of all things literal. There is no such thing described or even hinted at in the description of the flood. Peter said in II Peter 3:7, that the earth is "...reserved unto fire..."

WOMEN SAVED THROUGH CHILDBEARING?

Question: Since it states in the Bible that women can be saved through childbearing, then would women have no need of being born again? Does this mean that women can get into the kingdom of God just by bearing children; thus absolving them of the spiritual aspects of salvation?

Answer: No, it does not absolve them from the spiritual aspects of salvation nor from the need of being born again for the following reasons. First let me insert the Scripture text here that I assume to be alluded to in this question. I Timothy 2:14-15 reads thus: "And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression. Notwithstanding she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety."

When Jesus said to Nicodemus in John 3:3, "...Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God," He was referring to mankind—the human race. He was not referring to just "man," the male side of the race, but to the race itself—both male and female. This term is used this way throughout the Scriptures. In Genesis 1:27, we read, "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them." The male and female are component parts of one another and we see in this text they, both male and female, are referred to as **man**. The only time this is not true is when the male and female are being distinguished between the different roles that each of them fill in their relationships together as husbands and wives and parents in the home, and a few cases where a particular or specific woman is referred to. Thus we conclude that every person (male or female) getting into the kingdom of God must be born again and come in the same way. Acts 5:14 says, "And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women."

The Amplified Bible renders the text this way, and I feel it turns the true light on it. "Nevertheless (the sustenance put upon women (of pain in motherhood) does not hinder their (souls' salvation), and they will be saved (eternally) if they continue in faith and love and holiness, with self-control; (saved indeed) through the childbearing, that is, by the birth of the (divine) Child." This text introduces two important points. First: that the pain suffered in childbearing, which was a part of the penalty for her transgression, and even if she die (and many have), none of this is any hindrance to the salvation. Also note that the thought carried here is not that her soul is saved because of this, but that none of this is any hindrance to her being saved. Second: that the childbearing referred to here was the bearing of the Christ

Child, Jesus, the Divine and only begotten Son of God who was born of the woman without the man and was the Saviour of all mankind—both men and women.

In my thinking I cannot come up with any solution to this text that satisfies me better than this. I will insert here a quote from Adam Clarke. At this place on page 593, of Vol. 6, he inserts a quote from Dr. Macknight which says in part, "The female sex shall be saved (equally with the male) through childbearing—through bringing forth the Saviour, if they live in faith, and love, and chastity, with that sobriety which I have been recommending." And again on the same page we read this: "The salvation of the human race, through child-bearing was intimated in the sentence passed on the serpent in Genesis 3:15, '...I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head,...' Accordingly, the Saviour, being conceived in the womb of His mother by the power of the Holy Ghost, he is truly the seed of the woman who was to bruise the head of the serpent; and a woman, by bringing Him forth, has been the occasion of our salvation."

It is interesting to note in this connection that Jesus Christ is the "Seed of the Woman." In Scripture, all the genealogies are reckoned on the male side; so and so begat so and so, and on and on it goes. A man's seed was reckoned in his sons. This is true even though he may have begotten a number of daughters, too. But there is one exception to this rule. He who was the chief of them all, Jesus Christ, the King of kings, the Lord of lords, the Prince of the kings of the earth, the King of saints, the Blessed and only Potentate, the only begotten Son of God, the Saviour of all mankind is reckoned as the "Seed of Woman." True, after the stream of His genealogy started it was picked up and run through the male side, too, from generation to generation; but it was headed in the woman and He was declared to be the "Seed of the Woman."

After the stream ran through the male side for several hundred years, it surfaced in the woman in Isaiah 7:14, where we read, "Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." Accordingly, we read in the first chapter of Luke, verses 26-35, that the angel Gabriel appeared to a virgin named Mary and announced to her that she was going to conceive and bear a son and said some very exalting, majestic things about Him. She questioned how this could be since she was a single woman, but Gabriel explained to her that the Holy Ghost would come upon her and the Highest would overshadow her, and therefore that holy thing which would be born of her would be called the Son of God. The prophecy of Isaiah 7:14 surfaced again in Matthew 1:20-25, where the angel is explaining to Joseph about this miraculous, spiritual phenomena which was baffling him. The angel told him that it was by the Holy Ghost and that it was the fulfillment of Isaiah 7:14.

So the Saviour was clearly and totally the seed of the woman and I am satisfied in my own mind to accept this as the solution to I Tim 2:15. Acts 17:30 says that now God "...commandeth all men every where to repent." As noted before, when the Scriptures speak of man or men in regards to salvation, they are referring to human kind—all of them; both male and female. So women are required to repent the same as men. That much is clear.

HOW DO WE RECEIVE THE HOLY SPIRIT?

Question: Please comment on John 20:22: "And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and said unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost." I have heard that some people teach that is the way to receive the Holy Ghost.

Answer: First of all, I would like to say that there is no special specified way for people to receive the Holy Spirit. In Acts 19:6 the Holy Spirit was received through the laying on of the apostle Paul's hands. Again in Acts 8:17 they received the Holy Spirit through the laying on of the hands of the apostles Peter and John. These were the people of Samaria who had heard and believed the preaching of Philip as he preached Christ unto them, and were consequently ready to receive the Holy Spirit. Again in Acts 10:44, as Peter preached Christ unto the household of Cornelius, they opened their hearts and minds to the Lord and believed the words they were hearing, and the Holy Spirit came upon them. In this case there was no laying on of hands nor breathing on anyone or any other kind of maneuver—just an open heart and mind reception of the Word as it was preached unto them. Also in the second chapter of Acts, verses 1-4, the apostles and their companions (about 120 in number) tarried before the Lord in fasting and prayer for about ten days; when the day of Pentecost was fully come, the Holy Spirit came upon them and filled all of them. In this case there was no one doing anything at all to anyone; but they were just all fasting, praying, and waiting as they had been instructed to do. Again in Acts 4:31, we read, "And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost,..." This was a company of about 5000 men who were all believers and were under persecution and threat; they prayed, consecrated, and dedicated their lives unto God and literally laid their lives on the line before God; He accepted their sacrifice and filled them with the Holy Spirit. In all these cases we see there is no specified way, or maneuver, or ritual for the receiving of the Holy Spirit but just meeting the conditions to make them eligible for receiving the Holy Spirit—consecration, dedication, obedience and faith.

Also, I consider John 20:22 as a rather prophetic statement of something to come, and do not believe that the apostles received the Holy Spirit at that time for the following reasons. The first nine verses of the first chapter of Acts describe the last meeting on this earth between Christ and His apostles. In verse 4, He "...commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father,..." Then in verse 5, He clarifies what He was referring to : "...Ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence." It seems clear here that they did not yet have the Holy Spirit at this time. Also Luke 24:49 is another scripture which runs parallel with this one: "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 24:36, 53 contains a description of Christ's last meeting with His apostles, and it is again clear that at this time they did not have the Holy Spirit.

The apostles were instructed in Luke 24:49 to tarry in Jerusalem until they were endued with **power** from on high. But when was this to be? Acts 1:8 gives the answer; "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Spirit is come upon you:..." The infilling of the Holy Spirit is the source of this power to witness effectually for Christ, so again it is clear they did not yet have Him.

Jesus said in John 16:7 that if He did not go away, the Comforter would not come; but if He went away he would send Him. In John 14:26 Jesus declared that the Comforter is the Holy Spirit. Jesus had been gone back to heaven about ten days when the Holy Spirit came on the day of Pentecost.

For all of these reasons I believe that Jesus' statement in John 20:22 was a kind of prophetic statement of something yet to come. His "breathing" on them possibly corresponds with the creation of Adam, and God breathing the breath of life into his nostrils and he becoming a living soul. In this case, Jesus' breathing on His apostles seems to have been a kind of symbolic imparting of spiritual inspiration and vision (without which no person can possibly be an effective witness and

servant of Christ) to bring a quickening and regenerating grace into men's souls which these apostles did not realize and possess in its fullness until they were filled with the Holy Spirit.

WHO ARE THE SHEPARDS IN EZEKIEL 34?

Question: Please comment on Ezekiel 34:2-6 (Who are these shepherds?); also taking into consideration verse 12 "The cloudy and dark day."

Answer: The shepherds spoken of in these verses would be those whom God had appointed to guide, care for, and feed His flock, the children of Israel. This would refer to their priests and prophets. Also in this case, since Israel's government was a combination of church and state, it might include their kings and rulers as well. These were all set over the children of Israel to seek their welfare and best interest and to guide them in both sacred and secular things. We get a good view of the Good Shepherd in the 23rd Psalm. We see the Good Shepherd here providing all the wants of His sheep, leading them to the still waters and providing for them security and sufficiency so that they lie down in peace in green pastures. He never forsakes His flock but is with them in trouble and adversity the same as in prosperity which is evidenced by His walking with them through the valley of the shadow of death. He always provides abundance for them even to the overflowing stage and sets them a table right in the presence of their enemies.

In John 10:11, Jesus declares Himself to be the Good Shepherd and declares that the Good Shepherd giveth His life for the sheep. Then in verse 12 He speaks of the hireling, whose own the sheep are not, and when he sees the wolf coming he leaves the sheep and fleeth; the wolf catches the sheep and scatters them. Jesus further explained in verse 13 that the reason the hireling flees when danger and trouble threatens is because he is just a hireling and is primarily interested in his hire and temporal gain and does not care for the sheep.

Again in Luke 15:3-7, Jesus presents another graphic picture of a Good Shepherd looking after his sheep. He has a hundred sheep and one wanders away and gets lost. He leaves the ninety-nine in the fold and goes in search of the lost one until he finds it; then he puts it on his shoulder and carries it home. He cares for all his sheep and when one is in trouble, that is the one he seeks to help.

These shepherds spoken of in Ezekiel 34:2-6, were supposed to be like this and like the Good Shepherd of John 10:11, and the Shepherd featured in the twenty-third Psalm. But, oh, how different they were! They were like the hireling Jesus mentioned in John 10:12-13, and were looking after their own comforts and gain. They were entirely insensitive to the needs of the flock. They did not strengthen the diseased, heal the sick, bind up the broken, bring back those who were driven away, nor seek that which was lost. They ruled with force and cruelty. They were totally unfaithful and entirely insensitive to their responsibility as shepherds of a flock. As a result, the sheep were scattered and wandered through all the mountains and high hills of the whole earth and became meat to be devoured by the beasts of the field. This all actually happened to the children of Israel again and again because of their wickedness and idolatry which was instigated by their priests, prophets, and rulers. It is also a type of what has happened to the people of God (spiritual Israel) during this gospel dispensation and has a second fulfillment there.

In Isaiah 9:16, we read, "For the leaders of this people cause them to err; and they that are led of them are destroyed." Again we read in Isaiah 3:12, "...O my people, they which lead thee cause thee to err, and destroy the way of thy paths." In

Jeremiah 23, beginning with verse 9 is a strong indictment against the prophets and priests of Israel. Verse 11 says, "For both prophet and priest are profane; yea, in my house have I found their wickedness, saith the Lord." We also read in verse 13, "And I have seen folly in the prophets of Samaria; they prophesied in Baal, and caused my people Israel to err." Clear on down through verse 32 God is strongly proclaiming against the prophets who prophesy in His name declaring that "the Lord hath said," but they prophesy lies and falsehoods.

The awful consequences of all this false prophesying and the profanity among priests and prophets are found in Jeremiah 14:13-16, which I will insert here. "Then said I, Ah, Lord God! behold, the prophets say unto them, Ye shall not see the sword, neither shall ye have famine; but I will give you assured peace in this place. Then the Lord said unto me, The prophets prophesy lies in my name: I sent them not, neither have I commanded them, neither spake unto them: they prophesy unto you a false vision and divination, and a thing of naught, and the deceit of their heart. Therefore thus saith the Lord concerning the prophets that prophesy in my name, and I sent them not, yet they say, Sword and famine shall not be in this land; By sword and famine shall those prophets be consumed. And the people to whom they prophesy shall be cast out in the streets of Jerusalem because of the famine and the sword;..." It becomes apparent here that the people who listen to the prophets who prophesy falsehoods and offer security in those falsehoods and doctrines that are not according to God's Word, shall become victims of those prophets (be devoured by the beasts of the field—the false prophets) and share the same fate with them.

In Hosea 5:10 it says, "The princes of Judah were like them that remove the bound: therefore I will pour out my wrath upon them like water." A few other texts regarding landmarks and bounds will add a little emphasis to this text where it says "The princes of Judah were like them that remove the bound." When the Israelites entered into Canaan land, everyone received an inheritance consisting of a piece of land secured by bounds and landmarks. This was to remain in that family throughout their generation. This inheritance was considered such a valuable and sacred thing that the daughters of one tribe were forbidden to marry into another tribe because it would affect their inheritance which was not transferable to any other tribe. In Deuteronomy 27:17 a curse was pronounced upon anyone who tampered with the landmark and altered the bounds of his neighbor's field. Also read Proverbs 22:28 and Deuteronomy 19:14. We see this was a very strong charge against the princes of Judah who were like them that removed the bound. The princes of Judah would be their prophets, priests, and rulers. They had tampered with God's Word and law, and prophesied falsely to the people and led them into error and idolatry, and God's wrath was against them.

This whole discussion describes the class and condition of the shepherds in Ezekiel 34, and the awful consequences of their lordship over the people. It will be necessary to wait until another time to consider the other part of the question, "the cloudy and dark day."

THE DARK AND CLOUDY DAY

Question: Please discuss Ezekiel 34:12—"the cloudy and dark day."

Answer: The gospel dispensation or gospel day is divided into four parts and to get a clear understanding of any one of them it must be viewed in connection with the related other parts of the day. These periods are known as the "morning time;" the "noon time" when the sun was darkened at noon and the earth was darkened in the

clear day (Amos 8:9) which is known in history as the "dark age" of Popery; then a period which was neither light nor dark (known to the Lord as not day nor night in Zechariah 14:6-7, and known as the "cloudy and dark day" in Ezekiel 34:12); then the "evening time" which was to be light. (Zechariah 14:7.) Thus we have a gospel day which was bright and glorious both in its morning and evening, its beginning and ending. These two periods of time of gross darkness, the dark ages of Popery, were followed by a time of part light and part darkness as they approached the Evening Time when the sun was again to shine forth in its strength.

Now for a brief summary of each of those periods in order to establish the "cloudy and dark day" in its relation to the other periods of the gospel day.

In Isaiah 21:11 we read, "The burden of Dumah. He calleth me out of Seir, Watchman, what of the night? Watchman, what of the night?" According to the Pictorial Bible Dictionary (Zondervan), Dumah means silence. This prophecy probably refers to the 400 year period between the close of the Old Testament with Malachi to the beginning of the New Testament era and the coming of Christ during which time there was no prophet from God nor any word from Him. A lack or absence of any communication with God surely produces spiritual darkness and night. What the prophet is actually asking here is, "What time of night is it?" Then in verse 12 the glad announcement is given, "...The morning cometh,..." This was certainly an encouraging announcement after so long a night of dismal darkness. Again in Isaiah 60:1-3, we read, "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For, behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the Lord shall arise upon thee,... And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising." This is another prophecy of a glorious, new day which was to come.

These and many other Old Testament prophecies were gloriously fulfilled in the coming of Christ and His ministry and work and teachings among the people. He ushered in the dawning of the new and glorious gospel day. In Matthew 4:16 we read concerning Jesus, "The people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up." And again in Luke 2:32, Jesus is declared to be "a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel." Jesus is the "Light of the world," and with His coming the darkness of night was dispelled and the glorious light of the gospel was ushered in. This was the glorious morning of the gospel day.

Many grand and glorious things could be written about that morning time of the Church and the gospel going forth conquering and to conquer, but space does not permit. Neither is the question concerned with that.

In Isaiah 21:12, after the announcement that "The morning cometh," it immediately followed, "And also the night:..." There was an age of awful, terrible, frightful spiritual night that followed the glorious light of the morning of the gospel day. This was brought about by apostasy from the pure standards of the pure gospel in the morning Church. This apostasy brought about the setting up of a human, man-made religious system (the Roman Catholic Church) in the place of the spiritual Church built and presented to the world by Jesus Christ, with the pope at the head of it in the stead of Jesus Christ, the Head of the pure New Testament Church. This period was prophesied in a number of prophecies. I will refer to perhaps only a couple from the Old Testament and then maybe one or two from the New Testament. Amos and Micah describe it thus: "And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord God, that I will cause the sun to go down at noon, and I will darken the earth in the clear day" (Amos 8:9); and, "Therefore night shall be unto you,...that ye shall not divine; and the sun shall go down over the prophets, and the day shall be dark over them." (Micah 3:6).

After Jesus had described the destruction of Jerusalem and the calamitous tribulation during that time, He said in Matthew 24:29, "Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the power of the heavens shall be shaken." The language here is all figurative or symbolic, and signifies a terrific upheaval and commotion in the spiritual heavens and the darkening of the spiritual atmosphere. This was the result of taking from the people the pure Word of God and substituting in its place the theories and doctrines of men and the substitution of the form for the fact of godliness. This period lasted for 1260 years until the time of the sixteenth century reformation by Martin Luther which broke the power of the Catholic hierarchy.

Now we reach the period of time involved in our question—"the cloudy and dark day." The 34th chapter of Ezekiel is a prophecy which may have a twofold fulfillment. It may have a direct fulfillment in ancient Israel, but it certainly has a fulfillment in the spiritual Israel in this gospel day. God's rebuke of the unfaithful shepherds certainly describes the ministry of the apostate church in their brutishness, severity, arrogance, and tyranny over the people in those dark ages. Then at the time of the reformation, light broke in upon the darkness when Martin Luther declared the truth that "the just shall live by faith." Justification by faith in Jesus had not been taught to the people all during the dark ages. Now there was some light shining through, but it shone dimly—as through a cloudy mist of fog. Following the 16th century reformation we have a period of sect making and organized religion known as Protestantism. There were many sects or denominations formed, each having its own creed and doctrine. This was perhaps due to the different leaders of the period getting hold of certain truths as they began to be gradually revealed as they were coming out of the dark night of papalism, and each leader establishing a creed and doctrine on the particular principle or principles of truth which he had received. But there was still considerable darkness and practices carried out of the dark ages mixed in with the truth which had been revealed to them. Zechariah prophesied of this time in Zechariah 14:6-7. "And it shall come to pass in that day, that the light shall not be clear, nor dark: But it shall be one day which shall be known to the Lord, not day nor night:..."

The people of God generally became identified with these different sects and denominations, and consequently were scattered and divided one from another. This was not God's plan for His people. The New Testament teaches throughout the unity of spirit and faith (doctrine), and oneness of the people of God. Consequently, it is said in Zechariah 14:7, immediately following the quotation of Scripture above, "...But it shall come to pass, that at evening time it shall be light."

We are in that glorious time now when the pure gospel light is once more shining forth in its brilliance and beauty, and God's people are being gathered to the one body of Christ. The main thrust of the Evening Light Reformation message is the unity of God's people and the one, true Church divine. This is what is meant in Ezekiel 34:12, "...So will I seek out my sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day."

The cloudy and dark day period lasted 350 years from the time of the 16th century reformation in 1530 until the time that the Evening Light Reformation broke in 1880. The evening time will last until Jesus comes again which rounds out and completes the gospel day.

A MAN'S WORKS RELATIVE TO SALVATION

Question: I would like for you to comment on I Corinthians 3:14-15, where it says, "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."

Answer: At the very outset I am frank to say that even though I have crossed the path of this scripture and studied on it a number of times, I have not come up with any answer that has been very satisfactory to me. Perhaps I have come closer to it now, while studying on it, than at any time. However, I will cheerfully submit to you what is the best light and understanding I have on it at the present time.

First, I will pick up the context of the entire passage, beginning with verse 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. 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." (I Corinthians 3:10-15.)

In verse 10, Paul presents himself as a wise master builder by the grace of God given unto him for His purpose. As a wise master builder he laid a good foundation. Surely the first thing in a good, stable building is a good, firm, and stable foundation. "How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord: is laid for your faith in His excellent Word." Paul actually did this setting forth of Jesus Christ (verse 11) as the foundation upon which to build our Christian faith, our doctrine, pattern and standards. This means to obtain and maintain a solid experience of salvation and to construct our spiritual lives. Paul presented Jesus Christ as the only source of salvation and said that faith in Him alone, without the works of the law, is the only means of obtaining it. He said, "Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ,...and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified." (Galatians 2:16.) Paul did not have any quarrel with the law as such, however he said in Romans 7:12, "Wherefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good."

Paul was not opposed to circumcision, as such, either. We read in Acts 16:1-3 that he wanted to take Timothy with him in the work and he had him circumcised because his father was a Greek and there were many Jews in that area. Incorporating this into their salvation as a part of it, however, he stoutly opposed and denounced. Acts 15:1 tells of certain men who came down to Antioch from Judea and taught the Gentile converts that if they were not circumcised after the manner of Moses, they could not be saved. Paul and Barnabas stoutly resisted them which led to the apostolic council on this subject at Jerusalem. This man did not reject Christ as the foundation, but built on Him the ordinance of circumcision as part of salvation. This was the thing that Paul had conflict with everywhere and in all his work with the Gentiles and he denounced it as a perversion of the gospel in Galatians 1:7; II Corinthians 11:4; II Corinthians 2:17; Galatians 2:4; II Corinthians 11:26; and II Corinthians 11:13.

This perversion of the gospel and the corrupting of the Word of God consisted in their adding some human works (circumcision and the works of the law) to their faith in Christ as a part of their salvation. This was building on the foundation (Christ) "wood, hay, and stubble"—combustible material that would not stand the

test of the fire of God's Word, and certainly not the fire of the Judgment. Unfortunately, that idea never died with those people, but has been the perpetual and continued curse and plague of professors of Christianity all down through the gospel age of time until now, and it is just as abominable and combustible now as it was then. All dependence and trust upon any good thing we do, or on any sacrifice we make to obtain forgiveness from God or any favor from Him, is abominable to Him. The only thing God recognizes is our faith in the merits of the shed blood of His Son Jesus, and the sacrifice He made. He said in Isaiah 64:6, "...All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags;..." Paul understood this and said in Philippians 3:9, "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." "The righteousness which is of the law" is a righteousness of work and doing. (Romans 10:5.) Ephesians 2:8-9 declares that we are saved by grace through faith and not of works, lest any man should boast. This is the foundation Paul laid in all his ministry and for us to build upon it according to this principle, is to build gold, silver, and precious stones, all of which will stand the test of the fire of God's Word and Judgment. The plague and curse that destroyed the Pharisee in the parable (Luke 18:9-14) was his own self-righteousness which he trusted in and depended upon.

To build a life and experience with this kind of material even upon the foundation of Christ, is to build wood, hay, and stubble, which will not stand the fire test. For us to teach any doctrine or standard which does not coincide with the plain teachings of the pure gospel of Christ is the same. Unscriptural teaching (whether it's major doctrine or a minor point), even though it be done on this foundation and in the name of Jesus Christ, falls in the same category. There are more than just a few doing this.

Let us consider, in conclusion, the awful and dreadful pronouncement of verse 15. "If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire." It is certainly a crushing thing to think of—the whole of a person's work for his life-time being lost because he did not build solidly on the foundation which was because of some error and personal or private interpretation of Scripture he persisted in. God faithfully warns us that we will not be crowned unless we strive lawfully—according to set rules of procedure. (II Timothy 2:5.)

The most sobering thought of all is the very narrow margin by which such people may be saved and not perish forever. It is said that he will be saved "yet so as by fire." One translation says, "shall escape as through a wall of flames." Feature a picture like this: a burning building in which a man is known to be. A crowd of people are milling around outside watching and waiting anxiously—can he be rescued? Suddenly they catch a glimpse through the wall of fire and smoke of a fireman there with the man on his shoulder. The crowd gasps and everyone holds their breath. Can they possibly get through? The fireman, well trained for such extreme emergencies, bends his body low and, with the man on his shoulder, dashes into the wall of flames and smoke, and plunges through to reach the outside gasping, staggering, and probably on fire—but safe on the outside. This is somewhat the picture presented to us here of one in this situation being saved. If a person has willfully and knowingly persisted in some error or held onto some pet something of his own in his life, he cannot be saved when his works burn. He must be totally ignorant of the truth and God's will on this point and totally innocent before God and he must have his attitude right, if he is to expect any mercy from God in this time.

Note: The text says, "If ANY man's," not "ALL men's." God is working on an individual basis and God makes a difference. He teaches us in Jude 22: "And of

some have compassion, making a difference." If He teaches us to make a difference, He surely must make the difference Himself.

BAPTIZING FOR THE DEAD

Question: Can you help us with any understanding on I Corinthians 15:29? We had this in our Bible Study and could not come to an agreement on its meaning.

Answer: I think it to be a quite difficult scripture and Adam Clarke classes it the most difficult verse in the New Testament, and says that it has about as many interpretations as interpreters. I do have some thoughts on it and I will pass them on.

First, I will insert the text. "Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? why are they then baptized for the dead?"

We can surely say with positivity that this text does not mean what some make it to mean; that if a person dies without having been baptized that a living person can be baptized for them, or in their stead. In this belief, some have been baptized numbers of times in behalf of different people who have died without having been baptized. This contradicts the whole tenor of the Scriptural teaching on this subject and does away with, or circumvents the individual, personal responsibility of every person for his salvation and willful obedience to God personally and individually. Jesus said in Mark 16:16, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved;..." This makes it clear that the one who does the believing must be the one who is baptized—not a substitute for him. II Corinthians 5:10 says, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." Romans 14:12 says, "So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God." All of these scriptures, and many more, make it clear that no one can do anything at all in behalf of another person's salvation after he is dead and gone.

So then, that interpretation is out and we must search in another area for the meaning of this scripture .

The resurrection of Jesus and then of the saints at His second coming is a basic, fundamental, cardinal doctrine of the Christian faith. It is indeed the corner stone of our faith. Everything is founded upon that throughout the New Testament. The death of Jesus was sacrificial and redemptive but it would have been totally in vain had He stayed dead in the tomb and not been resurrected. In I Corinthians 15:16-17, Paul urges that if the dead rise not, then Christ is not raised and if Christ is not raised, our faith is vain and we are yet in our sins. There could absolutely be no salvation for us without the resurrection of Jesus Christ and our belief in it. Romans 10:9 says, "...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." This makes it entirely clear that we must believe in the resurrection of Jesus to be saved. Also Romans 4:15 says that Jesus "...was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification."

Romans 1:4 declares Jesus "...to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead. God had born record to Jesus as His Son at His baptism (Matthew 3:17), on the Mount of Transfiguration (Matthew 17:5), and at the feast in Jerusalem (John 12:28), and other occasions. The final confirmation and seal of His Sonship was given in His resurrection from the dead. God raising Jesus from the dead attested to the fact that He was fully satisfied with His sacrifice and death. Isaiah 53:11 says, "He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied:..." The sacrificial death of the sinless One

satisfied all the claims of a holy law and the honor and holiness and justice of God Himself and God witnessed all of this by raising Him from the dead to die no more and making Him heir of eternal life. (See Romans 6:9; Revelation 1:8.)

Not only did He obtain eternal life for Himself, but for us also. "...Whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life." (John 3:15.) Read also Romans 6:23; Romans 5:21; I Peter 1:3-5; Hebrews 5:9; and Hebrews 9:12.

When Jesus incorporated in the commission to preach the gospel to the whole world the idea of baptism ("He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved;..."—Mark 16:16) and commanded them to baptize believers in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost (Matt 28:19), He had something specific and important in mind. He did not say, "He that believeth and washeth the saint's feet," or, "He that believeth and taketh the Lord's Supper," or, "He that believeth and greeteth the brethren with a holy kiss," shall be saved. While all these things are important and are commanded, yet in the commission He singled out baptism because it maintains a relationship with this corner stone of our Christian faith that none of these things mentioned, nor any other thing, does.

The ordinance of baptism is an emblem of death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus and an outward, public testimony of belief in it. In John 14:19, Jesus said, "...Because I live, ye shall live also." The true believer in Christ lives his life and dies his death in this hope based on this direct promise of Christ and many, many more throughout the New Testament. By baptism, he gives public, open testimony of his belief in his own coming resurrection and his hope of eternal life which God, Who cannot lie, promised before the world began. (Titus 1:2.)

The ordinance of baptism symbolizes this experience of the believer in all of its aspects: death to sin, self, the flesh, and the world; buried in the water as a testimonial of this; and resurrected (raised up out of the water) to a new life in Christ Jesus. Paul says in Romans 6:3-5, "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." And again in Colossians 2:12, Paul said, "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."

Now to sum up: the ordinance of baptism symbolizes the death, burial, and resurrection. It also symbolizes our own death to sin and our resurrection to a new life in Christ spiritually. It also symbolizes our approaching death (physically) and our coming resurrection (physically) unto eternal life. And in it the true believer witnesses his faith and belief in all of these three aspects of the plan and work of God and testifies to his experience of salvation through the operation of God.

The verse involved in this question (I Corinthians 15:29) being inserted right in the middle of an extensive discussion on this subject and taken in this context, leads me to the conclusion that it relates to this directly. All of the three aspects discussed here have to do with death and resurrection. Now, Paul argues that if the dead rise not, then there is no salvation and our faith is vain and we are yet in our sins because Christ would not be risen either. Then why be baptized at all? The ordinance has no meaning at all if there be no death and resurrection. We would only be testifying to a false hope and witnessing a lie concerning our own experience which could not be without the death and resurrection of Christ.

GIVE TO EVERY MAN THAT ASKETH THEE?

Question: Please explain Luke 6:30, where it says, "Give to every man that asketh of thee; and of him that taketh away thy goods, ask them not again." I am thinking of times when people stand on the sidewalks, begging for me to give something for their cause. I'm also thinking of times when I would like for loaned items to be returned.

Answer: This text must be interpreted and understood in its proper context, just as any other scripture, in order to be understood at all. We could never think of Jesus just arbitrarily tossing out an unqualified commandment for His followers to give to everyone who asked them to. My! What a position this would put us in! People on the streets often ask us for money—just plain derelicts who want the money to buy themselves another drink or another shot of dope. We would actually be doing wrong to aid them in their sinful practices. God's Word actually forbids us to be a partaker of other men's sins in any sense. (I Timothy 5:22b; II John 11.) Jesus could not have meant that, and we should not interpret this text that literally. Any time we take a text out of its proper setting and isolate it, we can get ourselves in a really awkward position.

The thought here begins in verse 27, and continues through verse 36. The basic thought of the entire passage is for us to have a right attitude in our hearts toward all men. Verses 27-28 say, "...Love your enemies, do good to them which hate you, Bless them that curse you, and pray for them which despitefully use you." Then verse 29 says, "And unto him that smiteth thee on the one cheek offer also the other; and him that taketh away thy cloke forbid not to take thy coat also." Then comes this verse contained in the question: "Give to every man that asketh thee;..." This is part of it, too.

I do not think of this statement as applying generally or promiscuously. Instead it sets forth how we are to react to wrong treatment by our fellowmen. If a person who is my avowed enemy, or one who hates me or curses me, or despitefully uses me, or smites me in the face, or imposes on me and heaps injustice on me, and takes away my goods, etc.; if that person gets in need or distress and asks me for help, I am required here to give him help. I am not permitted to reserve my charities and benevolences for my friends only, but I am to bestow them on people like those described here.

The holy Scriptures teach further on our attitude toward our enemies in Romans 12:19-21. "Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good." This is the general teaching of Luke 6:27-36. Good parents do not leave it up to any of their children to whip another child if he gets out of order. That is Daddy or Mother's job. That policy keeps things running orderly in the family and a proper respect on the part of all the children for parental authority. God does not leave it up to us to chastise one another, either. It is His job to straighten us and others out and He does not permit us to withhold our charities and benevolences from anyone in need, even though it may be an avowed enemy or someone who has grossly mistreated us. We are not to be overcome by the evil they do us, and get a bad, wrong attitude toward them, and return the evil upon them. We are rather to overcome the evil with good, and if those very people need help and ask us for it, we are to give it to them, and if they desire a favor, we are to grant the favor without grudging or rancor. In Proverbs 25:22b, it says, "The Lord shall reward thee." The

Lord will surely bless and reward His children who behave properly under these kinds of provocations.

Also included in the question is the latter part of this verse in Luke 6:30, where it says, "...And of him that taketh away thy goods ask them not again." The questioner says that he is thinking of times when he would like to have loaned articles returned. The statement in the Bible does not pertain to loaned articles. This refers to one who just comes and gets some of your goods and takes them away for whatever cause. Maybe he just steals some of your goods, or whatever. In such a case, you will be better off to just commit yourself to God and not enter into strife with him. There are times when you will be happier and more blessed of the Lord to just take "joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that you have in heaven a better and an enduring substance." (Hebrews 10:34.)

There is nothing here that prevents a saint from asking for the return of a loaned item. The part of Luke 6:35 which says, "...Lend, hoping for nothing again;..." does not mean that, either—that you have no right to expect or even ask for the return of items. This verse says, "But love ye your enemies, and do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again;..." The thought here is that we do good to our enemies or anybody else and grant them favors without any thought of having those favors returned to us at some time on down the line. We should never have a thought of obligating another person to us because of a favor we do him. Just do him the favor because he needs and desires it and let it be gone, never to be remembered again in a way to obligate the person or expect anything from him because of it. We do have a perfect right to expect things we loan to a person to be returned and none of these scriptures shut us off from that.

This entire passage (Luke 6:27-36), deals with the same thought: our attitudes toward other people and especially our enemies. I have already dealt with verses 27-29. Now I will refer to verses 32-34, to confirm what I just said. "For if ye love them which love you, what thank have ye? for sinners also love those that love them. And if ye do good to them that do good to you, what thank have ye? for sinners do also even the same. And if ye lend to them of whom ye hope to receive, what thank have ye? for sinners also lend to sinners, to receive as much again." It is clear that God wants His people to be different from other folks in this area of their lives. Then it is all concluded in verse 36: "Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful." Our heavenly father "...maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust." (Matthew 5:45.) We are to be like that, also, toward all men.

DOES GOD LEAD MEN INTO TEMPTATION?

Question: Please explain Matthew 6:13. Why would Jesus teach us to pray, "...Lead us not into temptation,..."? He would never lead us into partaking of temptation and I did not think He would lead us into the presence of temptation. James 1:13 says that God tempteth no man, and then we read where Jesus was led of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. I can't seem to get these scriptures working together, so I would appreciate some explanation on them.

Answer: These scriptures do indeed appear contradictory and baffling on the face of them and this question may be of importance to more people than just this questioner. These scriptures are not contradictory when rightly divided and understood.

The word "temptation" has a double meaning which, when understood, will help us to understand the apparent contradiction here. One meaning is, "an inducement

to evil." Another meaning is, "try, test, prove, probe." The text in James 1:13, "...God cannot be tempted with evil; neither tempteth he any man," means that He does not tempt men with evil, or endeavor to induce them into evil. In Matthew 26:41, Jesus admonished His disciples to "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation:..." The strong temptation for evil was right at hand and lying just immediately ahead of them. It came upon them and Peter fell grossly into it to the point of denying the Lord Jesus with cursing and swearing. The others fell into it also in a lesser degree than Peter in that they forsook Him and fled. The only one of those twelve who stood with Him that memorable night was John the beloved disciple. This is what is meant by entering into temptation—partaking of it or being victimized by it. Then Jesus continued in the last part of Matthew 26:41, to say that "...The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." Many who fail to recognize this important truth fell that if they are willing in their spirit to live for God and seek earnestly to please Him in their lives, that somehow God will overlook and consider the frailty of their flesh if they give way and are overcome in the time of temptation. This is not the case. When one is overcome in the time of temptation and victimized by it, and partakes of it, it requires repentance before he can be restored, regardless of how willing his spirit was to live for God. Peter went out and wept bitterly (bitter tears of repentance) when he was struck with the reality of what he had done. When one has a deep sense of the reality and truth of Jesus' words, "...The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak," he will be constantly and continuously seeking to build up himself on this most holy faith (Jude 20) and to be "...strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man." (Ephesians 3:16.) This way, when he is enthralled and enveloped with temptation strong and keen, the power of the spirit within will prevail over the weakness of the flesh without, and he will not fall a victim to the temptation. One great comfort that we have, and really the only one that we need, is, "...Greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world." I John 4:4. As we yield ourselves more and more to the workings of the Spirit of God in our lives, the truth of this statement will be more and more confirmed unto us.

The other meaning of the word which is "to try, test, prove, or probe," means that God tempts us all in this sense. Daniel 12:10 says, "Many shall be purified, and made white, and tried;..." God will surely have a tried and proven people to take to heaven. The reason for this is clearly apparent. God, in the beginning, created man in His own image and after His own likeness, which is declared to be "righteousness and true holiness." We all know how man (Adam) failed and committed sin; and as a result of that all his posterity, the whole human race, was plunged into sin (Romans 5:12). We see all around us the appalling effect of this and the ruin of the race which has resulted from sin. Now, in approximately 6,000 years, the world has become almost an unbearable place for a righteous man to live. If this degree of ruin and devastation has been wrought by sin in 6,000 years, pray tell me if you can, the extent of the havoc which would be wrought in that eternal world without an end if anything faulty or evil were to get there. Every person who enters those portals will first be tried to the limit that he may be thoroughly purged from every imperfection and impurity before he is accepted in that company. God is absolutely taking no chances this time.

All of this relates to the text to which the question relates: Matthew 6:13. In this text Jesus taught us to pray, "...Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil:..." Adam Clarke says in his commentary on this text that the phrase interpreted here "Lead us not into temptation," means, in the translation from the original Greek text, "Bring us not into sore trial." He also says that several of the primitive Church fathers have added to this the phrase, "which we cannot bear." He further adds that "The word not only implies violent assaults by Satan, but also sorely afflictive circumstances, none of which we have, as yet, grace or fortitude sufficient

to bear." Then he says that "Bring us not into," or "Lead us not into," is a "mere Hebraism; God is said to do a thing which He only permits or suffers to be done."

A key text in this connection is found in I Peter 1:6, where it says, "...though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations." The key words are "if need be," and this refers to what has been said before about God testing, trying, purging, and purifying everyone to prepare them for heaven. One of our songs contains these words: "God is sweeping thro' the nations, With an awful searching eye; Every spot of imperfection Must be purged, or hope must die." God is the One who determines "if need be." He determines when one needs a trial and what kind of trial it should be. He sees every spot of imperfection about us; even the ones we do not see and realize ourselves. He has decreed that all these things must be purged and His method of purging them is through the trying, testing, proving, and probing experiences of life. He permits only those things in our lives which He sees will accomplish His desired end: the purging and purifying of the soul, and the perfecting of us in the image of His Son, Jesus.

He taught us to pray right along with, "...But deliver us from evil:..." Some render this, "Deliver us from the evil one." We can be sure that in all those trying experiences God sees necessary to subject us to in order to prepare us for heaven, the "evil one," Satan himself, will be on hand to attempt to take advantage of us in the trial and seek to persuade us to cast away our confidence in God or take a wrong attitude toward God, or circumstances, or people connected with our trial. The devil will try to hurt us in some way; but we can be assured that if we keep our trust in God and remain subject and submissive to Him that His grace will be sufficient, and the trial will never be too great for us to bear. This is spelled out in certain terms in I Corinthians 10:13, which you may read as a conclusion.

CLEANLINESS NEXT TO GODLINESS

Question: Where does the Bible say, "Cleanliness is next to godliness," and just how does it apply?

Answer: It doesn't. This is the easiest question I have had and there is the direct, simple answer. The Bible just plainly does not say that, as far as I know, but this will come as a shock to some folks who have heard that quoted for Scripture all their lives, as I have myself. I do not quote it as Scripture myself because I could never find it, but I hear it quoted every now and then.

Since the question is presented and the door is open, I think I would like to make a few comments on this point. The question raises an important point whether or not the Bible spells it out that way.

God was very particular and specific in His instructions regarding cleanliness throughout the Old Testament. In the cases of the sin offering for ignorance (Leviticus 4:12), and the burnt offering (Leviticus 6:11), it is specified that after all the parts of the bullock were removed which were to be burned on the altar, all the remains were to be carried forth without the camp "unto a clean place," and burned there. God did not allow them to burn even the refuse of His offerings which were not acceptable on the altar out in a garbage dump some place, but in a place that was kept clean and maintained for that purpose. In Leviticus 11:29-47, is an extensive discussion of unclean beasts, fowls, etc., and in verse 33, it is said, "And every earthen vessel, whereinto any of them falleth, whatsoever is in it shall be unclean; and ye shall break it." That vessel could never be cleansed sufficiently for use any more. In Isaiah 66:20, it says that the children of Israel were to bring an offering in a clean vessel into the house of the Lord. In Numbers 19:1-10, the water

of separation and the sacrifice for providing it is discussed and in verse 9, we read, "...A man that is clean shall gather up the ashes of the heifer, and lay them up without the camp in a clean place,..." Verse 10 says that the man who gathered the ashes had to wash his clothes and be considered unclean until the even.

There is much teaching in the Old Testament regarding cleanliness which is ceremonial, ritualistic, and typical of spiritual cleanliness and holy living. But all of the above texts refer clearly to physical and material cleanliness: the washing of the body, clothes, and a clean place to burn the refuse parts of the sin and burnt offerings and to store the ashes, etc. These things were all sacred to God and He required the proper care of the entire sacrifice, even the refuse parts of it, in a clean and properly prepared and maintained place.

Now let us make no mistake about it. Malachi 3:6 tells us that God changes not. Therefore, we must conclude that God still appreciates and requires cleanliness. Just as those sacrifices of old were sacred and holy unto the Lord and He required all of them to be taken care of in a clean and proper manner, so are our bodies and all that pertains to them (all the material appurtenances thereto; the houses we live in and the surrounding premises, etc.), are sacred and holy unto the Lord (I Corinthians 6:15, 19-20; I Corinthians 3:16), and He requires the proper care of them for His glory.

Titus 2:5 teaches us that young married women should be "...keepers at home,...that the word of God be not blasphemed." In I Timothy 5:14, they are instructed that they "...bear children, guide the house, give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully." Both of these texts speak specifically of the adversary speaking reproachfully and the Word of God being blasphemed in direct reference to the way the wife and mother takes care of her home and children. God requires something of us in this area of our lives.

One man said that he could always tell what kind of people lived in a house by the appearance of the yard and the premises on the outside. If the yard was all littered with papers, debris, and the like, you would not expect to find a very orderly house and people inside. Disorderly and unkept houses and children have sometimes brought strong reproach upon a Christian's profession. Littered houses, unmade beds, unwashed dishes and unkept children have sometimes nullified people's testimonies for Christ. The enemy takes great advantage of these things and cashes in on them to bring reproach upon the Christian profession and to blaspheme God's Word and God's people. And God cannot prevent it because it is contrary to His plan for His people. His approval is not upon it and there is no way He can justify it and defend the people involved.

In the over-all picture, the Bible teaches that a husband should provide and properly maintain a house and all the necessary things of life for his wife and children. Then it teaches that the wife and mother should make it "home." This is the responsibility of the one designated as the "keeper at home"—to make that house a livable, comfortable, and attractive place to live; something that is inviting for the children and husband to come home to when the day's activities are finished. The more attractive she can make it for her husband and children, the better it will be.

No man, who has been out battling the odds that are against him on his job or in his business all day long, enjoys coming home to a cluttered, unkept house with unwashed dishes in the sink, beds not made, and looking like a disaster. He is looking for a haven of comfort, love, and understanding at the end of a difficult day and would like to find it in his home and with his family.

Evelyn told of going one time some years back with her family on a camping trip to Big Bear Lake Recreation Area which is east of Los Angeles. There were several families and couples camped there and one single man. This lone man spent a lot of

time going among the other campers, talking religion to them and giving them tracts, etc. The campers said amongst themselves, "We will just watch and see how he leaves his campsite when he leaves." Sure enough, when he was ready to leave, he just loaded up and left, leaving his campsite all cluttered and littered with papers, scraps of food, etc., for someone else to clean up. All this man's influence, from all the commendable work he had done, was nullified because of the way he left his campsite. This same thing happens over and over again in camps, in get-togethers, at public or general dinners, in homes, and premises not properly cared for and in order.

The same thing applies to personal hygiene also. We all should be diligent to keep our bodies and the bodies of our children bathed regularly. We should have our clothes washed and clean clothes ready for everybody when needed.

DID JUDAS PARTAKE OF THE LORD'S SUPPER?

Question: Did Judas partake of the Lord's supper? The account in the 22nd Chapter of Luke sounds as if he did.

Answer: It has not been my understanding that he did and I shall endeavor to set forth my reasons for believing he did not.

First, let us keep in mind as we consider this question that there were two suppers considered in the scriptures right together at the same sitting—the Passover Supper and the Lord's Supper. And though they were together at the same sitting, yet they were distinct and separate and signified different things and we must consider them in that way to get the proper understanding. This Passover Supper that Jesus ate with His disciples at this time was the last official Passover to be observed. It passed out of existence that night and has therefore come to be called "The Last Supper." It had been observed by the Israelites ever since the night they came forth out of Egypt until that night when Christ ate it with His disciples for the last time. It was coming to its end right then. That Paschal Lamb which was eaten in the Jew's Passover Supper was a type of Jesus Christ Himself. Paul makes this clear in I Corinthians 5:7 where he says "...For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us." Therefore this typical Paschal Lamb was to be fulfilled the very next day at Calvary when Christ, the Lamb of God, offered Himself without spot to God as a sacrifice for our sins. Therefore, the type being fulfilled had no further practical use, so passed away forever at the death of Christ; and He became the Paschal Lamb for the house of God, the Church of God, for this gospel age of time.

At the close or finish of this Passover Supper, Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper which was a brand-new ordinance which was to be observed by the saints, the disciples of Christ throughout this gospel age of time. I refer to the Lord's Supper as the "Memorial Service of the Church." Jesus said concerning it in Luke 22:19, "...This do in remembrance of me." Paul wrote in I Corinthians 11:23-26 "...the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: And when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come." So it is altogether clear that this ordinance belongs to the Church for this age of time and is to be observed by the Church until Jesus comes back again.

So we have here the last Passover Supper which was ever to be officially observed at the closing out of the Old Testament Dispensation, and the first Lord's

Supper to be officially observed at the ushering in of this New Testament Dispensation. These were observed both at the same sitting but were separate and distinct and this has considerable importance in ferreting out the answer to this question clearly.

The first three gospels bring out about both of these suppers—Matthew 26:17-30; Mark 14:12-26; Luke 22:7-20. Now there are some important points in these passages which may help to guide us to our conclusion.

First, let us consider a passage in John's gospel which is of much importance. Strange as it may seem, and it does seem strange to me indeed that John made no reference to the Lord's Supper anywhere in his gospel. Neither does he mention directly the last Passover Supper. However, from the things he wrote in the 13th Chapter of his gospel and comparing them with what Matthew, Mark and Luke wrote in direct reference to the Passover; the setting of this 13th Chapter of John was in the Passover Supper. Jesus announces in verse 21 that one of them would betray Him. He makes this same announcement in Matthew 26:21, and that was clearly in connection with their eating the Passover. Also in Mark 14:18, while they were eating the Passover.

When Jesus had made this announcement, they began to ask Him who it was, and He told them it was the one to whom He would give the sop when He dipped it and He handed it to Judas. John 13:27 says "And after the sop Satan entered into Him. Then said Jesus unto him, That thou doest, do quickly." Then verse 30 says "He then having received the sop went immediately out: and it was night." Oh, the awful night that fills a person's soul when he turns away from the "Sun of Righteousness," the "Light of the World" and walks out into darkness! But the important thing in this verse as it pertains to our question is "Having received the sop went immediately out." This seems to make it clear to me that Judas left while they were still eating the Passover Supper so would not have been in there when the Lord's Supper was instituted because that was at the end of the Passover Supper.

Matthew records in Matthew 26:26-28, "And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." The same statements are recorded in Mark 14:22-24. But Luke is more specific in identifying when and in what order this happened. In Luke 22:20, he said that Jesus took the cup AFTER SUPPER and declared it to be the new testament in His blood, etc. This pinpoints the time when the bread (emblem of His body) and the cup (emblem of His blood)—these ingredients of the Lord's Supper—were introduced; it was after the Passover Supper was finished. Matthew said in Matthew 26:26, "And as they were eating,..." and Mark said in Mark 14:22, "...As they did eat,..." Now I recognize that these accounts do not pinpoint any specific time. It could have been any time during the Passover Supper that Jesus did this. But, since Luke specifies that it was AFTER SUPPER we could conclude it to be right at the winding up of the Passover Supper that this was done. In this case, Judas could not have been present because he left sometime during the Passover Supper, according to John's account. (John 13:21-30.)

Now the problem of the questioner concerning the account of Luke 22:19-23, could be that verses 21-33, regarding the hand of the one who betrayed Him being with Him on the table, follows verses 19-20 where the bread and cup were introduced. This would surely seem to indicate Judas was still there. But, since Matthew, Mark, and John all relate this incident in connection with the Passover Supper, I am inclined to think that Luke did not adhere strictly to chronological continuity at this particular point and that verses 21-23 should have been inserted up above there in the discussion of the Passover Supper.

WEARING OF DIVERS GARMENTS

Question: Please explain the scripture, "Thou shalt not wear a garment of divers sorts, as of woollen and linen together."

Answer: This scripture is found in Deuteronomy 22:11 along with some other mixtures which are forbidden, beginning with verse 9. I will insert all of verses 9-11 here because they all carry the same thought and teach the same thing. "Thou shalt not sow thy vineyard with divers seeds: lest the fruit of thy seed which thou hast sown, and the fruit of thy vineyard, be defiled. Thou shalt not plow with an ox and an ass together. Thou shalt not wear a garment of divers sorts, as of woollen and linen together."

A parallel text to this is found in Leviticus 19:19 and reads thus: "Ye shall keep my statutes. Thou shalt not let thy cattle gender with a diverse kind: thou shalt not sow thy field with mingled seed: neither shall a garment mingled of linen and woollen come upon thee."

This last text forbid their cattle to gender with a different kind. So let us look at a text now in regard to how God made things in the beginning. Genesis 1:24-25. "And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind: and it was so. And God made the beast of the earth after his kind, and cattle after their kind, and every thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind: and God saw that it was good."

We see here that cattle were distinct and separated from the beasts of the earth and also the creeping things. They were all in separate categories, so I do not get the idea from Leviticus 19:19 that God forbade the interbreeding of different breeds and strains of cattle such as hereford white faces, black angus, Holstein, etc., which all are in the cattle category; but He did forbid the gendering of any and all cattle with a horse, mule, bear or any other of the multiplicity of beasts of the earth all of which are in a different category and of a diverse kind. God saw that the way He had made it was good and He forbade men to dabble with it and change it.

All of the things mentioned in these texts may have had some special bearing on the Israelites at that time. Perhaps they did, though I am not knowledgeable enough to know what it was altogether. I think it safe to conclude that there is no moral evil contained in any of these things; else they would have been carried over into the New Testament, but none of them were. Murder, adultery, stealing, lying, coveting, etc.—many other things which contain a moral evil which were first taught against and forbidden in the Old Testament, are carried over into the New Testament and taught against and forbidden there the same as in the old, but none of these things were.

However, though these things themselves were not carried over into the New Testament, yet the principle and teaching of them was; and it was a very important principle and constitutes a very important and a far reaching truth for the people of God, the spiritual Israel, in this age of time. That is what we want to look at now.

Hebrews 10:1 says that the law had a shadow of good things to come. Hebrews 8:5 says that the priests who offered gifts under the law (verse 4) served unto the example and shadow of heavenly things. Colossians 2:16-17 says that their meats and drinks, holy days, new moons and sabbaths were all a shadow of things to come of which Christ is the body of reality. In the first 10 verses of the 10th chapter of I Corinthians is related a number of things which befell the children of Israel as judgments of God upon them for their disobedience and apostasy. Then in verse 11 we read: "Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples [types, margin]: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come."

Thus we see that the law and Old Testament contained many types, figures, and shadows. It is in this category that I think it most proper to cast the things mentioned in these texts. They set forth an illustration of God's on-going doctrine of separateness and "no-mixture" for the people of God, which is set forth in different ways and numerous figures throughout the Holy Scriptures. These things are all presented literally but the main thrust of them all is spiritual in application. This is a great and very important doctrinal truth taught throughout the Holy Scriptures.

The very first thing God did in the creation in bringing order out of chaos was to create light and the very next step was to divide between the light and the darkness. (Genesis 1:1-5.) Ever since that time God has presented truth and righteousness as light and error and sin as darkness and maintained a strict distinction between them. God's people are declared to be "children of light" (Ephesians 5:8; Luke 16:8; John 12:36; I Thessalonians 5:5, etc.). Those who live in sin and serve Satan are spoken of as "children of the devil" (I John 3:10; John 8:44; Matthew 13:38), and are said to be in darkness (I John 2:9,11; John 12:35, 11:10, 3:19-20). God has maintained a strict separateness throughout this light and darkness in the spiritual realm.

In II Corinthians 6:14 it says, "...What communion hath light with darkness?" Clearly NONE! Therefore, it says in II Corinthians 6:17, "...Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord,..." Throughout the teachings of the New Testament there is a strict separateness and distinction maintained between light and darkness, truth and error, sinners and righteous people, the people of God and the people of this world. In Colossians 1:13 it says, "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son." I Peter 2:9 says, "...who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light." Ephesians 5:11 says, "...have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them." Verse 7 says, "Be not ye therefore partakers with them." All these scriptures and many more make it clear that God takes everyone that He saves out of darkness and puts them in the light. He forbids them to have any communion, fellowship or part with those works of darkness anymore.

In Deuteronomy 7:1-5, God commanded the children of Israel not to have any communion at all with the nations around them. They were commanded to utterly destroy them and destroy their altars and burn their graven images and have no part in their idolatrous worship. They were especially and specifically forbidden to intermarry with them.

Verse 6 said that they were holy unto the Lord their God. The context here makes it clear that "holy" in this text refers to them being "Separated" unto the Lord from among the nations, and not to a pure heart and sinless life in which connection the term "holy" is used in the New Testament. That is also the common use of the term "Peculiar" (peculiar people) in the scriptures—a separate and distinct people unto God. Note its use in the following texts: Exodus 19:5-6; Deuteronomy 7:1-6, 14:2, 26:16-19, 28:9, 29:13; I Kings 8:53; Titus 2:14 (Purify UNTO Himself a PECULIAR people); II Corinthians 6:14-18 which spells out in plain, definite language the separateness and distinctiveness of saints in light unto their God.

All of the above texts refer to God's people being PECULIAR unto Himself and separated from the idolatrous nations around them unto God. Psalm 4:3 says, "But know that the Lord hath set apart him that is godly for himself:..."

This doctrine of separation of God's people from the nations around them throughout the Old Testament and then from the world, and sin, and formal and false religions and all the works of darkness in the New Testament, is set forth and taught in different figures throughout the Scriptures. Whatever direct bearing it may have had in the lives of the Israelites at that time, I consider the text in this

question and its related texts to be a part of the on-going teaching of the Scriptures of separation and no-mixing for the people of God.

RESTITUTION

Question: What state should a person be in to make restitution; a justified state or a sanctified state? Should they be advised by the minister or let it be the leading of the Lord?

Answer: I am truly glad to have this question presented because it opens the door to give some general instruction on this very important subject which is too much overlooked and neglected by some. Because of this neglect some fail to become established on a solid footing and foundation in their Christian lives and go through all their lifetime in an unstable, up and down state and condition, or sometimes just quit trying and give up altogether. This is really serious and I sincerely hope that every reader will give serious consideration to this discussion throughout.

The Bible teaches restitution, making our wrongs right, straightening up our lives, in both the Old and New Testaments. This has always been a requirement of God for His people. When God's Word said in Hebrews 12:13, "And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed," He did not mean for us to just level off and go straight from there on when we get saved. He also covered the ground of the wrong things we had done in our past lives before we were saved; go back and straighten them up, too. This is evident from the fact that reference is made to the person who has been made lame or crippled being turned out of the way. We will not be healed if we do not make straight paths for our feet. In other words, that person whom we have wronged, hurt, or offended, may stumble over that thing and fall and go down to eternal destruction unless we take strong measures to straighten the thing and make it right. Our professing salvation right over it will only intensify his hurt and gouge his sore. If we have wronged someone, or hurt or offended him, or treated him harshly or severely, or spoken sharply or severely to him, all the kindness and goodness we can show to him will not heal that hurt. We will have to confess our wrong and make restitution for it, seek his forgiveness and heal the hurt. Then rebuild the relationship by goodness and kindness.

I had an experience once (at least) that illustrates what I am saying here. There was a brother in our congregation that did some rather unwise things at times and it got to be quite a trial to myself and others. I had been praying about these things and thinking to talk with him about them. Well, it so happened that something occurred in the Sunday night service that struck me funny and I laughed. It offended this brother though I did not know it. I was working with him and the next day when we were working he brought this up and reproved me for laughing as I did and said it was not a proper example for a minister to set. Well, in the course of the conversation while we were on the subject, I just admonished him a little and went on back to work. The Lord smote me heavily and told me I surely should not have said that to the brother and should have said nothing at all to him at that time because he was reproving me and that appeared as retaliation. I just dropped what I was doing and went right back to that brother and said to him, "Brother, I want to acknowledge to you that I spoke very inadvertently and what I said was very much out of order and I was wrong, dead wrong, in saying anything at all to you under the circumstances and I beg your forgiveness for it." He graciously forgave me. The way that case worked out was interesting. In a camp meeting that brother went to the altar for some help. I went to pray with him and then the door was open for me to

talk with him about everything I had on my heart to say to him and he received it very graciously and humbly. The wound had already been healed.

In Ezekiel 33:15, it says, "If the wicked restore the pledge, give again that he had robbed, walk in the statutes of life, without committing iniquity; he shall surely live, he shall not die." In this text we see that restitution involves giving back anything of a material substance which one has wrongfully taken; appropriating anything to his own use which did not belong to him. It matters not if it belongs to some member of one's own family or a close friend or a group of which he is a member, etc.; if he took it wrongfully without permission, he must confess his wrong and give it back. All such things must be made right when one becomes a Christian, regardless of who is involved. I had to make some things right with my own parents. God required this of me. Also, this text involves one going back and making restitution for those broken pledges and reckless, irresponsible promises one may make and never perform or fulfill. Some people make reckless promises to people who then make their plans accordingly, counting on those promises. Then when the time comes to perform that promise it is not just convenient for the party to fulfill the promise he has given. Many times they do not even bother to contact the party who is depending on them and just leave them "swinging." Then they wonder why that party doesn't have confidence in them. Let me announce to you that people are not supposed to have confidence in you if you do not fulfill your word and are irresponsible. God's Word declares this to be wrong and that it must be confessed and restitution made for it. Psalm 15:4 says, "...He that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not." We see here that God actually requires saints to be dependable people and people of their word. If one has been reckless and careless on this line, he needs to confess his wrong and make restitution for it and straighten up his life.

How urgent and important is this? We read in Matthew 5:23-24, "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." It is just that urgent and that important. God will actually refuse to accept our gifts and sacrifices to Him—material substance, spiritual sacrifices (prayer, devotion, worship) which we bring to offer unto Him, if in the process of doing this He brings to our minds and convicts us of something we need to clear up with a fellow man and we refuse or neglect to do it. He requires us to clear things with our fellow man and makes it clear in verses 25 and 26 what will be the result with us if we don't. You will be put under bondage and will not come out until you have paid the uttermost farthing. In other words, when one commits a trespass against another he is required to go all out to clear the matter with him even if he is unreasonable and overly exacting. God wants us to remove the stumbling block out of his way over which he might stumble and help him get to heaven, too, if possible.

Zachaeus understood this from the law under which he was living. In Luke 19:8, we read where he stood before the Lord Jesus and said, "...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." The laws governing restitution in the Old Testament are set forth in Exodus 22:1-13. Zachaeus was desiring and seeking salvation and he willingly accepted these conditions and Jesus said unto him, "This day is salvation come to this house,..."

I have said all of this by way of teaching on this very important subject while the door was open to do so. Now, I will seek to answer the questioner's question briefly. Since restitution is taught throughout the Bible, if one has been well instructed and understands this condition for salvation, he will take care of these things when the Holy Ghost conviction seizes upon him as a part of his repentance because it is a part of repentance. Otherwise, when he comes to a knowledge of it as a scriptural

doctrine and the Lord convicts him of it he should take care of it as soon as possible regardless of what state he is in in his Christian experience—justified, sanctified, convicted. He can do this under the leadership of the Holy Spirit without counsel from a minister unless there might be some complications connected with the situation in which he would like some guidance.

LUCIFER

Question: Will you please explain about Lucifer; who he was? So many people think he was the devil.

Answer: I will insert here an excerpt (the first three pages) of my small booklet *Was the Devil Ever in Heaven?* which was published by Faith Publishing House a few years back and can still be obtained there. The discussion in these first three pages focus specifically on Lucifer.

"In Isaiah 14:12 it speaks of Lucifer falling from heaven, etc. and makes mention of his being 'cut down to the ground' who DIDST weaken the nations." I will insert here the full text of Isaiah 14:12, and another thought not in the booklet which I am quoting. The full verse says, "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!" The margin here says "O day star" and "Son of the morning," both refer to the light bringer. How could the Holy Spirit so complicate things as to refer to the devil in this text as the "Day Star" and then refer to Jesus as the "Day Star" in II Peter 1:19? Another complication would be in referring to the devil here as "Son of the morning," or light bringer, and in Ephesians 6:12 refer to him as "The ruler of the darkness of this world." In Revelation 22:16, Jesus referred to Himself as the "...Bright and morning star." The Holy Spirit makes no such mistakes as ascribing to the devil descriptions which belong to Jesus and it is evident that no reference is made in this text to the devil at all.

Now going on from the booklet. "To begin in the middle of a thought always does violence to the thought and causes one to miss the proper meaning. The thought here of which this 12th verse is only a part, begins with the 4th verse of this chapter and continues through the 23rd verse. This puts the 12th verse down in the middle of the thought.

"The 4th verse says, 'That thou shalt take up this proverb against the king of Babylon, and say,...' This makes it clear that the remarks made here refer to the king of Babylon and to no other. The thoughts concerning the proverb against the king of Babylon are continuous from this 4th verse through the 23rd verse. I request anyone who does not agree with this interpretation of this scripture to show where the line of thought changes and the remarks are directed to another person other than the king of Babylon. The 4th verse introduces the proverb against the king of Babylon and continues through the succeeding verses to tell of his violent acts in the earth against other nations and peoples for which the judgments of God are pronounced upon him, and in the 22nd verse he mentions judgments against Babylon which show clearly that the subject is still under consideration.

"Now, let us take a direct look at this 12th verse which mentions Lucifer who is said to have fallen from heaven as being cut down to the ground who DIDST weaken the nations. This, then, was some judgment upon him for something he had done before this came to pass. Could it then refer to the devil? Could he have weakened the nations while he was still in heaven and then later been cast out of heaven for having weakened the nations? Could he have done any evil work in the earth while he was still a pure angel in heaven? Of course not!

"On the other hand, the king of Babylon did do these things and became so exalted in his heart that he said he had done all these things with his own hand. The Babylonish Kingdom was the first universal kingdom that history records, and her king subdued and weakened and brought under subjection all other nations. Hence the reference to him who DIDST weaken the nations.

"The 4th chapter of Daniel, verses 12 and 13, will throw much light on this 14th chapter of Isaiah. In verses 10 to 16 is given a vision that Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon had. Let us read it: 'Thus were the visions of mine head in my bed; I saw, and behold a tree in the midst of the earth, and the height thereof was great. The tree grew, and was strong, and the height thereof reached unto heaven, and the sight thereof to the end of all the earth: The leaves thereof were fair, and the fruit thereof much, and in it was meat for all: the beasts of the field had shadow under it, and the fowls of the heaven dwelt in the boughs thereof, and all flesh was fed of it. I saw in the visions of my head upon my bed, and, behold, a watcher and an holy one came down from heaven; He cried aloud, and said thus, Hew down the tree, and cut off his branches, shake off his leaves, and scatter his fruit: let the beasts get away from under it, and the fowls from his branches: Nevertheless leave the stump of his roots in the earth, even with a band of iron and brass, in the tender grass of the field; and let it be wet with the dew of heaven, and let his portion be with the beasts in the grass of the earth: Let his heart be changed from man's, and let a beast's heart be given unto him; and let seven times pass over him.'

"In the 19th verse, Daniel begins to interpret his vision to him and refers to the tree, etc. and in the 22nd verse he says, 'It is thou, O king, thou art grown...and reacheth unto heaven, and thy dominion to the end of the earth.'

"This corresponds exactly with the 13th verse of the 14th chapter of Isaiah, which reads: 'For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God:... Nebuchadnezzar was proud in heart and said the same thing in different words in the 30th verse of the 4th chapter of Daniel after he had subjected all the kingdoms of the world to himself. Listen to him: 'The king spake, and said, Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for the house of the kingdom by the might of MY power, and for the honour of My majesty.'

"In Daniel 4:25, Daniel proclaims unto the king what is the decree of the most High concerning him. 'That they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field, and they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and they shall wet thee with the dew of heaven, and seven times shall pass over thee, till thou know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will.'

"In Daniel 4:31-33, we find that this judgment actually came on Nebuchadnezzar and just how serious it was because that in his heart he was lifted up with pride and exalted himself in his heart even unto heaven to the exclusion of the God of heaven and did not acknowledge Him but said he had done all this with HIS OWN HAND, etc. Thus he fell from heaven (the exalted position he held and attributed unto himself in his heart) and was cut down to the earth and humiliated beyond any other man we have any record of."

Let us take note that in numbers of instances in the Scriptures, ruling monarchs and dignitaries of high rank in the governments of the kingdoms of men are spoken of as bright luminaries of the heavens (high places among men) the same as celestial beings and bright luminaries are in the kingdom of heaven and in the spiritual realms.

NO MAN SHALL SEE GOD AND LIVE

Question: The Bible says no man shall see God and live. Yet Exodus 24:9-11 speaks of Moses, Aaron and his sons, and seventy elders of Israel seeing God and eating and drinking with Him. How could this be?

Answer: There are two separate scriptures referred to in this question. The first is in Exodus 33:18-23. In verse 18 Moses asked God to show him His glory. In verse 19 God said among other things that He would make all His goodness to pass before him, etc. In verse 20 He said, "...Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live." Then in verses 21-23, God explains to Moses that there is a place near Him that Moses can stand in and God will cover him with His hand while He passes by and then He will take away His hand and let Moses see His back parts but His face should not be seen. The second scripture is Exodus 24:9-11 which says this: "Then went up Moses, and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy elders of Israel: And they saw the God of Israel: and there was under his feet as it were a paved work of a sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven in his clearness. And upon the nobles of the children of Israel he laid not his hand: also they saw God, and did eat and drink."

Please note in this last scripture it does not say that they ate and drank with God as is stated in the question. God just plain does not permit that degree of intimacy and familiarity between Himself and human kind. At least in that time He did not, but in Christ He did. However, the words, "They saw God, and did eat and drink" merely infers that they went on living and engaging in the ordinary pursuits of life which is represented to us by "eating and drinking."

Now when an apparent contradiction occurs in the Scriptures we must look for a common ground on which to harmonize them; else we would have God as mixed up as we are sometimes in our understanding. In Deuteronomy 4:12, we read "And the Lord spake unto you out of the midst of the fire: ye heard the voice of the words, but saw no similitude; only ye heard a voice." And this is repeated in verse 15 which says, "Take ye therefore good heed unto yourselves; for ye saw no manner of similitude on the day that the Lord spake unto you in Horeb out of the midst of the fire." So it seems a safe conclusion that what they saw in Exodus 24:9-11 was a very forceful manifestation of God and not a similitude of any physical form or image.

God has strongly manifested Himself many times among men but always in some sheathed manner in which His naked glory would not be revealed. That is what humankind could not endure. God permitted Moses to see His back parts and I do not know what that was or what it was like. However, He never allowed even Moses to see His face. It occurs to me that if one were to meet God face to face and behold His naked, unsheathed glory, it would be so dazzling and brilliant that he would be consumed by it. In Isaiah 63:9 we read, "In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them: in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; and he bare them and carried them all the days of old." In this scripture the personal pronouns "He" and "His" and "The angel of his presence" are all used interchangeably referring to God. In this case His presence was manifested in an angelic being—"The angel of His presence." This is one of His most common ways of manifesting Himself among men throughout the Old Testament scriptures.

In Exodus 13:21 it says, "And the Lord went before them..." Then in Exodus 14:19 it says, "And the angel of God, which went before the camp of Israel,..." In these two texts it is clear that "God" and the "Angel of God" are interchangeable terms and refer to God Himself. There are other similar texts in the Old Testament.

I will refer to one more—there are many. In Exodus 23:20-22 we read, "Behold, I send an Angel before thee, to keep thee in the way,...Beware of him, and obey his voice, provoke him not;...for my name is in him. But if thou shalt indeed obey his voice, and do all that I speak;..." The phrases in this passage such as "My name is in him," "Obey his voice" and "Do all that I speak" certainly indicate that God Himself was manifesting Himself in this angelic being and speaking through him.

In Exodus 34:29-35 it is related that when Moses came down from the Mount Sinai where he had been with God several days and received the tables of the covenant, that the skin of his face shone and Aaron and all the children of Israel feared to come near to him until he put a veil over his face; then they came near to him and he spake to them. In all the references to this incident in the writings of Moses it specifies that there was a thick cloud covering the mountain when God came down upon it. Moses went up unto this mountain and communed with God and came near to Him; but it is certain that he could only get a dim vision of God's glory through the thickness of that cloud. Yet he absorbed enough of it to cause the skin of his own face to shine. Aaron was one in the company in Exodus 24:9-11 whom it said "Saw God, and did eat and drink." It would seem certain to me that if Aaron and the others mentioned in this text had actually seen the person of God and held intimate, familiar communion and fellowship with Him as indicated by "eating and drinking"; surely he would not have feared a dim reflection of that glory on Moses when he came down from the mount. Again in Exodus 40:34-38 we read that a cloud hovered over the tabernacle and the glory of the Lord filled it and Moses was not able to enter into the tent because of the glory of the Lord filling it.

In the face of all these scriptural facts, I feel safe to conclude that what Moses, Aaron, and company saw in Exodus 24:9-11, where it said that they saw God, was only a strong, definite manifestation of His presence there. Moses spells out plainly in Deuteronomy 4:12, "...ye heard the voice of the words, but saw no similitude;..." This is a positive statement and is conclusive.

God reflected His full glory in Jesus Christ; He is the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person (Hebrews 1:3), in Him all fulness dwelt (Colossians 1:19), in Him dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily (Colossians 2:9). However, this was all veiled in human flesh and not the naked, unsheathed glory of God Himself.

BEARING THE NAME "BISHOP"

Question: Is it right for one to be bearing "Bishop" as a name?

Answer: I presume the questioner in this case has reference to "Bishop" as a title in connection with one's name such as, "Bishop John Doe." First of all I would point out to all of us that we should never identify the scriptural term "Bishop" in the New Testament with the term as used in modern Christendom with all its attached pomp and preeminence. They are far different in their usage and meaning. It would certainly be wrong for an humble saint minister to attach that title to his name in its modern usage and meaning.

However, the term "Bishop" is a scriptural term found different times in the New Testament and in connection with "Overseer," "Oversight," and "Elder" all of which derive from the same root word. These words occur a number of times in the New Testament, and refer to the same office. "Bishop" does refer to an office in the Church and not to any particular individual. In I Timothy 3:1, Paul says, "...If a man desire the OFFICE of a bishop, he desireth a good work." I do not recall any of our brother ministers attaching the term "Bishop" to their name so I am not used to

it and it would probably cause me a little shock and a little raising of my eyebrows and wrinkling of my forehead to see it. However, several of our brethren have attached the term "Elder" to their names which is the same thing.

In Titus 1:5, Paul says, "For this cause left I thee,...that thou shouldest...ordain ELDERS in every city,..." Then Titus 1:7 says, "For a BISHOP must be blameless, as the steward of God;..." It is evident here that "Elder" in verse 5 and "Bishop" in verse 7 are used interchangeably and refer to the same office. We also see here that a "Bishop" was the "Steward" of God. In I Corinthians 4:1, Paul declares himself to be a minister of Christ and "Steward" of the mysteries of God. Then Paul was a "Bishop" though he never attached that term as such to his name. Paul continues in I Corinthians 4:2, "Moreover it is required in STEWARDS, that a man be found faithful." In I Timothy 1:12 he said again, "And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me FAITHFUL, putting me into the ministry." Again in Luke 12:42 we read, "And the Lord said, Who then is that FAITHFUL and wise STEWARD, whom his lord shall make ruler over his household, to give them their portion of meat in due season?" This verse is important because it makes it clear what the duties of a "Steward" ("Bishop") are—to give the household of God their portion of meat in due season. Or as Peter puts it in I Peter 5:2, "Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight [or "Bishopric"] thereof,..." He continues in verse 3, "Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock."

Oh, how different this is from the modern ecclesiastical "Bishop" in his pomp, preeminence and position of "LORD" over God's heritage. In Luke 12:43 Jesus said further concerning the "FAITHFUL" and good "Steward" (Bishop), "Blessed is that servant, whom his Lord when he cometh shall find so doing." Paul said in Titus 1:7 that a "Bishop" was the "Steward" of God and in Luke 12:42-43 the term "Steward" (Bishop) is used. These terms are used interchangeably which makes it clear that a scriptural Bishop is a servant—not a lord.

I will say again in closing that I have never known of any of the brethren attaching the term "Bishop" to their name or signature. Neither do I recall any place in the New Testament of any of those brethren using it either—such as Bishop Paul, Bishop Peter, Bishop Timothy, etc.—though all of these were Bishops. We have one case where Peter referred to himself as an "Elder" (I Peter 5:1) and "Bishop" and "Elder" were interchangeable terms in the New Testament usage and referred to the same office (Titus 1:5 and 7). However, I think that perhaps Peter referred to himself as an "Elder" here not so much to emphasize his eldership as to equate himself with the other elders. His statement here is, "The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder,..." He was placing himself right among them and not above them.

Some of the brethren have used the term "Elder" and some "Pastor" attached to their name and signature. I think the most of them just sign their name without any other identifying term attached at all. I don't know that we could have any scriptural quarrel with anyone who used any of these terms—Bishop, Elder, or Pastor—in their signature because they are all scriptural terms and identify the office and position of the individual. Perhaps the reason our brethren have not used the term "Bishop" is because of the pomp, honor, and position it signifies in the modern religious world today which is entirely foreign and strange to the humble, lowly servants of the Church to whom it was applied in the New Testament.

I feel inclined to insert a few thoughts in this space in discussion of what I consider to be a topic to saints; the idea of a clear perspective, a deeper comprehension, and a more thorough understanding of the standards of God's

Word for Christian living and the abundant supply in the economy of God's grace for attaining to high standards of holy living.

Gregory Mantle in the introduction of his book *Better Things from Above* inserts a quote from Faber which says, "The devil can fight as successfully against God with low views as with mortal sins. Low views of the privileges and possibilities of the Christian life result inevitably in slackness and weakness."

Low views produce low standards for the life which, in turn, results in only limited blessings from God and a limited measure of divine grace which, in turn, robs us of victories which we might otherwise have and the richness and fulfillment which should be realized in Christian living. This is true because we have low views of Christian standards and consequently settle for a low plane of living with whatever degree of blessings, joy and grace that affords. Therefore we do not expect much of ourselves nor demand much of ourselves in the way of Christian living and do not expect much from God in the way of divine aid to raise our standards of living and do better and gain greater victories. Thus we live our lives on the defensive and always have our defenses out and are loaded with excuses for our failures when we are overcome in the trials and tests of life. My answer to those who live this way is that whatever excuses you have for your failures in being what God wants you to be and failing of the grace of God in the test; you better be thinking up some good ones because you are going to have to meet God with those excuses some day. The good news I bring you is that you do not have to go through life this way on short rations because the same God who wrote the Bible and set up the standards of holy living outlined in those holy scriptures, set up an economy of grace to go along with those scriptures to supply every person with a sufficiency of grace to enable every Christian person to come up to the full standard of every principle of truth taught in the New Testament if they will just humble their hearts and submit to God and go down and get it.

It is appalling and downright pitiful and tragic that many people get all involved in worldly activities after the worldly mold and patterns even to the extent they allow those things to hinder them from their Christian duties and attending church services, etc., and they still affirm they are keeping victory and living for God and pray all the time whether they are in service or not and God is blessing them right along. What I fear is that some people get all caught up in these things and carried away with them and get all elated and feel a strong sense of satisfaction in themselves over what they are doing and actually honestly mistake this for spiritual blessings. Folks, I affirm this is not true and cannot be true in God's setup of things. It is certainly low views when we think we can mix up our lives between the Lord and these worldly activities and feel this to be acceptable to God and that He blesses our lives right on. We can defeat ourselves; yea, even destroy ourselves with our thinking—low views.

We can see many signs of compromise (low views) among the people today—immodest dress, bodily adornment, jewelry, worldly fashions, cutting and frilling the hair, worldly amusements, etc. These things belong to the outward life and we can see them and all of them are an important part of the general let down and departing from the "faith once delivered to the saints." However, there is another type of compromise which is more subtle and hidden which we do not see on the outside and therefore it gains its ground and does its fatal work in the soul without our knowing it until it is done. That is a type of compromise hidden in the heart involving attitudes, feelings, bitterness, unforgiveness, resentments, pet peeves, etc., and God's Word says there are many defiled with these things. (Hebrews 12:15-16.) For one to have these things in his life and retain them and cherish them and excuse them because of circumstances and how he was treated and still feel himself clear before God and justify himself in them is a clear, direct compromise of the

scriptural codes for holy living and will render him ineffectual in prayer and dry up his prayer life and bring him to total defeat in his purpose to live for God and be saved. We must be healed of our hurts, wounds, bitterness and critical and bad attitudes if we expect to prosper in our spiritual lives and get to heaven in the end. Let us all seek to encompass in the scope of our thinking and perspectives the possibilities of the healing of our souls and total victory over all these things through the abundance of God's grace. Let us not entertain any low views here.

The good news I bring you today is that you do not have to be a victim of circumstances. You can, through the grace of God, rise above them. Read Romans 8:35-39. Neither do you have to live under the cloud of hurt feelings, offences, mistreatment, spitefulness, misrepresentations, etc., but can rather abide under the shadow of the Almighty. Psalm 31:20 says, "...thou shalt keep them secretly in a pavilion from the strife of tongues." Job 5:21 says, "Thou shalt be hid from the scourge of the tongue:..." The margin says here "When the tongue scourgeth."

Some people could stand an actual whip lashing better than a tongue-lashing. When hard and sharp things are said to them, it cuts them down and they can never get over it. It is a peculiar kind of pride that causes people to be so sensitive to what people say to them. By the grace of God you can be healed of this sensitiveness and rise above it and overcome it. Read Matthew 5:43-44 and then settle it that whatever God tells us to do, He has already provided the grace and strength to enable us to do it. It begins with humility and denial of one's self. God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble. (James 4:6.) Let us never say we can't do this or that that God instructs us to do. Only say we have not been able to do it yet but we are on our way.

If you are down under or plagued by any of these things, you don't have to be. You are thus because you have settled for it that way. You have concluded you are just that way and that is your natural makeup and you can't help it. However, under God you can. You can appeal to God and submit yourself to Him and He can heal you of that defect in your nature and make you over new—ALL NEW. (II Corinthians 5:17.)

One of the things in which the children of Israel displeased God and brought His judgment down on them was that they limited the Holy One of Israel. (Psalm 78:41.) Let us therefore beware lest we fall after the same example of unbelief. Let us not limit the Holy One of Israel nor discount what His grace can do for us and just plain quit thinking we can't rise above these things and every other thing that is contrary to us and detrimental to our spiritual lives and would hinder us from fulfilling the Bible standards for holy living and boldly declare "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." Phil 4:13.

I have no question to answer or discuss this month and in looking through some of my old letters I came upon this composition which I received in my mail maybe six or eight years ago from Olive Hicks of Goodland, Kansas. I read it over again and it struck me as being highly important and beneficial to every reader. So I send it forth to you in the name of the Lord just as she herself composed it and sent it to me with the possible exception of inserting here and there the full scripture text where she only gave the scripture reference (chapter and verse).

THE BEAST OF REVELATION

Question: Please explain Revelation 19:19 and Revelation 20:9.

Answer: Revelation 19:19 reads thus: "And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army."

The first point to consider in this text is the "beast" and what it represented. There are two beasts presented in the Revelation but the second beast is more generally referred to as the "False Prophet" and when the reference is to "The Beast" it always refers to the first beast. The first identifying mark of the beast is "seven heads and ten horns." In the 17th chapter of Revelation this same beast appears again as "a scarlet colored beast full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns." In this case this beast is referred to as "A Beast" instead of "The Beast" as is common in referring to him but the identifying marks are the same—seven heads, ten horns, and names of blasphemy (Revelation 17:3 and Revelation 13:1)—so there can be no doubt of them being the same beast.

God chose a pure, chaste woman, exalted high above the world and adorned with the rich, glorious virtues and graces of His Son, Jesus Christ, to symbolize His true, pure Church. (Revelation 12:1.) Here He chooses a vile, corrupt, abominable woman decked out in all the gorgeous attire and ornaments of the world, living a corrupt, abominable, dissolute life to symbolize the corrupt, apostate church after which all the world wondered. (Revelation 13:3.) This 17th chapter identifies this false church or religious system more clearly than the 13th chapter in which she was first introduced.

In this 17th chapter of Revelation the beast has a gorgeous, glamorous woman riding upon it. However, this woman is just as corrupt and vile as she is gorgeous and glamorous. (Revelation 17:4-5.) Please read these verses. This beast with a woman riding upon it would symbolize a vast political religious combine. The kings of the earth have committed fornication with this woman which would signify that the political rulers and governments of the world exposed her cause, and supported her, and accepted her corrupt and apostate system of worship and worshipped at her shrine.

In verses 9 and 10 the seven heads are identified as seven mountains on which the woman sitteth; and also seven kings of which five are fallen, one is and one is yet to come. Verse 11 identifies "The Beast" as the 8th head but is actually of the seventh and his end is that he goeth into perdition. Here is described the city of Rome which actually is situated on seven mountains and also the kingdom or empire of Rome which actually had seven kings or forms of government during its existence. Five of them had already fallen at the time the Revelation was given and one was in existence then and one was yet to come. Then verse 12 identifies the ten horns as ten kings which had not yet received their kingdoms. This represents the 10 minor kingdoms which grew out of the Roman Empire during its decline and fall. Gibbon, in his history of the decline and fall of the Roman Empire, gives the details of all of this and the names of all the forms of government and of the minor kingdoms which I will not insert here for the sake of space. Then verse 13 says these all have one mind and give their strength unto "The Beast."

THE BEAST OF REVELATION (PART 2)

Question: Please explain Revelation 19:19 and Revelation 20:9.

Answer: It is clear that the double symbol we have here (the beast and the woman riding on it) identifies a political/religious system and indicates that they are intertwined in each other. It identifies Rome as the seat of government and the Roman Empire as the vehicle and support of the religious system. Then the beast with its woman rider could represent no other than the Roman Catholic Church with its hierarchical government.

The beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies would signify the whole combine of the Roman Catholic Hierarchy, with the kings of the earth that gave their strength to the beast with all the votaries of the religious system and even the support of the military arm of the empire which was sometimes used in enforcing the edicts of the Pope, the supreme head of the church. These all came together to make war against Him that sat on the horse, and against His army.

In Revelation 19:11-16, we have a description of the rider on the white horse. He was called FAITHFUL AND TRUE (verse 11). He judged and made war in righteousness (verse 11). He had many crowns on His head and His eyes were as a flame of fire (verse 12). He was clothed in a vesture dipped in blood and His name was called THE WORD OF GOD (verse 13). The name written on Him was KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS (verse 16). It would be impossible for anyone to fulfill all this description except the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. His army would be the great company of the redeemed, born again, blood-washed souls who followed the Lamb whithersoever He went. To get an idea of the bitter conflict that raged between the followers of Jesus Christ and this great false and apostate system in which many millions of the saints lost their lives in the most gruesome and hideous ways that the devil himself could conceive of at the hands of the beast power of Rome, read *Fox's Book of Martyrs*. This went on for 1260 years which was the time allotted to the beast to rule. (Revelation 13:5.) The 42 months in this text would amount to 1260 days (30 days to the month) and according to the prophetic rule of calculating time (a day for a year) this would amount to 1260 years.

Revelation 20:9 says, "And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them." Now who are "THEY"? Verse 8 says that Gog and Magog gathered themselves together to battle. Gog and Magog represent the entire combine of the false religions of the world. There have been three major systems of false religions in the world through the Christian era—Paganism, Papalism (The Beast), and Protestantism (The Second Beast or The False Prophet). These have succeeded one another in the order given above. These have all been on the stage of action one at a time. However, in the final windup we see them all coming together in one mighty combine and all operating together at the same time to stamp out the Church of the living God (the beloved city) and to destroy the truth and the true saints from the earth.

Revelation 20:10 speaks of the devil that deceived them being cast into the lake of fire where the beast and false prophet are. The devil in this text refers to paganism which was represented by a great red dragon in Revelation 12 and in Revelation 20:2 was called the devil and Satan. This godless religion was concocted by the devil himself and permeated by him and through it he deceived the nations of the earth. However, this was put down by the power of the gospel of Jesus Christ and the light of truth and is said in this verse to be bound, but down in the time of the end he is said to be loosed to go forth to deceive the nations again. (Revelation 20:7.) Verse 10 tells of his end in the lake of fire with the beast and false prophet to be tormented forever and ever.

Both of these texts (Revelation 19:19 and Revelation 20:9) are related and refer to the same operation but in different stages of it. It is all contained in the battle of that great day of God Almighty also known as the Battle of Armageddon. This is a

great spiritual conflict between the saints of God and the votaries of every false religion in the world, between truth and error, between light and darkness. Revelation 19:19 describes the mustering of these forces for the battle. We are in the very vortex of it now. Revelation 20:9 describes the battle as it comes to its roaring climax with the coming of the Lord who appears in flaming fire to rescue His saints who are hemmed in on every side and accomplish the complete overthrow and eternal destruction of the entire combine of false religions.

SALVATION OF CHRIST TO THE GENTILES

Question: Please explain Isaiah 51:4 (especially the last part of the verse); and also Daniel 12:7.

Answer: Isaiah 51:4 is part of a passage referring to the salvation of Christ especially to the Gentiles. Verses 4-6 contain the passage particularly to the Gentiles. The statement in the last part of verse 5 confirms this. It says, "...The isles shall wait upon me, and on mine arm shall they trust." But who are the isles? It could not refer to Israel because they were in Canaan which did not incorporate any of the isles. Isaiah 60:9 says, "Surely the isles shall wait for me, and the ships of Tarshish first, to bring thy sons from far,..." The 72nd Psalm through the 17th verse contains a prophecy of Christ's glorious kingdom and His salvation and verse 10 says, "The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring presents: the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts." In Psalm 2:8, God the Father says to Jesus Christ the Son, "Ask of me, and I shall give thee the heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession." The entire 2nd Psalm is a prophecy of Christ and His triumph and of His glorious kingdom. All these texts and many more sum up to the influx of the Gentiles into the Church.

The first three verses of the 51st chapter of Isaiah probably refer more particularly to Israel but there is a statement in verse two which also is important to this passage we are considering now. God mentions here about Abraham and how He called him, blessed him and multiplied him. The blessing that God pronounced upon Abraham was not for the Jews only, for God said unto him in Genesis 22:18, "And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed;..." Paul, the apostle of the Gentiles, argued this in the 3rd chapter of Galatians. In verses 8 and 9 he applies the promise of Genesis 22:18 to the Gentiles through Christ who was that SEED. And in verse 14 he spells it out specifically "That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ;..."

Now I will consider particularly the last part of Isaiah 51:4, "...And I will make my judgment to rest for a light of the people," which is the specific part of the verse the question deals with. I consider all I have said before as important to a proper understanding, interpretation and emphasis on this.

First we will consider the term "judgment" because that is the subject of this phrase. In Isaiah 42:4 it is said, "He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth: and the isles shall wait for his law." Adam Clarke in his comments on this verse in regard to the term "judgment" says that "judgment" takes on a great latitude of signification. It means rule, form, order, model, plan; rule of right, or of religion; cause, trial, sentence, condemnation, acquittal, deliverance, mercy, etc. He further says that in this place "It certainly means the law to be published by Messiah, the institution of the gospel." Then "judgment being set in the earth" would certainly refer in this text to the confirming and establishing of the law and government of God in all its latitudes and the full institution of all necessary facilities for the successful and efficient operation of the church, His

kingdom, the promulgation of the gospel of Christ and the salvation of immortal souls to the ends of the earth. It would also mean the same thing in Isaiah 51:4.

In Matthew 12:18 it is said concerning Jesus that He would show judgment to the Gentiles. Verses 20 and 21 say, "A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, till he send forth judgment unto victory. And in his name shall the Gentiles trust." Here we see Jesus setting the judgment of God in the earth and see that that judgment is calculated to bring victory to souls. It will only bring condemnation if it is rejected by souls. Jesus came to save; not to condemn. Those were only condemned who loved darkness and rejected the light of the world, Jesus.

In Isaiah 51:4 it is said "...I will make my judgment to rest..." But what does it mean for His judgment to rest? Let me illustrate by a certain procedure in the courts of our judicial system. At a point in the trial the attorney on one side of the case (either one) will say to the judge "we rest." What this means is that we have presented all of our evidence, we have heard testimony from all of our witnesses, we have completed all of our argument, there is nothing more we can do to strengthen our case. From this point on, the disposition of the case rests with the jury or the judge however the case is being tried.

It is the same case with God. He said in Isaiah 42:4, "...Till he have set judgment in the earth:..." He is saying the same thing here that He was saying in Isaiah 51:4. In one case He set judgment in the earth and in the other He made judgment to rest. It was through Jesus Christ that God set His judgment in the earth and it was confirmed in Him in all of its aspects. "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." Romans 5:8. God's judgments incorporate love, mercy, salvation, forgiveness and pardon the same as wrath, indignation and condemnation against sin and impenitent sinners. Jesus Christ absorbed the full measure of God's wrath and vengeance against sin in Himself at Calvary. But He also commended God's love or confirmed it to sinful men by His dying for us. God's judgment of mercy, love, pardon, redemption and salvation for every person of Adam's race from the river to the ends of the earth was set in the earth that day and confirmed in Christ that day. He tasted death for every man. (Hebrews 2:9.)

Since full provisions have been made for mercy, pardon, redemption and salvation for all men; no one is excluded, not a one; and it has all been confirmed. Qualified witnesses have been called and their testimony given, and all the evidence is in and the argument is completed and there is absolutely nothing more I can do to strengthen my case with mankind; therefore I rest and my judgment rests with me and is set in the earth through the preaching of the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ the Son of God for the full duration of the earth. The case now rests in the hands of the people of the earth as to how they respond to the overtures of mercy and love of God in Christ.

We read in Genesis 2:2 that at the conclusion of all of God's work in the creation of this material universe and everything in it, God rested. Then God launched another project of the NEW CREATION. In this NEW CREATION He makes all things new, and every redeemed soul in Christ Jesus is made a new creation (II Corinthians 5:17) and when it was all finished and completed Jesus said it was finished at Calvary (John 19:30). The plan of salvation was complete and finished and just a few days hence the Church would be established as an efficient, operating body as the arm of God in the earth and the kingdom of God would be confirmed and established by the coming of the Holy Ghost. When God had finished the first material creation, He looked it all over and determined it to be "very good." (Genesis 1:31). Then He rested because it was all complete and nothing could be added to it; neither could any improvement be made upon it. Deuteronomy 32:4 says "...his work is perfect:..." Likewise, when He had completed His NEW

CREATION (the Church, the kingdom of God, the plan of salvation) He looked it over and was satisfied with it. Isaiah 53:11 says, "He shall see the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied:..." It was all complete and the sacrifice to confirm it was acceptable and perfect. He said in Isaiah 5:4, "What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it?" It was all complete and perfect; nothing could be added to it nor any improvement made upon it so He rested having His judgment fully set in the earth and made His judgment to rest.

Daniel 12:7 in its entirety reads thus: "And I heard the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand unto heaven, and swore by him that liveth for ever that it shall be for a time, times, and an half; and when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished."

There are different texts both in Daniel and the Revelation which incorporate this same time period. In the seventh chapter of Daniel, Daniel had a vision of four beasts with the fourth beast being different from all the others and claiming Daniel's special interest. It was explained to him in verse 17 that these four beasts were four kings (kingdoms) which should arise out of the earth, but Daniel's attention was focused on that fourth beast and he made special inquiry concerning it. I refer the reader to Daniel 7:15-25 for a description and discussion of this beast. Please read.

Verse 23 describes his fierceness—treading down, breaking in pieces and devouring the whole earth. The ten horns out of this beast are declared in verse 24 to be ten kings which shall arise, but there was a little horn that came up among the ten horns and subdued three of them (verse 8). Verse 24 also describes another king rising up among these kings which shall be diverse from them. Verse 25 describes this king and his blasphemies against God and his boastfulness and exaltedness. The times were to be given into his hands for a time, times and the dividing of time. This is the same time period used in Daniel 12:7. Both of these powers are described as doing the same work and accomplishing the same thing. Daniel 7:25 says he shall wear out the saints of the most High; and Daniel 12:7 says he shall accomplish to scatter the power of the holy people. Inasmuch as the agents in these two passages of scriptures are allotted the same time period and do the same work and accomplish the same thing, we conclude they are the same. The seventh chapter gives us a better handle to work on, in that it gives a good description and identification of the power, so we will found our discussion from there.

The scriptures describe four universal kingdoms—Babylon, Meda-Persia, Greece and Rome. According to Daniel 7:23, this fourth beast was kingdom number four which was the last one. This was Rome. It is declared in this verse to be diverse from all the others. It was so in that it was a politico/religious combine with power to enforce its laws and decrees by carnal and military means. The little horn which rose up out of this kingdom from among the ten horns was the Roman Catholic power which subdued three of the other horns or kings and then went on to establish its power and rule over the whole earth and his fury was exceeding hot against the saints and he made war with them and wore them out and scattered their power. Prophetic time is reckoned thus: TIME, one year, TIMES, two years, and half a time or dividing of TIMES, a half year. So we have in the time period allotted here 3 1/2 years, 42 months or 1260 days. Prophetic time was also reckoned a day for a year which time period here would amount to 1260 years which is the time allotted in the Revelation for the Roman Catholic power to continue. So now we will go over to the Revelation and pick up a few points there.

In the eleventh chapter of Revelation verse one says the Revelator was given a reed and was told to measure the temple and altar and those that worshipped therein. This temple was a symbol of the spiritual temple of God which is His

church and the worshippers were the saints and the reed like unto a rod represented the Word of God by which all spiritual things must be measured. We must all face up to that measurement. He was told to leave out the court which was without the temple and not measure it because it was given unto the Gentiles and they would tread the holy city under foot forty and two months (verse two).

We notice here that the time period is the same as was discussed in the two prophecies of Daniel, (42 months—1260 days) so we can be certain that they are both speaking of the same thing. This scripture did not say that the temple was given to the Gentiles. There was still the true Church in existence worshipping in the temple, but the court which lay outside the temple was said to be given to the Gentiles. In other words, the apostate church (so called)—Gentiles, uncircumcised in heart, unregenerated, false—is what claimed the spotlight and focus in the eyes of the world while the real, true Church was concealed from public view within the temple itself during this entire period of time. This is the same identical thing as is described in Revelation 12:14, where we read, "And to the woman [true church; Revelation 12:1, etc.] were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent." Revelation 12:6 measures the woman's time in the wilderness as 1260 days. This is the same time period attached to the other references discussed so we know we are still talking about the same thing. Also there are identifying marks common to the fourth beast of Daniel 7 and the beast of Revelation 13 which connects them together and identifies them as the same.

I insert here a quote from F. G. Smith's book "The Revelation Explained," page 185. "This mighty transformation to a church containing nothing but uncircumcised Gentiles was fully accomplished during the latter half of the third century, from which date we must look for the true disciples of the Lord as entirely separate from the hierarchy." This explains the Gentiles treading down the court with the true Church concealed from public view in the inner temple. The vast Roman Church with its grand display of the form of godliness but without the power of it became the visible church to the public view and tread under foot the court of the temple and the holy city (the visible phase of the Church).

Then on the same page of the same book the author inserts a quote from D'Aubigne's History of the Reformation, Book 1, Chapter 1. "The living church retiring within the lonely sanctuary of a few solitary hearts, an external church was substituted in its place, and all its forms declared to be of divine appointment. Salvation no longer flowing from the Word, which was henceforward put out of sight, the priests affirmed that it was conveyed by means of the forms they had themselves invented, and that no one could obtain it but by these channels." This explains the flight of the woman (the true Church) into the wilderness and is the same as the scattering of the power of the holy people in our subject text (Daniel 12:7).

It was given to this false church to make war with the saints and to overcome them (Revelation 13:7 and Daniel 7:21). Daniel 7:25 says this power would wear out the saints of the most High. There was severe persecution of the true disciples of Christ through this long 1260 year period of papal night and millions upon millions became martyrs of the Christian faith. The fury and extent of this persecution is shown in Revelation 17:6 where it says, "And I saw the woman (a symbol of this apostate church) drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus:..." How sickening this is but it actually happened and the true Church was driven underground (went into the wilderness) and went into seclusion and the power of the holy people was scattered during this period.

HOLY SPIRIT

Question: Please comment on II Thessalonians 2:6-11 with emphasis on the words "Only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way" and "Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders."

Answer: First, let me suggest that the readers take your Bibles and read this entire passage so you can get a better over-all idea of the context being discussed here and I will not need to take up so much space inserting the full text here.

Matthew Henry in his comments at this place states that there are many who believe that the one referred to in the passage who was then letting and would continue to let until he was taken away was the Holy Spirit; but the majority of commentators believed it to be the Roman Empire. I recognize that the Roman Empire with its Pagan religion which was in power when Jesus was here and through the early period of the Christian Church at the time this passage was written stood as a deterrent to the Roman Empire under Popery (the Catholic religion) which is here described from coming in. In the 13th chapter of Revelation where the Roman Empire under Catholicism is symbolized by a beast having seven heads and ten horns, it is said in verse two that the dragon (in chapter 12 the Roman Empire under Paganism is symbolized by a great red DRAGON with seven heads and ten horns) and here it is said the dragon gave this beast (Catholicism) his power and his seat, and great authority. One of them followed the other; they were not on the scene at the same time and it is evident that Paganism had to pass off the stage of action before Catholicism could come in. I have no problem with that and no quarrel with those who hold that view. But I do have some problem in identifying this text with that view or at least limiting it to that view and my thinking runs more with those who believe this to be the Holy Spirit and my discussion will be along that line in general.

First, let it be remembered that Jesus instructed His apostles to not depart from Jerusalem but wait for the promise of the Father (Acts 1:4). This was to endue them with power from on high (divine Power) (Luke 24:49). This power was to be imparted to them by the Holy Ghost (Acts 1:8) and Jesus told them they would be baptized with the Holy Ghost "not many days hence" (Acts 1:5). This actually came to pass on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4). Jesus recognized the full importance of this and told them to not go anywhere or do anything until they received the Holy Ghost. He knew how futile all their efforts would be without the Holy Ghost. The apostles did not know it then (they could not have possibly know it then) but they did later on and we must recognize that also and never attempt anything in the work of the Lord without the unction, anointing, inspiration and guidance of the Holy Ghost.

The Church of God, the body of Christ, was built together for a habitation of God through the Spirit. The Holy Spirit indwells the body of Christ, the Church, and directs and supervises all its activities and doings. It was born and came into active being on the Day of Pentecost when the Holy Ghost moved into it to dwell there and have charge of all its activities. This new creation of God—the one new man (Ephesians 2:15) came forth a full-grown body just as the first man (Adam) that God created was a full-grown, fully developed man fresh from the hand of God. So this new man, the body of Christ, the Church, came forth fresh from the hand of God full-grown and ready to do service for God and that very same day there were about three thousand souls saved and added to them through the power and operation of the Holy Ghost in those apostles. (Acts 2:41.)

The Holy Ghost is the supervisor and general overseer of all the work of God being carried on by the Church. It is by the Spirit that believers are baptized or

inducted into the body (Church) and their unity and oneness is maintained by drinking into that one Spirit. (I Corinthians 12:13.) In I Corinthians 12:7-11 Paul enumerates nine spiritual gifts placed in the Church for the profit of the entire body and declares it all to be a work of the Spirit. God through the Spirit sets all the members in the body as it pleaseth Him (I Corinthians 12:18) and through the Spirit God tempers the body together (I Corinthians 12:24) and verse 28 describes the different parts and phases of the ministry that God through the Spirit has set in the Church to teach, instruct and build it up in the most holy faith. The Holy Spirit was the predominant one and in supremacy in all the activities of the Church throughout that first golden period of its history and how glorious it was. The book of Acts gives the history of the Church and its work through the first few years of its existence. But we see the Holy Spirit in all those pages and all those doings until we conclude that book could have, with all propriety, been called "The Acts of the Holy Spirit" as "The Acts of the Apostles." Beautiful!

All the apostles and ministers were humble servants of Christ and of the Church. What if some were more useful and effective in their work than the Holy Spirit had called them to and qualified them for; none of them were seeking or desiring preeminence or authority over any of the others. They were just all busy doing what the Holy Ghost was working in them and letting everyone else do the same. One historian said in describing the Church in its first golden period, "The Christian Church in its beginning was a community of holy brethren guided by a few of the brethren." How beautiful! In Ecclesiastes 3:11 we read, "He hath made every thing beautiful in his time:..." And surely God made a most beautiful and grand thing when He made the Church of God.

In the fourth chapter of Zechariah he had a vision, the principal objects of which were a candlestick and two olive trees, one on either side. To determine the identity of this candlestick let us look at a vision John the Revelator had in the 1st chapter of Revelation verses 12-20. In verse 12 he saw seven golden candlesticks. In verse 20 he was told that the seven candlesticks were the seven churches. The book of Revelation was addressed directly to the seven churches in Asia. There was one candlestick for each church. In Zechariah's vision there was only one candlestick which would represent the entire universal Church and not just a single congregation.

The candlestick, then, was the Church. But what of the two olive trees? They are of prime importance here because it was from them that the oil was supplied to light the candlestick and without them the candlestick would have just stood there dark; giving no light. Zechariah asked the angel to explain what these two olive trees represented. Revelation 11:3-4 throws some light on this matter. Verse 3 speaks of God's two witnesses in the earth and verse 4 identifies these two witnesses as the two olive trees. In John 5:39 Jesus said that the scriptures testified of Him. In John 1:45 Philip declared to Nathanael that they had found Him of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write. Luke 24:27 says, "And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself." Then it is evident that God's WORD is one of the two witnesses.

Then Romans 8:16 says, "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit,..." Again in the last part of I John 5:6 we read, "...And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth." Then going on through verses 7 and 8, we read "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 the earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one." Here is definite, conclusive proof of the Spirit being a witness of the Son of God and of salvation in the earth. But let it be noted that both the Spirit and the Word (the term "water" in verse 8 is symbolic of the Word)— bore witness in heaven which

would make it sure and indisputable that the witness of both the Spirit and the Word could be of heavenly and eternal things here in the earth. This is further confirmed by what Jesus said in Matthew 18:18-20 concerning the exercise of discipline and executing of judgment in the Church. He said, "Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." Read on through verse 19 and then verse 20 says, "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." Here we see the divine government in the Church being executed through the agency of Holy Spirit filled men and God can accept it in heaven because the same agents (Word and Spirit) which are in heaven and bearing record there are also in the earth and bearing witness here and exercising preeminent leadership in the government of the Church and directing all of its activities.

Therefore it is established that the two witnesses of Revelation 11:3-4, and the two olive trees which Zechariah saw standing one on either side of the candlestick (Zechariah 4:3), are the Word and Spirit of God. This is confirmed by what the angel said to Zechariah in explaining the vision to him in Zechariah 4:6, "...This is the word of the Lord...by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts." Thus it is evident that the Word and Spirit of God are the two representatives (vicars) of God in the Church and that the Church of God is a called out body of people in the earth in which these two agents are preeminent in the oversight and operation of all its activities. This is what makes it the Church of God. Take these away or relegate them to an inferior position and it is not the Church of God anymore.

It is very beautiful and interesting to watch the Holy Spirit operating and working and directing all the affairs of the Church in that early Church which had just come fresh from the hand of God and was just exactly like He wanted it. It was His new creation and was very good.

One requirement of all who held prominent places and exercised leadership in the Church was that they must be persons filled with the Holy Ghost. (Acts 6:3.) And by this means quietness, peace and harmony were maintained in this fledgling Church which was being threatened with schism by murmurings of discrimination by some of its members. These seven Spirit-filled men who were chosen by the Church and ordained for this service (deacons) by the apostles, took charge of this situation and were enabled by the power and wisdom of the Holy Spirit to steer things in the right course.

In the 8th chapter of Acts we read how the Church at Jerusalem was scattered by severe persecution but as they went they preached the Word. And Philip went down to Samaria and preached Christ unto them and a great revival broke out down there. But with all this going on there the Spirit led Philip, by an angel appearing unto him, to leave and go down on the Gaza desert. Philip obeyed and went. There was one lone man riding across that desert in his chariot and the Spirit led Philip to go and join him. Philip obeyed again and joined this man who was seeking after the things of God. Philip preached Christ unto him and he believed and was baptized but this was not the end of that story. This man was a very important man in the service of Queen Candace of Ethiopia and he carried what he got from Philip on down to Ethiopia and a sizable church was raised up there through him. This is a very beautiful example of Holy Spirit leadership in the Church and that He knew what He was doing when He took Philip away from the revival at Samaria and led him down to the desert to intercept his man.

When Cornelius was instructed of the angel of God to send to Joppa and get Peter to come down and tell him the way of salvation, he did so. Now be it remembered that Peter, being a Jew, was not permitted by Jewish custom to go in to one uncircumcised. But he explained when called in question about this that

"...the Spirit bade me go with them,..." and he went and the results were wonderful and the gospel of salvation was opened to the Gentiles. This is just another outstanding example of Holy Spirit leadership and that the Spirit knew what He was doing. (Acts 10:1-8 and 11:1-12.)

Again witness the operation of the Spirit in the 13th chapter of Acts verses 1-3. In this case there was a company of prophets and teachers in the Church at Antioch who were ministering and fasting and the Holy Spirit spake to them saying "...Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them." God had a far-reaching work for them to do. So the company of disciples were obedient to the instruction of the Spirit and, after further fasting and prayer, laid their hands on them and sent them forth. Their work on that journey brought in a regular influx of the Gentiles into the Church. They went far and several churches were raised up.

On another missionary journey they went through Phrygia and the regions of Galatia and would have gone into Asia but the Spirit forbade them to do it. Then they went to Mysia and assayed to go into Bithynia but the Spirit did not allow that either. Was this because God did not want those people to have the gospel of salvation? Nay, verily. God is extremely anxious that every person hear the saving gospel of the Son of God. However, He knows His times and seasons and knew the time and conditions were not ripe right then in those areas. Asia was evangelized later on and Churches raised up there and the book of Revelation is addressed to them. But for that time the Holy Spirit had other work for Paul and Silas to do so He led them into Macedonia where they had not originally planned to go and there was some great work done over there and Churches raised up. Paul said in Acts 20:28 that the Holy Ghost appointed the elders to be overseers in the Church. He not only appointed the overseers over the different congregations, but also endowed them with gifts and qualifications to fulfill their responsibilities and take care of the Church of God.

This was very beautiful and this was indeed the glory period of the early Church but it was not long to continue in this way. This was the period when the Holy Spirit was in full charge and directing all the affairs of the Church. In other words, He was the One who was letting or overseeing and supervising everything. "...Only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way." (II Thessalonians 2:7.) Though the Holy Spirit was in full charge then, the time was soon to come when He would be relegated to a "back seat" position and taken out of the way to make way for the "Man of sin" to come in.

A prophecy concerning this is found in Isaiah 63:18 and reads thus, "The people of thy holiness have possessed it but a little while:..." Again another prophecy concerning this same thing is found in Amos 8:9 and reads thus, "And it shall come to pass in that day, saith the Lord God, that I will cause the sun to go down at noon, and I will darken the earth in the clear day." In verse 11 it continues on to say that God would send a famine of hearing of the Word of the Lord and verse 12 says that they shall run to and fro to seek the Word of the Lord, and shall not find it. This, no doubt, had a direct fulfillment in Israel's night when the prophecy was cut off and there was no voice from God for 400 years between Malachi and Christ. But it also has a second direct fulfillment in what happened to the Church in the period we are now discussing in the second chapter of II Thessalonians.

In the first part of II Thessalonians 2:7, Paul said, "For the mystery of iniquity doth already work:..." The seeds had already been sown and were taking root and growing in Paul's day. In those early times of the Church, the ministry consisted of elders OR bishops (not elders AND bishops; the two were the same) and deacons. They were all humble men of God subject to the leadership of the Holy Spirit and there was no one among them seeking preeminence or to be lord over the others. However, this idea did surface among the apostles in their early days before the

Holy Spirit came—James and John desired the chief places; one on the right hand and one on the left hand of Jesus in His kingdom, and all the apostles debated among themselves at one time who would be the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. (Read Mark 10:35-45 and Luke 22:24-27). In these places Jesus taught them that was the way of the world and of the Gentiles and their kings and great men exercised lordship over them but it should not be so among them. And in Matthew 23:8 He nailed it down when He said, "...One is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren." The apostles got the point of that teaching and this thing never showed up in them anymore throughout their lifetime. They all remained just, humble men of God entirely submitted to the directions of the Holy Spirit. As one historian who has already been referred to said, "The Christian Church was in the beginning a community of brethren guided by a few of the brethren."

This was all very beautiful just like God makes everything beautiful and good; but Paul detected in his time the sprouting of the tares which had been sown among them and said the mystery of iniquity was already showing its symptoms. He called it the "mystery of iniquity." (II Thessalonians 2:7.) John wrote in III John 9 about one named Diotrephes who loved to have the preeminence among them and went on in verse 10 saying this man would not receive the brethren and forbade others from doing so and those who did he cast out of the Church. This was after Paul's time but he encountered some of the same things himself. He wrote in I Corinthians 4:18 saying, "Now some are puffed up, as though I would not come to you." How different this was from those humble men of God in the early days of the Christian Church.

The evidences of spiritual decline were manifest in the Churches of Asia in the Revelation. The Church at Ephesus was holding steadfastly to the doctrines and standards of Christ and His apostles but they had left their first love. Jesus reproved them for this and commanded that they repent and do their first works or He would come and remove their candlestick. (Revelation 2:1-7.) To keep the Word of God and hold Its standards (outwardly) and not possess the Spirit and love of God (inwardly) is to substitute the form for the fact of godliness. Christ called this a fallen church. It was to this very church that Paul gave his solemn charge in Acts 20:17-35 and admonished its elders with tears to be alert and watchful. He saw these things coming.

The Church at Laodicea (Revelation 3:14-22) had become very worldly and fallen to a very low spiritual level and become lukewarm and rating their spiritual status by their worldly prosperity. In a lukewarm state they were very obnoxious and nauseating to Christ and He was ready to spew them out.

Things were wrong in every church except Smyrna. They had false teachers and various kinds of wickedness. This low spiritual level and a high level of worldly prosperity combined to produce among the church leaders a lust for power and authority and preeminence and a competition for position. Soon every group of elders exalted one among them to a position of preeminence and to him was reserved the exclusive title of "Bishop" (before they were all bishops). Then the idea of ecclesiastical organization progressed a step farther and several bishops in an area formed a conference and the most influential bishop among them was elected to the position of Archbishop with authority over all the bishops in that diocese. Then as it progressed still farther one of the archbishops in a large district was exalted to the office of Metropolitan with authority over all the archbishops in his district. And so on and on until the Pope of Rome was declared to be the universal head of the church. He had authority over political kings and could humble and dethrone them and actually did this in some instances. Today the universal head of the church reigns with almost absolute authority over the world's largest congregation of 800 million souls.

This man sits in the temple of God showing himself that he is God. (II Thessalonians 2:4.) His title is "Vicar of the Son of God" and this title is lettered across his miter. But, as we set forth in the first part of this discussion and confirmed with definite scriptures, God's Word and God's Spirit were His two representatives (vicars) in the Church. So the title attributed to this ecclesiastical ruler is blasphemous and presumptuous. As this apostasy developed and the system produced, by each step of its progressive build-up, a human government over the church system, the Holy Spirit, who had formerly exercised leadership and governmental authority in the Church, was relegated to a lesser and lesser place and human preeminence took away His authority. He was taken away to make place for the man of sin (this human government system and its head, the supreme pontiff of Rome). This is what is referred to in Revelation 11:3 where it is said, "And I will give power unto my two witnesses, (the Word and Spirit) and they shall prophesy...clothed in sackcloth." This signifies that they would be in humiliation and mourning and would be relegated to the background and have a very limited operation. Their operation during all the time of the dark ages (1260 years) and the reign of the apostasy was just among the few who were faithful to the Lord Jesus Christ and His gospel and would not bow to human rule and faced the bitter persecution that came against them from this false, human, and apostate system.

And as the system of human organization progressed to its climax in the Roman Catholic hierarchy, those carnal, exalted, power and position-lusting men declared that God had given unto them the power to "Prescribe authoritative rules of faith and manners to govern the people of God." Thus they became a legislative and governing body for the church with power to enact laws and make decrees which they did and many of which were carnal ordinances and in direct opposition to the New Testament teachings of the pure truth of the gospel of salvation. Thus the Word (the other of the two witnesses (vicars) of Christ in the Church) was taken away and denied its rightful place in the Church.

It has been pointed out earlier that a body of religious worshippers must have both the Word of God and the Spirit of God working among them with full liberty in order for it to be the Church of God. Since this vast, apostate system to which the whole world bowed and worshipped, had neither the Word or Spirit it could not be of God but was totally human and of hellish and devilish origin. Therefore it is said, "Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders." This was Satan's substitute church and directly in opposition to the true Church of God in the earth and its head, Jesus Christ.

HOME REMEDIES

Question: Please discuss I Timothy 5:23 and does this scripture teach the use of home remedies, etc.?

Answer: I Timothy 5:23 reads thus: "Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities." First, I will apply the teachings of this same man, Paul, in another text to this same man, Timothy, found in II Timothy 2:15, "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, **rightly dividing the word of truth.**" Surely it is necessary to rightly divide the word of truth in this text the same as in any other text.

The Bible has quite a little bit to say about wine in both the Old and New Testaments. If we use the term "wine" indiscriminately we will run into numerous dead ends and difficult complications. There was fermented wine which the Bible condemns generally in every reference to it. Proverbs 20:1 says, "Wine is a mocker,

strong drink is raging; and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise." Proverbs 21:17 says that he that loveth wine shall not be rich. In Proverbs 23:29 it asks who has woe, sorrow, contentions, babblings, wounds without cause and redness of eyes? Verse 30 says, "They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine." Then verses 31 and 32 add this admonition, "Look not thou 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." All these texts and many others clearly refer to wine as an intoxicant in an advanced state of fermentation and is stoutly condemned and is strongly admonished against throughout the Scriptures.

There was also a sweet or fresh wine (grape juice) which is also referred to as "Wine" in the Scriptures with no distinguishment. Therefore we cannot arbitrarily accept the argument of some that "Wine is wine and it is all the same. Wine just means wine wherever you see it." It would be difficult to fathom the idea that in this place Paul was instructing Timothy to drink something that was so strongly condemned in other scriptures in the Bible. Neither can I fathom the idea that Jesus Himself would have passed to His disciples at the institution of the Lord's Supper a cup filled with this abominable, condemned substance and declare it to be His blood of the New Testament which is shed for the remission of sins. He didn't. But He called it the "fruit of the vine"—Luke 22:18, Mark 14:25 and Matthew 26:29.

I realize that everyone may not concur with my conclusions on this text in question but my conclusion, based on the foregoing scriptures, is that Paul was instructing Timothy to drink grape juice (the fresh, sweet variety) as it would be good for his stomach and system in general. It is commonly known that grape juice is an excellent health food—good for the stomach, good for the digestive tract, and a good blood-purifying agent. The water in the area may not have been all that good and pure and it would help his health to drink some wine (grape juice) along instead of water all the time. It seems from the text that he was instructing him to discontinue water altogether and drink grape juice (wine) instead. But I do not think of this as a remedy such as medication or pills or home remedies for an ailment, but for him to avail himself of the good health food that was available.

The New Testament scriptures abound with teachings for saints to trust God with every phase and area of our lives (spiritual and physical—soul and body) and offers much incentive for that in multitudes of healings of the people by Christ and His apostles and others and the promise of its continuance for all believers throughout the dispensation—Mark 16:14-18. God's Word gives positive instructions to the saints as to what to they should do when they become ill—"...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;..." James 5:14.

THINK THE FIERY TRIAL NOT STRANGE

Question: Please explain I Peter 4:12 which reads, "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you." Also I Peter 1:6, which says, "Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations." Please explain in detail about "strange thing happened unto you"—what all this implies and "season"—how long a time the Bible means when it said "for a season."

Answer: These two texts are closely linked together and are component parts of the general teachings in the Scriptures on the doctrine of God's corrections, chastisements, and preparation of His children for heaven and also for living their lives more to His glory. Trials are a normal part of a Christian life and we should not think them strange when they come. The devil would like to get us to consider them this way. If he can succeed in this, he has gained a great advantage. He would like to have us think that no one else ever had a trial like we are having. That kind of thinking is very devastating to the person who accepts it and it produces a self-pitying, self-sympathizing attitude which is one of the most destructive things to faith and the spiritual experience. I admonish this questioner and everyone else who reads this to resist these kinds of thoughts with all the power God gives you. And if that is not sufficient, humble your heart and earnestly pray that God will add to your faith and increase His power in your soul to be able to resist that kind of thinking until it flees from you. This is one of the most important places where the Christian must fight the good fight of faith and lay hold on eternal life.

I Corinthians 10:13 says, "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man:..." Then you can be sure that whatever kind of trial or temptation you are having, there are others having that same kind of trial (perhaps many) and there are, no doubt, people living around you who have already overcome that same kind of thing who could be a help to you if you would confide in them. I Peter 5:9 says, "Whom [the devil—verse 8] resist steadfast in the faith, **KNOWING THAT THE SAME AFFLICTIONS ARE ACCOMPLISHED IN YOUR BRETHREN** that are in the world."

Every trial or temptation that our heavenly Father permits to come to us has its special purpose and is a part of God's purging, purifying process in our lives. We may think we are pretty good folks and doing quite well in our Christian lives, but God looks down in the depth of our hearts and sees something there that would not fit in heaven and He could not take us to heaven with, so He goes to work to purge that out of us because He wants us in heaven and the trials that come to us are His process of doing this.

A few select texts from God's Word will confirm all that has been said. Job 23:10, "But he knoweth the way that I take: when he hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold. Psalms 66:10, "For thou, O God, hast proved us: thou hast tried us, as silver is tried." Isaiah 48:10, "Behold, I have refined thee, but not with silver; I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction." Malachi 3:3, "And he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness." I Peter 1:7, "That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ."

Now I would like to add this comment in regard to Malachi 3:3—purging and purifying the **SONS OF LEVI**. Levi was the head of the Levitical Priesthood in ancient, literal Israel. Only those who were of the tribe of Levi were permitted to administer about the holy things and offer sacrifices and they had to go through a process of ceremonial cleansing before they were eligible. The text in Malachi 3:3 is actually a prophecy of Christ and His work and the effects of His gospel and therefore could have no possible reference to the literal sons of Levi. But Israel after the flesh was a type of Israel after the spirit—the New Testament Church (spiritual Israel) in this dispensation. And the sons of Levi (the priesthood of ancient Israel) were a type of the spiritual priesthood (us) in this dispensation. Salvation through faith in Christ makes every redeemed soul a priest unto God—Revelation 1:6 and 5:10 and I Peter 2:9. Therefore this purging and purifying of Malachi 3:3 is going on

in US by the Word of God (the gospel of Jesus Christ the Son of God) and the operation of the Spirit of God in our hearts and lives.

This brings us to the consideration of the second verse in this question (I Peter 1:6) "...for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations." The key words in this text are the words "IF NEED BE." This is very important in understanding this question and the whole scope of God's dealings with us to purge and purify us and prepare us for heaven. Let us realize that God knows us better than we know ourselves and knows things about us that we never knew we had on hand. Psalms 19:12 says, "Who can understand his errors? Cleanse thou me from secret faults." We are certainly not so constituted as to be able to see ourselves as God sees us until He reveals ourselves to us. And He usually does this by shaping up certain circumstances in our lives and sending some special, peculiar kind of trial to us which will touch the thing He wants to purge out of our lives and bring it out and make it manifest itself.

The reason for this is that our will and consent is involved in all of God's dealings with our souls and our wills cannot possibly act in regard to things we have not seen or do not know about. Hence the text says, "IF NEED BE." It is God who determines when we need a trial and what kind of a trial we need to deal with something in our lives which He sees and maybe we don't.

The season referred to here in this text does not refer to any specified period of time such as a day, a week, a month or a year but just whatever time is necessary to accomplish the purpose of the trial. If we will just humbly, quickly and wholeheartedly submit to God and give Him the full consent of our will for Him to work in us as He sees fit to purge out of us the thing that has surfaced and manifested itself, we can shorten the duration of the trial. Failure to do this will prolong the duration of the trial. So the very best thing any of us can possibly do when a trial or test hits us is to quickly submit ourselves to God without any reservation and give Him a free hand in working His works in us. However, in a more extended sense the "season" here might refer to our entire lives because the working of our own salvation is surely a lifetime job.

PLACE OF WOMEN/WIVES

Question: What is the meaning of I Corinthians 11:1-16?

Answer: I will not here insert the full text of this passage for the sake of space; but I will suggest that each reader open your Bible to this place and read the entire passage for the purpose of obtaining good, clear knowledge of what it says before reading these comments. However, I will be inserting key and guiding verses as I proceed to construct my comments.

First, we must realize and recognize that there were a number of irregularities both in their collective worship and also in their personal and private lives in this church at Corinth. The reason for this was that it was a brand-new church, freshly converted from heathenism and a number of their heathen customs and practices were still with them. Much of this First Corinthian epistle is an endeavor by the apostle Paul to correct these abuses and clear them up on these things. This passage is no exception to this and falls in this category. One will have little difficulty in discerning the difference in the tenor between the first and second Corinthian epistles. The first is full of reproofs, admonitions, etc., while the second has numbers of endearing, encouraging and commendatory statements because they had given heed to the admonitions of the first and cleared themselves. See II Corinthians 7:8-13.

Now to proceed with a discussion of the passage in question. I Corinthians 11:3 says, "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." This is a basic foundation verse because it establishes the chain of authority which is basic throughout this passage. The order is God, Christ, Man, Woman. But the relationship between the man and the woman in their order of authority needs to be qualified a little, I think. And the reason I do think this is found in verse 10 where it says a woman should have "...power on her head..." and the margin here says "A covering is sign she is under the power of her husband." This makes it clear to me that the overall teaching in the Scriptures is in reference to the husband and his wife. I do not subscribe to the idea of the general inferiority of women as such, to men as such. I see that the only man my wife is to be subject to is myself. Oh, of course, I concede in this that a woman in a church congregation is to be subject to her pastor whether that pastor be a man or a woman; and the same with her boss if she is a working woman; and the same with magistrates and rulers. But in all such cases this woman is to be subject to this man, not as an inferior woman subjecting to a superior man, but for the position that man holds. And those subjections are limited and qualified.

Then verse 4 enters into the realm of spiritual worship and religious service. This verse says if a man prays or prophesies with his head covered it dishonors his head. According to verse 3, his head is Christ. There is clearly something dishonoring to Christ for a man to cover his head. Verse 7 says he is the image and glory of God. He is to reflect that glory by having his head uncovered. Then verse 5 says that if a woman prays or prophesies with her head uncovered it dishonors her head. Her head is the man (her husband according to verse 10 with marginal reading.) Verses 5 and 6 state that for a woman to have her head uncovered is all the same as if she were shorn or shaven which would identify her with the lewd, immoral women which would dishonor her husband.

It was customary practice among these Gentile people from time immemorial for their women to wear veils for head covering when in public. Paul seems to be finding it necessary here to be doing some adjusting to their custom (to them who were without the law, he became without law; and he became all things to all men that he might by all means save some—I Corinthians 9:21-22) as he did on different occasions in order to gain them. And verses 4 and 7 perhaps refer to the covering of the head with veils. This was necessary, under the circumstances, because of the deep-rooted traditional practice of this among these people, for they would be very reluctant to accept the gospel without this. However, Paul goes right ahead to set forth the gospel standard on this point. He says in verse 15, "But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for her hair is given her for a covering (Margin: "vail"). Then it is evident here that the New Testament standard for New Testament saints is long hair which God has given her for her head covering (vail).

Verses 8 and 9 and 11 and 12 simply refer to the creation of the male and female and how the chain of authority was established. The man was created first; then the woman was taken from the man and brought to him for his wife. But ever since that first pair, every man of the race has been conceived in the womb of a woman and has come forth from her and the same is true of every woman. Neither men nor women could ever have been here except by the union of a man and a woman who were here before them, so there is absolutely no room for boasting of either of them over the other.

Now returning to verse 10 a little. Verse 9 says the woman was created for the man and verse 10 says that because of this she should have power on her head (Margin: A covering is sign that she is under the power of her husband). Verse 15 declares this God-given covering to be the woman's long hair. And the standard for

godly women in the Church of God in this New Testament age is declared to be long hair which they wear as a sign of subjection to their husbands, which is another God-given requirement for godly women in this New Testament age.

The phrase "Because of the angels" in verse 10; I don't know if I can make any good commentary on that. I will give the best that occurs to me at this time. Hebrews 12:22 says that when we come to Mount Sion (the New Testament Church of God) we come "...to an innumerable company of angels." Hebrews 1:14 says concerning the angels that they are all "...ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation." The thought that is a thriller to me is that every time the saints meet together (whether many or few) there is always a generous number of angels present to minister to the needs of the saints who are there and they fly hither and yon distributing to the needs of everyone there, meeting their individual needs even though the message did not deal directly with that point. But this is not the only function of these ministering angels. They also accompany us about wherever we go observing the needs of our individual lives in the home and elsewhere, observing that wife and mother and how she conducts herself, how she offers her life, how well she is measuring up to the truth and submitting to her husband, etc. Because of this the text says she needs the sign showing her submission to her husband. The angels are looking on everything and are able, ready and willing to help you and administer to any lack or need you have. It is the same with the husband, too, but this particular verse was referring to the wife so I trailed off on it that way.

One more point now—verse 16, "...If any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the churches of God." There is a broad area of contention on this text which I consider to be so unnecessary. Moffit's translation says on the last part of this verse, "Well, I acknowledge no other mode of worship." And Good-speed's translation says at this place, "I for my part recognize no other practice in worship than this." These two translations correspond well with the way I interpret verse 16 in my King James Bible. It is spelled out in black and white in the 15th verse that long hair is the covering for her head and according to verse 10 (margin) it is a sign that she is under the power of her husband. This is all plainly taught. Therefore, if a man is contentious against this he would be contending for short hair and the taking away of the God-given sign of her subjection to her husband and we recognize no such custom in the Church of God. The standard held in the New Testament Church of God for all time, then and now, is long hair and submission to their husbands for all godly women.

TO WHAT EXTENT DOES GOD KNOW THE FUTURE IN OUR LIVES?

Question: To what extent does God know the future in our individual lives? Does He know our ultimate end? Did God know absolutely which choice Adam and Eve would make in the garden?

Answer: I will say that the questioner has asked a difficult question here and is treading in far-out territory. When we finite creatures with our little finite minds endeavor to analyze and categorize God, we can't go very far until we are left swinging in midair. I am sure I will not be able to satisfy the mind of this questioner.

One thing we can know for certain is that God knows everything that is going on in our lives—words, thoughts, deeds, attitudes and feelings—and absolutely nothing is hidden from Him. Hebrews 4:13 says, "...all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do." Ecclesiastes 12:14 says, "...God shall

bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing,..." Then it is certain there is nothing secret to God or hidden from Him. Jesus was a jump ahead of His adversaries all the time because He knew what they were thinking in their hearts before they said or did anything and He out-maneuvered them at every turn.

As to just how thoroughly God knows the future of our individual lives, I am not able to say. But I believe we have scriptures to prove that we have something to do with that ourselves. Galatians 6:7 says, "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." Every person is charting his own future day by day right now. In Matthew 7:2 Jesus said, "...and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again." Whatever we give out in our dealings with other people will come back to us just like we put it out. Therefore, we should all be really particular to put out such things in our lives that we will be glad to see coming back. Our futures are all affected by our choices and decisions we make now and are determined by the seed we are sowing now. It seems clear to me that we are all on trial and probation here and God lays out His course of life for us and if we walk in it He will bless us and if we don't, He won't. But the choice is ours. I feel that I can say with certainty that if we take God's way and commit our lives into His hands that He surveys our lives far enough ahead of us to prepare us for any eventualities and protect us from any traps or snares the enemy has set for our feet down the line. Psalms 139:3 says, "Thou compassed (winnoweth: margin) my path..." This indicates that the Lord goes ahead of us in our path and winnows out the things there that He wants us to meet with and this confirms what has been said before.

Does God know our ultimate end? I am sure everyone will not agree with me when I say this but I do not believe He does. I am not at this time convinced of that. I do not in any way diminish or discount God's omniscience in saying this. I recognize that God has the power to know the ultimate end of every one of the billions of people of earth but I do not feel that He chooses to exercise that power. In other words, I believe God knows everything He wants to know and needs to know to properly handle His affairs and deal with every man as He would in all fairness and mercy. Let me say it this way, if I believe that God has the power to know everything; then by the same token I believe He has the power to put out of His mind anything He wants to put out of it and to not know anything He doesn't want to know. And in the very nature of things, I believe this is one thing He does not choose to know; at least up to a certain point. One brother said he was praying about this very thing and asking Him if He really knew everything. And He said God answered him and said "I know everything I want to know." That seems to me a reasonable premise in this regard.

It would seem to me that if God allowed Himself to know our ultimate end, it would be difficult for Him to deal with men as the Bible tells us that He does to bring them to salvation. And in my little mind I would have difficulty associating much meaning to the command to His disciples to evangelize the world and take the gospel to every creature and all who will believe will be saved and all that believe not shall be damned. What meaning would this have if He knew beforehand what would be the ultimate end of each person. Read Job 33:14-30, which describes the different ways and means God uses in His dealings with men. Verses 29 and 30 say God works all these things often with man to bring back his soul from the pit and to enlighten him with the light of the living. What meaning would all this have if God knew they would not be drawn back from the pit anyway. It is clear in the Scriptures that salvation, in its provision, is universal (Christ tasted death for every man—Hebrews 2:9) and is offered unto all on a "whosoever will" bases and the choice is up to each individual as to whether he will accept it and be saved or reject it and be lost in the end.

Did God know absolutely which choice Adam and Eve would make in the garden? I am fully conscious that God thoroughly understood and knew the risk involved in creating man as He did; a free acting agent with the power of choice and free exercise of will. He fully understood the possibility of sin when He gave them the commandment He did. But that commandment gave workability to their exercise and free choice. A service of free choice, prompted by the free will of the individual, is the only thing that would satisfy the yearning in the heart of God for love and companionship from a moral, intelligent being. He created man an intelligent and moral being like Himself, capable of responding to love and giving love in return and thus fulfilling that yearning that God had. He could have made man a robot with power only to do as he was programmed to do but that would not have fulfilled the deep yearning for love and companionship that God had.

This would have been the only way that He could have eliminated the possibility of sin. God knew this so He made ample provision for such a situation, in the event it happened, in the plan of salvation which He made. And the plan of salvation is so complete, perfect, comprehensive and all-encompassing as to meet every need of mankind that it certainly demonstrates that God knew well what He was about when He set it up. To say that God absolutely knew what Adam and Eve would do and all the doleful and devastating consequences of it all would be to reduce the whole human and spiritual drama to a kind of war-game situation between God and the devil to see which one could outdo the other and to set man up in the middle as a target to catch the full blunt of the whole operation and as a prize for the winner. It is also to say that God's deep yearning for a family and love and companionship overcame His better judgment and He just went ahead and made man anyway.

I do not, I cannot think of God in that way. I know God could know everything if He chose to, but I believe He has wisdom to not know some things and it is a mutual advantage to Him and us for Him to not know those things. God never created man for a target between Him and the devil. He made him upright (Ecclesiastes 7:29), in His own image and after His own likeness (Genesis 1:26-27) and wanted him to stay that way. The fellowship and communication between them in the garden was perfect and sweet and God wanted it to continue that way. But man, by an act of his own will and by his own choice, believed the lie of the devil and was deceived into disobeying the commandment they had and lost their righteous estate and fell into sin which changed the whole picture. Then God set about to bring His plan of salvation into action which He did approximately 4000 years later in His Son, Jesus Christ.

REPENTANCE

Question: Will you please discuss REPENTANCE; what is it, etc.?

Answer: This is a legitimate and good question and I am glad it has been presented because I fear there may be a number of others who do not know what genuine REPENTANCE is. Therefore I discuss it cheerfully and freely.

Repentance is very basic to salvation and to the gospel. In the preaching of John the Baptist, he said in Matthew 3:2, "...Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Jesus preached this same exact message (Matthew 4:17; Mark 1:14-15). We see here that repentance is a basic requirement for entering into the kingdom of God; being saved. In Mark 1:15, Jesus said, "...Repent ye, and believe the gospel." This scripture takes on strong emphasis in the light of another statement of Jesus in Matthew 21:32, "...ye,...repented not afterward, that ye might believe..." These scriptures teach us that a lack in our repentance is an obstacle to faith or believing

the gospel for salvation. A defect and lack in repentance may account for the shallow experience that some have and their lack of ability to live victoriously and triumphantly in the severe situations of life and to exercise faith and trust God fully in life and death situations. I hold the position that a full and complete repentance will produce a saving faith. "When thy soul the perfect price hath paid, God will send the holy fire." When God sees that a soul has genuinely, completely repented, totally renounced, rejected and forsaken all sin, and turned to Him with the whole heart, He will give him faith to "...believe to the saving of the soul." (Hebrews 10:39.) Faith to believe the gospel and be save is not a of us but is a gift of God (Ephesians 2:8) and He withholds it until the repentance is complete and then He gives it. It would be easy, therefore, to discern the supreme importance of complete, genuine repentance to our salvation and to our relationship with God thereafter.

In Luke 13:1-5, Jesus referred to two groups who had miserably and violently perished. Then He said to those present "...Think ye that they were sinners above all men...?" He then told them His own judgment in the question: "...Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." Ah, let us grasp the urgency of the situation here. It is repent or perish. Acts 17:30 says, He "...now commandeth all men every where to repent." The call of the gospel is to all men; rich, poor, high, low, Jews, Gentiles, all nations, kindreds, tongues and people. The only way that one can enter into the kingdom of God is to "Repent, and believe the gospel."

Having discussed the importance of repentance, and it is supremely important to the extent of repenting or perishing, let us consider some of what it is. Cruden's Concordance says of repent or repentance, that it is "used of regret and sorrow for having done some deed." He further says, "Godly repentance, which means such sorrow as shall cause a complete change of action." One definition says, "A turning away in heart and practice from that which is forbidden to that which is required." One describes it as "An amendment of life." Perhaps the best and simplest definition was given by a young boy in a class. The teacher asked if anyone in the class could tell her what repentance was. One boy held up his hand so she called on him to explain. He said that it was being sorry for your sins. The teacher thought that was an excellent answer but asked if anyone else wanted to say anything and another boy held up his hand. The teacher said surely he could not add anything to what the other boy had said and he said, "Yes, I can, too." So the teacher called on him and he said, "It is being sorry enough for your sins to quit them." Ah, there you have it folks. But let us see how the Scripture speaks in regard to all these definitions of repentance that men have given, because the Scriptures are the final authority.

Ezekiel 18:30 says, "...Repent, and turn yourselves from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin." Verse 31 says further, "Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed; and make you a new heart and a new spirit: for why will ye die, O house of Israel?" Did you notice in these verses how all-encompassing repentance is? One of the key words here is "ALL." "Turn yourselves from ALL your transgressions" and "Cast away from you ALL your transgressions." Folks, it is all or nothing with God; no little pet sins, no secret corners in the heart we don't want to let God into, no reservations, but a total, complete renunciation and forsaking of all sin out of our lives. Proverbs 28:13 says, "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy." Repentance involves an open confession of sins and then a forsaking of them. I John 1:9 says, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." God has not promised us mercy and forgiveness of sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness of life, and we have no claim on Him for this, neither can we

believe for it to bring peace to our souls until we have openly and freely confessed our sins to God and forsaken them and asked for His mercy and forgiveness.

Neither is confession of our sins to God sufficient if in our sinning we have wronged or injured other people. Confession and restitution must also be made to them. Repentance also requires our straightening up our lives with other people as far as is possible to do so. Ezekiel 33:14-15 says, "Again, when I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; if he turn from his sin, and do that which is lawful and right; If the wicked one restore the pledge, give again that he had robbed, walk in the statutes of life, without committing iniquity; he shall surely live, he shall not die." In Luke 19:8, Zacchaeus stood before Jesus and confessed Him as "Lord" and said that if he had defrauded any man he would restore him fourfold and Jesus told him in verse nine that salvation was come to his house that day. In Matthew 5:21-26, Jesus discussed the matter of our dealings with a wronged or offended brother. He said if you approach God's altar to present an offering and remember that a brother has something against thee, leave and go in search of the offended or wronged brother and confess your wrong to your brother and go all out to make it right with him and be reconciled to him. Read II Corinthians 7:10-11 for a description of the fruits of repentance prompted by godly sorrow, a carefulness of life, a clearing of yourselves, an indignation against the enemy of your soul and all the wrong he has involved you in against God and men and a vehement desire to be right and at peace with God and your fellowmen. This, I think, gives a pretty general coverage of what repentance is.

There is another thing which this lesson would not be complete without. That is the matter of our forgiving the wrongs of other people against ourselves. Many are limping around without power to live a successful, consistent Christian life on this account. In Matthew 6:12, Jesus taught us to pray, "...Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors." An important part of a seeking sinner's repentance is to forgive from his heart every person whom he is holding anything against. He will never find peace with God until he does. It is a very important part of obtaining salvation and after one has obtained salvation, it is a very important part of maintaining that salvation to keep a forgiving heart and attitude and never allow any malice, grudge, bitterness, resentment or hard feelings toward any person to get into your heart. It will disturb your peace with God and result in you having some more repenting to do. God bless you all.

PRINCE OF PERSIA

Question: Please discuss Daniel 10:13. Who was this "Prince of Persia" and how could he withstand a divine messenger?

Answer: I will first insert the full text of Daniel 10:13. "But the prince of the kingdom of Persia withstood me one and twenty days: but, lo, Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me; and I remained there with the kings of Persia."

For several verses prior to this, Daniel had set himself to mourn in total fasting and prayer before God over a certain thing that had been revealed to him by God (Verse 1). He chastened himself in this manner taking no food or water for three full weeks (21 days). Then at the end of this time, a divine messenger appeared unto him in a vision (verse 12) and announced to him that his words had been heard on the very first day and he had come on account of his words. Then in verse 13 he explained why he had been so long getting there; the Prince of Persia withstood him for one and twenty days.

When he had finished his mission with Daniel, he said down in verse 20, "...now will I return to fight with the prince of Persia:..." From this verse and verse 13 and other related scriptures and incidents, it appears evident that this Prince of Persia is a very important person in the drama that is being enacted here; and indeed he is. So let us see a little how he fits in the picture and it will help us in explaining and understanding some other points in the question.

The first four verses of the 45th chapter of Isaiah are very revealing of Cyrus who is declared in Daniel 10:1 to be the king (Prince) of Persia. Though he was a heathen king, God called him His anointed. God chose this man and put His hand on him and he was dedicated by God and set apart for a specific and definite purpose: His work to liberate the children of Israel who were held captive by the Babylonians. God had judged them for their disobedience and decreed that they would be captives in Babylon for 70 years. Now the time of their captivity was about up and God was arranging and maneuvering for their deliverance and He had chosen the Prince of Persia and anointed him to accomplish this project. He told him that He would hold his hand, subdue nations before him, go before him, break in pieces the gates of brass and the gates would not be shut. This was certainly a sure guarantee of victory. Read Isaiah 45:1-3. Then in verse 4 we get a little insight into how close God actually got with this man, Cyrus, in that He called him by his name and gave him a surname, etc. And He explained that this was all for the sake of Jacob His servant and for Israel His elect. This makes it altogether clear that all His relationship and work with Cyrus was in behalf of the children of Israel and their deliverance. He was to conquer the Babylonish kingdom and liberate the children of Israel.

This Cyrus did, but at the same time the divine messenger (probably Gabriel) came to Daniel (Daniel 10:13) and announced that he had been withstood 21 days by the Prince of Persia. It appears that Cyrus perhaps was halting in his decision and hesitating and perhaps thinking it to be a massive undertaking, which it certainly was, and he needed the presence and encouragement and support of the divine messenger with him to help him to decide to carry out the plan of God for him. But when Michael came, he left him with Cyrus and he went on to Daniel to answer his prayer. Adam Clarke expresses this same thought in general in his comments on Daniel 10:13. Then on the basis of this reasoning and conclusion it would seem that from the thought stated in Daniel 10:13 of the Prince of Persia **WITHSTANDING** the heavenly messenger, we would get the thought of him **DETAINING** him. The urgency of the need, in the face of the halting indecision of Cyrus, demanded that he stay with him until Michael arrived to take charge of him and relieve the first heavenly messenger to go to Daniel. Therefore we are not to suppose that Cyrus actually rose up to oppose conflict or combat with him to try to turn him back but just had the need of his presence to bolster him and encourage him in what the will of God was for him.

That was a magnanimous undertaking that lay before him there could be no possible question. Babylon, the seat of government of the Babylonish kingdom, was surrounded by a massive, impregnable wall with gates of solid brass. This must be overcome and the city taken. This was surely sufficient to cause even men of strong spirit and courage to have second thoughts about attacking such a formidable fortress. But with the divine inspiration and anointing of the Almighty God upon him and Michael with him, he undertook the venture. The Euphrates River flowed under the wall and through the city. There was no other possible entrance but this. Cyrus and his engineers, by the inspiration of Almighty God, conceived the idea of diverting the channel for the river. Then he cut it through into the main channel and turned the course of the water. When the water in the river had flowed on down to expose the river bed, Cyrus' army rushed through into the city and up to the

palace gates. Adam Clarke says that when the king heard the tumult outside, he ordered the gates to be opened to see what was going on and when the gates were opened, Cyrus' men rushed in and took charge of the palace, slew the king and victory was theirs.

Cyrus was now master of all the nations of the world. (II Chronicles 36:23.) He said the Lord God of heaven who gave him all this, had told him to build Him an house in Jerusalem. He made a proclamation that all of God's people among them could go up for this project, and he issued a decree in writing (Ezra 1:1-4) which was entered in the record books. Seventeen years later in the sixth chapter of Ezra, Darius, the king at that time, found the decree of Cyrus in the records and he made another decree that even extended Cyrus' and made more provisions. About 62 years later, when Artaxerxes was king he made a more generous decree yet in favor of the Jews. And finally in Nehemiah the command was to rebuild the wall and restore the streets of Jerusalem and to adopt laws and establish their nation.

All this was accomplished under God through the Prince of Persia, Cyrus, whom God had anointed and dedicated to this purpose.

DOCTRINE OF JUSTIFICATION

Question: Will you please discuss the doctrine of justification?

Answer: *Justification* is defined in the dictionary as (1) the act of justifying; and (2) The condition or fact of being justified. *Justifier* is defined as "One who justifies." *Justify* is theologically defined in the dictionary as "To free man of the guilt and penalty attached to grievous sin."

Justification is the legal aspect of our salvation; the absolving from guilt by the forgiveness of all of our sins. Psalms 103:3 says of the Lord God "Who forgiveth all thine iniquities;..." As the dictionary defines "Justifier" as "One who justifies," so the Scripture says in Romans 8:33, that it is God that justifieth. Hence, God is the Justifier who justifies sinful men on certain grounds and conditions and for specific reasons. Psalms 103:10-12 says, "He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him. As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us." The reason and grounds for God not dealing with us after our sins nor rewarding us according to our iniquities will be seen as we proceed. Another scripture confirming God as the Justifier is Isaiah 43:25. "I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins." Again in Hebrews 8:12, speaking of His new covenant He would make with the people, God said, "For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more." In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established. (Matthew 18:16; John 8:17.) So these texts are sufficient to establish God as the Justifier and He is the only Justifier. If we obtain justification for our sins at all, we must receive it directly from Him. So now we will move on to discuss the grounds on which He can righteously justify us; blot out all our transgressions and remember our sins no more.

Since all humankind was blighted by sin as a result of the disobedience of our fore parents (Adam and Eve) in the Garden of Eden and their sinful state separated all of them from God (Isaiah 59:1-2), there existed no point of contact between God and man and no means of approach to Him; consequently no remedy for the doleful condition. But God was not satisfied with that condition because He loved mankind and wanted fellowship with him. So He set about to devise a means of

reconciliation. In Isaiah 59:16 we read this, "And he saw that there was no...intercessor: therefore his arm brought salvation unto him; and his righteousness, it sustained him." God must bring this about in a way to protect His own character and sustain His own righteousness, holiness and justice. God Himself had decreed a penalty of death for sin. (Genesis 2:17; Ezekiel 18:4; Romans 5:12 and 6:23.) Therefore the acceptable sacrifice for sin must be one subject to death and the shedding of blood—"...Without shedding of blood there is no remission." (Hebrews 9:22.) But man could not accomplish this for himself because the sin sacrifice must be perfect without spot or blemish (Leviticus 22:19-20), and no man could qualify here because "...All have sinned and come short of the glory of God." Romans 3:23. (See also Romans 5:12.)

So when God looked over the entire human race and saw no man who was eligible to make an atonement for the sins of the race and qualify to stand in the breach between God and man and act as a mediator, go-between, intercessor between them, He never abandoned the project and gave it up as a bad job. He made Him a man (Jesus) Who accomplished the redemption of the human race. (Isaiah 59:16 and Revelation 5:1-10.) "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." John 3:16-17. Ah! folks, here is our redemption and salvation and our ONLY redemption and salvation because Jesus, the Son of God, offered Himself to God a sacrifice for our sins "...as of a lamb without blemish and without spot" I Peter 1:19. (See also Hebrews 9:14.)

Romans 3:24-26 says, "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." There could be no compromise here if God were to maintain His own character of holiness, righteousness and justice. The full penalty for sin (death) must be paid and it must be paid by One who was eligible and qualified to pay it, having no stain of sin upon Him and no spot in His character if God could be justified in forgiving sin and justifying sinful men. This was the great problem of redemption but Jesus solved it and bridged the gap by offering a total and acceptable sacrifice for sin and dying in our stead and His shed blood was a sufficient redemption for sin. Now, under this arrangement, God can still be God as holy, righteous, and just as He was before and still justify sinful men who will humble their hearts, confess, forsake and repent of their sins, believe Jesus Christ as God's Son and their Saviour and put their faith in the merits of the all-atoning blood of Jesus Christ and that ONLY for the forgiveness of their sins. Jesus bore our sins in His own body on the tree (I Peter 2:24), He tasted death for every man (Hebrews 2:9), and God placed on Him the iniquity of us all (Isaiah 53:6). Therefore God can have mercy on them who are out of the way and freely forgive their sins and blot out all their transgressions and remember them no more when they come unto Him by Jesus Christ. This is total and complete justification by God for Jesus' sake.

Romans 5:1 says, "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Peace with God is the result of justification. It is sin that breeds the quarrel between man and God and separates us from Him. (Isaiah 59:1-2.) When sins are forgiven and blotted out, the cause of the enmity is removed and peace is restored. This peace is through Jesus, the Mediator of the new covenant. Jesus has qualified as the One and only Mediator between God and man and to be our Intercessor at the throne of grace. We can come unto God through

Him in His name and in no other way. Read the following scriptures: John 14:6; Romans 8:34; I Timothy 2:5; Hebrews 9:15; Hebrews 8:6; Hebrews 12:24; and Hebrews 7:25. Jesus is right now appearing in the presence of God for us mediating and making intercession for all who will come unto God by Him.

But there is one more thing I must add before I close this little article. Let us not settle too cheaply on this matter of New Testament justification. We have dealt much on the thought of God forgiving all of our sins, blotting out all our transgressions, canceling out all our past life and justifying us and declaring us righteous on the basis of Christ's righteousness and our faith in Him. Wonderful!! But this is only one part of God's process of justification. When He has done this, He then imparts to the justified person a power and grace to have victory over sin and to live a life free from sin. In Acts 13:39 we read, "And by him all that believe are justified FROM all things, FROM which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses." The key word in this text is the word "FROM." God forgave sins under the law of Moses when the required sacrifice was offered. Man was forgiven but that was all. He received no power to enable him to live without sinning so he had to bring his sacrifice again and again. But in justification under grace he is justified FROM those sins when they are forgiven and receives power and grace to live victoriously over sin.

SANCTIFICATION

Question: Will you please discuss the subject of sanctification?

Answer: The questioner in this case has asked for a discussion on repentance, justification and sanctification. This is a good comprehensive question covering the three major steps of our salvation. The first step in salvation is a genuine repentance for sins committed. When this is thorough, complete and genuine, then God injects a faith into the penitent, broken heart to believe in Jesus Christ and His blood atonement for his forgiveness, salvation and the washing away of his sins. Then God, for Christ's sake, justifies the repentant sinner (absolves him from guilt of his committed sins) and counts him innocent in His sight because of his faith in what Christ did.

The forgiving of sins committed is not the sum total to the solution of the sin problem. There is another type of sin we did not commit that every person has, which cannot be repented of because we did not commit it and are in no way responsible for it. It is a genealogical thing. It is transmitted from generation to generation from Adam clear on down through the generations of humankind until now. Sin brought about a change in man's moral nature. In God's moral likeness and image, as he was created, he was possessed of "...righteousness and true holiness." Ephesians 4:24. (See also Colossians 3:10.) Now, instead of this "righteousness and true holiness," he becomes depraved and corrupt in his moral nature. (Ephesians 4:22, 25-31.) The fact that the moral likeness and image of God was effaced from the human soul by this means, is evidenced by the fact that when we obtain the salvation of the Lord Jesus Christ we are said to be RENEWED in that image. (Colossians 3:10.) In other words, it is a restoration to the image of God—hence we conclude it had been lost. As a result of this the moral nature of all mankind was affected in this way and became depraved and corrupt. Sin has become universal as a result of the sin of this first pair. (Romans 3:23; Romans 5:12; Romans 11:32; Galatians 3:22.)

The Scriptures conclude something about sin being hereditary, a depravity of nature to be handed down through the generations of mankind from the original

parent. Genesis 5:3 says that "...Adam...begat a son in his own likeness, after his image;... His moral likeness and image was now depraved and corrupt and he could only transmit what he had. For a thing to be hereditary it must be inherent in a child at birth and not something acquired later on in life. Hence, this depravity of nature must be in the infant child at birth. Thus we see that the infant child just born is already one step below the plane on which God created man in His own likeness, after His image. However, we must not confuse this hereditary sin (or seed of sin, or principle of sin) with sin acquired or committed—one's actual transgressions for which he repents when seeking salvation. Some find the idea of our inheriting a seed of sin objectionable on the grounds that they cannot conceive of an infant child just born into the world being a guilty sinner. That is exactly right, but just what these people are doing is confusing sin inherited with sin acquired or committed.

Inherited sin is never productive of guilt. Even though the infant child possesses within him the germ or seed of sin from his first parent, Adam, he remains in a state of perfect innocence before God until he reaches an age of accountability to know right from wrong and by an act of his own free will does the wrong thing. This is confirmed by a scripture in James 4:17, "Therefore to him that KNOWETH to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin." But he had to KNOW it before it became sin to him. Further in John 3:19, Jesus said, "And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." NOTE: The condemnation and guilt came when the light (knowledge of right and wrong) came to them and they rejected the right and chose to continue in the wrong. When the child comes to the age of accountability before God and falls into willful disobedience to God's law and becomes guilty of sin and a partaker of the sinful life, this is more than just the nature or principle, which in itself is not productive of guilt, but is the fruit of that nature or the projection of it into a way of life of actual sins committed which brings guilt and condemnation upon the soul. This, then, takes him a second step lower than the plane on which man was created.

God devised a plan of salvation by which man is restored back to the Edenic state in which man was created in the likeness and image of God and which was lost when sin entered into this world by the willful choice of our fore parents, by which they apostatized from God. (Genesis 3:1, etc.) And not only so, but Adam's sin brought about a change in man's moral nature and it became depraved and corrupt instead of having the righteousness and true holiness he had possessed before. Further, this morally depraved nature was transmitted to all generations of the human race. (Genesis 5:3; Psalm 51:5; Romans 5:12.)

Now, it must be evident unto all that there are just as many steps going up the stairs as there are coming down. Since man has fallen two distinct steps below his created state, it would surely be evident that there would be two separate, distinct steps in his getting back to the original state of the likeness and image of God. Indeed there are two parts to our salvation; two separate and distinct works of grace—justification and sanctification. Justification is the first step up and is the forgiveness and absolving from guilt of all our actual sins which we have committed when we properly repent of them and put our faith in the merits of the all-atoning blood of Jesus Christ for salvation. But it does not deal with that inherent depravity. Neither could it, because we could not repent of it inasmuch as we were in no way responsible for it. Neither is it possible to recognize it so long as our conscience is crowded with guilt and condemnation for unforgiven sins. But after we are justified and absolved from guilt and are at peace with God and our burden of sin gone, it is then, in our efforts to live a holy life according to New Testament standards, that we become aware of the conflict going on within us.

The sanctifying work and grace of God is ordained in God's plan of salvation to meet this need and purge out that old depravity of nature and purify the heart and affections and fill us with the Holy Spirit and an indwelling, abiding Comforter, empowering us to meet all our problems of life and overcome them and enabling us to live a victorious, triumphant holy life according to New Testament standards. Then it must be evident unto all that one's salvation is not complete without this second grace. Some have lost out entirely with God because they did not press on into this experience when they became conscious of its need. When one becomes conscious of a real conflict within as they endeavor to live a holy life pleasing to God, then they are face to face with a decision in their Christian experience; either go on and die out to the self-life and consecrate his life to God for divine service and sacred use and lay himself on the altar of sacrifice or service, or draw back unto perdition. (Hebrews 10:39.) It is either go on or go back; we cannot remain the same from that point.

Hebrews 10:14 says, "...He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." We see here that sanctification is the completion of our salvation. Hence, we can never say we are complete without this experience. In Acts 15:8-9, we find that God gave the Gentiles the Holy Spirit even as He had given Him to the Jews on Pentecost and PURIFIED their hearts by faith. Justification delivers from the power of sin and cleans up and purifies the outward life, but it takes a definite inner working of the Holy Spirit in the heart to purify the heart from its inherent depravity. This is what sanctification is: a genuine, thorough cleansing of the heart by the Holy Spirit and then Him taking up His abode in the heart thus cleansed.

One is justified through repentance. One is sanctified through consecration and faith. They are different works obtained by different means and having different objectives. In Romans 12:1 we are instructed to present our bodies (our lives) a living sacrifice to God (entire consecration) and verse 2 says, that we might "...prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God." And I Thessalonians 4:3 says, "...This is the will of God, even your sanctification,..." In Romans 15:16, we read "...That the offering up of the Gentiles might be acceptable, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost." Here again we see that sanctification is a work of the Holy Spirit and that there is an "OFFERING UP" (consecration) connected with it on our part.

WHAT PART DO "WORKS" PLAY IN OUR LIVES?

Question: We can't be saved by "works," but what part do "works" play in the lives of God's children?

Answer: This is a good question, indeed, and to properly differentiate in it is very important. In the scriptures pertaining to our salvation in respect to our works, it is necessary to "rightly divide the word of truth" (II Timothy 2:15), and to keep everything in its proper context in order to get a balanced perspective in regard to works and the part they play in the Christian life. We need to understand that a subject as big as "Salvation" cannot possibly be set forth in any one text of Scripture. One text may deal with one aspect of salvation and another text present another phase and represent it in a different way to correspond with the particular point in discussion. Therefore it is never good to over-extend any text to cover more ground than it does. The result may be gross confusion. For an example of this principle, let us consider the various representations of the CHURCH OF GOD in the Scriptures. One scripture refers to it as a "city," another as a "body", another as a woman (bride), another as a mother, another as a vine or vineyard, another as a house, another as a family, etc. Well, you may say, "This all confuses me and I can't

understand the Church; what is it? Is it a city, or is it a bride, or is it a mother with children, or is it a vine or vineyard, or is it a body, or is it a house? I can't tell from all of these just what it is." Well, the fact is, it is all of these and more too. Each of these scriptures just describe a different phase or operation of the Church. If one will keep this in mind when studying the Word on this subject and just keep each scripture in its proper place and context, and not try to over-extend it into some other scripture to which it does not relate and that is describing some entirely different phase and function of the Church; when he gets through with his overall study, he will have a good, clear, concise picture and understanding of the Church and how it functions. It is the same with this subject of salvation and if one will keep this in mind when he is studying the Scriptures on this subject and be careful to keep every point properly divided and everything in its proper context and place, he will come out with a clear understanding of salvation and how our works relate to it.

Now, we must realize that some scriptures deal with the actual experience of salvation itself and many relate to the holy Christian life which salvation produces and our "works" will hold a different relation and play a different part in these two phases of salvation and its effects in the life. Romans 5:1 says that we are justified by FAITH. To be justified is to be saved. In this case the emphasis is on faith. The entire 4th chapter of Romans is on faith and especially Abraham's faith which was imputed unto him for righteousness (verse 22). In verses 23 and 24, it says this was not written for Abraham's sake only but for our sakes also if we believe. Then follows in chapter 5, verse 1, that we are justified by faith. Since Paul here was speaking to a people who desperately needed a faith in Christ and were having problems with it, he focused in on FAITH and never mentioned any other ingredients of salvation. But there are some others.

In Ephesians 2:8 the same man (Paul) wrote this "For by grace are ye saved through faith;..." Here he introduces the thought of GRACE in connection with salvation. But he says, "By grace through faith." Grace is bestowed because of faith and he says in this verse that this is not of ourselves but is a gift of God. Then verse 9 says, "Not of works, lest any man should boast." But we need to observe here the premise of rightly dividing the word of truth and keeping everything in its place and in the proper context or we will run into problems with some other texts on the subject; even with other parts of this man's teaching. Paul understood, as clearly as any and more than most, that the law was fulfilled and abolished when Christ came and set up the new order and established grace. Therefore he taught all the time and in every place that the works of the law (circumcision and other rituals and observances) had no further merit as pertained to salvation but he taught salvation through faith in Christ only without the works of the law.

Titus 3:5-7 says, "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." He speaks here of the "works of righteousness" not being any basis to found our faith in for salvation. The law's righteousness was no longer acceptable to God and had no salvation virtue in it and Paul was teaching all his people this and to not put their confidence in those "dead works" as any part of their salvation but just put their faith in Jesus Christ and the merits of His shed blood and that only for their salvation.

In I Corinthians 1:30, Paul says that God has made Jesus our RIGHTEOUSNESS. And in Philippians 3:9, Paul said concerning himself, "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." His

reference here to his own righteousness which is of the law referred to the works, ordinances, rituals and observances of the law. But he did not want that anymore because there was no value in it any more. In Jeremiah 23:5-6 is a prophecy of Christ and verse 6 says, "...And this is his name whereby he shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS." In this day of salvation and grace, God recognizes no righteousness at all but just Jesus and it is through our faith in Him and our relationship with Him through faith that we have any righteousness at all that God will put His seal on and recognize. In Isaiah 64:6 it says, "...all OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS are as filthy rags;..." Paul believed in this and preached this universally, and the places where he spoke out against works was in regard to this and had no reference to the essential and required work of repentance, restitution, confession of sins, restoring the pledge, giving again that we have robbed, forgiving our enemies and those who have wronged us, straightening and clearing up our lives in general, etc., all of which works we cannot be saved without. So let us not rule out all works from our salvation for there are some works we cannot be saved without. At the same time let us realize that all these works within themselves do not save us. It is faith in Christ and the all-atoning efficacy in His shed blood that obtains for us the mercy of God and the forgiveness of our sins for His Son's sake. Then we conclude that our salvation comes through FAITH (Romans 5:1; Ephesians 2:8), GRACE (Ephesians 2:8), and WORKS (James 2:24).

James 2:14 says, "What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him?" James 2:20 calls this man a "vain man" who says, "I believe and that is all that is necessary for me. I don't have to do anything or give up anything; just believe." James informs this man in this verse that "faith without works is dead." James 2:21 declared Abraham was justified by works when he had offered his son, Isaac, upon the altar. Verse 22 says that faith wrought with his works and faith was made perfect (manifested, demonstrated) by works. Verse 24 says, "Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only."

We readily agree and understand that a person cannot be saved by works alone, even good works with no bad ones at all. Good works and morality will never save a person. But faith alone without some works won't either. But faith accompanied by works will bring a grace into the soul which translates into salvation.

When one has obtained salvation, he begins to live a Christian life and that life is full of good works. In I Timothy 6:18 we are instructed to "...do good,...be rich in good works,..." Titus 3:1 instructs saints "...to be ready to every good work," and verse 8 says, "that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works...." In Titus 3:14 we are instructed to maintain good works for necessary uses, that we be not unfruitful. In this text "works" is related with "fruits" which brings the focus on another text, in James 3:17, which says that the wisdom from above is full of good fruits (works). And so on and on and on and on; the New Testament abounds in this kind of teaching. But let us never make the fatal mistake of identifying our works with ourselves and claiming them as of us (our works). But let us realize that our lives and the fruits or works of them are of God and not of us as we read in Philippians 2:13, "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure."

THE KEYS TO THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN

Question: I would like for you to explain Matthew 16:19.

Answer: Matthew 16:19 reads thus: "And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." From verse 15 through verse 19 is recorded a personal conversation between Peter and Jesus. It was not necessarily intended to be that way. Jesus had asked the entire company of His apostles, "...Whom say ye that I am?" Peter was quicker in answering than were the others and consequently Jesus directed His remarks to him personally. But actually His remarks would apply to all of the company as well as Peter because He had directed His question to the entire company. His remarks did apply to all of them and not to them only but also to their successors clear on down through the generations of mankind even unto us and beyond us if time continues and other generations follow us. This will be clearly evident from other scriptures which we will pick up as we go along. Therefore we can safely conclude with certainty that this text does not teach what some try to make it teach; that Peter is to be considered the head of the Church and as having personal and exclusive rights to the keys of the kingdom. The remarks made here by Jesus apply to all of them, even though they are directed to Peter, but only because he was the first to speak up in response to Jesus' question.

Then we must endeavor first of all to establish what the keys of the kingdom are. A key is something that opens up or unlocks and provides an entrance or access to a building, house, or situation. In the fourth chapter of Zechariah is recorded a vision that the prophet Zechariah had and the principal objects of it were a golden candlestick and two olive trees, one on either side of the candlestick. First we will consider the candlestick and what it represented. In the first chapter of Revelation is recorded a vision that John had of Jesus Christ as the high priest of God in the Church or kingdom of God (verses 10 through 20). In verse 12 he saw seven golden candlesticks. And in verse 13 he saw one like unto the Son of man (Jesus). In verse 20 Jesus explained that the seven golden candlesticks were the seven churches (named in verse 11). Then it is clear that a candlestick was used to represent a church. In Revelation, chapter one, seven candlesticks were used to represent the seven churches of Asia to which the book of Revelation was sent. Then we conclude that the single candlestick in Zechariah 4:2 represented the one entire universal Church of God or Kingdom of God. In Zechariah 4:6 these two olive trees are declared to be the Word of the Lord, saying, "...Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts." Then it is clear that the two olive trees represent the Word of God and the Spirit of God. Again these two olive trees are further identified in Zechariah 4:14 where it is said, "...These are the two anointed ones, that stand by the Lord of the whole earth." In Revelation 11:3-4 it is said, "And I will give power unto my TWO WITNESSES, and they shall prophesy a thousand two hundred and threescore days, clothed in sackcloth. These are the two olive trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth." The emphasis here is on the two witnesses.

Now let us see what are the two principal witnesses of God in the earth. Romans 8:16 says, "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit,..." Hebrews 10:15 says, "Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us:..." These texts establish the fact that the Holy Spirit is one of God's principal witnesses in the earth. In John 5:39 Jesus said, "Search the scriptures;...they are they which testify of me." Also Luke 24:27 says, "And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself." There are other scriptures confirming the Spirit and the Word to be God's two witnesses. But in Revelation 11:3-4 it refers to the two witnesses being the two olive trees standing before the God of the earth which refers us right back to Zechariah 4:3 and verse 14 says, "...These are the two anointed ones, that stand by the Lord of the whole earth." And

verse 6 declares them to be the Word of God by the Spirit of God. But verse 12 presents the two olive trees (Word and Spirit) through two golden pipes emptying the golden oil out of themselves into the candlestick. Thus we see that the Word and the Spirit of God are the two agents of God to pour their essence, grace, power and strength into the Church to make it the light of the world, a city set on an hill which cannot be hid; an all-conquering, all-triumphant, all-victorious, all-glorious entity in the world. It is these two agents that open the door and provide a means of access into the kingdom of God (salvation). These also provide the necessary ingredients to sustain and maintain the soul in the kingdom of God after it has been guided into salvation. Then it is clear that these two agents (God's Word and God's Spirit) are the keys of the kingdom of God. This is what Jesus promised to Peter and to all the other apostles when He charged them to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature (Mark 16:15.)

But he did not send them forth half-equipped. He gave them the WORD and commanded them to preach it just as He had given it to them. (Mark 16:15, Matthew 28:19-20, II Timothy 4:2.) But He told them to tarry in the city of Jerusalem until they were endued with power from on high. (Luke 24:49.) Again in Acts 1:4 Jesus told these men to wait in Jerusalem for the promise of the Father and in verse 5 He declares this to be the Holy Ghost. The Word alone was not sufficient. They had to be filled with the Holy Spirit to give anointing, power and conviction to the Word. In Zechariah's vision (Zechariah 4:6) the two olive trees were declared to be the WORD by the SPIRIT. These two agents govern, control and direct all the operations and activities of the Church of God. I know of no record anywhere in the Bible, where God ever gave anything more than the Word and the Spirit of God to any minister to carry on His work, and He certainly has never given any God-called minister less. But He gave to Peter, to all the apostles, to their successors, to every God-called minister throughout the generations of mankind, and every God-called minister living in the world today, these two keys to the kingdom of God (God's Word and God's Spirit) and sent them forth to do their job. In I Peter 1:12 Peter referred to "...them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven;..." This is the way God's work has always been carried on; God's Word by His Spirit; and by these the kingdom of heaven has always been opened to men who would obey it and closed to men who would not obey it.

WILL WE KNOW ONE ANOTHER IN HEAVEN?

Question: Will we know one another in heaven, especially husbands and wives?

Answer: This question comes up quite often. This questioner is not the only one who would like to know the answer to this question. It may be that most of us are more or less curious about these matters at times, but in the main we may not get much satisfaction for our curiosity.

First of all, I would say to you as the Apostle Paul said in II Thessalonians 1:7, to some who were troubled about some things: "And to you who are troubled rest with us,..." He then went on to explain to them that when the Lord Jesus comes to judge the people, He will set all things in order and judge them properly according to their deeds. One thing we know is that God made us in the beginning, and now through salvation He has made us over again. We are "new creatures in Christ" and "partakers of the divine nature" (II Peter 1:4), and He knows exactly what it takes to fulfill the desires and longings of that nature because it is His own nature which He has given to us. He has fitted everything in heaven to that nature, so we can be

perfectly assured that if we are accounted worthy to enter there, we will be perfectly and thoroughly satisfied with everything exactly as it is, however it may be. God has fixed that place to exactly fit the nature He has given us through salvation so that we will be sublimely happy, satisfied, and content with everything just as it is, so let us all bend all efforts to get there.

It appears certain from the holy Scriptures that our relationships with one another will not be the same in heaven as they are here on earth. Here, we have relationships in the flesh, but it will not be so there. In Matthew 22:23-33, there is recorded a conversation between Jesus and the Sadducees which touches on this very question that we are considering. The Sadducees did not believe in the resurrection of the dead. These Sadducees confronted Jesus with what they considered to be an air-tight case against the resurrection of the dead. They referred to a statute in the law of Moses which said that if a man married a wife and died without having any children, that his brother was to take his wife and raise up seed unto his brother. In their story there were seven brothers, and one by one they all had the same woman to wife and none of them had any children, so she was married to all seven in order. Now all of them were dead, they said, and the woman also was dead. Their question was, "Whose wife will she be in the resurrection, because they have all married her in this life?"

Jesus answered the Sadducees straight from the shoulder, and said in Matthew 22:29-30, "...Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven." This spells it out in black and white that there are no husband and wife relationships in heaven. Neither will there be any family relationships (father and son, mother and daughter, etc.) in that eternal world. Oh, how merciful, compassionate, and sympathetic God has been to arrange it this way! This is surely His divine wisdom. Many are familiar with the burden, grief, yearning, and longing in the heart for a wayward, erring loved one; and how anxious we are for them to come home and change their way of life. Oh, the unspeakable anguish that rends the heart when we see that loved one snatched away unprepared, and we know that there is no more hope—they are gone, forever gone. To bear that same anguish of heart for long, long eternity is devastating just to think about. God has taken care of that with one stroke of His mercy, by just dissolving all human ties and bonds which we have in this life, so that if a son, daughter, spouse, or parent should be lost, it will not affect our happiness of heaven to any degree.

It is evident, however, that there is a way in which all of God's redeemed ones will know one another, and apparently even without introduction. The first seven verses of the seventeenth chapter of Matthew record the incident of Christ's transfiguration before three of His disciples: Peter, James, and John. Verse 3 says, "And, behold, there appeared unto them (Peter, James, and John) Moses and Elias talking with him (Jesus)." The disciples knew them and it is evident that they did, for in verse 4, Peter said to Jesus, "...Let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias." He named them and wanted to build tabernacles for them, so it appears evident that he knew who they were.

This knowing of one another is knowledge of a different plane or elevation than the knowledge we have of one another in the flesh. I cannot explain just how it will be in that respect, for I have never been there to experience it first-hand, but a few scriptures guide my thinking which is not at all dogmatic. It seems to me that the knowing of one another in that eternal world will be in the spirit, and not in the flesh. I do not intend to convey the idea here that I do not believe that the resurrected saints will not have bodies and perhaps familiar, recognizable features. I believe they will, but I also believe that everything there will be on a spiritual level and it is in that realm that we will know one another.

Actually, that relationship begins here, when in salvation we come "...to the spirits of just men made perfect." (Hebrews 12:23.) Salvation brings us into a unique and "knowing" relationship with every other blood-washed saint in the whole world. We fellowship and know them in the spirit. II Corinthians 5:16 says, "Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh:...yet now henceforth know we him no more." Colossians 3:11 says, concerning our relationship in Christ, "Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all." Read also Romans 10:12, I Corinthians 12:13, Gal 3:28. These scriptures all teach us that salvation brings all born-again souls of every nation, tongue, and people (Revelation 7:9) into holy amalgamation in the spirit, and that their relationship and bond of fellowship is in the spirit and not in the flesh. By this we know that this knowing of one another in the spirit begins here, but it will be perfected over there and that will be the basis of all relationships in heaven.

CHRISTIAN PERFECTION

Question: Will you please make some discussion on biblical Christian perfection?

Answer: The term "perfect" and the term "perfection" are used a number of times in the New Testament and in some instances mean or refer to different things. The context will determine its application and meaning. But in no instance does it refer to human perfection or a human being being out beyond human error in judgment or being complete in knowledge. Peter said in II Peter 3:18, "But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ...." This is clearly an open-ended statement. It suggests no termination. It is not said here to grow in grace and knowledge until you "know it all" and there is no more knowledge to be obtained, and until you have all the grace there is and there is no more grace to be obtained. The matter of Christian growth and development is a perpetual, continuous thing from the beginning of our salvation to the end of our life. If one ceases to grow at any time along the line, he will become stale and stagnant, and if persisted in, will lose his contact and relationship with God. But don't ever try that out to see if it is so or not, for this is not the will of God concerning you. But it is the will of God that you be continually advancing into new territory and areas in your experience and relationship with God, being always fresh and vibrant, making the way of God attractive to your associates.

In Matthew 5:48 Jesus said, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." This statement of Jesus must be taken in context to get the proper meaning of it and the key word in it is "THEREFORE." This word refers back to what has been said before. The thought begins back in verse 38 where Jesus begins to teach about our attitudes and dealings with our fellowmen. He said here that it had been said back under the law "...An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth." Now that was the standard under the law but Jesus taught a different standard than that. "...Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." (John 1:17.) He said to resist not evil but if they smite us on one cheek, turn the other also, if they sue us at the law and take away our coat, give them our cloak also, and if they compel us to go a mile, go two. In other words, see to it that we give full satisfaction to our adversaries regardless of the injustices involved. Verse 42 says, "Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away." Again the context must be strictly observed to get the proper meaning of this text. Jesus is certainly not teaching here promiscuous giving to every Tom, Dick and Harry. He is teaching that we should be willing to help our enemies if they are in need and not

turn them away or discriminate against them because they have struck us in the face or have treated us unjustly but to render aid to them if they are in need as though they were our friends.

Then in verse 43 He referred again to the law standard of loving our neighbor and hating our enemy. The law permitted this but Jesus in the standard He taught said in verse 44, "...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." Then in verse 45 He makes known His own attitude toward all humankind and says, "...He maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust." It is in this respect that He says to us to be perfect even as He is perfect. Let us recognize that this instruction was given in connection with the thought of our dealing with an attitude toward all humankind (both friend and foe) and is accentuated by a declaration of His own attitude toward them all and this is the pattern for us to adopt in all of our dealings and attitudes toward everybody. Let us also realize that the One who gave us this command and set up this standard is the One who has all power in heaven and in earth and is abundantly able to supply us with sufficient grace and power to reach it. Let us not settle for anything less than this, but just humble our hearts and earnestly seek God for that measure of grace which will enable us to live to this standard.

Let it be remembered that though God has mercies and a package of blessings for all mankind in general, yet He has a special package of special blessings for His own people who love and serve Him. This is made clear throughout the Scriptures in God's special dealings with them. He also teaches us to be this way. In Galatians 6:10 we read, "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, ESPECIALLY unto them who are of the household of faith." We are to make a specialty of favor to the saints, but never to discriminate against an adversary who is in need just because he is an adversary.

In Hebrews 10:14 it says, "...He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." In this text "PERFECT" means complete or finished. Man's salvation has two parts. He is first saved (forgiven of all sins and trespasses when he properly repents of them), but that is only part of his salvation. That work of grace in the soul does not in any way affect that native depravity or sin nature which came upon us all from Adam. Repentance could not touch that because we were not responsible for it; hence, we would have no conviction of it or a godly sorrow concerning it. It is removed by the Holy Ghost with the blood of Jesus for our heart's cleansing by the means of consecration and faith. Salvation is not completed without this experience. Therefore, receiving this sanctifying grace makes our salvation complete. Hence it is said we are perfected (completed or finished as pertains to our salvation). Perfection here does not mean we have reached the end of all spiritual growth and advancement in our spiritual lives. Far from it. We are just then prepared to launch forth on this venture and will be pursuing it the remainder of our lives.

In Colossians 1:28 we read, "Whom (Christ) we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man PERFECT in Christ Jesus." Again, "perfect" here refers to their being complete, entire, finished in their Christian experience. Paul said again in Ephesians 4:15, "But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ." The objective of the Apostle Paul in all of this preaching and teaching was to nourish them up in every principle of truth, in all the ways of truth and righteousness, that he could present all his converts perfect, complete, entire, a finished product in the grace of God in Christ. He said in Colossians 2:10, "And ye are complete in him,..." This is the meaning of the term "perfect" in this text.

You will note that not one of the texts I have used in this lesson had any reference to being perfect human beings beyond making mistakes or erring in

judgment. Some people, not having understood this, have judged and condemned themselves in regard to some innocent mistakes they made and the enemy has taken advantage of them to impose upon them a spirit of accusation. Also, some who have not understood what Christian perfection is, have broken off fellowship with them when they should not have. Let us allow ourselves and all other saints to be human and live their lives freely and not under critical, prying eyes; and let us have charity and patience with them in their mistakes considering ourselves to be human also.

In Hebrews 5:9 we read, "And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him." We see here that Jesus' being made perfect was all-important to our salvation. But what did this involve and how was it accomplished? Hebrews 2:10 says, "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 sufferings." I acknowledge frankly that for many years I was not able to comprehend the idea of Jesus being made perfect. The reason was because I always thought of Jesus as being perfect. Now here comes God's Word talking about Him being "made perfect" through suffering. Actually, He was morally and spiritually perfect from time immemorial. Only after He had personally encountered every temptation and suffering in His flesh and lived His life on the same plane that we have to live ours could He be able to lead us to glory.

Hebrews 5:8 says, "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered." I never got the full import of this, either, until one day this week while meditating on a message that Bro. Keith Fuller had brought in our Assembly Meeting on the sufferings of Jesus. There is no such thing as suffering in heaven where Jesus was until He left there and came here on a mission of redemption. Then when He took on Himself the seed of Abraham and was clothed in human flesh and lived as one of us, He had to learn to take orders and obey. Philippians 2:8 says that Jesus humbled Himself and became obedient unto death. Luke 13:23-33 makes it clear that His death was His perfection. Verse 33 says, "Nevertheless I must walk to day, and to morrow, and the day following: for it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem." This is a clear reference to His death at Jerusalem and "the day following" tomorrow would be the third day. Verse 32 says that on the third day He would be perfected. This confirms that His death was His perfection. Also, Hebrews 2:18 says, "For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted."

Then we have this concerning the perfection of Jesus: Jesus learned obedience through the things which He suffered (Hebrews 5:8), and it was through suffering that He was made perfect. (Hebrews 5:8-9 and Hebrews 2:10.) Therefore, when Jesus had faithfully obeyed His Father in submitting Himself unto every kind of suffering and temptation that humankind could possibly encounter in life and had overcome it all to the final and even His death; and came out in the end with a perfect score offering Himself without spot to God, He was then completely, thoroughly, entirely, and totally qualified to be a perfect captain of our salvation to lead us to glory. This is what the term "perfect" means in regard to Christ being the captain of our salvation; completely, thoroughly, totally, entirely qualified and able to do this and lead us to glory. It has no reference to perfecting Him morally, spiritually, intellectually, or in any of His divine attributes.

Now I will consider Paul's references to "perfect" in the third chapter of Philippians. In verse 12 he says, "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect:..." Connected to verse 11, this would seem to be a reference to the resurrection of the dead as attaining and being made perfect. But I feel certain, by the general tenor or Paul's writing in all his epistles, that Paul had a clear vision of greater and greater accomplishments in his spiritual life and Christian experience

and He was striving for and reaching out for deeper depths, higher heights, longer lengths, and broader breadths in the things of God. This being true, he could never reckon himself to be perfect so long as he could envision greater depths and heights out ahead.

So I am reckoning this reference to "perfect" in verse 12 to involve this idea even though it might be a direct reference to his resurrection. However, he said in verse 15, "Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded:..." Here is a reference to some who are perfect. I am picking up the thought here that Christian perfection is a progressive thing. He declared himself to not be perfect but he also said, "Let us (you and I) therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded:..." This is equivalent to saying, "I do not claim to be perfect, but I am perfect." "Ah, come on," you say. "You are talking in riddles now." Well, so be it; that's just the way it is. Let me illustrate with a student in school. Take, for example, a small child in the first grade. He will learn little one, two, and three-letter words, and 1+1, 2+2, and 3+3 problems, etc. If, at the end of the year, he can spell all those little words and work all those little problems correctly, that is perfect for him in the first grade. But it would not be perfect for a student in college. He is supposed to know more than that. All the way up from the first grade to college he can be perfect all the time; year after year, grade after grade; but never be perfect for the grade ahead of him at any time. It is this way in the Christian life. A brand-new convert (a babe in Christ) may have completely satisfied God and be up-to-date with Him and be perfect in his relationship with Him, but that would not at all be perfect for the person who has been saved for ten or fifteen years. He is supposed to understand more about God and know more truth than that new convert.

The Christian life is a continual and perpetual growth and development. In II Peter 3:18, we are admonished to "...grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ..." We may be perfect before God but to maintain that state of perfection, we must be walking in the light, measuring up to the truth, and continually climbing up to higher and higher levels of divine grace. What is perfect for you now may not be perfect a year from now, and certainly will not be if you maintain a normal pace of growth in grace.

Philippians 3:15 says that all who are perfect should be "thus minded:..." "Thus minded" would refer to something said before, and actually is a foundation for everything said from verse 1 clear to the 15th verse. This would include having a mind to worship God in the spirit and having no confidence in the flesh (verse 3); counting the things which are gain to us in the things of the world and of the flesh as loss for Christ (verse 7); counting all things as loss and of no value in order to win Christ and counting the knowledge of Christ as a very excellent thing (verse 8); being found in Christ and having the righteousness of God in our lives through the faith of Christ and not having our own righteousness (verse 9); seeking to know Jesus Christ and the fellowship of His sufferings and being conformed unto His death (verse 10); seeking and desiring to attain unto the resurrection of the righteous (verse 11); having a recognition of not having yet attained and not yet being perfect, but steadfastly pursuing those things (verse 12); and having a tendency of heart and disposition of mind to forget the things behind and reach forth unto those things which are before and to press on to the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ (verses 13 and 14). All of this is involved in the mind of the perfect Christian.

After all, Christian perfection is not a matter of being "right on target" every time in all of our choices, decisions, judgments, and understanding, but it is a state, condition and attitude of the heart toward God; having the right motives and purposes in everything we do, even though we may fail sometimes in our methods of doing them. God's Word says in II Chronicles 16:9, "For the eyes of the Lord run to

and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect toward him...." I Samuel 16:7 says, "...The Lord seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart." Oh, how often we err in our judgments of one another because we look on the outward appearance and after the seeing of the eye and the hearing of the ear we fail to discern the motive and purpose in the heart of the person who was trying to do something good and failed in the proper method of doing it. This is a stark tragedy, but is often repeated. God help us!

Ephesians 4:13 speaks of us all coming to a perfect man. The margin here says, "to age." The meaning of "perfect" in this place is to grow up, or come to age or maturity in our Christian experience. The same thought is set forth in I Corinthians 14:20, where it says, "...In malice be ye children, but in understanding be men." The margin here says "perfect" instead of "men" in the text (grown up, fully developed people spiritually).

I trust you will consider what I say and the Lord give you understanding in all things. Let us all quit looking for the perfect human who is "right on target" every time and never makes a mistake. You will never find him. There is no such person. Let us allow our brethren to be human and forgive them for their human errors and innocent mistakes, and let us go on striving for the faith of the gospel.

DO GIFTS AND CALLING STILL CONTINUE WITH A BACKSLIDDEN MINISTER?

Question: Please explain Romans 11:29. Does this mean that if God calls a person into the ministry or for any other phase of the work of God and endows him with gifts suitable to his call; if that person backslides his gifts and calling still continue on even after he has backslidden?

ANSWER: The answer to this question is a resounding "NO." The text in the question has no reference at all to Divine calls and gifts of the Spirit in the operation of the New Testament Church. But this text refers to God's purposes and plans concerning Israel and the covenant and promises made with their fathers. The full text reads: "For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance." Verse 28 says of the Jews that "...they are beloved for the fathers' sakes." "The fathers" in this text refers to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. To these men God gave a covenant incorporating some broad, sweeping promises; first to Abraham and then confirming them with Isaac and Jacob, heirs together with him of the same promises.

The covenant and promise made to these men have a far-reaching importance, so let us look at them a little. In the 12th chapter of Genesis, verse 1, we have the call of Abraham to separate himself from his father's house and his kindred and go to a land that He would show him. In verse 2 He promised to make of him a great nation and bless him and make him a blessing and to make his name great. Then verse 3 is the all-important promise, "...In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed." This is very far-reaching. In Genesis 18:18 is another reference to this same promise but this text uses the term "all nations" instead of "all families" as in Genesis 12:3. In Genesis 17:19 God said to Abraham that his wife, Sarah, would bear him a son and he should call his name "Isaac." He further said He would establish His covenant with him and with his seed after and it would be an everlasting covenant. And in Genesis 21:12 God told Abraham that "...In Isaac shall thy seed be called." And again in Genesis 22:18 God said to Abraham "And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice."

Now it must be evident from these statements that it was God's original plan and purpose to bless and provide the blessing of salvation to the whole world (Gentiles—all nations—the same as the Jews) and this was to be brought about through Abraham's seed. Now a reference to Galatians 3:16 will throw a bright light on all of this. "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."

It must be clear, then, that the ultimate end of the covenant with Abraham and all its promises transcended centuries and ages and cut right straight through to Jesus Christ and terminated in Him.

So let us back up a little now to the call of Abraham to leave his father's house and be separated from his kindred (Genesis 12:1). There was a distinct reason for this. The people where Abraham grew up, including Abraham's father and his household, were all idolaters. It may be assumed that Abraham himself worshipped idol gods and served them, too. We read in Joshua 24:2 "...Your fathers dwelt on the other side of the flood in old time, even Terah, the father of Abraham,...and they served other gods." Verse 3 continues and says "And I took your father Abraham from the other side of the flood,..." We see here that God was not pleased to establish His covenant of salvation and grace with a people serving and worshipping idol gods. So He separated Abraham from them and revealed Himself to him until he knew and recognized Him as the true and living God and accepted Him as his God. Because he obeyed His voice and went out from his people as he was instructed to do and forsook his idol gods, God established His covenant with him and made him the head and beginning of a new race separated from all others. This was the Israelites and speaking of them in I Kings 8:53 Solomon said, "For thou didst separate them from among all the people of the earth, to be thine inheritance,..." Again in Deuteronomy 26:18 we read, "And the Lord hath avouched thee this day to be his peculiar people, as he hath promised thee and that thou shouldest keep all his commandments." And finally in II Samuel 7:24 we read, "For thou hast confirmed to thyself thy people Israel to be a people unto thee for ever: and thou, Lord, art become their God."

It was through this line, this separated, distinctive, holy, peculiar, separated unto the Lord line, that the Messiah was to come; the SEED of Abraham in whom all the nations of the world were to be blessed. God chose and separated Israel unto Himself for this particular, specific purpose. Several times Israel was in severe crisis and threatened with extinction, but God most miraculously and in most unexpected ways intervened and preserved and sustained them until time for Christ to be born and presented to the world. God's Word said in Genesis 49:10, "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be." Even though they were a conquered and subjected people under the Romans when Christ was born, yet their political system and religious system were still pretty much intact and they were permitted a measure of freedom to operate their system among themselves. To this extent Genesis 49:10 was fulfilled and God had succeeded in bringing this line through intact and accomplishing His purpose for getting His Son into the world.

Soon after the life and ministry of Christ (70 A.D.) the Jewish nation with their capitol city, Jerusalem, and the Jewish polity was totally and most miserably destroyed but not until He had carried out His plan and accomplished His purpose through them. But in all of this there was no repenting, withdrawing, or changing of plan or purpose on God's part. He accomplished what He had in mind to accomplish in them. Neither was there any breaking of any of God's promises to them in forsaking them and permitting them to be so miserably destroyed without His aid. True, God had promised to be with them and not forsake them. In Hebrews 13:5 a reference is made to this promise "...I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee."

But right along with that promise He also said, "If you forsake me, I will forsake you." (II Chronicles 15:2, 24:20; Deuteronomy 31:16-17.) When the Jews filled up their cup of iniquity in rejecting God's Son and crucifying Him and had utterly forsaken God; then He abandoned and forsook them as a people and let them miserably perish. But He had faithfully warned them of this several times and was thoroughly justified in abandoning them. They ceased to be a special people unto God at that time and will never be such again.

I GO TO PREPARE A PLACE FOR YOU

Question: Will you please comment on John 14:1-3 together with I Timothy 3:15?

Answer: Yes, I will, to the best of my understanding and ability, by the help of God. First, I will insert the full text of John 14:1-3 and discuss it separately from I Timothy 3:15 and pick that up later. "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 first thing to consider here is that Jesus was nearing the time of His going to the cross and dying and He knew what confusion and wonderment this would produce in His disciples and how disheartening this would be to them. Read Luke 24:13-21 to get a picture of the dejected, defeated, deeply disappointed spirit and disposition of two of them. Verse 21 says, "...We TRUSTED that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel:..." It does not go on to spell it out, but we conclude from the entire passage that they had trusted and hoped, but now their hopes are all dashed because He is dead. Another look at the downcast, crestfallen spirit of the disciples after the death of Jesus is found in John 21:3 where Peter said, "I go a fishing," and the others said they would go too. They had been fishermen before they had left all to follow Jesus and now that was all over and they just returned to their old occupation. Jesus knew this would happen and was trying all He could to fortify them against total disaster when it did happen.

Jesus endeavored to draw out their minds and thinking to the kingdom of glory which He would soon enter and which they also would enter in due time. But their minds were not at this time spiritual enough to comprehend this. This is evident from the context following this. (Verses 4 through 14.) He presented that kingdom of glory as His Father's house. (Verse 2.) Then as a descriptive term of His "Father's House," He said there were many mansions there. In my understanding, He is not presenting the idea of a literal place with literal mansions but something comparable to that of a spiritual nature. He endeavors to convey the thought to them of heaven as a real place with real people and real substance; not just an imaginary, mystic something with disembodied, even invisible, spiritual beings floating around up there in the uncharted sky some place.

The reference to "many mansions" describes the spaciousness as well as the grandeur, glory and breathtaking beauty of that place. Jesus did not refer to a place with segregated areas for different classes of people; mansions for the rich, other areas with less magnificent dwellings for the common people, and ghettos with dirty, run-down tenement houses and dirty little shacks for the poor and poverty-stricken such as we know here. Oh no, heaven is a place of supreme grandeur, glory and matchless beauty with nothing to mar it; nothing there but grand mansions. Many mansions would require an area of great expanse because mansions are large structures. The place prepared for the eternal abode of the righteous is sufficiently

large to accommodate all who will get there. Neither will God be straightened for providing places for late arrivals and unexpected guests. He provided room in His great heart for every member of the human race from the start, even though He knew they would not all be coming.

Even though all of this may be true, yet the "mansions" convey a definite message concerning the eternal abode of the saints, so let us examine them a little in particular. A reference to II Corinthians 5:1 will throw considerable light on this statement of Jesus. "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." It is clear here that "our earthly house of this tabernacle" which was to be dissolved refers to our earthly, physical, material bodies in which we now live. Also, it is clear that "we have a building of God, an house not made with hands," refers to that resurrected, immortal, glorified body in which the righteous will live in eternity—"eternal in the heavens." This is also confirmed by verse 2 where it says that in this (physical, corruptible body) "...we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven," or that spiritual, glorified body. Verse 4 further confirms this where the closing phrase says, "...that mortality might be swallowed up of life." This is endless, eternal life.

Again in Philippians 3:20-21 we read, "...the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body,..." Again in I John 3:2 we read, "...But we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him;..." Also in I Corinthians 15:42-44 where Paul is discussing the resurrection of the saints he says, "So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body...." In verse 51 Paul says, "...We shall all be changed." In verse 53 he says, "For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality."

From all of this we see that this mortal, earthly, natural body in which we live our lives here is not fit or acceptable to enter into heaven; it must be changed into a body fitted for that place. All of these scriptures and a number of others make it very clear that the resurrected body of the saints will be a glorious, immortal, incorruptible, spiritual body fitted for that eternal world prepared for the righteous. Projecting all of this into the sayings of Jesus in John 14:1-3, and considering the totally magnificent, shining glory of the resurrected bodies of the saints which would fittingly correspond to what Jesus spoke of as "mansions" in His kingdom of glory, we could safely conclude that those mansions were the resurrected, glorious bodies in which they would live in that everlasting kingdom of eternal glory prepared for them. Jesus said there were many mansions and we are sure that there are myriads of redeemed souls, through the ages, who will be there, every one in his own mansion.

In I Timothy 3:15 it says, "But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth." I will also insert a few scriptures here to establish the use of the term "house" as used in the Scriptures and what it means. In Ruth 4:11 we read, "...The Lord make the woman that is come into thine house like Rachel and like Leah, which two did build the house of Israel;..." "Israel" was Jacob, and Rachel and Leah were his two wives. From them came all of his children and these children constituted his house (household). Luke 1:27 says that Joseph, to whom the virgin Mary was espoused, was of the "...house of David;..." Luke 2:4 says that Joseph was "...of the house and lineage of David." This makes it clear that the whole line of David's posterity constituted his house. In Joshua 24:15, Joshua said, "...as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." His house was his family

or household and he could speak for them. I Timothy 3:4 gives one of the qualifications of an elder or bishop as "One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection..." This text spells it out that his house was his family. The Bible abounds with texts of this nature which make it perfectly clear that a man's house was his children and their children to many generations.

It is the same here. The house of God is His household, or His children. "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus." Galatians 3:26. It is certain that every person who is saved from sin by faith in Christ is a child of God in the family of God. This is God's household which is declared to be the Church of God. (I Timothy 3:15.) Hebrews 3:6 says, "But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we,..." The redeemed saints make up the house of God. In Ephesians 2:19, Paul declares the whole company of redeemed saints to be the household of God. Isaiah 53:8 asks, "...Who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living:..." But verse 10 makes it clear that out of His death a seed or generation would come forth who would declare His generation; millions and millions and millions of us. Revelation 7:9 refers to "a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues,..." Ah, saints and brethren, that illustrious company, that innumerable company is us. We and all the others who have been redeemed by Jesus' blood and become children of God by faith in Christ Jesus throughout this gospel age of time make up the generation of God who declare His generation.

Now let us see how this all relates to John 14:2 in regard to many mansions in the house of God. We have already seen by Scripture that the house of God is God's household, family, or children, who have been saved by faith in the merit of the all-atoning blood of Jesus Christ. This makes up the Church of God in this dispensation of time. But Ephesians 2:22 says that we are "...builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit." I Peter 2:5 says, "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house,..." Then we go to Hebrews 3:6. "But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we,..."

These texts all refer to the collective Church of God as being the house of God. But the house or family of God is made up of saved men and women, boys and girls. (Hebrews 3:6.) There are numbers of other texts confirming this thought. In this great house (II Timothy 2:20), there are many other houses (mansions) all enveloped in this great house. In other words, the entire Church of God, or body of Christ, is composed of many members. "For as the body is one, and hath many members,...so also is Christ." (I Corinthians 12:12.) I Corinthians 12:27 says, "Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular." Ephesians 1:22-23 declares the Church to be His body. But since His body is also His Church, then it must be clear also that every saint is a member of God's Church, dwelling in that "great house." (II Timothy 2:20.) But we are all houses, too, as I shall show by the Scriptures.

I Corinthians 3:16 says, "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" I Corinthians 6:19 says, "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you,..." These texts and others refer to the individual saints as temples, buildings, houses, and mansions indwelt by the Spirit. In Ezekiel, chapters 40 through 47, we have recorded a vision Ezekiel had of a man with a measuring reed measuring the temple and all the appurtenances thereof and other things. In chapter 40, verse 5, he measured the outside wall and it was one reed broad and one reed high. He measured the threshold of the gate (verse 6) and it was one reed broad. In verse 7 he measured each little chamber in the building and each one measured one reed broad. How surprising this is! How could this be that each chamber in the building and the gate be as large as the whole building? A good understanding of God's plan of salvation

and work of the Holy Spirit in the hearts and lives of all who are saved and then indwelt by the Spirit will make this clear.

By reading Hebrews 9:1-9, 25; 8:1-2 and Matthew 16:17-18, we see that all these scriptures combine together to build the case and establish the fact that that Old Testament temple with its system of sacrifices and worship was a type or figure of this New Testament temple (a spiritual house) with its spiritual sacrifices (I Peter 2:5), and its spiritual system of worship (John 4:23-24). Now with this in mind, let us take special note of these measurements of Ezekiel's vision and see what they tell us. The whole building measured one reed broad and one reed high. Then the threshold of the gate measured one reed or the length of the entire building. (Ezekiel 40:6.) In John 10:9, Jesus, the gate or door, measured the same as the size of the entire building, because He fulfilled every principle of righteousness and truth upon which the Church of God is built. He dwells in it and fills every nook and corner of the building.

But the main thing in connection with our question is the little, individual chambers in the temple and that they measured one reed long and one reed broad (verse 7); the size of the entire building. Now if the building was a type of the New Testament temple or Church of God, and the Scriptures clearly establish this to be true, then what would the little, individual chambers in the building represent but the individual members in the Church? Surely this is a proper conclusion. The measuring of the size of the whole building indicates that whatever is the standard set forth in the Scriptures of holiness, righteousness, truth, victory, and grace for the Church of God, is the standard of life for each individual member of the Church. In this respect, every individual member is as big as the whole Church. But God through His Spirit dwells in the individual members (I Corinthians 3:16). Therefore, every blood-washed saint is a mansion (not a shack or cabin or slum area anywhere around) in the language of the text (John 14:2) in our question. Throughout this gospel age of time there are many of us—millions and millions and millions of us who have been washed from our sins and made white in the blood of Jesus. We have been clothed in spotless, white robes which is the righteousness of saints (Revelation 19:8), and we are fulfilling the will of God in our lives according to the standard set for us by our example, Jesus Christ (I Peter 2:21). We are the many mansions in "my Father's house"—which is the Church.

Where did Jesus go to prepare a place for us? My answer is, to Calvary, and I will bring forth some scriptures (just a few of many) to confirm my thinking on this point. In Hebrews 10:19-22 we have this passage: "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,..." Verse 19 speaks of our entering into the "holiest." The discussion through the 9th and 10th chapters of Hebrews is a running comparison between the Old Testament sanctuary and its system of sacrifices and worship and the New Testament sanctuary (the Church of God) and its spiritual system of spiritual sacrifices (I Peter 2:5 and Hebrews 13:15) and spiritual worship. That Old Testament sanctuary had two compartments in it, the holy place and the holiest of all, or most holy place. This was a type of the New Testament temple, the Church. But for the anti type to conform to the type it must have two compartments also; and indeed it does. These correspond to two parts of our salvation, justification and sanctification. This text only mentions the "holiest" which is the ultimate of our salvation. Hebrews 10:14 says, "For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." The sanctification of God's people required an acceptable sacrifice and that sacrifice was the blood of Jesus which was shed at Calvary. Hebrews 13:12 says, "Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with

his own blood, suffered without the gate." Hebrews 10:20 said that He consecrated a new and living way for us through His flesh. But His flesh was torn and His body broken for us and His blood flowed out at Calvary to open up a way for us into an experience of full and free salvation; saved and sanctified—filled with the Holy Spirit.

In Ephesians 2:16, we read, "And that he might reconcile both unto God ("Both" here refers to the Jews and Gentiles) in one body by the cross,..." Verse 18 says, "For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father." Hence we see that a way was opened up for us to approach unto God and be brought into fellowship with Him and be reconciled with Him through the sacrifice that Jesus made at Calvary and our faith in the merits of that sacrifice. Some of the words of a song I used to sing said, "Jesus Christ the Lord opened up the way to glory, when He died to save us from our ruined state." One of our present songs says, "Let us sing a sweet song of the home of the soul, the glorious place of our rest; It is not far away in the heavens untold, but deep in the infinite breast." The "home of the soul" spoken of here is the Church of God, the body of Christ, where the soul finds its glorious rest in Christ, the blessed Rest Giver. The Church of God was purchased with the blood of Christ. (Acts 20:28, Ephesians 5:25-27).

We could multiply scriptures on this thought on and on. But to what profit? We always wind up at the same place; that we enter into this glorious place of rest and peace, perfect love and holiness, victory over sin and victorious and triumphant living, the abundance of divine grace, the glorious estate and habitation that Jesus prepared for us by the sacrifice He made and the blood He shed when He went to Calvary.

However, all of this pertains to our salvation and our habitation in the kingdom of God in this world. But this is not the end or ultimate. When Jesus died for our sins at Calvary, He didn't stay dead in the tomb where He was laid. On the morning of the third day He burst the bars of death and the grave asunder and came forth a living Christ, immortal and glorious to never die anymore. Jesus said to His disciples, and us, in John 14:19, "...Because I live; ye shall live also." Read also I Corinthians 15:51-57, Philippians 3:20-21, I Thessalonians 4:13-18. All of these passages and many more attest to the fact that in Jesus' rising from the dead and ascending to heaven, He prepared a way for us to resurrect and be glorified and gathered to Him where He is in heaven. In II Peter 1:11, Peter speaks of the faithful saints having an abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom of Jesus Christ. We are in the present, earthly phase of the kingdom when we are saved, but we enter into the everlasting phase of the kingdom at the time of our resurrection at the last day. Jesus went to prepare the entrance into this place for us when He arose from the dead and ascended into heaven.

DID JESUS' BLOOD ATONE FOR OLD TESTAMENT PEOPLE?

Question: Did the blood of Jesus atone for people's sins under the law or in the Old Testament times? Give scriptures.

Answer: It is my understanding that it did and for the following reasons:

In **Revelation 13:8** we read, "...the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." It is evident that the plan of salvation and redemption was in the mind of God from the beginning of the world. God made a definite promise in Genesis 3:15 that the seed of the woman would bruise the serpent's head. This was a sure promise of redemption and salvation. The plan was formulated in the mind of God from the beginning and He counted it as a thing

already done even though it was a few thousand years later that Christ actually came and was slain. But in that period God provided an exact prototype of the New Testament Church and its system of worship and spiritual sacrifice and the blood of Jesus the great Redeemer, in the Old Testament sanctuary with its system of divine worship and blood sacrifices, etc. Then we read in Hebrews 9:22, "And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission." The context here strongly indicates that the blood of the animal sacrifices which they offered under the law was a type of the blood of Christ which was to be shed for the sins of the people (all people) in time to come and was accepted in lieu of the blood of Christ in this interim period to make an atonement for the people's sins. Further, Hebrews 9:25-26 makes it more plain. "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." Note that this last verse says, "...Then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world:..." This strongly indicates that Christ Himself was deeply involved in every sin offering of blood of animals from the foundation of the world clear on through to the time He actually came to the world and shed His own blood for the remission of the sins of the whole world.

Now we will look at Hebrews 9:15 which spells it out in black and white plainly. "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." This text plainly states that by the death of Christ a redemption was made for the transgressions of people under the first covenant; the Old Testament time or law age. Hebrews 8:4-5 teaches that the gifts and sacrifices which the priests offered according to the law were examples and shadows of heavenly things. Therefore we conclude that every time God saw the blood of an animal sacrifice being offered for sin He said within Himself that this is an example and shadow of heavenly things to come, a kind of installment payment, a kind of credit memorandum which will all be paid off when my Son goes to earth on His redemptive mission to make an atonement for all sin by the sacrifice of Himself and the pouring out of His blood to the last drop. Are there any of us who would presume to say there was no one saved back under the law? Of course not. The Bible abounds with accounts of Old Testament saints and some mighty men of God and champions of faith who accomplished great things for God.

But Peter said in Acts 4:12, "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." Ah, folks this is eternally true. This covers all time past, present and future. All who were saved in Old Testament times under the law were saved by faith in Christ. All in this gospel age of time who have been saved and are saved today, are saved by faith in Christ. God never has, neither will He ever, recognize anyone in heaven as a Saviour, but His Son Jesus Christ. But if this be a question in your mind as to how this could be that they would or could believe in a person who had never been born and lived among men on the earth my answer is this: none of us ever saw Jesus either. We never saw nor handled Him as the Apostle John said he and the other apostles did. We never heard Him speak nor saw His miracles which He did (many of them). We never saw Him crucified, buried and then resurrected. We never saw Him ascend to heaven. But we believe all of this; that Christ was born of the virgin Mary, that He lived here among men, that in due time He died and shed His blood for the salvation of the ungodly, that He was buried and rose again on the third day, that He ascended back to heaven and is there right now at the right hand of the throne of God making intercession for us. We believe all of this because the

Scriptures tell us this and the Holy Spirit confirms it in our hearts. Then why should we count it as an incredible thing that the Old Testament saints should believe in the same Son of God, even as ourselves, when the Old Testament abounds throughout with sparkling gems of prophecy concerning Him, His coming, His work and mission and what He would do, etc. It is not incredible and many of them did believe in the promise of a coming Saviour and Redeemer and made their blood of animal sacrifices for sin periodically as a token of their faith in that promise and by virtue of that were saved.

Bear in mind that Jesus Christ is the focal point of the history of the world and humankind past, present and future, and that the whole plan of salvation for saving humankind was complete in every detail in the mind of God from the beginning and therefore Christ was a Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. Therefore, God was counting it as a thing already done in His mind from the dawn of the world's history and therefore was extending saving mercy to all of those in Old Testament times who believed the promise of His coming and embraced it.

MINISTERS AND OFFICERS IN THE CHURCH

Question: Will you please comment some on the different parts of the ministry and other officers in the Church; the methods of their selection, the method of certification or ordination and procedure for this and their duties, etc.

Answer: This is a very big subject and I am certain I will not be able to cover it in the space allotted to me in this column, but perhaps I can produce a few important points that might be helpful to the questioner. Though it is a very large topic, it is a very beautiful one and I am glad for the opportunity to present a few points on it for the consideration of the readers.

First, let us realize that the human body which is used as a model of the Body of Christ, the Church, throughout the 12th chapter of I Corinthians and in many other scriptures of the New Testament is the most complete, synchronized and most completely harmonious in the functioning of all its parts of any organism that there is. The reader may read the entire 12th chapter of I Corinthians; Romans 12:5; Ephesians 1:22-23 and Galatians 1:24 as they are all related to this point. God fashioned, built and organized His Church on this model. But to build a Church after this fashion (Matthew 16:18; Hebrews 8:2; Colossians 1:18) is to assemble the members of the Church together to join them together by joints and bands (Colossians 2:19) and furnish it with organs and necessary facilities to function as a unified body. To form the body of Christ, He has brought together, in order, a number of persons, saved men and women who have been saved and cleansed from sin by the blood of Jesus, and put them together in an orderly, functional, structured whole so they can function as a unit.

Then within this body He has provided a special, distinct group of individuals called ministers with various gifts and callings to meet the health needs of the body, and among other things, to function as a kind of built-in, self-healing facility so that the body may maintain a good, healthy condition and function efficiently for its intended purpose—a soul-saving and a soul-nurturing institution. There is in the human body a specified quantity of blood and in that blood are numerous minute particles called corpuscles. The particular function of certain of these corpuscles is to fight infection and promote the healing process in any part where the body has been hurt or has sustained a severe wound, bruise or injury. The procedure is this: when such a thing happens in any part of the body, the blood immediately rushes to that part conveying these corpuscles to that area. These corpuscles just come

swarming into that particular trouble spot and immediately set up a fight against the wound, bruise or injury. The ministry that God has set in the Church serves the body of Christ in a similar capacity. I saw this very beautifully demonstrated at a time when an infectious situation had developed in a certain area. An SOS call for help was sent out. Ministers heard the call in far distant places and in several states.

Those ministers were consecrated, dedicated men to God and His cause and the body had been severely injured and was in danger. When they received the call they immediately dropped what they were doing and immediately arranged plans to travel. Some came from a distance of 2500 miles and from several different states and converged on the infectious area ready to do battle with the infection and take steps to set up a healing process of the condition. Not only did the ministers respond in this case but the saints throughout this far-flung area rallied to the emergency and on very short notice raised sufficient money to cover the traveling expenses of all those ministers traveling by plane from great distances. But a severe emergency was existing, the body of Christ had received a severe injury and was in danger and the situation immediately set in motion the in-built self-healing agency that God has set up in the body of Christ when He built it. Actually nothing else mattered right then but to get there and get the infection stopped and set up a healing process for the condition.

In Acts 20:28 we read, "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." This verse is contained in Paul's last farewell message to the elders of the Ephesian Church beginning in verse 17 and continuing through verse 35. We see in this verse how the elders obtained their position and from whom they received their office—by the Holy Ghost. We see also what their duty is—to feed the Church of God. The next two or three verses carry the thought that their feeding of the flock needs to contain an ingredient of teaching and warning concerning those who might come in among them or even some who were among them then, who would arise speaking perverse things to draw away some from the congregation to follow them. The elders or overseers are charged with the responsibility of watching for any signs of approaching danger for the flock and to sound out an admonition to the saints concerning it. Hebrews 13:17 says that "...They watch for your souls, as they that must give account,...." In Acts 20:28, Paul charges the elders of the Ephesian Church to "Take heed unto yourselves,...." This was the first charge to them; then to take heed to the souls committed to their charge. From verse 13 through 19 he has been reminding them of his work among them; he had faithfully taught them publicly and privately from house to house by day and by night and had kept back nothing that was profitable to them and therefore he was free from the blood of all men. Then he said "Take heed THEREFORE unto yourselves,...." That word THEREFORE is important here. In other words, you have my example of my work among you to go by. Use that as a pattern for your work with the souls committed to your charge and go forth and be faithful to your post.

In I Peter 5:2-3, we read Peter's exhortation to elders, "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." We see here Peter is giving the same instruction to the elders that Paul gave in Acts 20:28, "...Feed the church of God,...." It is clear and evident that God wants the saints well-fed and instructed in the ways of truth and righteousness and well-warned and admonished concerning things that would affect them wrongfully and to avoid all such things. Let all of us to whom God has committed to our trust (Paul said "...He counted me faithful, putting me into the

ministry. I Timothy 1:12.) be faithful at our post and serve Him in humility and fear so long as He places us in this responsibility.

I wish to return now to Hebrews 13:17 and note a few points in regard to the ruler, overseer, pastor or guide (by whatever name you desire to call them—all are scriptural). This verse says, "...They watch for your souls, as they that must give account,..." This identifies them with the watchmen referred to in Ezekiel 33:1-9. The first six verses refer to the nation at war and how they select a man for their watchman and what his duties are. If he sees the sword coming and blows the trumpet and sounds the warning, whether the people respond to it and prepare themselves for battle or not, the watchman has cleared himself no matter what happens to the people. But if he fails to blow the trumpet and sound the warning and the people are destroyed, their blood will be required at the watchman's hand. Then verse 7 says, "So thou, O son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore thou shalt hear the word at my mouth, and warn them from me." The first word of the verse, "So," means "in like manner." This had reference to literal Israel but it is also a type of spiritual Israel, the saints under the new covenant. God has appointed watchmen, overseers, rulers, pastors or guides over His people in this "new" age of time for the specific purpose to keep them warned, advised, admonished and instructed concerning things God reveals to them. If people will give heed to their pastor's admonitions and he faithfully warns them of impending danger it will be well with both them and their watchman. If they fail to heed the warnings given, and the enemy comes in and gains advantage over them, deceives and overthrows them, it will still be well with the faithful pastor but not for them. If the watchman fails to see what is happening and fails to give warning and evil comes upon the people, then their blood will be required at the watchman's hand.

So the watchman stands in a very responsible place and must be very sincere, diligent and faithful if he is to save his own soul. Also the congregation whom he serves must be very diligent and sincere to obey and submit themselves if they would save their souls. All things considered, it is easy to see why these instructions are given to obey and submit. God has placed them there for that specific purpose and people are helping on their own destruction and total ruin who take an independent stand on anything they have been admonished by God's man and fail to obey and submit themselves. Some have said, "If God tells me, I will accept it, but I will not accept it from man." But the advice from here is that if you take an attitude to discredit and discount the worth of God's man and say you are just going to get your direction from God Himself, I will almost guarantee you will come up with a grand deception and just go shouting your way right on to your own destruction and ruin. In Luke 10:16 Jesus said, "He that heareth you heareth me;..." He speaks through His men.

In I Peter 5:2 and Acts 20:28 we read that it is the duty and responsibility of the elders to feed the flock, the Church of God. It is the elders duty to always have something from God to feed, nourish, edify, strengthen, build up and inspire the souls of the people; also to admonish, instruct and enlighten them.

In Hebrews 13:17 where it says, "Obey them that have the rule over you,..." the margin says "Guide." The true man of God rules his flock or congregation by guiding and leading them and showing them how to fulfill the Word and will of God in their lives by performing it right before their eyes. In Philippians 3:17 Paul said, "Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample." Again in Philippians 4:9 Paul said, "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." Peter writing to the elders in I Peter 5:3 said, "Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock." And Paul wrote to

Timothy, the pastor or overseer at Ephesus, in I Timothy 4:12, "Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity." Oh, how beautiful this is when a pastor can bring a message from God's Word on any line and when he has finished can say: "Now that is the message from God's Holy Word. You just watch me now and I will show you how to do it." I promise you that you can guide, lead and govern your congregations more successfully by this method than by being a lord over God's heritage and governing by dogmatic commands.

Then we see in Matthew 18:15-20 Jesus giving instructions and directions to His ministry for maintaining order and discipline in the Church. Clearly this is one of their major responsibilities. The instruction here is if a brother offends, go to him and tell him his fault between the two of you alone. If he refuses to hear you, take one or two more with you and go again. If he refuses to hear them, take it to the Church. And at this point the pastor and elders come into it and it is their responsibility to settle the matter equitably and right even if it comes to expelling the offending party from the fellowship of the Church. Jesus said He would put His seal and sanction on any judgment rendered by His spirit-filled men according to His Word. In verse 18 He said, "...Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." But the conclusion of the whole matter is in verse 20 where He said, "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." It is Jesus executing judgment through His God-called, spirit-filled, Holy Spirit appointed men performing the work of God in their place.

In Matthew 16:19 Jesus said to Peter, "And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven:..." This was not just to Peter, but it was said in a direct conversation between Jesus and Peter so it has been taken that way by some. However, this applied to all the Apostles and all of their successors, (ministers of the Church of God) throughout this gospel age of time. Every God-called, God-qualified minister has those keys. They are God's Word and God's Holy Spirit. And all the work done through these agents has the seal and sanction of God and heaven upon the back of it.

We read in 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 fulness of Christ." We see here several classifications of ministry, all of whose work and place in the ministry are necessary in bringing the members of the body of Christ into the unity of faith and bringing them to full maturity and development in Christ and in their Christian experience.

The "apostle" is defined as a "planter." Paul, who was an apostle, said of himself and his work in I Corinthians 3:6, "I have planted,..." As we follow the work and ministry of Paul we see that he was perpetually and constantly reaching out into new, virgin territory planting the truth and establishing new churches. He said of his work in Romans 15:20, "Yea, so have I strived to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build upon another man's foundation." We conclude, then, that the work of an apostle is to go into new territory and plant the gospel and gain converts to the Christian faith and establish churches. We may think of apostles as only the twelve apostles of Jesus. Truly they were a hand-picked special group selected by Jesus to be with Him during His ministry and death, resurrection and ascension; to plant the truth and establish the first Christian Church in Jerusalem. They were also to pilot it through its early stages and then after that in other outlying areas.

The second thing mentioned in Ephesians 4:11-13 is "prophets." This is another phase of God's ministry for the Church. We do not want to confuse the "prophets" in the New Testament Church nor endeavor to identify them with the "prophets" of Israel in Old Testament times. The New Testament prophet speaketh unto men to edification, exhortation and comfort. (I Corinthians 14:3.) This identifies him as a proclaimer of the gospel truth the same as all other ministers of the New Testament Church. Yet there is a difference in his ministry and the other classifications of ministers. He is different from the apostle, pastor or teacher, etc. But he is a man whom God can use in special purposes wherever they are. Sometimes they foretell future events also as in the case of Agabus. (Acts 11:27-30; 21:11.)

The third classification in Ephesians 4:11 is "evangelists." They are principally traveling ministers who go about to different established churches and sometimes where there are no churches. The main burden of their ministry is the saving of sinners and also to support the pastors and undergird them in their teaching and managing of their congregations.

The fourth classification is "pastors and teachers," which we have already considered extensively.

The important thing in this respect is for everyone who is called of God to the ministry to abide in the same calling wherein he is called. (I Corinthians 7:20.) It has sometimes been very detrimental and troublesome when one called and qualified in one phase of the ministry crosses over the line of his ministry and tries to exercise himself in another phase of ministry for which he has not been called and qualified. This can upset a lot of things. This kind of thing happens more often in evangelists crossing over their line of ministry and endeavoring to take the place of the pastor in his preaching. An evangelist can very well leave a pastor more problems and troubles than he had before he came if he does not behave himself wisely in the congregation. I would especially caution all evangelists not to dabble with problems in the congregation or counsel anyone involved in a problem with his pastor without bringing the pastor in on the counseling or you can very seriously deepen the problem and complicate matters more than they are.

Now let us consider some of the ordination of ministers, the method of ordination and what it means. I do understand it to have some definite, important meaning beyond a mere recognition of the call of God upon them. In Acts 13:2-3 we read, "As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabus and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away." This was a sacred, solemn charge to them and they fasted and prayed before they did it, even after the Holy Ghost had spoken to them. They wanted to be certain they were not mistaken. Ah, brethren, could we be a little admonished at this point and consider our ordination services as a more serious and solemn responsibility than we sometimes do. I feel deeply that I myself can.

I am sure that a token of recognition is a big support from the ministers with whom and among whom he is going to be working, but I feel the ordination service goes deeper than that and the laying on of hands by Holy Spirit filled men actually imports something to the one on whom their hands are laid. In I Timothy 4:14 we read, "Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery." Again in II Timothy 1:6 Paul said, "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." Paul confirms in these two texts that there was actually something imparted to them by the laying on of hands by Holy Spirit filled men. I feel we should teach this to our people and especially to the candidates for ordination and prepare them to expect to receive something special from God when the hands of Holy Ghost filled ministers are laid on them.

EXCEPT THE LORD BUILD THE HOUSE

Question: Will you please comment on Psalm 127:2 and does it bear any relation or have any connection with the verse preceding it or the verses which follow?

Answer: First I will insert the full text of Psalm 127:2. "It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows: for so he giveth his beloved sleep." This seems to me to have a direct connection with verse one which says, "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." The Holy Scriptures abound with many strong references to the power, strength and ability to help us in our undertakings which are worthy undertakings and also the feebleness and fruitlessness of human efforts to accomplish anything when men leave Him out of their plans and projects and undertake them on their own. What is said here about the laborer building the house and the watchman protecting the city and all the efforts being in vain except the Lord is an active Participant in it is also true of all other areas of life. These two verses taken together just confirm how utterly vain and ineffectual all purely human efforts are to accomplish their desired end when the Lord is left out and Divine aid is lacking. The obtaining of any desired, worthwhile objective cannot be realized. All this is true in all areas of life but especially in the spiritual life and the work of God.

I Corinthians 3:9 says, "For we are labourers together with God:..." II Corinthians 6:1 says, "We then, as workers together with him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain." The last part of Philippians 2:12 says, "...Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling" and verse 13 says, "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." These verses, and especially the last two (Philippians 2:12-13), confirm that our own personal salvation is a cooperative work between our soul and God. We work out our own salvation by humbly submitting ourselves to God and permitting Him to work out His will and His works in us to will and to do of His own good pleasure. Try as we will to work out our own salvation, grow in grace, and increase in the divine virtues and graces of God within ourselves and by our own means and efforts without the inspiration of His Spirit, and we will make no progress. Jesus said, "...Without me ye can do nothing." (John 15:5.) But, praise God, Paul said, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." (Philippians 4:13.) Again Paul said, "Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God." (II Corinthians 3:5.) Still again he said, "But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me." (I Corinthians 15:10.) And yet again Paul said, "For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ hath not wrought by me,..." (Romans 15:18.)

In our text (Psalm 127:1-2) we have the case of a laborer building a house and a watchman on the wall protecting the city and they rise up early and stay up late and just work, work, work, work, until they are exhausted, but the text says it is all in vain if the Lord is not in it and directing the operation. Verse 2 mentions them rising up early and staying up late **to eat the bread of sorrows**. Even so it is with people who try and try and work, work, work to improve their spiritual stature and grow in graces in their lives without the aid of the Spirit of God working within them and enlightening and guiding them; they eat the bread of sorrow and disappointment because of their failure to gain their desired objective. But it can never be obtained no matter how hard one may work at it without the aid of the Divine Spirit working within us to enlighten and guide us.

Now let us look at the last thing said in Psalm 127:2. It is indeed marvelous and glorious—"...For so he giveth his beloved sleep." Jesus said, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls." (Matthew 11:28-29.) Peter said, "Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you." (I Peter 5:7.) God's Word says again, "Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee: he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved." (Psalm 55:22.) Again we read in Psalm 37:5, "Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass."

Oh, dear soul, how exceeding great and precious these promises are to the troubled soul. When we can learn the full impact of these great promises and learn to trust in God with all our cares and burdens and commit our way to God and cast all of our cares upon Him and feel safe and secure with all our cares, burdens, and anxieties as well as ourselves in His hands and under His loving care; then we shall learn and know the peace, calm and rest that salvation brings and then shall He be able to **give his beloved sleep**.

What a contrast this is to all that strain and stress; getting up early and staying up late in order to have a longer day to worry in and battle with our anxieties in and eating the bread of sorrow because things are not working out like we want them to. But such is the sad lot of all who attempt to bear their own burdens, solve their own problems and choose out their own courses in life. They are appointed unto sorrow and disappointment.

MARK OF THE BEAST

Question: Please comment on the "mark of the beast."

Answer: To intelligently discuss the "mark of the beast" it will be necessary to understand what the beast is. In the 13th chapter of Revelation there are two beasts brought to view. Also, in the 12th chapter "a great red dragon" is introduced. This dragon and the two beasts are symbols of the three major systems of false religion which the world has known through the ages of time which have stood diametrically opposed to the true religion of God and the true gospel of Jesus Christ. The dragon was the first one and was on the stage of action at the time Jesus Christ appeared here to introduce His soul-saving gospel and to set up the kingdom of God. Jesus met him head on and the conflict was severe, bloody and deadly. But the followers of the "Lamb of God" eventually overcame him and cast him down and the truth of the true kingdom of God was firmly established. It was Jesus who said that the violent take the kingdom of heaven by force (Matthew 11:12), and we can see a clear picture of this truth through the 12th chapter of Revelation. This dragon was a symbol of paganism (idolatry, plurality of gods) and was called "the devil and satan" (verse 9) because it was a religion of the devil and actuated by his spirit.

The first beast introduced in the 13th chapter was a symbol of the next major system of false religion which followed paganism after it went down and it symbolized the apostate, corrupt system of Roman Catholicism (the Papacy). He received his power and authority from the dragon (verses 2 and 4) and worshipped the dragon (verse 4) which makes it clear that the same spirit of the devil permeated this system as did the dragon system.

Then in verse 11 another beast rose up out of the earth (it was of the earth and "manmade"—a human system) and did not come down from heaven as Jesus and His true gospel did. This beast was a symbol of the third major system of false religion, "Protestantism," which is a world system of religion today. He exercised all

the power of the first beast before him (verse 12). He also caused all of his devotees to worship the first beast (verse 12). This makes it clear that the same satanic spirit that permeated the Papal system also activated the system of Protestantism. In fact, all three of these major systems of false religion can be traced merging each one into the other and all actuated by the same spirit of the devil and Satan. Strong efforts are being put forth now through the ecumenical councils being held periodically to bring all of these systems (paganism, Catholicism, and Protestantism) into one world church, and that is the way I understand what I read in the book of Revelation. I believe there will be a vast combining of the three major systems of false religions (the dragon, the beast, and the false prophet, which was the name given to the second beast, Protestantism) under one head and dominated by the spirit of the dragon which is called in Revelation 12:9 "the devil, and Satan." This combining is what is called "Gog and Magog" in Revelation 20:8 and is said to encompass the four quarters of the earth.

Well, I have said more about these beasts than I intended to when I started, so I will now proceed to discuss the "mark of the beast." I will kind of come in the back way on it by discussing first how God seals (marks) His people. In II Timothy 2:19 we read, "...The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his...." God has each one of His people clearly marked. In Ezekiel 9:4 we see God had a special concern for all the people who were grieved and burdened over the abominations being done in Jerusalem and sent a man through the city to set a mark upon their foreheads so they would be protected from the judgments which were to come upon that city. In Revelation 7:1 we see four angels standing on the four corners (quarters) of the earth having the four winds of the earth in their hands. In verse 2 is another angel having the seal of the living God. In verse three this angel is commanding those angels to not release their winds which were to hurt the earth until he had sealed (marked) the servants of God in their foreheads. In the following verses, through verse 8, we see there were 12,000 out of each of the 12 tribes of Israel that were sealed. This was 12x12 making a total of 144,000 which was the number given in verse 4. These figures are all symbolic. Scripturally and prophetically twelve is a number denoting fullness or completeness. This then would represent the Church of God, the body of Christ in its fullness and completeness, every member in it marked with the seal of God in their foreheads. What we have in this 7th chapter of Revelation is a picture of God holding in check all the turbulent, devastating storms and winds of false doctrines and deceptions which were ready to sweep over the earth until His people became sufficiently confirmed and established in His true doctrine to not be swept away by it.

Now the glorious part: After the narrative of the Revelation has brought us through the severe and bloody conflict with paganism in chapter 12, and through the dark ages with more, **much more**, violence and bloodshed under Papalism, and then through the dark and cloudy time of Protestantism, then it comes out in chapter 14, verse 1 with 144,000 (the complete and entire Church) standing on Mt. Zion with the Lamb of God and all having the name of the Father in their foreheads. The gates of hell had not prevailed against the Church Jesus had built. The term "forehead" in all these texts is a symbol of the mind, intellect and intelligence. Thus God's Word says in Hebrews 10:16 concerning His New Covenant, "...I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their **minds** will I write them." God's mark upon His saints, then, is God's laws written in their hearts and minds and sealed there by the Holy Spirit.

Then it begins to come clear, by way of comparison and in contradistinction with God's seal or mark upon His true people, what the "mark of the beast" is. It is exactly the same as God's mark on His people, but the doctrine they are marked

with is a false doctrine instead of the true doctrine of God and it is sealed into their hearts and minds by a false spirit instead of God's Holy Spirit. Nevertheless, it is so sealed in them that it will take a strong manifestation of God's Spirit upon them to ever get them out of it into the truth. Also it is said in Revelation 13:17 that no man could buy or sell if he did not have the "mark of the beast." Buying and selling would represent just the regular, ordinary pursuits of life—giving, receiving, exchanging, communicating with society. If one is not marked with their doctrine and not possessed of their spirit, he cannot go into their services and give his testimony and have freedom there. He is looked upon as a foreigner and ostracized from their society, spiritually speaking. He cannot do as true Christians do or are expected to do. It makes no difference what part of the beast religion; whether the first beast (Roman Catholicism) or the second beast (Protestantism) with all its multiplied fragments, denominations, sects and creeds, the "mark of the beast" is always the same and its effects are forever the same: to seal its people in darkness, deception and error.

However, here again comes the glorious part. In Revelation 15:2 we read, "And I saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire: and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over his **mark**, and over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God." Thank God, there is victory and deliverance from the beast religion and its mark for anyone who will open his heart and humble himself before God, earnestly seeking Him to reveal His light and truth to him. God will surely hear his cry and reveal the truth unto him and give grace to walk in the light. But that is the only way out for a soul who has been marked with a beast doctrine and sealed with a beast spirit.

IF YE SALUTE YOUR BRETHREN ONLY

Question: Please comment on Matthew 5:47.

Answer: Matthew 5:47 reads thus: "And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so?" Now let us break this verse up a little. The first phrase is "If ye salute your brethren only." The 20th Century New Testament says "if ye show courtesy to your brethren only." Goodspeed's translation says "and if you are polite to your brothers and no one else." Phillip's translation says "and if you exchange greetings only with your own circle." All of these together—"salute," "show courtesy," "you are polite," "exchange greetings"—cover the whole scope of our general association with our fellows. Adam Clarke comments at this place that "brethren in this text would be properly rendered "friends." Then the whole scope of our association and attitude with our immediate circle of friends is comprehended here and it is altogether congenial.

The second phrase is, "What do ye more than others?" Rotheram's translation renders this "What more than common are you doing?" Waymouth's translation says "Are you doing anything remarkable?" Olaf Norlie's translation says, "Does that give you any special distinction?"

The last phrase says, "Do not even the publicans so?" Rotheram's translation uses the term "the nations" instead of "the publicans." The James Moffatt translation says, "Do not the very pagans do as much?" The Centenary translation by Helen Montgomery says, "Even the Gentiles do that, do they not?" Beck's translation inserts "the people of the world" in place of "the publicans."

This seems to me to cover the whole scope of the direct meaning of this text. If we are courteous, polite, exchange greetings, and are congenial and friendly with our friends and brethren only, that in no way distinguishes us from the worldly

crowd; because they all do the same. Matthew 5:47 is in a context with a number of verses which begin with verse 43 and continue through verse 48. So let us backtrack a little and consider the whole context and see how verse 47 fits in with the overall discussion of these verses.

"Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you, and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. For if you 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?** Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." Matthew 5:43-48.

In these verses is described the attitude of God, our heavenly Father, and His generous mercies toward all mankind; both the good and the evil, and how He gives rain and causes the sun to shine on all of them alike. Paul referred to this same disposition of the living God (Acts 14:15) when speaking to the heathens at Lystra in Acts 14:17 where he said that "...He did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness." This, then, is the attitude and disposition of God toward humankind—generous and merciful. He has certain mercies that He dispenses to both the good and the evil. Of course, we understand that He has a special package of mercies which He reserves for His own (the righteous children of God). He enjoins upon us, His children, to be the same. In Galatians 6:10 we read, "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto **all men**, especially unto them who are of the household of faith." The law standard said, "Love your neighbour and hate your enemy." However, Jesus came to offer the sacrifice of Himself for sin and to save us from our sins and establish the New Covenant with mankind that demanded a much higher standard of life than the law of Moses afforded. Jesus requires that we love our enemies, bless them that curse us, do good to them that hate us, and pray for those who despitefully use us and persecute us. (Matthew 5:44.) He said we would have to be like this in order to be the children of our Father in heaven. (Verse 45.) The salvation which Jesus established and provided is to make us partakers of the divine nature of God (II Peter 1:4) which makes us a partaker of the attitude and disposition toward humankind as is described to us in this group of verses (Matthew 5:43-48). Verse 47 has its setting in this context and teaches us that we must have a generous, kind, benevolent, considerate and courteous attitude and disposition toward all humankind, friend or foe. It forever obliterates clannishness from the hearts and lives of the children of God. To be perfect before God, we must be like this.

The exact same thing is taught in the group of verses immediately preceding this group of verses we have just been studying (Matthew 5:39-42) where it says, "But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also. And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain. Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away."

Now let us realize that all Scripture must be interpreted in its proper context. Therefore, the last verse of this group of verses (verse 42) which says, "Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away," must be interpreted in context with the entire group of verses with which it is connected. These verses (38-41) teach us what attitude we should have toward our adversaries, of whatever dimension they are, and how we should respond to those who would oppress us, treat us unjustly and persecute us. We should go all out,

even beyond reasonable and required bounds, to give satisfaction to the claims of anyone with whom we become involved. Then the general thought concludes with this 42nd verse which says, "Give to him that asketh thee,..." In other words; if one of your adversaries—one who has smitten you on your cheek, sued you in the court and gained a judgment against you (justly or unjustly) or has taken undue advantage of you and compelled you to do something he had no right to require of you—needs help and comes to you and asks a gift or help or asks you to loan him something to enable him to meet an emergency, grant him the favor just as you would a friend. Never refuse him a favor just because he has mistreated you. This is exactly the same truth that is taught in Matthew 5:47 and its related verses. God is looking for people who can meet their problems in a different way than the man of the world meets his.

POOR IN SPIRIT

Question: Would you please explain the meaning and import of Jesus' reference to "poor in spirit" in His opening statement of the "Sermon On The Mount" in Matthew 5:3?

Answer: This verse says, "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." We see here that being "poor in spirit" is stated by Jesus Himself as a prime requisite of entering the kingdom of heaven and should therefore be considered worthy of close attention and study.

I will begin the discussion by injecting two other scriptures into it which may help to clarify its meaning. Isaiah 61:1 in describing the mission and ministry of Christ says this: "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek;..." The word "meek" here is the key word. Then in the fourth chapter of Luke, verses 16-21 tell that Jesus came to Nazareth and went into the synagogue and there was handed Him the book of Esaias to read and He read this very prophecy of Isaiah 61:1. He read in verse 18, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor;..." The word "poor" is the key word here. We see that the same word that is translated "meek" in Isaiah 61:1 is translated "poor" in Luke 4:18, and makes it clear that "poor in spirit" is related to meekness and humility. Jesus could have said, "Blessed are the **humble** for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" and it would have meant the same thing.

So let us study humility a little because without it one can never enter the kingdom of heaven. The proud in heart can never be saved until they renounce pride and become humble enough to repent and confess their need of God and help from Him. Poor is defined as having little or no resources. That is the condition we must reach before we can approach unto God; poor, bankrupt, no goodness of our own to plead. Some of the words in an old hymn say, "Nothing in my hand I bring; simply to thy cross I cling." That is the way we must come to God if we are to receive mercy and grace from God. "...God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble." James 4:6. We cannot use any good things we have done as bargaining points with God when we want Him to save us or want any other favor from Him. Actually God Himself hath said in Isaiah 64:6 that "...all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags;..." That surely is not much of a bargaining commodity, so let none of us try to use it in seeking God for salvation or any other favor from God. In Isaiah 54:7 we read, "...their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord." That is the only righteousness God will recognize—just that which He has wrought in us. So in order to enter the kingdom of God we must empty ourselves of all our self-righteousness

and just throw ourselves entirely on the mercies of God and trust Him to cleanse us from all our righteousness and fill us with His own righteousness.

In Luke 18:9-14, Jesus gave us some very clear teaching on this point. He told of two men who went up to the temple to pray—a Pharisee and a publican. The Pharisee's prayer was full of commendatory remarks about himself and what he had done. All the things he said were good, commendable things. All true saints observe those things in their lives, too. There was nothing wrong with the things he did. They were right. But using them as bargaining material with God and commending himself to God on that grounds was not acceptable. On the other hand, the publican standing afar off and feeling so spiritually bankrupt and poverty-stricken, and having absolutely nothing to commend him to the Lord, smote upon his breast in the anguish of his soul and said, "God, be merciful to me a sinner." This prayer has come to be recognized the world around, even today, as "The Sinner's Prayer." God accepted that prayer and rejected the Pharisee's prayer even though he said many good things about himself. Jesus said the publican went down to his house justified rather than the Pharisee. Pharisaical religion (self-righteousness; a formal, external religion and worship) is the plague and curse of modern religion. They are missing the kingdom of God on account of it just as the Pharisee in Luke 18:9-14 did. It is still true that the humble people possess the kingdom of God.

In John 15:5 Jesus said, "...Without me ye can do nothing." Oh, let us ever be mindful of this and never boast ourselves or take credit to ourselves even inwardly, where nobody can know, for anything that God has wrought in or through us, but always acknowledge God and give Him all the credit and glory for everything, that we may continue to abide in and possess the kingdom of God.

Again Jesus said in Luke 12:25-26 that we could not, by taking thought, (worrying about it) add one cubit to our stature or turn one hair white or black. He then concluded His thought by saying that if we could not do the things that are least, why worry about the rest? Ah, folks, we will all do well to recognize and confess our insufficiencies and inabilities within ourselves and throw ourselves totally into the hands of God for Holy Ghost enablement for Him to work in us of His own good pleasure. Paul said, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." (Philippians 4:13.) So please, let us not throw up our hands and quit because of a consciousness of our total insufficiencies, but let us throw ourselves totally on God and trust in Him to endow us with His all-sufficient power and strength to enable us to do everything He wants us to do.

We can only be worthy of God's divine blessings and favors in our lives, and of salvation itself, so long as we keep our faith in the merits of the shed blood of the Son of God and the sacrifice He made in our behalf. It is only through His sacrifice and our faith in it that we have any access to God at all. Let us never forget this for one moment. Let us never think that God owes us anything at all for any service we have rendered or any good thing we have done. As soon as we do this we become unworthy of the least of His favors that very moment.

In I Peter 5:5-7 Peter said this, "Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you." Again in Philippians 2:5 we read, "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." The following verses tell of His condescension and humility in emptying Himself of the position, glory and honor He had with the Father in heaven, and condescending to come down to this world of human beings and taking our likeness upon Him and becoming obedient to His Father's will, even to death. Folks, this is great condescension, beyond our

comprehension to fathom. But we read in verses 9-11 how God highly exalted Him and gave Him a name which is above every name.

Now to sum up a little to this point: In I Peter 5:5-7, Peter is giving instructions to ministers, pastors, overseers, elders—young and old—and exhorting them to be humble, submissive and subject one to another. Ah, brethren, we are to set the pace and furnish an example to the saints of what we teach them. If we teach them humility, be humble ourselves. Let us teach them by example as well as by precept and instruct them to behave themselves among themselves and get along among themselves just like they see us behaving and getting along among ourselves. The Church of God cannot operate smoothly and function properly outside of this perimeter.

There is a certain prescribed kind of humility saints are to have. A genuine lowliness of mind and humility of heart is to characterize the life and behavior of the saints—not a voluntary or "put on" humility which is very distasteful to a genuinely humble person. It is Christ's humility we are to be clothed with. "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." Philippians 2:5. This is a lowly mind. (Philippians 2:8.) In Romans 13:14 we are instructed to put on Christ. That is, be clothed with His divine virtue of humility, from which all other graces flow.

But let us make no mistake about it; we are to walk in Christ after the same manner in which we received Him. (Colossians 2:6.) The kingdom of God belongs to humble and lowly people. If, in order to enter the kingdom of heaven, we must become poor and stripped of our resources and drop all our claims to any mercies or favors from God and just recognize ourselves as undone and "Nothing in my hand I bring; Simply to thy cross I cling," we must surely maintain our citizenship in the kingdom of God by the same means. So it can still be said, "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven," whether we are just entering in or remaining in. We remain in the kingdom of God by the same means by which we enter the kingdom of God.

Since it is Christ's humility we are to be clothed with, it must manifest itself in the same way in us that it did with Him. In His humility He made Himself of no reputation. (Philippians 2:7.) Another translation says, "He emptied Himself." Then it must work the same way in us. We must empty ourselves of all self-interest, self-promotion, self-advancement, all self-seeking, (I Corinthians 10:24; Philippians 2:4), self-planning, etc. As we empty out self, we will be more filled with God. In John 3:30, John the Baptist said, "He must increase, but I must decrease." Oh, what a great truth this is. Christ cannot increase in us until we decrease in our own self life. Christ can only expand in us to the extent we make room for Him. There is an old hymn which I have seen but have never heard. It contains four verses, and those four verses tell the whole story step by step. The first verse says, "All of self and none of God." The second verse says, "Some of self and some of God." The third verse says, "Less of self and more of God." The fourth verse says, "None of self and all of God." Ah, folks, there you have it; an emptying out of **self** and a filling up with God; we decrease and God increases in our lives.

Jesus humbled Himself and became obedient. (Philippians 2:8.) Genuine humility involves obedience. God's Word establishes a clear chain of obedience. This begins in the home. Wives are to be obedient unto their own husbands. (Ephesians 5:22; Colossians 3:18; Titus 2:5; I Peter 3:1, etc.) Children are to be obedient to their parents. (Ephesians 6:1; Colossians 3:20.) Parents should also teach their children a broader scope of obedience beyond the home; their teachers in school and anyone else who has authority over children and the management of children by reason of the position he holds or the office he occupies which has to do with children. Everybody—husbands, wives, parents, children, teachers, etc.—is instructed to obey the laws and ordinances of men and be law-abiding citizens. In

the spiritual realm, saints are instructed to obey their pastors who are in charge and exercise oversight and watch for their souls and spiritual welfare. (Hebrews 13:7, 17.) It also teaches ministers of the gospel, including pastors, overseers, elders and all classifications and callings, to be subject one to another. (I Peter 5:5.)

Right along with this instruction, Peter admonished all of them to be clothed with humility (I Peter 5:5) and to humble themselves under the mighty hand of God. (Verse 6.) God's plan and arrangement for the Church to operate by cannot possibly function smoothly and effectively without **humility** on the part of everyone connected with it. God knew all of this, so He set it up to function and be well-lubricated with humility and all of its out flowing graces and virtues. He certainly will not long allow anyone who gets lifted up with pride and personal ambition to be detained in the kingdom of God. So again, the final conclusion is, "Blessed are the **poor in spirit** [humble]: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Matthew 5:3.

THE SIN NOT UNTO DEATH

Question: Will you please explain and discuss I John 5:16-17?

Answer: shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it. All unrighteousness is sin: and there is a sin not unto death."

First let us notice the phrase in verse 17 which says "All unrighteousness is sin." Since God's Word says this, we must accept it as so and conclude that every unrighteous act is sin from God's viewpoint. God's Word also says, "...The soul that sinneth, it shall die." (Ezekiel 18:4.) But it also says in verse 17, "...There is a sin not unto death." There surely must be some harmonizing grounds for these apparently contradictory scriptures.

In James 4:17 we read, "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin." The key words in this text for this discussion are "knoweth" and "to him." We conclude on this basis that if the individual had no knowledge of God's will in the matter, it would not be sin to him and would not be charged against the individual as sin by God. Therefore he would not be cut off from God (spiritual death) on account of it even though it is sin in God's sight according to the definition of sin given in I John 5:17. Romans 4:15 says, "...For where no law is, there is no transgression." It must also be true that where there is no knowledge of the law on any given point, no transgression would be charged against an individual who violated the law on that point. Paul confirms this also in Romans 7:9 where he says, "For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died." But what does this mean? It seems to me to mean that even though Paul was doing things that violated the law, he was free from the condemnation of it until he came to knowledge of the law on the points he was violating. But when the knowledge of the commandment came to him, he fell under condemnation and sin revived and he died.

Therefore, I conclude that light and knowledge enter into the consideration to determine whether a certain thing would be classified as a "sin unto death" or a sin "not unto death." If we see a brother doing something that we know to be contrary to God's will, though he does not know it and therefore is not being charged with it, and his connection with God is not being severed on account of it (death); yet God cannot bless him with it in his life like He could bless him without it, then we are instructed to pray for God to reveal the light and truth to him on that point so he can be freed from it. When God answers prayer and deals with the individual about that unrighteous thing in his life and makes him know that it is an unrighteous

thing, contrary to the will of God; and he continues right on in it knowing it is a violation of God's will, then through the knowledge of the commandment, "Sin revives and he dies." (Romans 7:9.) It then becomes a sin unto death to him and I John 5:16 says we need not pray about that matter any further. The text didn't say not to pray for the individual's recovery to repentance and salvation, but just not to pray about that particular sin in his life—it has already been dealt with.

Even though the text under scrutiny says "There is a sin unto death," I do not understand it to be identified with the one and only upardonable sin—the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit. (Matthew 12:32.) I John 5:17 also says there is "a" sin not unto death. Would we suppose by this that there are only two sins in the world available unto mankind; one unto death and one not unto death? Of course not. The best understanding that I have at this time is that there is a kind or class of sin unto death and a kind or class of sin which is not unto death, and it is determined by the light and knowledge of the individual.

“WHOSESOEVER SINS YE REMIT”

Question: According to John 20:23, were the apostles given some special power in regard to remission of sins?

Answer: John 20:23 says, "Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained."

This text seems to say something that it does not teach and must be used with other scriptures in the same category to see just what it does teach. But first let us look at some texts on the other side of the ledger. John 5:22 says, "For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son." Note, all judgment is committed unto the Son; not to any other person. Romans 8:34 says, "Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." It is the same Christ who died for us, rose again, ascended to the right hand of God and who makes intercession for us who will condemn or acquit us in the last day; no one else. Acts 10:42 says, "And he commanded us to preach unto the people, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the Judge of quick and dead." Romans 14:10-13 says, "But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God. Let us not therefore judge one another any more:..." In I Corinthians 4:3, Paul said that it was a very small thing to him to be judged of man's judgment. Verse 4 says, "...He that judgeth me is the Lord." Verse 5 says, "Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God." Scriptures could be multiplied to show God to be the Judge of all through His Son Jesus and to show that man's judgment can be faulty because man looks on the outward appearance and does not and cannot always discern the motives, thoughts and intents of the hearts of other men.

Now to proceed with the other part of the question, there is what is called the "unanimity of faith." This means that any scripture on any given subject must be interpreted to conform and harmonize with every other scripture on that subject before we can be sure we have the correct interpretation of a scripture. So let us link John 5:23 with other scriptures pertaining to the same thing.

In Matthew 16:19 Jesus said, "And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." But what are the keys to the kingdom of heaven? With all certainty they would be the Word of God and the Spirit of God which unlock to us the kingdom of heaven and through which is revealed to our souls the unsearchable riches of the treasures of truth that are there. And within this framework of the **WORD** and **SPIRIT** of God, anything that is done down here by Holy Spirit filled people following closely the outline of procedure given in the Word of God will be recognized in heaven.

We would all surely recognize that Jesus would not build a Church and leave it here in the earth and make no provisions for its orderly operation. Certainly He has not done that. He has set within the Church a certain group or body of Spirit filled people with special endowments and charged them with the special responsibility of overseeing and maintaining the orderly operation of the Church locally and generally. They are called ministers or overseers in the scriptures and are endowed with certain gifts and qualifications.

We have a very clear example of this outline in Matthew 18:15-20. This is in regard to dealing with the case of an offending brother who has failed to submit himself in the preliminary steps outlined here to resolve the matter. It has run its course now and is to be taken to the Church. (Verse 17.) Then in verse 18 is given the same thing Jesus pronounced in Matthew 16:19, namely, "...Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven:..." In other words, if Holy Spirit filled people who have been designated by God to attend to such matters follow closely the outline in the Word of God for dealing with such infractions and irregularities, their judgment and decision will be recognized in heaven. The crux of the whole matter is in Matthew 18:20 where Jesus said, "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." In other words, when Spirit filled people follow closely the step by step procedure set forth for handling a given case or controversy, Jesus is right with them supervising the whole operation so that it cannot be classed as human government or man-rule, but that is just the way Jesus has it set up to maintain the orderly operation of His Church.

Neither was this just something special for the apostles; but it is an on-going thing running down through the annals of this Christian era, even unto us in our day; and it is to operate just as long as the Church continues in the earth.

WHAT DOES "PECULIAR PEOPLE" MEAN?

Question: What is the meaning of the term "peculiar people" in I Peter 2:9? Does it mean strange or odd?

Answer: Not at all. This text is speaking of what God's people are to Him, and God does not make a people who would be odd or strange unto Himself. On the contrary, they are His jewels (Malachi 3:17) and special treasure (Deuteronomy 7:6). They are the chosen of God, elect and precious. This is what God's people are to Him. Oh, the blessedness of being chosen by God to be one of His special people.

Of course, this does not describe what the saints are to the world nor the way the world looks at us. We are to them a strange spectacle with our conduct of self-denial, loving our enemies, doing good to them that hate us, praying for those who persecute and revile us, turning the other cheek, going the second mile, giving the cloak with the coat, etc., as compared with the self-centeredness, every fellow for himself, and the devil for us all, attitudes. But, as before mentioned, this text is referring to what the people of God are to Him and not to the world.

Now we will notice some texts which contain the term "peculiar," or its equivalent, and see what their use is in the Scriptures. "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...." Exodus 19:5-6. Note the use of the term here, "a **peculiar treasure** unto me above all people." This would clearly refer to a separated group of people from among all the other people of the earth. In Deuteronomy 7:1-6 we read how the Israelites were to deal with the people of the land when they entered Canaan. They were to utterly destroy all their places and facilities for sacrifice and worship. Verse 6 plainly states the reason for this stern indictment. It says, "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." This text uses the term "special people" instead of "peculiar treasure" as in Exodus 19:5-6. These are alternate terms used in the same way and clearly mean the same things. Read also Deuteronomy 14:2; 26:16-19; 28:9; 29:13 and I Kings 8:53.

In all the above texts the terms of peculiar, holy, special and separate have the same meaning and describe the same relationship between God and His people. This is just about, if not altogether, the total meaning and scriptural use of the term "peculiar people" in the Bible.

Our text, I Peter 2:9 and Titus 2:14), may be the only places in the New Testament where the term "peculiar people" is used, and clearly it is used in the same way and means the same thing as its use in the Old Testament in regard to ancient Israel, the chosen people of God in that time. Titus 2:14 says this: "Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." It is clear in this verse that the ultimate objective of Christ's sacrifice at Calvary was to redeem and save us from all sin and unrighteousness and purify unto Himself a **peculiar** or **separated people**. In II Corinthians 6:14-18 we read, "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." Here is clearly taught the doctrine of total separateness and the reason for it is: the opposites mentioned here can by no means blend. Therefore, since He has provided the sacrifice in His Son, Jesus, to fully cleanse us from sin and purge us from every impure and unrighteous thing through His blood, He now requires us to be separated from all these things unto Him. He now requires us to touch none of the unclean things from which He has purged us in the blood of His Son, and maintain a holy and righteous life separated unto Him.

COULD PRIESTS OR PROPHETS CAST OUT DEVILS?

Question: Did the Jews, their children, priests, or prophets have power to cast out devils before Christ came on the scene? I refer to Matthew 12:26 and Acts 19:13-20.

Answer: I am a little reluctant to enter into a discussion on this question because I like to have a solid scriptural foundation for everything I put out for the public to

read and I find that to be somewhat lacking in regard to this question. I have searched but have found very little if any direct scriptural references on this subject.

I find this reference in the writings of Josephus who is accredited with being one of the most renowned of Jewish historians. In book 8, chapter 2, paragraph 5, pages 240-241 of "Antiquities of the Jews" he says in discussing the superlative wisdom which God gave unto Solomon, "God also enabled him to learn that skill which expels demons which is a science useful and sanative (curative; restorative). He composed such incantations also by which distempers are alleviated. And he left behind him the manner of using exorcism, by which they drive away demons, so that they never return; and this method of cure is of great force unto this day;..." Josephus in the same paragraph states that he had seen a man named Eleazar driving out evil spirits from people and still making mention of Solomon and reciting the incantations which he had composed. Now Josephus lived shortly after Christ's time and he declares that these things were going on then and that those who did this were still using the name of Solomon and reciting the incantations which he composed. It would then probably be safe to conclude that this practice had been going on all down through the annals of Jewish history from the time of Solomon and that his name was being used in connection with it all along.

However, to be fair to everybody, I will also insert a footnote from these same pages (240-241). I do not know who wrote the footnotes throughout this volume but suppose it to be the translator of the volume, William Whitson, a Cambridge University professor of mathematics. He says, "I entirely differ with Josephus in this his supposal, that such books and arts of Solomon were parts of that wisdom which was imparted to him by God in his younger days; they must rather have belonged to such profane and curious arts as we find mentioned in Acts 19:13-20, and have been derived from the idolatry and superstitions of the heathen wives and concubines in his old age, when he had forsaken God, and God had forsaken him, and given him up to demonical delusions." He concludes this footnote with this, "As for the following history, it confirms what Christ says in Matthew 12:27, 'If I by Beelzebub cast out demons, by whom do your sons cast them out?'"

No matter which opinion we choose to adopt, it seems certain that all through Jewish history from Solomon on, there were men among the Jews engaged in casting out demons or evil spirits. And it is certain, and we do find solid scriptural foundation in Matthew 12:27 that there were such people in the time of Jesus. In the case in Acts 19:13-20, the seven sons of one Sceva, a priest, must have been familiar with the practice of calling someone's name (perhaps Solomon's) in expelling demons, only in this case they repeated the name of Jesus whom Paul preached. At any rate it never worked. They were practicing a curious art, and God never gave His support to it. It would appear that all that kind of work that went on in Jewish history was spurious also.

CHILD RAISING

Question: Please give us a lesson on how to raise our children and teach and train them.

Answer: In Psalm 127:3-5 we read, "Lo, children are an heritage of the Lord: and the fruit of the womb is his reward. As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man; so are children of the youth. Happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them: they shall not be ashamed, but they shall speak with the enemies in the gate."

God ordained that the man (Adam) and the woman (Eve) which He created would be joined together in holy wedlock and that they should produce children (offspring) and bring forth fruit unto God. This first pair was the pattern for all succeeding generations. God adds children to a marriage as one major means of blessing the parents, enriching their lives and giving luster, cheer and pleasure to the home and family. In these verses He teaches that the children are a valuable asset to the parents and are a source of strength and support to them.

We need first of all to recognize the value and importance of our children in God's sight. They should be precious and of prime importance in our sight also. They are a blessing from God and are the heritage of the parents from Him. In Genesis 33:5 Jacob referred to the children which God had **graciously** given Him. In Genesis 48:9 Joseph said unto his father, "...They are my sons, whom God hath given me in this place...."

God, however, gives children to parents for a specific purpose beyond what has yet been mentioned. Within those little bodies are souls that Christ died for and are precious in God's sight. He has entrusted those souls to the care of parents that they might train, teach and nurture them in the ways of the Lord, and so beget within them a desire for salvation and to love and serve Him. He wants to increase the population of heaven, and the size of His own family with those souls, and has strictly charged the parents to whom He entrusted those souls to do all in their power to take good care of them so they may be returned to Him as redeemed souls at the end. Every set of parents has a good missionary project in their own home.

In Psalm 48:12-13 we read, "Walk about Zion, and go round about her: tell the towers thereof. Mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces; that ye may tell it to the generations following." Psalm 102:18 says, "This shall be written for the generation to come: and the people which shall be created shall praise the Lord." We see, then, that God values our children as much as us and He wants them to be saved the same as us. He expects us to bring them up knowing the same truth that we know and believing in the same God. He charges all parents with the responsibility of teaching and training their children in a way that they will know what salvation is and how to get it. We will be held accountable to God for failing to do this as much as we will be held accountable for failure to do God's will on any other line. Please read in connection with this Deuteronomy 4:9-10, 8:6-9, 11:18-21, to see how diligently God commands His people to continually have these truths before their children.

Adam Clarke, commenting on Deuteronomy 6:7, says that the Hebrew word used here (diligently) means to repeat or do a thing again. He further says at this place, "God's testimonies must be taught to our children, and the utmost diligence must be used to make them understand them. This is a most difficult task; and it requires much patience, much prudence, much judgment and much piety in the parents, to enable them to do this good, this most important work, in the best and most effectual manner."

If we want our children to really get a firm hold on the truths of God's Word, we must diligently teach them in a spiritual way, not just like a school class or teach the Bible like a school book, but we must be very spiritual ourselves and teach them in that atmosphere—by example as well as precept. I was told that Bro. Willie Murphey used to instruct his boys when they were growing up, "Boys, you watch me, and anything you see me do will be all right for you to do. If you don't see me do it, you better not do it." I would say that is good solid teaching and training. We must be obeying and practicing God's Word ourselves and let our children see it in actuality as it is being taught to them. In other words, teach them the truths and principles of God's Word and then tell them, "Now just watch me and I will show

you how to do it and how it works out in everyday living." If we can't do this, we are totally defeated to start with.

This is the way Jesus taught His disciples and us. I Peter 2:21-23 says that Christ left us an example that we should follow in His steps. In John 13:15 Jesus said, "...I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done..." That is the way He taught His disciples and us, and that is the way we must teach our children if we want them to really get it. If you want to really confuse your children and discourage them, then just try the old "Don't do as I do; but do as I say" theory. II Timothy 2:6 says, "The husbandman that laboureth must be first partaker of the fruits." This will apply to you teaching your children as well as your pastor teaching you. This is of extreme importance.

If you teach your children to love God above all else and put Him first in their life, then let them see you putting Him first in your life and loving Him supremely. If you teach your children to be unselfish and to share, then let them see no selfishness in you and see you sharing with one another and with them. If you teach your children that they must not strive, nor quarrel among themselves, then let them never, never hear you, their parents, striving, quarreling, speaking harsh, sharp, cutting words one to another nor arguing between yourselves. If you teach them to be humble and submissive one to another and to you, their parents, then let them see you manifesting a lot of humility and submission one to another in the fear of God. Especially let them see their mother humbly and graciously submitting herself to their father as the Word of God instructs her to do. If you teach them to live in peace among themselves, make sure that they see you living in peace between yourselves. If you teach your children to deny themselves and never contend for their own way, then let them never hear either of their parents contending for their own way, but let them see them both denying themselves and submitting one to another.

I here insert another quote from Adam Clarke's commentary. "He who understands the way of God should carefully instruct his household in that way: and he who is the father of a family should pray to God to teach him, that he may teach his household. His ignorance of God and salvation can be no excuse for his neglecting his family: it is his indispensable duty to teach them; and God will teach him, if he earnestly seek it, that he may be able to discharge this duty to his family. Reader, if thy children or servants perish through thy neglect, God will judge thee for it in the great day."

Abraham faithfully taught his household, which included Lot, the principles of upright living and righteousness; also the entertaining of strangers and hospitality to travelers. This paid off good dividends in later years with Lot and his family. When the angels came to Sodom at evening, Lot, looking for opportunities to show hospitality to strangers and travelers, and help to the needy as he had been taught by precept and the example of his Uncle Abraham, went right out and urged the men to come under his roof for the night. This proved to be the saving of his life as well as his two daughters' lives. Way over in the New Testament, reference is made to this in Hebrews 13:2, "Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares." The principles of righteousness and upright living continued to direct Lot's life so that he was not drawn into the evil, corrupt way of life which was prevalent all around him, but it was obnoxious and vexatious to him. He had been taught better than that. Peter referred to him in II Peter 2:7-8, "And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked: (For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds.)"

I insert here still another quote from Adam Clarke in regard to Lot. "He and his family...alone were free from the pollution of this accursed people. How powerful are

the effects of a religious education, enforced by pious example! It is one of God's special means of grace. Let a man only do justice to his family by bringing them up in the fear of God, and He will crown it with His blessing.... This is your work that is the Lord's. If through your neglect of precept and example, they perish, what an awful account must you give to the judge of the quick and the dead. It was the sentiment of a great man, that should the worst of times arrive, and magistracy and ministry both fail, yet, if parents would just be faithful to their trust, pure religion would be handed down to posterity, both in its form and in its power."

Before passing on from the discussion of Abraham and Lot and his family and the relationship between them, let me point out and emphasize this point. Abraham was a man that lived very close to God, and God was well pleased with him, and his sacrifices were acceptable to God. Consequently, he stood in a place with God where God would and could accept his plea in behalf of his kinsmen (Lot and his family) as the hour of destruction approached for the city in which they dwelt. It seems that in the narrative related in the 18th and 19th chapters of Genesis that the Lord himself and the two angels with Him appeared in the form of men to Abraham and he entertained them. After they had eaten the meal that was prepared hastily for them the two angels went on their way, but the Lord tarried and made known unto him what He was going to do in the destruction of Sodom. He knew that Abraham had kinsmen down there and he would not carry out His purpose to destroy the city without letting him know about it. Then Abraham began to plead with the Lord to spare the city if 50 righteous people could be found in it. The Lord agreed to that. Then Abraham asked that if 50 couldn't be found if He would spare it for 45; then 40, then 30, then 20 and finally 10 and the Lord accepted his petition all the way, step by step, and agreed to spare the city if 10 righteous people could be found there. That would surely cover Lot and his family. Abraham was pleading for their lives and the Lord knew it, but the Lord was pleased with his life and faithfulness and his sacrifice was acceptable to God, so he was qualified to plead in their behalf. But, alas, all of them had not maintained righteousness, so there were not enough to save the city. But watch it now. The two angels spent the night in Lot's home and in the morning told him to go to his married children and tell them and their families to get out quickly because the destruction of the city was imminent. They would not go, so the angels took Lot and his wife and their two daughters and told them to hurry and get out of there because they could not do a thing until they had gone out of the city. (Genesis 19:22.) Abraham had made an acceptable plea for the lives of Lot and his family, and the angels made certain that Lot got the message and was gone from there before the destruction fell. This can all be traced to the acceptability of Abraham's life and his sacrifices before God.

Ah, parents, grasp the urgency and the importance of our own lives being well pleasing to God and our sacrifices acceptable to Him. It is very important that we have a good relationship with God and a life well pleasing to Him so that our sacrifices will be acceptable in defense of our children and in behalf of their salvation.

I am fully aware of the fact that we are somewhat at a disadvantage, even legally, in disciplining our children. The legislators have taken hold of the matter of "child abuse," and in some cases have enacted laws that prohibit parents from using a paddle or switch on their children. I have read where there have been attempts in our congress to enact laws to permit children to bring suit against their parents in court if they do not like the way they have been disciplined. I understand this has been hotly contested and debated on the floors, and in the chambers of congress, but so far as I know has never gotten through, even in any modified form, and I hope it never will. Such would just open the door wide to outright rebellion and anarchy through our children and younger set, and the courts would be hopelessly

flooded with such cases because "Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child;..." (Proverbs 22:15.) Children don't like discipline of any kind at any time. None of them do. They want to be at liberty to go their own way and do their own thing all the time and do not like restraint, especially if they are a strong-willed child. You will be at loggerheads with him or her anytime you try to restrain them in something they want to do.

Notwithstanding all this, saints have God's Word to go by in training their children, and we can count on God backing us up in it if we pray earnestly to Him, follow His instructions and employ His way in dealing with them. In Proverbs 19:18 we read, "Chasten thy son while there is hope, and let not thy soul spare for his crying." This verse seems to teach us that there is a time or period of their lives when our chastening will be to their profit, and we are admonished to not pass that time up, for when it is past there will be no more hope of helping them by that means. Again in Proverbs 13:24 it says, "He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes." It is a perverted sense of love we express when we are so sympathetic and "loving" toward our children that we cannot stand to hurt them and hear them cry over a chastisement we are administering to them. The word *betimes* seems in my mind to mean when it is necessary, administer the discipline and when it is not necessary, don't do it. Proverbs 22:15 says, "Foolishness is bound in the heart of a child, but the rod of correction shall drive it far from him." This verse makes it clear that it is common to all children to have foolishness bound up in their hearts, but God Himself has designed that the rod of correction in the hand of a wise and good parent shall be a means of helping to guide them out of their foolishness. Again in Proverbs 29:17 we read, "Correct thy son, and he shall give thee rest; yea, he shall give delight unto thy soul."

Now this is God's instructions for dealing with and training our children, and He will surely back us up in doing this when it is done in the proper way. But let it be hoped that among the saints when it is necessary to chastise our children that we will have them sufficiently under control, and ourselves sufficiently under control, that we won't get into trouble with the authorities and fall under a charge of "child abuse" or unnecessary brutality over the way we did it. There are some cases, and perhaps we all know some, where the parents need to discipline themselves and get themselves well in hand before they even start in on disciplining and correcting their children. The same God who inspired Solomon to write these texts of instruction in the Scriptures in regard to our chastising and correcting our children, also inspired the Apostle Paul to write this warning and admonition in the Holy Scriptures: "And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." Ephesians 6:4. "Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged." Colossians 3:21. Ah, fathers and mothers, let us seek God earnestly to enable us to more clearly and deeply understand the extent and depth of our responsibility and authority with our children, that when it is necessary to chastise them, we may do so in the meekness and gentleness of Christ and not in severity and sharpness.

Adam Clarke says in regard to provoking to anger, "If a father punishes his child in severity and sharpness, the child will only be hardened in his sin." One man was whipping his boy in severity and harshness and asked the boy if he knew why he was doing this, and the boy said, "Yes, it is because you are mad and you are bigger than I am." Here is a fair example of a child being hardened in his resentment through his punishment. Sternness and severity seldom work any good purpose with children. There must be a lot of meekness and love in our chastisements and corrections if they are to be effective.

I remember a time when my own two boys had been guilty of what to me was a heinous crime of misbehaving and making a disturbance in the worship service at the chapel. I took them both down to the bedroom and talked with them a little about how bad a thing that was and how desecrating that was to the worship and service of God, and that I could not by any means pass over a thing like that. I prayed with them and then soundly spanked them. As soon as I finished with that, I just dropped down between them, and broke out crying and sobbing. Both those boys began to love and pat me and say, "Oh, Daddy, don't do that. Don't cry, Daddy. It's all right, we're going to be good boys." Perhaps that little episode did more good for those boys than any other correction I ever gave them.

I can remember my father's dealings with me in the matter of chastisements. He never jumped at me in an agitated way nor approached me harshly or sternly. Sometimes he would pray over it for two or three days. Then he would take me down to the barn and talk to me and pray with me a while; then he would give me a genuinely sound switching. All the time he was just as calm as if we were eating ice cream. There was no trace of agitation, sternness or harshness. I can never remember a time when my father would chastise me that I did not feel closer drawn to him than before.

As your children grow older, be a pal with them. As they show interests and tendencies to certain activities—hunting, fishing, playing ball, etc.—provide them with the essentials and equipment for those activities they are interested in. Provide time, on your part, to go with them occasionally on outings for hunting, fishing, camping, playing, etc. Let them lead the way in this, for if you don't you may be planning things for them which they have no interest in and do not like. You may not enjoy the particular thing your boy or girl does, but that is just one among many points in which you may need to deny yourself and your own likes and dislikes in order to be a good parent to your children.

This is something I did not do enough of. I found out later, when it was too late to bless the lives of my children, how much I should have done this to keep a hold on my children. Anytime I would come along where my boys were playing ball and enter in and throw a few balls or catch a few, no matter who or how many other boys were around, my boys would just pull out and start playing ball with me as they did not get to do this very often. That manifested the hunger they had for Daddy to share their activities with them. I did not, at the time, realize the importance of this, but now give this kind of advice and counsel to all parents with young children. In fact, since my children have all been grown and established in homes of their own, I have talked with all of them and acknowledged that I had not been the father to them that I should when they were growing up, in that I did not spend enough time with them and participate enough with them in the activities they were the most interested in, and asked forgiveness for this shortcoming.

In schools they have a "Father and Son" banquet, and other "Father and Son" activities. They expect the boys to bring their fathers on these occasions. When your boy comes to you and lets you know one of these times is coming up on a certain date, it will make him stand tall and help to create a closer relationship between you and him if you will just say, "All right, son, you can count on me. I will cancel all plans I have for that evening and be available to you." It makes your son feel important and adds dignity to his life.

Now to use a phrase from the world's vernacular, "Learn to roll with the punches." Change your tactics as your children get older. You cannot deal with them in the same way you could when they were smaller. They are developing and you must develop too if you are to maintain a close relationship with them and keep your hold on them through that period of their lives when they need you the most. Study out different methods of dealing with them, and note carefully which are the

most effective. This is the time when you need to develop as close a pal relationship with them as possible. Go places with them, do things with them as much as possible. Above all else, maintain a good, close relationship with God. Pray much and earnestly for God to give you courage, ability, wisdom, grace and faith to be able to pilot your children through this very difficult and important time of their youth.

DOCTRINE OF ELECTION AND FREE WILL

Question: Among the many doctrines in the Bible are the two dealing with salvation—the doctrine of election and the doctrine of free will. There are many passages in the Bible on both of these doctrines and many books written, etc. Now my question is simply this—How can we fit these two opposing doctrines together so as to form a reasonable part of the whole? The entire Bible must somehow fit together as God's whole Word, so there should be some logical answer to this confusing matter. Frankly, I don't see how both of these doctrines can be in the Bible, but they are, and how do we explain them?

Answer: In the first place, let us recognize and be persuaded that there cannot possibly be two mutually contradictory doctrines in the Bible. For such a case to exist would certainly raise questions in our minds about God Himself and doubts as to the credibility of the Bible as God's Word. Mutually contradictory doctrines may arise, and often do, out of men's interpretations of the Bible, but they never exist in the Bible itself when properly interpreted and understood.

I see the two doctrines as being mutually compatible, blending into each other and each incorporating the other and the doctrine of *free will* enveloping the doctrine of *election*. The doctrine of free will is so definitely and so broadly established in the New Testament that it could not possibly be questioned as pertaining to the plan of salvation and the economy of God's grace. We are told in John 3:16 that "...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 3:14-15 says, "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." Revelation 22:17 says, "...And **whosoever** will, let him take the water of life freely." II Peter 3:9 says, "The Lord is...not willing that **any** should perish, but that **all** should come to repentance." This would certainly destroy the idea of God's electing (choosing) certain ones to be saved and excluding others from being saved by an act of His own will and sovereignty. This thought is further emphasized in I Timothy 2:1 where we are exhorted to pray for all men, and verse 4 says that God would have **all** men to be saved. I Timothy 2:6 says that Christ gave Himself a ransom for **all**. I Timothy 4:10 says that God is the Saviour of **all** men. Hebrews 2:9 says that Jesus, by the grace of God, tasted death for **every man**.

I have referred to several scriptures and could go on and on with many more to show that salvation, in its provisions, is universal and available to all men, but in its application it is individual and on a **whosoever will** basis. Anyone who is saved must be willing to be saved within the scope of the economy of God's grace, to come under the covenant provisions in the terms of the gospel and meet the demands of God's Word. Anyone who will do this will be saved.

Now I have stated that the doctrine of *free will* envelops the doctrine of *election*. But how? The term *Elect* is used a number of times in the Old Testament in reference to ancient Israel, who in that time were the chosen people of God. God had elected (chosen) them as a peculiar people, separated unto Himself from all the other peoples upon the earth, that in them He might reveal His glory, power and

holiness; to whom He could deliver the oracles of God (the law), extend and perpetuate the covenant and promises made to Abraham, the originator of their race, and through them bring Jesus Christ into the world.

Therefore they are referred to as the *elect* in different places throughout the Old Testament. But in the New Testament the term *elect* or *election* is extended beyond the limits of the Jewish nation to include all, both Jews and Gentiles, who are redeemed from sin through faith in the merits of the all-atoning blood of Jesus Christ.

In the first four verses of the 11th chapter of Romans, the Apostle Paul argues that God has not cast off His people, Israel, and confirms it with the fact that he himself was an Israelite and had obtained mercy and been saved by faith in Christ. Also, he refers to the time of Elijah when a remnant was reserved unto God in a time of Israel's deep apostasy and idolatry. Then in verse 5 he says, "Even so then at this present time also there is a remnant according to the election of grace." Note on what grounds the election of this remnant was reckoned. It was not by virtue of being the children of Abraham according to the flesh, nor by the keeping of the law, neither by circumcision, nor by any of the conditions on which the election of ancient Israel was predicated. It is on an entirely different ground—"According to the election of grace." But there are only eleven references to "grace" in the Old Testament. Two of them are prophetic (Zechariah 4:7 and 12:10); one refers to God's mercy in a time of deep trouble (Ezra 9:8); and the Psalmist spoke of grace being given to his lips in prayer (Psalm 45:2). All the others refer to the grace of one person to another, or of the king to individuals, etc. The Old Testament was not an age of grace, but it is said in John 1:17 that "...Grace and truth came by Jesus Christ."

Therefore the election spoken of in Romans 11:5 was not an Old Testament kind of election, but it was the "election of grace" through Christ which only a remnant of the Israelites obtained. John 1:11-13 says, "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: Which were born,...of God." Those among the Jews who received Jesus Christ when He came and believed on His name constitute this "remnant according to the election of grace." Adam Clarke in his comments on Romans 11:5 says, "The election of grace simply signifies God's gracious design in sending the Christian system into the world, saving under it all those who believe in Christ Jesus, and none else. Thus the believers in Christ are chosen to inherit the blessings of the gospel, while those who seek justification through the works of the law are rejected." Again he says in his comments on verse 6, "And this is done according to the election of grace, or rule of choosing any persons to be the people of God upon the footing of grace, which takes in all that believe in His son, Jesus Christ."

To this the Scriptures bear conclusive evidence, for it is written "...**whosoever will**, let him take the water of life freely," (Revelation 22:17); and "...**whosoever** believeth in Him should...have everlasting life." (John 3:16.)

Romans 11:7 says, "...Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for;..." They desired to continue as the chosen people of God with all the power and glory of their kingdom which had been in time past. But they did not recognize the Author of eternal salvation when He came, so did not accept Him, but rejected Him, therefore failing to obtain what they desired. This verse says further, "...but the election hath obtained it,..." We have seen that the election were those who believed in Jesus Christ and received Him, thus were born of God, and became His children in reality. Therefore they inherited all the blessings of the gospel, entered into the spiritual kingdom of God (righteousness, joy and peace in the Holy Ghost—Romans 14:17), and obtained the fullness of what they sought after.

This group of Israelites, who were elect according to grace received Christ and believed in Him, were born of God, and became children of God in reality. This great majestic company of faith champions survived the complete spiritual collapse and downfall of the Jewish people and came through with faith and belief in the promises, looking for the Consolation of Israel. This group came through, merged into, and blended with the spiritual body of Christ and entered the spiritual kingdom of God. It was absorbed into a much greater and broader "election" which included all of those from every nation under heaven (both Jews and Gentiles) who believed in Christ and received redemption by faith in His blood.

The term "elect" means *chosen, selected*. Several translations drop the term *elect* and insert the term *chosen* in its stead in all texts where "elect" is mentioned. *The Amplified Bible* retains the term *elect* but in each case inserts in parenthesis the terms *chosen, select*. Then we read in Ephesians 1:4, "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." The choosing or electing here does not refer to particular individuals, but that God had chosen or selected a plan for people (all people) to be saved, and this was through Jesus Christ and Him only, by believing in Him and yielding themselves to Him for salvation. Thus it is said that we (all the people of whatever nation, kindred, tongue or people) are chosen (elected) in Him, or there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved. (Acts 4:12.)

Now let us look at a very important text regarding "election." In II Peter 1:10 we read, "Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall." This scripture teaches us that we have a part in our election. Someone said a long time ago in regard to the "election," that "God has a vote, the devil has a vote, and I have a vote, and whichever way I vote is the way the election is going." In Romans 6:16 we are told, "...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." Again Romans 6:13 says, "Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God,...and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God." Thus we can see that the yielding of ourselves to one master or the other is in our own hands, subject to our own will and our yielding determines our election one way or the other.

II Peter also teaches us that our election can be lost after it has been gained. "...If ye do these things, ye shall never fall." (II Peter 1:10.) The inference here is that if we fail to do these things and give diligence to this, we will fall.

This is exactly what happened to Israel. They were the elect of God, but they lost their election status and were cut off because of unbelief. (Romans 11:20.) Verse 17 speaks of the Gentiles being grafted in and verse 20 says they stand by faith. Then verse 22 says, "Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in his goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off." This all makes it very clear that our election is determined by us and how we yield ourselves, and that our election can be lost after we have obtained it if we do not diligently work out our own salvation with fear and trembling.

BORN OF WATER AND THE SPIRIT

Question: Please discuss the "new birth" and what the term "water" refers to in John 3:5. Is this water baptism?

Answer: John 3:5 says, "...Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."

The whole topic of Christ's conversation with Nicodemus recorded in the first several verses of the third chapter of St. John's gospel is the new birth, or being born again. His speech is concerning the heavenly birth. Now, if we can find out from the Word of God just how this experience is reached and the agents that are cooperative in its being reached, we will know what is meant by the water and Spirit, for they are the two agents spoken of by which we are born again. By referring to the marginal reading in John 3:3 and 7, we note that this second birth is "from above." In John 1:13 the writer speaks of those receiving Jesus as being "born of God." In John 3:6 Jesus draws the distinction between two kinds of births. One was of the flesh or a natural birth. The other was of the Spirit or a spiritual birth. Since the spiritual birth is "from above" then the agents that bring it about must necessarily be from above. Since the birth is of God the agents must necessarily be of God and emanate from God. Since the birth is spiritual the agents and elements involved in it must necessarily be spiritual. Hence, the term water in the text could not possibly refer to literal water, for the elements and agents involved in the new birth must meet all these requirements. They must be from above, of God and spiritual. While it is true that literal water is given us by God for "...He...sendeth the rain on the just and on the unjust" (Matthew 5:45), yet it could not be said to emanate from God, for God is a Spirit and that which emanates from a spirit is not literal but spiritual. This, at least, answers one part of the question: "water" in the text under consideration could not refer to literal water and could have no reference to water baptism being a part of our spiritual birth. It has its place all right, but not here.

Again, it is not the outer man, or the flesh, that is born again. This was the big question with Nicodemus, "...How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?" (John 3:4.) Jesus' response to this question was, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." (John 3:6.) But it is the inner man or soul that is affected by this birth. David said, "He restoreth my soul:..." (Psalm 23:3.) It was the soul that was dead because of trespasses and sins. Ezekiel 18:4 and 20 says, "...The soul that sinneth, it shall die...." Therefore it was the soul that needed to be restored to life or born again. Now it must be evident unto all that "Spiritual things must be compared with spiritual and natural things with natural." (I Corinthians 2:13-14.) They do not intermingle and one does not affect the other. Literal things do not affect or react on the spiritual, neither the spiritual on the literal. Therefore literal water could not react upon the spiritual part of man; hence could not be employed as an agent in the heavenly, spiritual birth of a person's soul.

When we look into the Word of God, which is the only place we can find the plan and operation of salvation and the new or heavenly birth clearly set forth, and begin to search for agents that will meet all three requirements for employment in this operation of being born again (from above, of God and spiritual) we find only two that qualify—the Word of God and the Spirit of God. But let us see if we are born of the Word. Let us look first at I Peter 1:23. "Being born again, not of corruptible seed (now it must be evident unto all that literal water is corruptible and we have seen some of it that was so corrupted that it could hardly be used for anything), but of incorruptible, by the Word of God which liveth and abideth for ever." James 1:18

says, "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth,..." I Corinthians 4:15 says, "...For in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel." We see clearly in these three texts that the Word of God is one of the agents in the spiritual begetting and new birth of the soul. To be born implies a coming into a state of life. But life naturally can be produced only where there is the seed of life. This is also true in a spiritual sense. Spiritual life can only be produced from a spiritual seed of life. In the text above, I Peter 1:23, we discover that the incorruptible seed is the Word of God and that it liveth. Jesus said in John 6:63, "...The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." Hence, the Word of God is the seed of spiritual life. A seed planted in the earth, under the proper conditions of moisture, heat, light, etc., will germinate and spring into life. So the spiritual seed, the Word of God, when planted in the heart and acted upon by the germinating power and influence of the Holy Spirit will spring up and produce life in the soul. In the eighth chapter of Luke, Jesus gave the parable of the sower who went forth to sow and mentioned a number of places and conditions into which the seed fell. Then in reiterating the parable to His disciples He said in Luke 8:11, "...The seed is the word of God." Then He continues in verse 15 by saying, "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..." Again Jesus says in John 5:25, "...The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead (spiritually dead) shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear (receive the Word of God, the seed of spiritual life) shall live." This is how a man is born again, by the operation of the Word and Spirit of God in his heart.

Now it is surely evident unto all that the term "born again" describes the same experience and operation that is described elsewhere in the Word of God by "salvation" and "being saved." But let us see how the Word is connected with salvation or being saved. I Corinthians 1:21 says, "...It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." But preach what? "Preach the Word." (II Timothy 4:2.) "Preach the gospel." (Mark 16:15.) "Teach all things I have commanded you." (Matthew 28:20.) "They went everywhere preaching the Word." (Acts 8:4.) And God said He was pleased to save men by the preaching of His word which is able to save your souls. (James 1:21.) "...I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation..." (Romans 1:16). "The Word of truth, the gospel of your salvation." (Ephesians 1:13.) It is an indisputable fact, from this collection of Holy Scriptures, that the Word of God is one of the agents employed in our being saved. Now just a test or two to prove by the Word of God itself that the Word is represented by water in some instances in the Bible and the proof will be as complete as the Word of God can make it that the term "water" in John 3:5 means the Word of God.

Ephesians 5:26 says, "That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word." Here the sanctification of the Church is spoken of as being accomplished with washing of water by the Word. But Jesus says in John 17:17, "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth." So we see here that the Word and water are used interchangeably and are put to the same use to accomplish the same result. Again, it speaks in this same place of being cleansed with the washing of water. But Jesus said in John 15:3, "Now ye are clean through the word..." and Peter tells us in I Peter 1:22, "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth..." Jesus said, "...Thy word is truth." (John 17:17.) There are perhaps other similar texts, but Jesus said every word was established by two or three witnesses so this is deemed sufficient at this point.

Now if literal water could possibly fill the three requirements for this spiritual birth—that is, if it could be spiritual, of God or emanating from God and from above, then there might be some room for argument about this text, but it is impossible and therefore that consideration is out. However, the term "water" is not only used

interchangeably with the Word in certain instances in the spiritual sense, but it is also used in certain instances as interchangeable with the Holy Spirit. But since the text is so worded "water" and (conjunction—implying another separate person or thing) "Spirit," and the Spirit is introduced in the text under His own name and since the Word and Spirit are the only two agents which can meet the necessary requirements for employment in the operation of the spiritual birth, then the matter just narrows down to one unalterable conclusion—"water" in the text means the "Word of God." The Holy Spirit works in connection with the Word in effecting the new birth by convincing people of its truth and of their need of its benefits, by inspiring faith in the heart causing it to act in harmony with the Word's precepts and furnishing the germinating power and influence which causes it to spring up and produce life in the soul.

THOSE THAT HAVE SINNED WITHOUT THE LAW

Question: Please discuss and explain Romans 2:12-15.

Answer: Romans 2:12-15 reads thus in its entirety: "For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law: and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law; (For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified. For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another.)" "In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel." (Verse 16.)

This passage states clearly and plainly that some sinned without law. But I John 3:4 also clearly states that "...sin is the transgression of the law." Also, Romans 4:15 clearly states, "...For where no law is, there is no transgression." This idea would also include the knowledge of the law. To one who has no knowledge of the law or God's will at any given point, sin is not imputed even though he might violate it. Paul said this in so many words when he said in Romans 7:9, "For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died." What he is saying here is that without the knowledge of the law, when he knew not what the law said, he was alive (innocent before God); but the commandment came, or he received a knowledge of what the law said, it revived in him and he died. Death is the consequence of sin.

But there is a people sinning without law and declared to be perishing without law. How could this be in the light of the scriptures given in the above paragraph? The answer is found in verses 14 and 15 of the second chapter of Romans. It is said in verse 14 that these people did not have the law but they did by nature the things contained in the law. Verse 15 says that they show the work of the law written in their hearts, and their consciences bore them witness and their thoughts accused or excused them. These verses do not teach what some have taken them to teach; that an individual can be saved by his conscience. They rather teach that there is sufficient knowledge of right and wrong doings. Every person who comes into the world is given sufficient knowledge of God's law of righteousness to guide him right until it is squelched by repeatedly riding over his conscience until it becomes hardened. Then he loses that. Romans 1:21 answers this well. "Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened." This verse says that these people knew God, but verse 28 said that they did not like to retain God in

their mind. From verse 21 through the remainder of the chapter we have described the deplorable and disgusting condition these people fell into on account of their taking their own way instead of God's way and "Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools." (Romans 1:22.) Can we see this same thing happening all around us today in our world?

What God implants in the bosom of each individual exactly corresponds to what is in God's law even though he may not directly have knowledge of God's law. "For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves." Romans 2:14. Let us realize that for a person to violate his own conscience is sin and is a very serious thing and will produce very grave consequences even though he does not have direct knowledge of the commandment. These people's conscience bore them witness and their thoughts accused or excused them.

Now let me earnestly warn you that you are more likely to perish by your conscience than you are to be saved by it if you don't take good care of it and keep it tender by responding quickly to its dictates and properly educating it by the Word of God.

The antediluvian world perished by their conscience. That was the only law they had at that time but they grossly violated it and rode over it persistently and repeatedly until it became so hardened and corrupted that the imaginations of their hearts were only evil continually and there was no remedy. The passage we are discussing in this lesson declares that some of the heathen will perish by their conscience; and you will, too, if you do not take proper care of it and keep it clear and tender.

FLAUNTING OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS FORBIDDEN

Question: What is the meaning of Matthew 6:17-18, "But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face; That thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret: and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly."

Answer: The whole major thrust of the first eighteen verses of the sixth chapter of Matthew is aimed at getting true Christian people away from the idea of seeking any praise, commendation or reward from men for what we do in service or worship to God and doing whatever we do in these areas "...heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men." (Colossians 3:23.) We see in these verses how that the serpentine influence of self interest and self promotion and aggrandizement can creep into and slither across our deepest acts of devotion and charity—giving alms, praying, and fasting.

Jesus presented these whole ideas as hypocritical acts. They were doing these things and announcing their doing and sounding their trumpets so that men would be sure to notice and give them credit and praise. This is all a very destructive thing to one's relationship with God and to Christian living. Jesus said these people had their reward—that men would see them and praise them—but they had no reward from God. This is an attitude to be religiously avoided by true Christian people.

Jesus said, "How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only?" (John 5:44.) We are certainly not to seek praise and commendation from men for what we do for God and for our acts of devotion and worship to God.

In the particular part of this overall teaching on this subject—the matter of fasting and how to carry it out—we are instructed in general to do nothing special to

let men know we are fasting. The anointing of the head (one translation says, "pour perfume on your hair" and another translation says, "brush your hair") was a normal part of Jewish grooming, but it was forbidden by their canon in times of fasting and humiliation. But what Jesus seems to be teaching us here is that when we fast we should groom ourselves as usual and dress ourselves as usual and not in any special garment of mourning as those people did, that we might not appear unto men to be fasting.

It is evident and clear that this is no part of the fasting itself because Jesus continues on to say, "That thou appear not unto men to fast,..."

True Christians should always avoid any tendency to vaunt themselves in anything they do for God or to seek credit from their fellowmen for those things. Let us be satisfied with the credit and reward that God gives unto those who serve Him in the right attitude of heart. This will help our "togetherness" with God which is a very precious thing with the child of God. It is a very rewarding and enriching thing to one's life when God rewards him for doing something as unto Him. We are taught by Jesus to "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see you good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." (Matthew 5:16.) Truly, all glory belongs to God, and let us be satisfied for Him to get it from our lives.

BLASPHEMY AGAINST THE HOLY SPIRIT

Question: I do not understand Matthew 12:31-32. Please explain.

Answer: First I will insert this passage, "Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come."

The first question to be determined to intelligently discuss these verses is, "What is blasphemy?" Webster defines "blasphemy" as "to speak in an impious or irreverent manner of; to speak ill or to the prejudice of; to use insulting or abusive language." Further Webster defines blasphemy as "evil or profane speaking and irreverence of God, derogating from His power or claiming His attributes; the expression of defiant impiety and irreverence against God or things held sacred."

Jesus discusses this matter of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit in Matthew 12:31-32, Mark 3:28-29 and Luke 12:10. The entire context of these scriptures, which is helpful in understanding and would be good for the reader to read in this connection, is Matthew 12:22-33, Mark 3:22-30 and Luke 12:10. In all these scriptures we find Jesus using this language, "He that shall speak a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him but whosoever shall blaspheme the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him neither in this world nor in the world to come." We see here that Jesus uses the terms "speak against" and "blaspheme" interchangeably and this corresponds with Webster's definition given above.

Then, to blaspheme the Holy Spirit would be to speak impiously or irreverently of Him and His power and operation or to hold that attitude towards Him. It is specified in Mark 3:30 that Jesus spake these words, "Because they said, He hath an unclean spirit," thus downgrading and derogating the Holy Spirit and attributing work which could only be done by Him to the devil. Adam Clarke says that it is evident that this and nothing else is what is meant here. I agree that it is.

Let us keep in mind all the time that we are discussing something very specific here and we should discuss it in a specific way and not in any general terms. If we

speak in reference to "the sin against the Holy Spirit" let us specify it as "blasphemy" with an understanding of what that term means. All unrighteousness is sin and all sin is against the Holy Spirit and is grievous to Him. But the common category of sin such as pride, foolishness, an evil eye, uncleanness, backbiting, malice, evil speaking, tale bearing, gossip, slander, deceit and all such else as may be mentioned in the Word of God are against Him only in the sense that His nature is that of absolute holiness and consequently all unrighteousness and unholiness is grievous and vexatious to His holy nature.

But blasphemy against the Holy Spirit stands alone in a category all by itself and is declared to be the only unpardonable sin and, therefore, should be referred to in a very specific way and not be mentioned in connection with any of the common catalog of sins mentioned in the Bible. Blasphemous words against the Holy Spirit are the worst kind of sin and unpardonable. Jesus said, "...All manner of sin...shall be forgiven unto men:..." (Matthew 12:31.) Blasphemy against God, a sin immediately touching His name and honor shall be forgiven. Words spoken against the Son of man shall be forgiven even as it was to those who reviled Him at His death, many of whom repented and found mercy. "...All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men:..." said Jesus, but he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Spirit, "...it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come." (Matthew 12:31-32.)

What is meant here is the individual who knowingly, with a fixed purpose and full exercise of his own will, maliciously opposes, defiantly blasphemes, impiously and irreverently speaks of and despises the Person of the Holy Spirit and His operations.

Matthew Henry comments on this point: "It is adjudged in our law that an act of indemnity shall be construed in favor of that grace and clemency which is the intention of the act. Therefore the exceptions in the act are not to be extended any further than needs be. The gospel is an act of indemnity. It is necessarily construed in favor of grace and clemency and its terms are extended as far as they possibly can be without reacting against God's justice and holiness in order to make room for everyone possible to be made partakers of its mercy and benefits and the one and only exception is the person that blasphemes the Holy Spirit and should therefore be construed in the narrowest sense. This one exception, and it a somewhat narrow one, is made not because of any defect in God's mercy; not because He does not love those who are guilty of it; not because he who becomes a blasphemer against the Holy Spirit was originally overlooked in the "Whosoever will" invitation; not that he was one singled out by the Almighty God as an object of contempt and one to be punished from the beginning; but because to be guilty of it inevitably leaves the sinner in infidelity and impenitence."

But now the question remains, "Why is the blasphemy against the Holy Spirit so eternally fatal when all other blasphemy can be forgiven?" Jesus said, "...All manner of sin and **blasphemy** shall be forgiven unto men:..." (Matthew 12:31.) Note: This statement of Jesus included all manner of **blasphemy**. But Jesus moved right on to say in the same verse, "...But the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men." But why this distinction? The answer is rather simple when we understand the nature of the God-head, the plan of salvation and the unfolding of the Divine revelation of Himself and His truth unto men.

The God-head is a Trinity composed of three in one—God the Father, God the Son (Jesus), and God the Holy Spirit. These three have all cooperated together in the plan of salvation in their various roles and capacities. God devised the plan of salvation and sent His Son into the world to confirm it and then sent the Holy Spirit into the world to execute it. God had a dispensation in which He dealt with men directly and personally. But men in general did not understand God and

consequently were not true in their allegiance to Him. Then He dealt with men in a more indirect and impersonal way through the law and the prophets, and in different types, shadows and figures tried to reveal Himself more clearly to men through the types and rituals of the law. But though they did not understand Him and love and serve Him as they should, He was merciful unto them and long-suffering with a purpose to send His Son, Jesus, into the world to reveal Himself fully in Him and perchance men would be convinced of their error and turn to Him. Hebrews 1:3 declares the Son to be the "...brightness of his glory, and the express image of His person,..." Colossians 1:15 and II Corinthians 4:4 declare that Christ is the "image of God." In John 14:9 Jesus said, "...He that hath seen me hath seen the Father;..." Colossians 1:19 says that all fulness dwelt in Him. Therefore it was a part of the mission of Christ to reveal God to mankind in a full and complete sense and to bring men to God.

Many were gained and brought to God through Jesus' revelation of God to them, but in general they did not understand Him nor believe in Him either. But that was not necessarily fatal, because there was still another who was to come and reveal Christ to them in a full measure and convince them of the error of their ways. This was the Holy Spirit. Jesus said in John 16:14, "He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you." Also He said in John 16:8-9, "...He will reprove the world of sin,...because they believe not on me." We see here it was the work of the Holy Spirit to reveal Christ to men and convince and convict them that they had missed the mark and erred greatly in not believing in Him.

The Holy Spirit is the third Person of the Trinity and completes the God-head. This is His dispensation in which we now live and it is the last one. God's Word said in Acts 2:17, "And it shall come to pass in the **last** days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh:..." and Peter declared this that happened on the day of Pentecost to be a fulfillment of a prophecy found in Joel 2:28. But the Holy Spirit was to be poured out upon all flesh in the **last days**. Therefore this is the **last days** and the last dispensation of time. There is no other to come after the Holy Spirit to accomplish anything more in the salvation of men. **This is it!** It is now or never! All who fail to be convinced of their error in rejecting Christ through the convicting power and influence of the Holy Spirit and continue on in their unbelief and blasphemy are now and were then sinning against the last remedy for sin and were left without pardon. The Holy Spirit is the last agent of conviction and the last means of access to God. Jesus said, "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him:..." But the Holy Spirit is the agent through which God draws men unto Himself and without His drawing, convicting power we cannot get to God at all.

Since the Holy Spirit is the last remedy for sin and the last means of access to God, to despise and irreverence Him leaves one without any other source of help and means of access to God, and consequently doomed. To blaspheme Him inevitably leaves one in total and permanent impenitence and consequently unforgiven and therefore eternally condemned.

DANIEL 12:7

Question: Please explain the latter part of Daniel 12:7: "...And when he shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people, all these things shall be finished."

Answer: Let us first establish the true identity of who "he" is. The first part of this verse says, "And I heard the man clothed in linen, which was upon the waters of the

river, when he held up his right hand and his left hand unto heaven, and sware by him that liveth for ever that it shall be for a time, times, and an half;..." In the seventh chapter of Daniel is recorded a vision Daniel had of four beasts which came up from the sea (verse 3) and a description of each one; but the focus is on the fourth beast beginning at verse seven. In verse 25 it says, "And 'he' shall speak great words against the most High, and shall wear out the saints of the most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time." The time span here is the same as in Daniel 12:7. Dividing of time here is the same as the half time in Daniel 12:7. In Revelation 13:1 we see a beast rising up out of the sea. The following verses describe him and his character and what he will do, and verse five says power was given unto him to continue forty and two months. The time span here is the same as in Daniel 12:7 and 7:25. "A time" in these texts is a year, "times" is two years, and "a half" or "dividing of time" would be six months. This amounts to 42 months and corresponds with the duration of the beast of Revelation 13. These two beasts (Daniel 7 and Revelation 13) possessed the same character and disposition. The beast in Daniel 7 spoke great words against the most High and wore out the saints of the most High (verse 25). The beast of Revelation 13 opened his mouth in blasphemy against God and all holy things (verse 6) and he was given power to make war with the saints and to overcome them. (Verse 7.) Daniel's beast of Daniel 7 and John the Revelator's beast of Revelation 13 were identical.

Now to identify the "he" of Daniel 12:7 let us return to Daniel 7:17. "These great beasts, which are four, are four kings, which shall arise out of the earth." History records four universal kingdoms: Babylon, Media-Persia, Greece and Rome. Daniel and Nebuchadnezzar had visions which referred to these four kingdoms, but the focus was always on the fourth one; the Roman. This is because it was to be in existence at the time Jesus Christ appeared on the earth to establish His kingdom, and the first major conflict of the Church was with this power. Daniel 7:23 says that this kingdom was to be diverse from all kingdoms, and surely it was. It was a combination of church and state—a political-religious system with the religious entity in the preeminence. Rome had its emperor, but he held his office and authority subject to the will of the pope, and all other political rulers throughout the world did too. The pope was the absolute head and ruler of the universal Catholic church and held absolute authority over all dignitaries, both politically and ecclesiastically throughout the world. There was never another kingdom in the world before or since like this one. Paul, writing of him in II Thessalonians 2:4, said, "Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God." Also in II Thessalonians 2:9 Paul says, "Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders." This is the "he" spoken of in the last part of Daniel 12:7 who was to "scatter the power of the holy people," the saints of the most High God who are the only holy people on the earth. Revelation 13:7 says, "And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations." The last part of this verse shows the universal scope of this vast religious system and its head.

Revelation 13:1 describes a beast that arose up out of the sea, to whom power was given over all kindreds, tongues and nations. Note that it came up out of the sea. Revelation 17 gives quite an extensive description of this same beast but in this case a vile harlot woman is riding upon his head and it is said that this woman sat upon many waters. Verse 15 explains that the waters were peoples, multitudes, nations, and tongues. This makes it clear that this system rose right up from among the people; it was totally of human origin as distinguished from the true kingdom of

God which originated in heaven and came down from heaven to earth. The double symbol used here, (the scarlet colored beast and the woman riding upon its head) signifies the twofold nature of this vile, corrupt system—political (the beast) and religious (the woman). The kings of the earth committed fornication with her (Verse 2.) In other words, the kings and rulers of all the kingdoms of the earth consorted with her and supported her. She was a vile, corrupt woman and had a cup in her hand full of the abomination and filthiness of her fornication. She was called, "MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH." (Verse 5.) Verse six says she was drunken with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus. It was this corrupt, vile, abominable, apostate, human system of religion that was responsible for the bitter persecution and horrid death of many millions of the true people of God who refused to embrace this false, apostate, abominable human system of religion down through the 1260 years (42 months, or time, times and dividing of time) during what is called "The Dark Ages" of this dispensation of time. This is the "he" referred to in Daniel 12:7 who was granted to "scatter the power of the holy people."

The scattering of the power of the holy people in Daniel 12:7 was accomplished by them being driven from public view, into seclusion, or "underground" in the more modern vernacular, being compelled to worship in secret and hidden places, in the dens and caves of the earth, etc. In other words, scripturally, "the WOMAN (true Church of God, the "holy people" fled into the wilderness (seclusion), where she hath a place prepared of God, that they should feed there a thousand two hundred and threescore days." This time period corresponds to the time period allotted to the beast of Daniel 7 and Revelation 13.

"...All these things shall be finished" (Daniel 12:7) refers to all that the Scripture says about the beast and the power given unto him and what he would do in opposition to the saints and the truth. Those prophecies all came to an end and were fully accomplished at the end of the time period allotted to the beast to operate. Also, the idea of universal kingdoms in the earth was finished and closed when the Roman empire was dissolved and came at an end. There will never be another universal kingdom of men upon the earth. The only universal kingdom existing now is the kingdom of God and it will endure forever, even forever and ever; it shall never be destroyed. (Daniel 2:44; 7:13-14).

THE "REST" TO THE PEOPLE OF GOD

Question: Please, will you discuss and explain the following scriptures: Hebrews 4:4-5, Exodus 20:8 and 31:12-17?

Answer: All of these scriptures are related and combine together in the same topic; namely, the rest of the people of God. So we will unite them together in the discussion. Hebrews 4:4-5 says, "For he spake in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all his works. And in this place again, If they shall enter into my rest."

These verses fall in the middle of a passage which continues from the first verse through the eleventh verse. The first verse says, "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." Verses 9-11 conclude the passage and they say, "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." All of this passage refers

to the rest of the people of God, but the fourth verse injects the idea that the seventh day and the Old Testament seventh day Sabbath had some connection with it, so we will go back now and pick up a few references pertaining to it and see if we can confirm this relationship in the Scriptures.

In Exodus 16:23 we find mention of "the rest of the holy sabbath unto the Lord." This is the first reference in the Scriptures to the Sabbath and it was made 1400 years after God had completed the work of creation. So it would seem evident that no one before Moses, including Enoch who walked with God and had the testimony that he pleased God, or Noah who found favor with God through which he and his house were saved from the destruction of the flood, or Abraham who believed God and it was counted to him for righteousness and through his faith became the father of all those who believe, nor any of the patriarchs knew anything of, nor observed any Sabbath. It was reserved for a special people, the chosen people of God (Israel), and was given them at Sinai when the law was given for a special, specific purpose. Note: This text refers to the "rest of the holy sabbath" and indicates that the holiness of the day consisted in total rest from physical labor on that day. This thought is prominent in every reference to the Sabbath, or nearly so, throughout the Old Testament scriptures. This is important to the discussion and the meaning of the Sabbath.

In Exodus 20:8-11 we have this: "Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: But the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work,... For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it." Again the idea of ceasing from all physical labor on that day is related to the holiness of the day. They were commanded to keep the day holy and in the very next verse they were forbidden to do any work on that day, and the next verse just emphasizes and confirms that command.

Exodus 31:12-17 is one of the passages included in the question and it comes right in line here with the overall discussion. Verse 14 says, "Ye shall keep the sabbath therefore; for it is holy unto you: every one that defileth it shall surely be put to death: for whosoever doeth any work therein, that soul shall be cut off from among his people." We see here again that doing any work on the Sabbath constituted a defiling of the day and the penalty was death. We have a specific case recorded in Number 15:32-36 where a man was found picking up sticks on the Sabbath day. They brought him to Moses and Aaron and they put him in ward until they could inquire of the Lord concerning him. The Lord said the man should surely die, so the congregation stoned him and he died there. This may sound very severe to us, but God had said in Exodus 35:3, "Ye shall kindle no fire throughout your habitations upon the sabbath day." He required strict obedience to this command.

In the face of all this background of scriptures regarding the Old Testament and with knowledge that it has a direct connection with the passage in the fourth chapter of Hebrews, verses 1-11 (verses 4-5), let us see how these two sets of scriptures dovetail. In Colossians 2:16-17 we read, "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." We see here that the Old Testament Sabbath with all of its provisions was a shadow or type of the New Testament Christians' rest to the soul through faith in Christ. The holiness of that Old Testament Sabbath, consisting in refraining from all physical labor on that day, was a type of the child of God abandoning and forsaking all of his own works, and casting himself wholly and without reservation on the Lord for Him to work His works in him.

Hebrews 4:10 says, "For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his." I consider this text to refer to all of our own works, righteous or wicked, and just allowing God to work His works in us according to His own pleasure. In Romans 10:3, Paul spoke of a class of people who were going about to establish their own righteousness but had not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God. All such works and efforts of our own to establish our own righteousness must be laid aside and our trust must be fully in Christ and the atonement He made for our righteousness if we are to find this rest in Him. According to Exodus 31:14, any work done on the Sabbath constituted a defiling of the day. Just so, any works we do outside of Christ working in us constitutes a defiling of our Sabbath, which is Christ. Paul said in Romans 15:18, "For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ hath not wrought by me,..." In I Corinthians 15:10 Paul referred to his abundant labors but hastened on to add, "...Yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me." Just as any work constituted a defiling of the Sabbath and the penalty was death, so any of our works and efforts in the kingdom of God which do not fall in the category of being anointed, inspired, and energized by the Spirit of God, will constitute a defiling of our Sabbath (Christ), and if persisted in will produce spiritual death to our souls.

WHOSOEVER IS BORN OF GOD DOTH NOT COMMIT SIN

Question: Please explain I John 3:9.

Answer: This text reads, "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God."

The first part of this verse interposes little or no problem. Numerous scriptures make it clear and plain that one who is born again (born of God) is delivered from the power of sin and enabled through the power of God to live a holy life free from sin. Matthew 1:21, "...He shall save his people from their sins." Luke 1:73-75, "The oath which he sware to our father Abraham, That he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve him without fear, In holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life." Romans 6:14, "For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are...under grace." This makes it clear that the grace of God breaks the power and dominion of sin in the life of the person who receives it. Romans 6:17-18, "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..." This text makes it clear that when one obeys from his heart the Word of God and complies with its terms and conditions, he is set free from sin.

But the second part of this verse is a source of much controversy. We cannot interpret this to mean that one who is born again, saved, born of God, cannot possibly commit sin or even return to a life of sin if he so chooses. This would do violence to numerous scriptures which teach to the contrary. II Peter 2:20-21 says, "For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them." II Peter 3:17 says, "Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness." In II Peter chapter 1, beginning with verse 5, a number of Christian graces are cataloged which the Christian is to diligently add to his Christian life. Then verse 10 says,

“Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall.” Verse 9 says, “But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins.” These verses make it clear that only through diligent pursuit of the Christian life and cultivation of the Christian graces in one’s life can he maintain his experience, and that one who fails to do this will fall from his own steadfastness and forget the experience he had with God at one time.

We are to understand this part of the text as applying to a present, up-to-date, continuing experience and relationship with God, “because he IS [present tense] born of God.” He has the seed of God (God’s Word and Spirit) abiding in him and he cannot sin as long as he is in this state. It does not mean that he does not possess the power, right or privilege to commit sin, but sin is contrary and repulsive to his nature and to the principles of light and truth that are in his soul and he cannot do it for that reason. It is the same as we would say about a man of irreproachable character and integrity: “That man cannot lie, cannot steal, cannot commit any of many other enormities in the catalog of sin and unrighteousness,” not because he does not have the power and ability to do such things even as other men do, but it is so foreign to his character and life and the way we know him. Perhaps this thought is best stated in the words of Joseph to Potiphar’s wife in Genesis 39:9, “...How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?” He had the power to do that thing even as other men, but it was so obnoxious and repulsive to his pure character that he just could not do it, but fled from it.

Also, it must be understood that he cannot purposely, knowingly do evil while the seed of God (the Divine principle and truth) remains in him and he IS born of God; for as soon as he consents to the evil and turns from the light and truth, this seed of God departs from him and he has departed from the holy commandment and is no longer a child of God.

MEANING OF ISAIAH 66:17

Question: Please explain and discuss Isaiah 66:17.

Answer: Isaiah 66:17 reads thus: “They that sanctify themselves, and purify themselves in the gardens behind one tree in the midst, eating swine’s flesh, and the abomination, and the mouse, shall be consumed together, saith the Lord.”

We must remember that the history of the human race presented a pretty dark and ugly picture until Christ came into the world and they that sat in darkness saw great light. (Matthew 4:16.) Nearly all the world was steeped in pagan, heathen, idolatrous darkness. God had gathered out a small nation of people (Israel) which were the “fewest of all people” (Deuteronomy 7:7), for Himself, and the remainder of the world’s peoples were in this dreadful condition. But a prophecy of hope for all these poor benighted souls appears in the latter part of Isaiah 66:19 where it says, “...They shall declare my glory among the Gentiles.” The Gentiles were all the people of the earth except the Jews (Israel), whom God had chosen out of the nations to be His own peculiar people, to reveal His glory through them. But the long-range importance of this prophecy was Jesus Christ, the Son of God, whom God sent forth into the world to manifest His glory unto all the peoples of the world.

Now with this little introduction to the subject, let us return to Isaiah 66:17, the principal text for the discussion. This verse has to do with the sacrifices and worship of the heathen idolaters and their system of worship, which was quite elaborate. They “sanctified” and “purified” themselves—the same things that God did for His people in their sacrifices and worship—to sanctify and purify them. But

these people offered abominable sacrifices on their altars (swine's flesh and the mouse) and ate these things, all of which God had declared to be an abomination and forbidden. (Leviticus 11:1-44.) They had groves planted in the high places and altars set up among the trees, and apparently offered sacrifices to different gods upon these separate altars. The text says, "...behind one tree in the midst,..." The margin says "one tree after another." I think this would describe it better because there were always groves where the heathen worshipped and offered their sacrifices. The Lord said at the close of this verse that all their abominable sacrifices, and the abominable things they ate, and they themselves would all be consumed together in God's wrath. They set up their worship system pretty much like God's, with altars and sacrifices, and sought to accomplish the same results that God did in His people. But the sad and yet glorious fact is, that the kinds of sacrifices and worship which the true God prescribed had the effect upon the true worshiper of exalting him to a higher plane of living and more like God, while the heathen's sacrifices and worship had the effect of transferring his own corrupt nature to his god because there was no life nor essence in his god to exalt and lift him up. So he sank to a lower plane of corruption than before. Someone (an atheist, I suppose) has said that God never created man in His own image as Christians believe; but man created a god after his own likeness and in his image. I accept this to be pretty much true of the heathen pagan, and in a measure of religionists in our day who have no exalted idea of Christ likeness in Christian lives.

Now I will refer to a few other texts which describe the way of the heathen to confirm what I have already said. In Isaiah 65:1-7 God described the condition of the Gentiles (pagans). In verse 3 He said they continually provoked Him to anger to His face; they sacrificed in gardens (Isaiah 66:17 says they sanctified and purified themselves in the gardens), they burned incense upon altars of brick (whereas God required that His altars be built of whole stones, Deuteronomy 27:6), they ate swine's flesh and broth (or pieces—margin) of abominable things in their vessels (which God forbade in Leviticus 11), and they said, "Don't come near me, stand by thyself; for I am holier than thou." (Isaiah 65:4-5.) God said these were smoke in His nostrils, a fire that burned all the day. Yet He extended His arms to them and offered them salvation.

In Deuteronomy 7, God instructed the Israelites that when they entered into the Canaan Land they should utterly destroy the people that were there (verse two) and make no covenant with them. They were to destroy their altars, break down their images and burn them with fire, and cut down their groves. (verse five.) He said the reason for this was that the Israelites were a holy people unto the Lord their God (verse six) and the people of the land were not acceptable to Him, neither were their altars, their sacrifices, their groves, nor their worship. God still requires that same separateness today between the people who worship Him in spirit and in truth and the formal religionists who teach for doctrines the commandments of men and thus worship Him in form only.

Read also Exodus 23:24; 34:12-14; Deuteronomy 12:1-4; II Kings 16:4; I Kings 14:22-23, etc.

We see then how God hates idolatry and what an abomination it is to Him. We also see what an elaborate arrangement the heathen made for his place and system—high places, beautiful groves, and gardens, etc. It was all so abominable and obnoxious to God that He required every trace and memory of it to be totally obliterated. He even required in Numbers 33:52 that all their pictures be destroyed. Pictures had a strange and powerful fascination to them, so God required that all the pictures that would be a reminder or a suggestion of idolatry to them be destroyed.

In closing this discussion, let us think a little of our idolatry. Is it as much an abomination to God as theirs? The Bible says covetousness is idolatry. (Colossians 3:5.) To covet this world's riches and to desire more than God has provided us with of the material things of this world is a form of idolatry in God's sight. He hates that disposition of heart. His Word says, "Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have:..." Hebrews 13:5. Discontent is a grievous thing in the sight of God. We are instructed in I John 2:15 to "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." James 4:4 says, "...Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God." In Matthew 22:37 Jesus said, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy mind." In verse 38 He said, "This is the first and great commandment." Ah, folks, let us realize that this is the fundamental basic of holy living, and of our relationship with God—to love Him with all our being. Therefore, it becomes evident that to accept into our heart a love of the world, or any of the things of the world (self-love or a love for anything that is not godly), is to set up a rival love in the heart which God detests and will not tolerate. From Luke 14:26 and 33 we see that a father, mother, wife, child, etc., and yea, anything we have can become an idol to us if we do not forsake it all for Jesus' sake. (See also Matthew 10:37.) We cannot love any person or thing more than we love Christ without becoming idolaters. Quite a sobering thought, isn't it?

A HEART OF FLESH FROM A STONY HEART

Question: Please comment on Ezekiel 11:19-20.

Answer: Ezekiel 11:19-20 reads thus: "And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh: That they may walk in my statutes, and keep mine ordinances, and do them: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God."

Before entering into a discussion on these verses, let me couple them with some similar verses. "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them." Ezekiel 36:25-27.

These two passages refer to the same situations. The Israelites, by consorting with the heathen nations around them and engaging in their idolatrous worship and immoral practices, had incurred the wrath of God. He caused them to be overcome by the heathen nations, carried away and scattered among the nations. But He was not willing that they remain in such a condition. In these passages He offers hope to them that He would gather them out of the nations (Ezekiel 36:24) and that they would dwell in the land He had given to their fathers. (Ezekiel 36:28). Also read Ezekiel 11:16-18. We read in II Chronicles 7:14, "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." It is evident He never intended to cast them off forever. Jeremiah 3:12 says He would not keep His anger forever. Oh, how wonderful it is to know that God is merciful, and will not hold His anger and continue to punish us on and on, when we acknowledge our transgression, repent and plead His forgiveness and mercy. So it was with the children of Israel. When they had sinned and God punished them by allowing them to be taken captive, He was still offering them

mercy and proclaiming He would gather them out of the nations where they had been scattered, and return them to their own land where they would be one people again.

In these verses God is announcing that He will change their hearts and put a new spirit within which would cause them to walk in His statutes and keep His judgments. He could then dwell among them again and be their God and fight their battles as before.

But there are more to these verses than that. That was the short-range fulfillment of the prophecy. The long-range fulfillment and terminus of this prophecy extends beyond their time into this gospel age of full salvation through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, and our faith in the merits of His shed blood to make an atonement for our sins.

Let us realize that Israel after the flesh is a type of Israel after the Spirit. Many of God's dealings with them and His relationships with them were a type of His dealings with us and His relationship with us in the Spirit. This is confirmed in Romans 2:28-29 where it is said, "For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God." Circumcision in the flesh is a cutting off of something. The circumcision in the Spirit is also a cutting away of something from the heart. We read in Colossians 2:11, "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." Ephesians 4:22-24 says, "That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." The New Testament abounds with many scriptures describing this work of salvation.

The verses we are considering in this question deal with the heart, so let us consider a little now what the heart is. "Heart" is defined in the dictionary as (1) a. Emotional constitution, disposition, or mood. b. Capacity for sympathy or generosity; compassion. c. Love; affection. (2) Inner strength or character; fortitude. (3) A person esteemed as lovable, loyal, or courageous. In short it is the sum total of the affections and passions that motivate and control all the activities of an individual's life. Proverbs 4:23 says, "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life." Jesus, in His teaching, said in Mark 7:21-23, "For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: All these evil things come from within, and defile the man." Again Jesus said in Matthew 12:35, "A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things."

In this last text the two hearts are presented as for what they are, and what comes out of them and is manifested in the lives of those who have these kinds of hearts. In the verses we are discussing in this question, there are two kinds of hearts presented—the stony heart and the heart of flesh. The heart of stone is a hard heart that is entirely irresponsive and impervious to the Spirit of God, His admonitions and will. Consequently, that individual cannot perform the will of God in his life. The salvation that Christ provided for humankind through His sacrifice and shed blood provides a change of heart—the taking out of that hard, irresponsive, impervious heart and replacing it with a heart of flesh that is responsive to the voice of God and His will, and can be actuated by His Spirit. One of the verses being considered in this discussion says God will remove the old stony heart and give us a new heart (completely renovate and change that old corrupt,

defiled nature) and change us from nature to grace; and then give us a new spirit to actuate the new affections and passions that flow from that new heart of flesh. And more, it says that God will give us His Spirit (the Holy Spirit which will cause us to walk in His statutes, keep His commandments and do them). This is the full and free uttermost salvation—justification and sanctification (filled with the Holy Spirit) that is provided for us in Jesus Christ our Lord.

THAT WHICH DEFILETH A MAN

Question: Please explain Matthew 15:11.

Answer: This verse reads thus: “Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man; but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man.”

This response came at the end of Jesus' answering of a challenging question which was put to Him by the Pharisees. The question was this: “Why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? for they wash not their hands when they eat bread.” (Verse 2.)

I beg permission to transfer the discussion to the seventh chapter of Mark; the first 23 verses deal with the same thing but go into more detail. Verse 3 explains their custom of washing their hands, etc. It says, “....Except they wash their hands oft, eat not, holding the tradition of the elders.” Then, verse 4 explains this a little farther by saying “And when they come from the market, except they wash, they eat not....” And verse 4 continues on to say that many other things they have received to hold as washing of cups, pots, etc. In verse 5 they asked Him why His disciples didn't observe these traditions of the elders but ate with unwashed hands.

The words “when they come from the market” in verse 4 throws considerable light on this point. Involved in this was the fact that God had drawn a sharp line of separation between the Jews and the Gentiles for His own particular purposes and set the seal of circumcision upon the Jews to identify them as His special people and forbade them to have any intercommunications with the Gentiles, unless the Gentile would be circumcised and become as one of them. God's principle purpose in doing this was to have a pure stock that He could set apart unto Himself and establish His covenant with, and through them bring Christ into the world. He gave them certain things to observe in order to establish in them and through them, to the world, the idea of clean and unclean, pure and impure, right and wrong principles, etc. The whole system was principally ceremonial and had nothing in it to purge the conscience and purify the heart and affections from the polluting effects of sin. It required the blood of Jesus to do this, and until His sacrifice of Himself on Calvary, the standard of holiness maintained throughout the Old Testament period was a ceremonial, external system which could not make the comers thereunto perfect. Hebrews 7:19 says, “For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did; by the which we draw nigh unto God.” God pronounced unto the Jews certain things which were unclean—things which the Gentiles practiced—and commanded them not to do those things. But the Jews had carried these things clear beyond the bounds of what God had said, through the traditions of their elders. The traditions of the elders were oral, or verbal, additions to what God had commanded, which were written commandments, and they had become as binding upon the Jews as the written commandments of God. But God never recognized them. But the Jews had carried the idea of clean and unclean to such an extent that they considered the Gentiles unclean (physically), and when they returned from the marketplace they washed their hands and arms to the elbow to cleanse them from any contamination they might have received because of

brushing against a Gentile. Perhaps, physically, the Gentiles were as clean and well kept as the Jews, and such bigotry would be difficult for us to imagine, but that is the extent to which the traditions of the elders had carried it.

Mark 7:7-9 says, "Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, as the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do. And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition." Then He proceeds to point out to them a particular commandment which Moses had commanded them from God which was a written commandment. Verse 10 points out a commandment Moses had given them which enjoined them to honor their parents. "Honor" in this text refers to assisting, maintaining, and supporting them. This meaning of the word honor here is confirmed by what He said in verse 11, that if the son should say to his parents that it was a gift—that is a consecrated gift to the temple—that he would be free from the obligation of helping his parents, and in verse 13 He said, "Making the word of God of none effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things do ye."

Then, in verse 15 Jesus said that nothing entering into a man from without could defile him; but the things which come forth out of him are what defile him. This thought is again emphasized in verse 18. Verses 20-23 say, "...That which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: All these evil things come from within, and defile the man."

The weight of Matthew 15:11 comes down on us when we look at the formal, external, outward, put-on type of religion that is prevalent in many lives in our day. It can be said in our day as Jesus said in His day, "...In vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men." (Matthew 15:9.) It is certainly true that God has a standard of dress and general behavior and moral conduct and uprightness for Christians to observe, and it is all found written in His Word. But let us realize that it is possible to be misled by putting all of our emphasis on externals behind which and underneath which may be bad attitudes, unkind feelings, unforgiveness, pride, bigotry, and many other things which will keep people out of heaven.

In Matthew 23:23 Jesus told the scribes and Pharisees that they paid tithes, etc., but had overlooked the weightier matters of the law: judgment, mercy, and faith. Then He concluded by saying, "...These ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone." Oh, my brethren, let us govern all phases of our life by this maxim and have our lives properly balanced between the doing and the being, and have a good relationship between our inward condition of heart and our outward appearance and conduct. God have mercy on us and help us to be all He is calling us to be, inside and out.

WHEN DID THE DEVIL COME INTO EXISTENCE?

Question: When or how did the devil come into existence? Did he always exist as does God, or did God create him? Also, will you please explain Isaiah 45:5-7?

Answer: This question of the devil's origin often comes up and seems to never be resolved conclusively in people's minds. This is possibly due to the fact that there is no direct scripture stating when and how he came into existence; also the widespread teaching in Christendom today is that he was once a bright angel in

heaven whose name was Lucifer and he became exalted and lifted up with pride and through jealousy and envy started a rebellion in heaven in which he was the loser and was cast out of heaven and came down to earth. All of this doctrine is based on a misunderstanding and wrong conception of certain scriptures. If the questioner in this case will purchase the booklet *Was the Devil Ever in Heaven?* from Faith Publishing House, P. O. Box 518, Guthrie, OK 73044, it gives a concise treatise on all those scriptures.

I, personally, cannot conceive of a holy God creating an unholy devil. That runs averse and contrary to the principles of truth set forth in the Holy Scriptures. Also, the idea of jealousy and pride ever getting into heaven and producing a rebellion and war up there is entirely foreign, to my thinking. If it were so, how could we have any assurance or find comfort in our hope in Christ of eternal peace, happiness, joy and security, which are the things that prove an anchor to our souls in our times of temptations, trials and sufferings in this world? If such a thing ever, at any time, got into heaven, could we have any definite assurance that it could not happen again?

As to the idea of God creating the devil, I will refer the reader to a few scriptures which in my mind present an impossibility of this ever having happened. Jesus said in His sermon on the mount, in Matthew 7:16-18, "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." In James 3:11-12 we read, "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 both yield salt water and fresh." Again we read in Job 14:4, "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? no one." All the foregoing scriptures are saying the same thing; viz., that an infinitely holy God could not possibly have created an infinitely unholy devil, and all scriptures bearing on this subject confirm this. Again in Genesis 1:31 we read, "And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good...."

Could it be then that God created the devil a holy and righteous being and he fell from that into a degenerate, corrupt and vile being afterward? For the following reasons, I hardly think so. Jesus said to certain of the Jews of His day who were disputing with Him (John 8:44), "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it." In I John 3:8 we read, "He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning...." We see, then, that he was a murderer, a liar, and a sinner from the beginning. He started out that way and has never changed. In regard to the beginning we read in Genesis 1:1, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." That is as far back as we can go with any degree of certainty. Everything before that is purely speculation. I would advise you not to try to delve into that. Now if that is the devil's beginning or if he existed back before that point in time is really not important. This is the first time he appears on the scene of action. He used the serpent to seduce Eve and through her, subsequently, to seduce Adam, and from there started the corrupt stream of sin in all its categories; all the misery, ruined lives, all sickness, grief, sorrow and trouble that the world knows or ever has known. So he was an evil being, a murderer, liar and sinner, at the time of beginning that we know anything about.

Now in concluding this part of the discussion, I would admonish every reader that you not waste time trying to figure out where the devil came from nor how he got here, but rather recognize that he is here now in very real form and just settle it in your hearts to steadfastly resist him in the faith and give no place to the devil lest he gain some advantage of you and seduce you, too.

Now a few thoughts and scriptures on Isaiah 45:7, "...I make peace, and create evil: I the Lord do all these things." Evil has a meaning of moral evil (sin). But we could never think of a holy God ever producing or creating that. He gave His only Begotten Son, Jesus, to save us from that, so we could never rationally, reasonably think of Him creating that. But there is another meaning to evil such as famine, pestilence, war, and various kinds of calamities which God at various times has used to bring judgment upon people (even His own) because of their sins and injustices, etc., to punish them and bring them back in line with Him. In II Chronicles 20:9 Jehoshaphat prayed, "If, when evil cometh upon us, as the sword, judgment, or pestilence, or famine, we stand before this house, and in thy presence, (for thy name is in this house,) and cry unto thee in our affliction, then thou wilt hear and help." In I Kings 8:33-34 Solomon prayed at the dedication of the temple, "When thy people Israel be smitten down before the enemy, because they have sinned against thee, and shall turn again to thee, and confess thy name, and pray, and make supplication unto thee in this house: Then hear thou in heaven, and forgive the sin of thy people Israel, and bring them again unto the land which thou gavest unto their fathers." This is one of the things which Jehoshaphat prayed for and classified as evil. God decreed the overthrow of Nineveh for their wickedness and sent Jonah to pronounce judgment on them. He did not want to go on that mission so went the other way. After Jonah had spent three days and nights in the belly of a great fish which God had prepared for that purpose, he decided to go, and he did go to Nineveh and began to announce in their streets the message, "...Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown." (Jonah 3:4.) The result was astounding! All the Ninevites, from the king on down, turned from their evil ways and repented and called mightily on God, and God saw and heard their repentance and turned from His purpose and spared them. Jonah 3:10 says, "...And God repented of the evil, that he had said that he would do unto them; and he did it not." The evil, in this case, was the destruction of the city of Nineveh by whatever means God chose.

Job referred to all his trouble and grief—the loss of all his animals, children, and his physical affliction, etc.— as evil. In Job 2:10 he said to his wife, "...What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?..."

There are numbers of other scriptures on this line, but I will go no further with it now. These are the kinds of evil God creates and uses for His purpose in chastising nations, cities, individuals, etc., for their sins, and to correct those wandering off-course from the straight and narrow way. But never moral evil. God forbid.

WHICH IS TRUE BAPTISM?

Question: Could you explain to me the difference between the two baptisms (water baptism and spiritual baptism)? Which is the true baptism?

Answer: I trust the Lord will enable me, by His Spirit, to make this answer plain. First, I would say that both baptisms referred to in the question are true baptisms, definitely taught in the New Testament Scriptures. The one is a work of man, immersing the bodies of believers under the water as a public testimony of their conversion to Christ; the other is a work of the Holy Spirit upon the inward man, inducting him into the body of Christ and purifying his heart by faith. Further, let us understand that both of these baptisms are exclusively and totally New Testament doctrine. They were never taught nor practiced among the Israelites in Old Testament times. They belong exclusively to the gospel dispensation and are to accompany the preaching of the gospel and the conversion of souls to Christ. The

word “baptism” does not occur a single time in the Old Testament. There is only one reference to baptism relating to the Israelites in the New Testament and it is found in I Corinthians 10:2 where it says “And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea.” This refers to the Israelites passing through the Red Sea with the cloud of God over them and enveloping them from Pharaoh’s army, and it was a mass operation, not an individual, personal thing such as an individual converted to Christ testifies to when he is baptized. In Acts 1:21-22 we read, “Wherefore of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, Beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection.” We see, then, that the ordinance of water baptism came right in and had its beginning with the bringing in of the preaching of salvation through faith in Christ and His gospel.

After Jesus had risen from the dead and had been with His disciples periodically for about 40 days, He delivered unto them His divine commission to “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.” (Matthew 28:19.) Mark records this same commission in these words, “...Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved;...” (Mark 16:15-16.) These scriptures make it very plain that baptism is to be taught wherever the gospel is preached and all converts to the Christian faith are to be baptized as an outward testimony of that inward work of grace in the soul. The disciples taught this wherever they preached and souls were saved.

Water baptism is symbolic of all the fundamental elements of the atonement—the death, burial, resurrection and ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ—and our faith in the whole plan of salvation in all of its parts. Paul makes this very plain in Romans 6:3-4 where he says, “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.” “Baptized into Jesus Christ” would clearly refer to a spiritual operation. By faith in the merits of the shed blood of the Son of God the soul is “born again” of the Spirit (John 3:5), inducted into Christ, and brought into fellowship with Him through the operation of the Spirit. As a result of this experience, the converted individual is baptized in water to give in symbol an outward testimony to the inward work of the Spirit in his soul. Verse 4 of Romans, chapter 6 says that because we are baptized into Christ, therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead we should walk in newness of life. This is water baptism. Its purpose is to signify that we are dead with Christ to the things of the flesh, and we symbolize that by being buried in the water. We further testify to our new life in Christ by being raised up out of the water. Water baptism is closely related to the gospel of Christ because it testifies in symbol to our faith in the death, burial, and resurrection to a new life (eternal life) of the Lord Jesus Christ. In I Peter 3:21 Peter referred to baptism as a figure, and compared the eight souls being saved from a drowning death by the ark they were in to the souls of all who are baptized into Christ Jesus being saved from eternal death by abiding in Him. He also mentioned that it was not the washing away of the filth of the flesh. There is no actual cleansing from sin in the ordinance of baptism, but Peter says it is the answer of a good conscience toward God. Now it must be recognized by all that a person cannot answer to a good conscience until he has or receives a good conscience. How does one obtain this good conscience? Hebrews 9:14 says, “How much more shall the blood of Christ,... purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?” Hebrews 1:3, speaking of Christ says, “...When he had by himself purged our

sins,...” Revelation 1:5, speaking of Jesus, says, “...Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood.” We see here that our sins must be purged by the blood of Jesus and our conscience purged before one is eligible for baptism. Then the individual is baptized in water to give public testimony to that experience.

Let us look a little at the teaching in the New Testament regarding spiritual baptism. This is also an exclusive New Testament doctrine. While there are numerous scriptures in the Old Testament relative to the Spirit of God coming “upon” people, and qualifying them for some special work or purpose, yet there are no references at all to any people ever being baptized with the Holy Spirit and Him abiding within them such as is taught for all converted souls in the New Testament. In Matthew 3:11-12 John the Baptist said, “I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire: Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.” Here we have water baptism and Holy Ghost baptism contrasted. Men could baptize with water, but it took Jesus to baptize with the Holy Ghost, and He had to die and shed His blood in order to do it. Jesus said in John 16:7, “Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.” Again Jesus said in Acts 1:5, “For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.”

All of the above texts make it clear that the baptism of the Holy Ghost had not yet come upon men up to the time of Jesus, nor during His time, but He was preparing the way for the Holy Ghost to come. In Luke 24:49 Jesus said, “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.” The promise of the Father was the Holy Spirit as an abiding Comforter for the saints and a source of power and victory for preaching and living the gospel. It was prophesied in numbers of places in the Old Testament Scriptures but was not poured out upon the Church until the day of Pentecost after Jesus had gone away and sent Him according to His own promise in John 16:7. The reader may refer to Isaiah 32:15-19; 35:3-7; 44:3; and Joel 2:28 for just a few references of prophecies of the giving of the Holy Spirit.

In Acts 15:8-9, Peter in testifying of his experience at the house of Cornelius, a Gentile centurion, said this: “And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us; And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith.” Here is stated one of the basic essential works of the Holy Ghost in the hearts of saints—“PURIFYING THEIR HEARTS BY FAITH.” He is the only One qualified to purge the heart and life of any individual from all dross, worldly affections, self-love and interest, etc., which is an absolute essential if we are to have power and victory in our lives and fulfill all the standards set forth in the Holy Scriptures for holy living.

We read 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.” Here we see that every converted soul is inducted into the body of Christ, established in a unity and fellowship with the saints by the Holy Ghost, and maintains that relationship with Christ and Christians by continuing to drink of that one Spirit.

In John 7:38-39 Jesus said, “He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)”

Such texts could go on and on, but I have already over extended the space allotted to me, so I will break it off right here. God bless you.

SANCTIFICATION

Question: During the last while several questions have come in regarding sanctification: the need of this experience, the process of it, what it is and what it does, how it is done, what the conditions are for it, and when and how it is obtained, etc.

Answer: Mankind in his unregenerate state is two degrees, or steps, below the state of moral purity and holiness in which he was created.

Originally, at his creation, man was in the image and after the likeness of God Himself. (Genesis 1:26-27.) In this state he was possessed of “righteousness and true holiness.” In Colossians 3:10 we read, “And have put on the new man which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him.” In Ephesians 4:24 it says, “And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.” These two texts make it clear that the image of God is “righteousness and true holiness.” This is what man possessed in his original state.

Transgression of the commandment of God by the original pair changed all of this. Sin entered into this world by the willful choice of our foreparents and by this means they apostatized from God. (Genesis 3.)

Sin brought about a change in man’s moral nature. Then, instead of the righteousness and true holiness that he had originally possessed, he became depraved and corrupt in his moral nature. In Ephesians 4:22 it says, “That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts.” Ephesians 4:25-31 describes the corrupt deeds of the old man: lying, stealing, corrupt communication, bitterness, wrath, anger, clamour, evil speaking, malice.

The fact that the moral likeness and image of God was effaced from the human race by this means is evidenced by the fact that when we obtain the salvation of the Lord Jesus Christ we are said to be renewed in that image. (Colossians 3:10.) In other words, it is a restoration to the image of God—hence we conclude it had been lost.

As a result of this, the moral nature of all mankind was affected in this way, became depraved and corrupt. Sin has become universal as a result of the sin of this first pair. “...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.” (Romans 5:12.) “...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.” (Romans 5:15.) “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.) “For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners,...” (Romans 5:19.)

Romans 5:13-14 says, “(For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam’s transgression,...” Adam’s transgression was that he violated a specific commandment spelled out by God Himself. But from Adam to Moses, when the law was given on Mt. Sinai by God to the children of Israel through Moses, there was no commandment in existence; hence, people could not sin after the similitude of Adam’s transgression by breaking a specific commandment but, at the same time, they were in sin, and death reigned

over them. The only law they had during this time was the law of their conscience. Concerning this we read in Romans 2:13-15, "(For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified. For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another.)" This text does not teach salvation according to man's conscience as some suppose, but it does teach us that there is sufficient knowledge in every man's conscience to fix responsibility and render him a responsible being to God. Galatians 3:19 says, the law "...was added because of transgression, till the seed should come..." But if the law was added because of transgression, what were they transgressing? There was no actual commandment in existence between Adam and Moses when the law was given. There was nothing to transgress except the law of their conscience, and these poor fallen creatures were so under the power of sin they could not even live to their own conscience. Galatians 3:22 reads, "But the scripture hath concluded all under sin,..." Romans 3:23 says, "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." "...Death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." (Romans 5:12.) "For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all." (Romans 11:32.) II Corinthians 5:14 says, "For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead."

If these scriptures do not prove all men to be under the dismal sway of sin, that they are thus affected because of one man and his sin, and that one man is Adam, what do they teach? How could this all be true except there is something hereditary about sin? Certain diseases, defects, and deficiencies (mental, physical, and otherwise) are said to be transmittable from parent to child and they are called hereditary. If it is carried through different members of the family or through succeeding generations, it is said this or that runs in the family. Their father or grandfather had that, or was that way, etc. The scriptures conclude something about sin being hereditary, a depravity of nature handed down through the generations of mankind from the original parent.

Adam begat children in his own likeness after his image. Genesis 5:3 says, "And Adam lived an hundred and thirty years, and begat a son in his own likeness, after his image; and called his name Seth." At this time Adam had lost the image and likeness of God (righteousness and true holiness). He was now possessed of a depraved nature and could only transmit what he had to his posterity.

But let us notice a few more scriptures along this line. Psalm 51:5 says, "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me." The psalmist is not saying here that his mother committed sin in conceiving him but that his parents were sinful people by nature and passed that on to him, and sin had him when he got here. Genesis 8:21 reads, "And the Lord smelled a sweet savour; and the Lord said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground any more for man's sake; for the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth; neither will I again smite any more every thing living, as I have done." Genesis 6:5-6 reads, "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."

The fact of the universal depravity and the corrupt nature of humankind is further confirmed in the fact that God, in order to get a pure, holy seed (Christ) into the world that would be able to offer a sacrifice without blemish and without spot, qualified for making an atonement for the sins of all mankind, had to set the man aside. Without the use of man, God begat, by the Holy Ghost, a holy seed within the woman, and Christ is called the seed of the woman. In Isaiah 59:16 we read, "And

he saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no intercessor: therefore his arm brought salvation unto him; and his righteousness, it sustained him." God looked the whole universe of mankind over and found not one man who was qualified to redeem the human race from sin, so He made Him a Man who could qualify through the operation of the Holy Spirit. Jesus was the arm of God reached out to us to redeem us from sin.

Now I want to consider the point of how God reckons genealogies in the Scriptures. This is important to the point being considered here of how this depravity has passed from father to son through the generations of mankind. In Hebrews 7:9-10 it says, "And as I may so say, Levi also, who receiveth tithes, paid tithes in Abraham. For he was yet in the loins of his father, when Melchisedec met him." Levi was one of the children of Israel and head of one of the 12 tribes. Therefore it refers here to "Levi, who receiveth tithes." His tribe never received any inheritance in the apportionment of land in Canaan, but they were set apart to care for the tabernacle and to administer about the holy things. Their portion was a tithe from all the other tribes. Though he received tithes through the arrangement God made for him; yet it is said that he paid tithes in Abraham, and this is on the grounds that he was yet in the loins of his father when he met Melchisedec and paid tithes to him. Levi was the fourth generation from Abraham and was yet an unborn child in his loins when he paid tithes to Melchisedec, and it is said that he "paid tithes in Abraham." In Galatians 3:29 it says, "And if ye be Christ's then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."

In Romans 4:11, speaking of Abraham and his faith it says, "And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also." Abraham is the first one of whom it was written that he was justified by faith. There were several champions of faith who accomplished great things through faith before the time of Abraham who are mentioned in Hebrews 11, but he is the first one of whom it is said that he "believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness." (Hebrews 4:3.)

We today become children of God by faith in Christ Jesus, and it is said that we are justified by faith in Him. It is also said that the just live by faith and that we walk by faith and not by sight. But the principle of justification by faith and living by faith began in Abraham and therefore he is said to be the father of all those who believe. He was the beginning of a new race (believers) and became the royal head of that race. Therefore, when we are brought into fellowship with God through faith in Christ Jesus, we are said to be Abraham's seed by coming under that principle of justification by faith which began in him.

There were 42 generations from Abraham to Christ. The saints of this gospel age of time would be the 43rd generation. Yet we are reckoned to be children of Abraham on the same grounds that Levi is said to have paid tithes in Abraham. That is, we were yet unborn children in the loins of our father (figuratively) when he believed God and it was counted unto him for righteousness. On the same grounds, we were all reckoned to be under sin because we were unborn children in the loins of our father, Adam, when he committed sin. The effects of that sin passed upon the entire race.

As further proof that all of the human race is under the effects of Adam's sin and actually receive something from him by way of a depraved nature, those who obtain salvation in this dispensation are said to put off the old man and put on the new man. (Colossians 3:9-10; Ephesians 4:22-24.)

Adam is the head of the human race according to the first or old creation of God. Jesus Christ is the head of the spiritual race according to the new creation of God. II

Corinthians 5:17 says, "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature [new creation, margin]..." Ephesians 2:10 says, "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works,..." But Christ is called Adam also—"the second Adam," or he might properly be called the new Adam or new man. I Corinthians 15:45-47 reads, "And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven." In Romans 5:14 we read, "Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come." "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." (I Corinthians 15:21-22.) The terms "new man" and "old man" apparently are derived from these heads of the two creations. The "new man" is identical with the new creature and the "old man" refers to our condition in the old, defiled creature—Adam, the "old man."

We partake of the nature of Adam in natural birth. Here is the basic principle which requires our being born again. We were born on the wrong side the first time, hence we must be born again to get straightened out on the right course of life. Therefore, the child is one step below the standard of moral purity and holiness in which man was created at the beginning. Then when he reaches the age of accountability, the inherited nature of Adam causes him to fall into willful disobedience of God's law and thus he partakes of the sinful life of Adam. He then possesses both the nature and the life of the old Adam or "old man." We might say at this point, without changing the meaning at all, that in salvation we put off Adam (the old Adam) and put on Christ (the new Adam).

We will now enter into the discussion of actual, willful sin which produces guilt and condemnation in the conscience, and why every individual experiences this condition.

When a child reaches the age of accountability before God and falls into willful disobedience to His law, becomes guilty of sin and a partaker of the sinful life, this is more than just the nature of sin, which in itself is not productive of guilt, but is the fruit of that nature, or the projection of it, into a way of life of actual sins committed. This is what brings guilt and condemnation on the soul. This, then, takes him a second step lower than the plane on which man was created. However, we must not confuse the hereditary sin (seed of sin, or principle of sin), with sin acquired or committed. Some find the idea of our inheriting the seed of sin objectionable on the grounds that they cannot conceive of an infant child just born into the world being a guilty sinner. What these folks are doing is confusing sin inherited with sin acquired or committed.

Inherited sin is never productive of guilt. Even though the infant child possesses within him the seed of sin from his first parent, Adam, he remains in a state of perfect innocence before God until he reaches an age of accountability to know right from wrong, and by an act of his own free will does the wrong thing.

This is covered by the principle laid down in Romans 7:9-11. "For I was alive [in a state of innocence before God] without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died [lost my innocence and became guilty before God]. And the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death. For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me." Also in I John 3:4 we read, "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law." Again in Romans 4:15 it is said, "Because the law worketh wrath: for where no law is, there is no transgression." Romans 5:13 says, "(For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed where there is no

law.)” James 4:17 says, “Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.”

All of the above scriptures sum up to the fact that a person must have knowledge of the law or will of God, and know what is right to do and then fail to do it before it is imputed to him as sin, or charged against him as such, and he becomes guilty before God. What is sometimes called “sin inherited” is only a nature and is not productive of guilt. There must be a willful, knowing transgression of God’s law to make one guilty of sin before God. This principle would be applicable to all, beginning with the infant who had no knowledge of moral principles on through persons of all ages who were innocently ignorant of God’s will on any point and had not yet received light or knowledge on a given point. Romans 4:6-8 says, “Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.”

I John 5:17 says, “All unrighteousness is sin: and there is a sin not unto death.” I have already referred to Romans 7:9-11 but I wish to refer to it again here to pick up another point or two. In Romans 7:8-9 it says, “But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin was dead. For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.” Here we have a reference to a sin that spawned sin, worked sin, wrought sin, produced sin. A tree can only grow on the root from which it sprang and can only live in the life which was in the seed that gave it its being. There must be a source from which anything and everything springs. Sin has a source from which it springs also and it is in this seed of sin, this native depravity or sin principle which has passed from Adam on down through all of his posterity. This is the sin within Paul which rose up and slew him, causing him to die (spiritually) when he came to accountability before God through a knowledge of God’s law. We need to understand the potentials of sin and its enormity. Sin is capable of immense expansion and evolution. In the most mild sin exists the potential of the most vicious sin which can be imagined. The fundamental principle of evolution is that that which is evolved must first have been involved. Hence, in some mysterious way all the properties of the fully developed, full grown oak tree existed in the acorn from which that tree grew. This is true of everything which has life in it. It is also true of the principles of sin and righteousness.

The apparently mild sin of which Adam and Eve were guilty blossomed out in the murder of one of their children by his own brother not far down the line. Within 1500 to 1600 years, sin had ruined the entire race and the world that then existed was ready for destruction. Every hideous sin that is even beyond our imagination in the world of today, is all springing from the properties which existed in that inherent seed of sin. Although in itself it is not productive of guilt, it is blossoming out into the entire endless chain of sins which are engulfing the world in our time. This is what Paul referred to in Romans 7:8-9.

That sinful nature which is inherent in all of Adam’s race lies dead or dormant—without power to produce guilt and condemnation—until the individual comes face to face with the commandment of God and a knowledge of God’s will (receives light). Then that corrupt nature, indwelling sin, seed or principle of sin, revives, becomes active to cause us to fall into willful acts of sin, and produces guilt and condemnation of conscience because now the knowledge of the law has come to us. The following scriptures confirm this fact. “And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.” John 3:19. “Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We see; therefore your sin remaineth.” John 9:41. “If I

[Jesus] had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloke for their sin. He that hateth me hateth my Father also. If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin: but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father.” John 15:22-24.

After Jesus’ time of temptation from the devil, the scripture says that He returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee. (Luke 4:14.) Jesus was baptized with the Holy Spirit at His baptism, then went through His temptation, and then returned in the “power of the Spirit” and began to preach in the “power of the Spirit.” The Word He preached was accompanied by the Spirit and brought conviction of sin to the hearts of the hearers. When Jesus returned to heaven after His resurrection, He sent the Holy Spirit to dwell in the hearts of all believers, and to direct and supervise the operation of the Church He had built. The ministers of the Jerusalem Church preached the gospel of Christ in the “power of the Spirit,” as Jesus Himself had done, and it produced the same effect. It was said of Stephen in Acts 6:10 that they were not able to resist the wisdom and spirit with which He spoke.

In John 16:8, Jesus, speaking of the Holy Spirit, said, “And when he is come, he will reprove, (convince, or convict) the world of sin,...” It takes a work of the Holy Spirit in a person’s heart to really convince and convict him of sin to the extent he can genuinely repent of sin and believe in Christ to the saving of his soul. Before the Holy Spirit came into the world and into men’s hearts as He does now in this Holy Spirit dispensation, men could not actually see sin in its true color. Old Testament saints did not see the depths of sin as we can see it in this age of time. The Holy Spirit gives us a new way of seeing things, with which we can see spiritual things where all has been darkness before. This is the age of spiritual light because the Holy Spirit is in the world and dealing with men’s hearts.

Just as the dust in a room rises or appears when the sunlight is let in; so when the light of God’s law (the gospel of Jesus Christ) enters the heart accompanied by the Holy Spirit, it causes sin to appear as sin. The apostle Paul said in Romans 7:13, “...But sin, that it might appear sin,...” It took an operation of the Holy Spirit in the heart to cause this to happen. Then we see in sin that which we had never seen in it before. We see sin in its true colors; defiling, deforming, breaking righteous laws, affronting an awful majesty, and profaning a sovereign crown by casting it to the ground. We see sin in its consequences with death at its heels. “The wages of sin is death,...” (Romans 6:23); and “...The soul that sinneth, it shall die.” (Ezekiel 18:4.) Thus sin revives and we die, or lose our innocence before God in which we have lived up until then, and become guilty before Him and condemned in our conscience. There is nothing about which the natural man is more blind than inherent corruption, concerning which the understanding is altogether in the dark until the Holy Spirit by the Word of God—the gospel of Christ—reveals it and makes it known.

Now, let us return to Romans 5:12 and look at it a little further. It is said in the Scripture, “...so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.” There would surely be no question in any of our minds about all dying. All our ancestors have died and gone on and we see people around us dying every day, and we all accept the fact that we will die. But in the text the fact that all die is predicated on the fact that all have sinned. Why can we not as readily accept that statement as the one preceding it?

Notwithstanding, there may be some question in the minds of some as to how this could be and whether it includes children (before the age of accountability), etc. I feel it the safest policy to accept the statement as it is in God’s Word whether we may be able to explain every feature of it or not, and especially when a statement that we all do accept without question is predicated upon this statement.

It is my persuasion that small children do sin. They do unrighteous things and “All unrighteousness is sin:...” (I John 5:17.) Very small children do things that are not right. They do things that they could not do and remain in innocence before God if they were older and more mature in judgment. They deceive their parents, fuss and fight over their toys, strike each other, bite, scratch, and pull hair when another child has a toy they want. They throw temper tantrums when they can’t have their own way and do many other things that are not right and are therefore sin in the strictest sense of the word. All of this indicates something in that child’s nature that is selfish. It also indicates something in the child’s nature to want his own way and to rebel when he can’t have it.

The question has been asked, “What makes a child cry?” Ordinary crying could be for many ordinary causes. But when a child throws a temper tantrum because he cannot have his or her own way, that goes deeper and indicates that something is in his nature to want his own way. His actions show rebellion inside of him against not being able to have his own way. I have seen some really small children throw themselves on the floor, scream, yell and cry because they could not have something done their own way. You may say, “My child doesn’t have those kind of spells. I just won’t allow it and he knows just what he would get for trying something like that.” Well, that is really wonderful and you ought not to allow your child to act that way. But if you have your child under better control than that, it does not mean that he does not have the same thing in his nature as the child who does act that way. He just knows he could not get by with it. But you just let him alone and exercise no control over him and he will be just as bad as that other child who is not under proper control. Take a whole lot of children and just leave them all to themselves and they will all be bad that way because it is in their nature to be selfish, to want their own way and to rebel when they can’t have it.

Let us compare the moral man who doesn’t lie, steal, cheat, drink, gamble, commit adultery, etc., with the man who does these things. We would all agree that he needs salvation just as much as the man who does those evil, immoral things and will be lost the same as he, if he isn’t born again. Jesus said, “...Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” John 3:3. He has the same root of sin (sin nature) in him that the other man has, but he has exercised better control over his life, perhaps through the influence, teaching and prayers of godly parents, and that root just has not developed that far and borne that much fruit. But he will still be lost if he fails to be born again and obtain salvation through faith in the all-atoning blood of Jesus Christ.

We will now begin with the matter of the little child growing up and what happens to him as he grows up. The little child grows up doing or acting wrong all along, at times in a greater or lesser degree. But because he is not developed far enough in mental and moral perception to exercise sound judgment in regard to moral principles, sin is not imputed to him and he is held in a state of complete innocence before God. Some may think that in order for a child to come under condemnation at his age of accountability, he must do something different or commit some special kind of sin. That is a mistake. In many instances the child may cross that line living just like he has all the time from really small childhood. Perhaps he comes to that point with no unusual thing happening in his life in the way of any pronounced or gross sin. Maybe he never steals or swears or takes God’s name in vain or any of these bad sins. But what actually happens in many cases is that the child comes to the point where God sees he is sufficiently developed in his judgment and moral and mental perception for Him to deal with, and he can understand now what His dealings will mean to him, so He sends His Spirit to visit the child’s heart to enlighten him, and it suddenly dawns on him, “I am wrong. I have been doing wrong all along. Every time I snatched toys from my playmates,

and every time I pulled hair, scratched, bit, fussed and fought with others when they had something I wanted and would not give it up; every time I pouted or stomped, screamed and had a temper tantrum when I could not have my own way, every time I practiced deceit against my parents and took advantage of them, it was all wrong." The child begins now to feel these things wrong and understands what is involved in them. He realizes, through the conviction of God's Spirit, what he has never realized before, and that he is wrong (morally wrong) and needs to repent and be forgiven and get things straightened out and adjusted in his life. Sometimes those who are better instructed feel it necessary for them to go back to their parents or sometimes to others, and confess their wrongs to them, even what they did in innocence before they were morally accountable for it.

Now a grown person living in a justified experience before God, which brings them back to the state of the little child in innocence in God's sight, (Matthew 18:3), cannot do those things that the small child does and remain justified and in a state of innocence before God, because he is already sufficiently developed in judgment, moral and mental understanding, that he understands those things to be wrong and in contradiction with the moral law of God, and if he does them he will fall under condemnation before God.

The difference here is in the state of the individuals involved, and not in the nature of the things involved. These things are just as much a contradiction with God's moral law when the small child does them as when the grown person does them. But the small child, being in an undeveloped infantile state in his understanding as well as physically, is not morally accountable for his doings, because he is not even supposed to know and understand these things; while a grown person, being advanced in understanding and mature in judgment as well as physically, is supposed to understand moral principles of right and wrong, and therefore is accountable.

I have in mind a young brother who had much trouble in his early spiritual life. Most of his trouble was because of impatience and temper, and much of the time it would happen to him when he was all alone and things would go wrong. When he would be working in the field and something would go wrong, he would feel impatient or lose his temper. He would feel condemned in his conscience on that account because he understood and knew this was not right. Generally the people who knew him and had association with him could not tell from the way he lived that he did not have the victory because he lived outwardly good all the time. But his trouble was mostly with himself; much of the time by himself and within himself because he would be condemned over these things. But a little child does not feel that condemnation over his temper tantrums because he does not know but what that is the way for him to do in order to get what he wants.

But God could not take these little children to heaven having that in them which would cause them to pull hair, strike and scratch each other, scream, kick, squall around and snatch things from each other. It would turn out to be a very unpleasant place to be. Jesus Christ acts as guardian for their souls until they come to accountability before God morally, so as to act on His will in regard to these things, Jesus applies His blood to their souls without an act of their will, and purges them from that nature and fits them to go on into heaven.

Someone asked me that if it were true that we could inherit a depraved or corrupt nature, why would it not be true also that we could inherit a righteous nature? The answer to that question is: whatever we may inherit by way of nature, traits, and disposition from our parents, we inherit what they were by nature and not what they are by grace, so that it would not be possible to inherit holiness from them even though both of them may be saved and sanctified. Whatever degree of

grace they may possess, it is the work of God, and the work of God in the soul cannot be transmitted from father to son.

But let me stress that the transmission of one's spiritual nature is from the royal head of the race, whether it be the old creation (Adam), or the new creation (Christ), and is not from the immediate parents. We were born of Adam (the old creation) the first time and inherited his depravity of nature. Herein lies the basic need for being born again. Now if we will be born again of God (the new creation), the righteous One, we will inherit from Him His righteous nature.

When one is born again, born of God, he does inherit from Him a righteous nature as the following scriptures will prove. "And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him." Colossians 3:10. "And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness." Ephesians 4:24. "...That they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me." Acts 26:18. "Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light." Colossians 1:12. "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." Acts 20:32. See II Peter 1:1-4. Verse four says, "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." "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. These scriptures all declare that for the twice-born soul, saints in light, sanctified, there is a special inheritance which consists of a conformity to His image which is declared to be "righteousness and true holiness," and being a "partaker of His divine nature." So we see that when one is born again of the righteous One, he does inherit a righteous nature. But we must not overlook the fact that everything checks back to Adam and Christ, who are the royal heads of the two races—natural and spiritual.

Once when I was discussing the native depravity before a class and spoke of it as corrupt, someone asked, "What do you mean by corrupt? Do you mean vile, wicked, ungodly?" Now all these terms are all right when applied properly, but not in their common usage or as they are usually looked upon in their extreme form. All of these have varied degrees from the lesser to the greater as there are also degrees of holiness. When we think of these terms, we commonly think of them in their finished, extreme, exaggerated form and connect them with the drunken sot, the woman of the streets, the lascivious and unclean wretch and profane and vulgar persons, etc. Consequently we revolt at the idea of looking upon a child as in that class, and that is exactly right. The child is innocent. But at the same time, that child has deep within his being a nature which contains in an undeveloped and embryonic form the seed that may later on produce in his life any or all of these fruits of sin in their extreme form.

We see then that the entire human race was in a sad plight under the thralldom of sin and stood in need of redemption. Jesus Christ is declared to be our Redeemer. Galatians 4:4-5 says, "But when the fulness 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." Titus 2:14 says, "Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity,..." Colossians 1:14 says, "In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins." Revelation 5:9 says, "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."

But redemption implies a restoration to a primitive or former state. For an example: Suppose you borrow \$1000 and make a note for that amount to be paid in twenty \$50 payments and secure it with a mortgage on your home. Then suppose you pay ten of those payments and go to the banker and tell him you would like to have the mortgage lifted off your property. He will check the record and find that you have only paid half of what is owing on the note and will tell you that the mortgage cannot be cleared until you have paid the full amount. Then suppose when you have paid nineteen of the twenty payments you go to him again and ask for the mortgage to be lifted. He will check his record again and note there is still one payment owing on it and inform you that it cannot be cleared until that payment is made. But when you make the last payment, the full amount of the note is paid, and you can require him to clear the mortgage. If he should refuse, you could take him to court and compel him to. This makes it clear that in order for a thing to be redeemed, it must be just as free from debt as it was before any debt was made on it.

This is true of redeeming the soul also. As already observed, at some length, the transgression and consequent fall of Adam affected all of his posterity and plunged the entire human race into sin. Paul said in Romans 7:14, "...I am carnal, sold under sin." Our father, Adam, sold all of his posterity down the river and delivered us to be bondservants to another man. The devil held a blanket mortgage on the entire human race which God would not lift until a suitable sacrifice to satisfy His sense of justice was made. Jesus Christ made this sacrifice.

Mankind today is, in general, the same as he was created, and possesses the essential characteristics that he did then, except in one particular sense. He has undergone a change in his moral nature through the fall and has lost the moral likeness, purity, and holiness in the image of God which he possessed when he came fresh from the hand of God.

This is the full aspect of the redemptive plan as it affects man morally. The redemption of the body from death is also part of the plan and that will be realized in its fullness at the resurrection of the dead in the last day when death shall be destroyed and his dominion broken, and the body comes forth to live forevermore.

Since man in his unregenerate state is two steps below the state of moral purity and holiness (the image and likeness of God) in which he was created, and since those two steps are of a different nature consisting first of the native depravity (an inherent, corrupt nature in the child at birth, but which is not productive of guilt) and later on the committing of actual sin which produces a state of guilt and condemnation: it must be evident that there must also be two steps back to the original state; two parts to man's salvation, or two works of divine grace. It would surely be clear to anyone's mind and thinking that in any flight of stairs there are as many steps going up as there are coming down. The two forms in which sin exists in the human soul must be dealt with in different ways to suit the nature of the case. The Bible throughout teaches this twofold salvation—saved, justified; then sanctified (heart cleansed), baptized with the Holy Ghost. This is what I believe in.

(I just received a letter from a party reminding me I had made a mistake earlier in saying that when one was born again he received the nature of his father (God). It is possible that paragraph may be a little misplaced, because the discussion had not reached the point of sanctification. But that paragraph should be read as an extension of the preceding paragraph regarding parents transmitting to their children some characteristics and natures like their own and especially in regard to the transmission of the corrupt nature of fallen Adam to their posterity. Then follows the paragraph regarding a person who is born again and receives the nature and likeness of his Father, God. All the scriptures in that paragraph refer to the finished work of salvation—sanctification. It seems likely to me that when Jesus

said to Nicodemus, "...Ye must be born again," (John 3:17), He was referring to the transmission from nature to grace through a full salvation without breaking it down and dissecting the parts or steps in arriving at it and that being born again covered the whole ground to the finished product. For anything I have written in this case or any other that is confusing or not clear, I apologize and ask forgiveness for it.)

And now to go on. In II Corinthians 1:15 we read, "And in this confidence I was minded to come unto you before, that ye might have a second benefit." The margin here says "grace" in the place of "benefit." We believe in that. A person is saved from his sins, regenerated by a work of God's grace upon his heart and then he is sanctified—perfected in his experience—by a second definite work of God's grace upon his heart.

Again in I Thessalonians 3:9-10 we read, "For what thanks can we render to God again for you, for all the joy wherewith we joy for your sakes before our God; Night and day praying exceedingly that we might see your face, and might perfect that which is lacking in your faith?" We would judge from the first epistle to the Thessalonians all the way through that these people were truly saved and their condition was commendable. Yet there seems to have been a lack in their faith. Sanctification is a work of grace or experience that is entered into by faith the same as justification. If a person does not have sufficient faith to make the required consecration and then receive the sanctifying grace, he certainly has a defect in his grace. Then, too, the faith which was once delivered to the saints involves a complete experience of full and uttermost salvation and if one is only saved, no matter how truly saved he is, and not sanctified, there is something lacking in his faith. Paul was anxious to see these folks that he might perfect that which was lacking in their faith, and he declared in I Thessalonians 4:3 that "...This is the will of God, even your sanctification,..." and goes on in that chapter and the next to describe the experience, the need, and to declare God's ability and faithfulness to do that for them.

Hebrews 10:14 says, "For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." This makes it clear that the perfecting of our experience is in our sanctification, and this is what Paul was anxious to see the Thessalonian brethren obtain.

In Jude, verse 3, we read, "Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered to the saints." This does not mean to enter into strife of words and to contend physically and carnally. These things are all condemned in the Word of God. But we are to contend for that faith in its entirety—its doctrines, its personal regenerating and sanctifying experiences, its spiritual life, its holiness, its power, its gifts of the Spirit, its unity of believers, and its fruit. But first contend for it within yourself (don't settle for anything less in your own personal experience) against the devil and unbelief, and doubts and fears that you may possess within yourself about the fullness of the blessings of the gospel of Christ. This is to be done by all, and if we all do this we will find the entire Church in possession of all the provisions of the faith which was once delivered to the saints.

The early Church possessed this faith in its entirety and was able to produce its fruit, and as a part of it they were all filled with the Holy Ghost. It was a wholly sanctified Church, able to live victoriously and triumphantly over all opposition. The Jerusalem Church actually had power over all the power of the devil and was able to triumph over him in all his efforts to hinder their work for God. The emphasis with them was on the Holy Ghost. Jesus emphasized the Holy Ghost. In Luke 24:49 He said, "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." But He said again

in Acts 1:8, “But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you:...” The baptism of the Holy Ghost was the promise of the Father. (See Joel 2:28; John 7:37-39; Acts 2:16-17.) Again in John 16:7 Jesus said, “Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.” Then in Acts 1:4-5 just before He was taken from them into heaven He, “...being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.” All believers in the early Church were filled with the Holy Ghost. (See Acts 2:4; 4:31.)

It is the ultimate aim and objective of God's perfect plan of salvation to completely eradicate sin, both committed and inherited (the inherent depravity which all of us received from Adam) and to totally restore mankind to the likeness and image of God in which man was originally created, by the infilling of the Holy Spirit. There is an old, old song which in the first verse says: “All of self and none of God.” This is the way of life of unsaved, unregenerate mankind. Then the second verse says, “Some of self and some of God.” The third verse says, “Less of self and more of God.” Then the last verse says, “None of self and all of God.” Ah, folks, this is the ultimate; let us move on to it, for God has provided it for us. One of the songs which we sing often, says:

“If thou wouldst have the dear Saviour from heaven
Walk by thy side from the morn till the even,
There is a rule that each day you must follow:
Humble thyself to walk with God.

“Just as the Lord in the world's early ages
Walked and communed with the prophets and sages,
He will come now if you meet the conditions:
Humble thyself to walk with God.

“Just as the stream finds a bed that is lowly,
So Jesus walks with the pure and the holy;
Cast out thy pride, and in heartfelt contrition
Humble thyself to walk with God.”

Paul's first question to the disciples at Ephesus was, “...Have you received the Holy Ghost since you believed?” (Acts 19:1-2.) When the apostles at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the Word of God by the preaching of Philip, they sent Peter and John unto them to see to it that they received the Holy Ghost. (Acts 8:14-17.)

Surely that is the next thing in order after one is saved, and the sooner, the better and easier it is. When one is just in his first love and in possession of a brand-new experience with God and relationship with Christ, the burden of sin, guilt and condemnation has just been lifted off him and he is bubbling with zeal and spiritual energy and feels well able to “run through a troop and jump over a wall,” it would be really easy at that time to present his body a living sacrifice and complete his experience of salvation by receiving the Holy Ghost. Much of the difficulty in obtaining this experience and much of the confusion surrounding the doctrine comes from folks who halt too long in a justified state until they have some ups and downs, their zeal kind of cools off, their love kind of wanes and they actually need a renewal of their experience. Knowing they need something, they decide it is

sanctification they need and they put in for that, when it is actually a renewing of their justified experience and covenant with God that they need. When such people receive a blessing upon their souls from God, they call it sanctification, when really it is just a renewing of their justification. Then, when it does not do for them all that they think it should, they become confused and begin to flounder around and sometimes never get really established.

Now let us return to the thought that man in his unregenerate state is two steps below the state of moral purity and holiness in which he was created. It must be evident unto all that there are just as many steps in a flight of stairs going up as there are coming down. Also that the last step coming down the stairs will be the first step going up, and that one cannot take the second step until he has taken the first one. And when one has taken the first step, it puts him in a natural position to take the second one in stride.

In this case the first step down is the fallen, depraved nature which we all partake of from Adam, and the second step is the actual sins committed in the life of the individual after he comes to the age of accountability before God which produces guilt and condemnation in his soul.

Since man is two steps below the plane of holiness and purity in which he was created, it must naturally be understood that there must be two steps to his redemption or restoration—two successive steps in bringing him back to the primitive state of purity and holiness in God's image and likeness—and he cannot be reckoned to be completely restored, to be perfect in purity and holiness, until both steps have been taken.

This thought has been objectionable to some on the grounds that they feel that the God whom they serve just does not do any halfway work. I agree to that point without reservation. But what I am talking about here is not any halfway work. It is two complete entire works. When God saves a person from his sins and forgives his transgressions, He saves him from all sin and forgives him and all his transgressions—no halfway work here. It is the same when He sanctifies a person. He sanctifies him wholly, entirely, through and through—no halfway work here—and fills him full of the Holy Ghost and thoroughly purges his nature from all impurities.

But, it is sometimes argued, our God is not so puny that He has to take two efforts at anything to accomplish it, and certainly not with our salvation. I readily agree with this point that there is no weakness in God and that from God's end it would be very easy for Him to accomplish the entire thing in one operation. But the difficulty here lies in man's weakness and inability, not in any weakness or insufficiency on God's part. The reason is evident. Sin exists in two forms—inherent and acquired; native depravity and actual transgressions—and must therefore be dealt with in two different ways. But man is an intelligent, free-acting agent, possessing freedom of will so that he can, of his own volition, decide his course of conduct. God never violates this right of man to exercise his will freely, and an act of one's will is involved in all of God's dealings with his soul. "...Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." Revelation 22:17. In order to be saved, one must, of his own free will, choose to repent of sin, forsake it, choose to cast his lot with God and meet all conditions in order to obtain forgiveness for his sins—actual transgressions. But this does not touch that depraved nature within him because it is not dealt with through repentance, but through consecration. There must also be a volitional act of one's will in recognizing this inherent depravity of nature, renouncing and rejecting it, appealing to God for a purging of it and a willful yielding of one's body and complete consecration of his life to God before God could be justified in performing this operation within him to purify his nature and fill him with the Holy Ghost.

But since one's will is involved in this part of his salvation, as well as in being saved, it is evident that he must recognize the existence of the thing before his will can act toward God for its cleansing; but it is not possible that we could recognize this depravity of nature within us, which within itself is not productive of guilt, hence produces no condemnation, so long as our actual committed sins are crowding our conscience with condemnation. One is never conscious of it, and could not be conscious of it, until he actually forsakes sin and begins to live a holy life, and then he is brought face to face with the reality of it. Paul spoke of it in Romans 7:23 as a law in his members warring against the law of his mind. When he purposed to do good, he found himself being contested by this thing which he never knew anything about until he began to live a holy life free from sin; he came face to face with something within him warring against him in doing the thing he desired to do. It is in the special efforts of any justified person to live this holy life that he becomes painfully conscious of that depraved nature within him conflicting with his efforts to maintain that holy life, and his soul begins to cry out to God for an experience of heart purity. But God will never deal with this until we recognize it and become willing for Him to deal with it.

To any reader who objects to this doctrine on the ground that you feel that God does not do any halfway work or that He is not puny enough to have to take a second operation to complete any work of His; let me ask you this: Why did God not reveal unto you the full light and knowledge of His will all at once when you were first saved? Why has it taken this long for you to get where you are in God? The answer is clear: It is because you were not able to receive it that way and God just plainly had mercy on you not to crowd light on you faster than you were able to receive it and thus bring you into condemnation. Why did God not give the children of Israel the full light of this gospel age at Sinai instead of just giving them the law which could not bring them to where He wanted man to be? The answer is the same. They were not able nor in any condition to receive such light as the gospel gives and it would have destroyed them. God had mercy on them in giving them just what they were able to receive at the time, even though it did not satisfy Him and He found fault with it from the beginning.

The apostles, whom Jesus chose to be with Him and whom He made foundation stones in the Church of God, were not able to receive all that He said unto them while He was with them. Jesus told them in John 16:12 that He had many things to say unto them, but they were not able to bear it at that time. He never said those things to them either. But why didn't He? Simply because He knew they were not able to grasp them and they, no doubt, would have become confused and discouraged by those things which were beyond them. Jesus left it for the Holy Spirit to teach them many things. It was some time before even the Holy Spirit could get to them all they needed to know, because even after some years certain persons were still holding to circumcision and clinging to fragments of the law. It took some strong arguments and some special dealings and revelations to get them out of that teaching.

God, in His wisdom, has from olden times revealed Himself and His attributes, nature, truth and will to man little by little and in various ways. Now, would any of us say that in any of the above mentioned cases that God did not reveal the full light and knowledge of His will to the new convert, or did not give the full light of this gospel age to the children of Israel at Sinai, or did not say everything He had to say to the apostles, or revealed Himself to mankind little by little, because He did not want them to have the full light or know His perfect will or that He was not able to make it known to them or was not able to reveal Himself in all of His attributes and nature all at once and by direct means? Of course not. Then why didn't He? Simply because He was too wise and merciful to do it, but has dealt in simple ways and

means with mankind according to man's capacity and ability for receiving the things of God. The provisions of salvation are set up on this basis also, and herein lies the cause why God cannot complete the full work of perfect salvation all in one operation.

Even though man has been given a mind that is capable of a vast expanse of development, the foregoing sums up to the fact that he can only receive so much at one time, and the unfolding and expanding of his intellect is more or less gradual. This fact, coupled together with our free moral agency and the requirement that our will must act in every dealing of God with our souls, is a plain, clear answer as to why there must be two operations in our salvation and a gradual increase of light and knowledge beyond that.

The universal testimony of the Holy Scriptures in both the Old Testament (in type) and the New Testament (in anti-type and actual experience) is that there are two parts to man's salvation—two works of grace—and that his salvation is not complete without both of them.

We will now enter into a little in-depth study of the two parts to man's salvation; JUSTIFICATION and subsequently SANCTIFICATION. In doing so, we will begin by considering the two compartments in the tabernacle and also the children of Israel crossing the Red Sea and subsequently the river Jordan. These and other related points will be dealt with in more detail later on. But at least for the present, since there were two compartments in the tabernacle and since the type must conform exactly to the anti-type, there are conclusive grounds to prove two parts to man's salvation.

Since the last step down in man's fall into sin was the actual sins and transgressions which produced guilt and condemnation in the soul, then the first step up must of necessity be to deal with that and have the guilt and condemnation removed from the soul and be restored to a state of innocence before God, as we were in early childhood before our age of accountability, by the forgiveness of those sins and the purging of them out of our hearts by the blood of Jesus. This, then, is the first part of our salvation.

This work of grace in the heart, known as JUSTIFICATION, is based upon true Bible repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. In Acts 20:21 Paul spoke of "Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ."

REPENTANCE: "...God...now commandeth all men everywhere to repent." Acts 17:30. In Acts 3:19 Peter said, "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord." In Acts 5:31 it says, "Him [Jesus] hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins." In Acts 2:38 we read, "...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." Luke 24:47 says, "And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his [Christ's] name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem." Luke 13:3 says, "...Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." Mark 1:15 says, "...The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel."

REPENTANCE INVOLVES—First: A forsaking of all sin. In Isaiah 55:7 it says, "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts:..." Again in Isaiah 1:16-17 we read, "Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes, cease to do evil; Learn to do well;..." Webster defines repentance as a turning away in heart and practice from that which is forbidden, to that which is required. This definition is sustained also in the Holy Scriptures. Ezekiel 33:11 says, "Say unto them, 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; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?" Ezekiel 18:30-32 says, "...Repent, and turn yourselves from all your transgressions; so iniquity shall not be your ruin. Cast away from you all your transgressions, whereby ye have transgressed; and make you a new heart and a new spirit:... For I have no pleasure in the death of him that dieth, saith the Lord God:..." "Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls." James 1:21. I Peter 2:1-2 says, "Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby." Ephesians 4:22-23 says, "That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; And be renewed in the spirit of your mind." Read on through verse 32. (Read also Colossians 3:8-14.) The reader will note in all these texts, the putting away of evil practices out of the life before one can receive the good things from God, given us through His salvation. He will also note that all the things mentioned here that are to be put away out of his life, refer to actual sinful practices and wrong doings which corrupt and defile the soul and bring condemnation upon the conscience. In no place does it mention the native depravity, the corrupt, depraved nature that we all inherited from Adam. It is evident, then, that REPENTANCE does not act upon that part of our inner being.

REPENTANCE INVOLVES—Second: A confession of sins. In I John 1:9 we read, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins,..." Psalms 32:5 says, "I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin." Proverbs 28:13 says, "He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy."

REPENTANCE INVOLVES—Third: A making of restitution. In Ezekiel 33:14-16 we read, "Again, when I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; if he turn from his sin, and do that which is lawful and right; If the wicked restore the pledge, give again that he had robbed, walk in the statutes of life, without committing iniquity; he shall surely live, he shall not die. None of his sins that he hath committed shall be mentioned unto him: he hath done that which is lawful and right; he shall surely live." Among other things that Zacchaeus said to the Lord in Luke 19:8-9 were these words, "...If I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold." In Matthew 5:23, Jesus taught that if we bring our gift to the altar and remember there that our brother has ought against us, to leave our gift before the altar and first go and be reconciled with him. In other words, make our wrongs right and straighten up our past life with every person. This is very important, and many fail to obtain mercy and saving grace at this point.

REPENTANCE INVOLVES—Fourth: A forgiving of those who have wronged us. In Matthew 6:12, Jesus taught us to pray, "And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors." And when He had finished teaching them to pray, He went back and picked up this thought again and said in Matthew 6:14-15, "For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." Luke 17:3-4 says, "Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee,...seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him." Mark 11:25-26 says, "And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses. But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses." In Matthew 18:21-35, we are taught by Jesus Himself the great importance of having mercy and forgiving all and that those who fail to do this

are held under the bondage of their own sins—unforgiven because they fail to forgive. We are taught here that we are to forgive seventy times seven times, which surely would require that we be possessed of a spirit of mercy and forgiveness. This is so important to one seeking mercy and pardon from God, and many fail to obtain salvation for no other cause than failing to forgive another.

BIBLE REPENTANCE is predicated upon godly sorrow. II Corinthians 7:10-11 says, “For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of:... For behold this selfsame thing, that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves,...” This kind of repentance, plus a saving faith in Jesus Christ, brings about a complete absolution from guilt. It restores one to a state of complete innocence before God. This produces an experience of entire justification before God.

Justification is the legal aspect of our salvation and signifies an absolving from guilt. Man has a responsibility to God’s law, and when guilty of a transgression of that law, possesses no power to free himself from that law’s just claims. But Christ stepped in between an offended God and offending man, and gave Himself as a ransom for sinners. Thus, He paid a sufficient satisfaction to God’s justice, and on that basis, when our sins are confessed in the Bible way, they are laid upon Him, and His righteousness becomes ours. Guilt and condemnation are removed from us and we stand acquitted, pardoned and entirely innocent before God through faith in the merits of the sacrifice that Jesus Christ made in our behalf, and the efficacy of His shed blood to make a suitable and sufficient atonement for our sins when He went to Calvary and offered Himself without spot to God for that specific purpose. The following scriptures confirm this to be so. “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. “Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” Romans 5:1. “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. For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.” Romans 5:17-19. “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. 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 3:23-28.

This experience is also termed in the scriptures as “conversion.” In Matthew 18:3 Jesus said, “...Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.” In Acts 3:19 Peter said, “Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out,...” Conversion, in its general sense, refers to a change from one state to another state. In scripture, and as it pertains to our salvation, it refers to a real change in heart and life from an evil state to a righteous state. Acts 26:18 says, “To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God,...”

This experience is also referred to as being “born again.” In John 1:11-13 we read, “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: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor

of the will of man, but of God." Jesus said in John 3:3, "...Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Again in John 3:5 He said, "...Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." In I John 5:1 we read, "Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God:..." I John 3:9 says, "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God." I Peter 1:23 says, "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever." I John 2:29 says, "If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him." And finally, Romans 8:16 says, "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God."

The prominent idea connected with birth is life. In I John 3:14 we read, "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death." And again in John 5:24, "...He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life."

This birth is of the spirit and is from above. (John 3:3, 5.) But birth is connected with new life, not a mature life. In this experience a new spiritual life (the life of Christ) is imparted to the soul. In I John 5:11-12 we read, "And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." I John 4:9 says, "In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him." Colossians 3:4 says, "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory." Note, this text states Christ to be our life. In John 6:51-58 we read of our eating of Christ's flesh and drinking of His blood and that by doing so we have life and if we do not do this we have no life in us. Verse 57 says if we eat of Him we shall live by Him. This scripture shows Christ to be received into the soul in a spiritual sense, in a manner comparable to food being received into the body in a literal sense. It is the food that we take into our body which sustains our life and replenishes the cells of the body. That food becomes assimilated by means of the "built in" facilities of digestion, and is absorbed into our bodies until it becomes inseparable from our bodies, and actually becomes, in a very real sense, our bodies. The title of a book on diet and health is, *You Are What You Eat*. This is actually true. When one is born of God and receives Christ into his soul, he receives Him in the very same manner, and Christ becomes absorbed into our life until He, in a very real sense, becomes our very life and being.

My purpose now is to bring a scriptural distinction and comparison of Old Testament and New Testament justification, and possibly clear up some questions in some people's minds which have been asked at different times.

The justification obtainable under the New Testament economy is far superior to the justification that was obtainable under the law in the Old Testament economy. In Acts 13:38-39 we read, "Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: And by him all that believe are justified FROM all things, FROM which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses." Note, it is stated here that we who believe can be justified FROM all things FROM which they could not be justified under the law.

Justification under the law was obtained by the shedding of blood. Hebrews 9:22 says, "And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission." But in that case it was the blood of animals. Leviticus 6:6-7 says, "And he shall bring his trespass offering unto the Lord, a ram without blemish out of the flock, with thy estimation, for a trespass offering, unto the priest: And the priest shall make an atonement for him before the Lord: and it shall be

forgiven him for any thing of all that he hath done in trespassing therein." In Leviticus 4:20, 26, 31 and 35 where the sin offering is under consideration, it gives instructions on how to proceed with the sin offering and it says in these verses that "the priest shall make an atonement for him as concerning his sin, and it shall be forgiven him." See also Leviticus 5:10, 13, 16 and 18, which only state the same thing over. The same thing is stated in Numbers 15:25-28.

In all these texts a promise is contained of the forgiveness of sins when the blood of animals is shed. The forgiveness of sins is all that is promised here and that is the only justification they received under the law. But they did obtain pardon and the pardon they received was as good as the pardon we receive through the blood of Christ. Now please do not misunderstand me to be saying that their salvation was as good as ours; far from it. But pardon is pardon no matter on what condition it is granted. But that was the full extent of justification obtainable under the law. Such sacrifices were not sufficient to take away sins. Hebrews 10:3-4 says, "But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year, For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins." Verse eleven says, "And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins." It is not said here that these sacrifices could not obtain forgiveness of sins, but that they could not take away sins. There is a difference between forgiving sins and taking away sins. For instance, if one who was a liar would receive law justification, he would be forgiven of all the lies he had told, but would not receive power over the evil habit to refrain from lying thereafter. He had been a liar because he was inwardly disposed to lying and as the law of sacrifices could only provide forgiveness for sins, but could not take away sins, he would not be delivered from the inward disposition to falsify. He would soon be found indulging in the evil practice again and would stand in need of another repentance. Hence, there was a remembrance of sins made every year and a big annual day of repentance and sacrifice for sins was observed. (Read Leviticus 23:27-29.)

In New Testament justification under grace, the individual is actually justified FROM THOSE THINGS from which he could not be justified under the law. In other words, he does not only receive forgiveness for sins committed but he also receives a cleansing of all sinful habits out of the heart, thus enabling him to live without committing sin. Under the law dispensation there was a remembrance made of sins every year, but in this dispensation God says that our sins and iniquities will be remembered no more. (Hebrews 10:16-17.) This is based on the fact that the blood of Christ not only provides forgiveness for our past sins but imparts at the same time grace to live without committing sin. Hence, no further remembrance of sins is necessary.

Justification is twofold. It has a positive and a negative side to it. That is what New Testament justification under grace does. It provides for the forgiveness of all past sins when properly confessed and forsaken, and also provides for a cleansing from the power of all sinful habits and practices, thus enabling one to refrain from committing sin. Old Testament justification did not provide this second ingredient, but only the first ingredient (forgiveness), and the people were still under the power of sin and had to continue bringing sacrifices for sin over and over to keep up-to-date on their forgivenesses. Grace is a New Testament doctrine entirely. It was not Old Testament doctrine at all. The word "grace" occurs perhaps not over a dozen times in the entire Old Testament, and in most of those references it referred to special favors granted from one individual to another individual, and not of God's special favor to humankind. The grace of God that saves and keeps from sin issued forth from Calvary when Jesus, the Son of God, died to make an atonement for the sins of all mankind.

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." Righteousness in this text refers more to one's outward acts than to their inward condition of nature. Righteousness is a form of the word "right" and signifies a doing of those things which are right. Unrighteousness, then, would signify a doing of those things which are not right, or committing sin.

In New Testament justification, life is imparted unto the soul; the very Christ-life. This was not obtainable under the law dispensation. In Galatians 3:21 we read, "Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law."

New Testament justification brings peace with God. Romans 5:1 says, "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Guilty sinners under condemnation could not have this. Isaiah 48:22 says, "There is no peace, saith the Lord, unto the wicked." Romans 8:1 says, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."

New Testament justification produces a holy life. Those who are justified before God do not commit sin but live a holy life free from sin. I John 3:8-9 says, "He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil. Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God." And again in Hebrews 3:1 we read, "Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling,..." In this text the brethren are called "holy brethren," but they were not perfected because the great burden of the entire epistle is to show an advanced degree of grace under the types of the Jewish sanctuary, and is an exhortation to go on to perfection. Hebrews 6:1 says, "Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on to perfection;..." It also contains an exhortation to enter into that which was not possible before the shedding of Christ's blood. Hebrews 9:8 says, "The Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing." Again Hebrews 10:19 says, "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus." We are told in II Corinthians 7:1, "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." This perfection is our sanctification. Hebrews 10:14 says, "For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified."

In Romans 12:1-2 we are instructed to present our bodies holy unto the Lord and this is so we can prove the perfect will of God. The will of God is declared to be our sanctification in I Thessalonians 4:3.

All of these texts sum up to the fact that one who is justified is living a holy life free from sin, but that there is another degree of holiness to be obtained which is declared to be "perfecting holiness."

Failure to understand, recognize and maintain a distinction between living a holy life free from sin in the justified experience of justification, and actually having the heart purified, cleansed from the native depravity, and the shedding abroad of the love of God in the heart, and being filled with the Holy Ghost (Romans 5:1-5) by a second definite work of grace, has resulted in some not seeing the need of going on to perfection, or even concluding that there is no such experience for them. This is a very serious mistake and we exhort that no one make this mistake, but diligently pursue your course on into the completion of your salvation.

In Luke 6:43 and Matthew 7:17-18, Jesus declared that a good tree cannot bring forth corrupt fruit and a corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit. The question is: If the depraved nature still exists in the justified person, and he needs an additional

cleansing and work of divine grace to free him from it, can he do right and bring forth good fruit?

When one is born again, he receives a new life into his soul which is the Christ-life and it is holy—free from sin. In Romans 11:17-24 we have a discussion of how the Jews were cast away and the Gentiles were accepted in among the people of God, and it is referred to as a “grafting.” Of course this is referring to people and nations, etc., but what applies to them collectively will also apply individually so far as God and the principle is concerned, because the application of salvation is on an individual basis. Job 34:29 says, “When he giveth quietness, who then can make trouble? and when he hideth his face, who then can behold him? whether it be done against a nation, or against a man only.”

Whatever or however much this passage in the 11th chapter of Romans involves, it at least serves to instruct us that there is a spiritual process with God that is equivalent to grafting and is called grafting. This pretty well explains how I see the receiving of the Christ-life in the justified experience while the inward depravity of nature still exists in the individual. This experience is called “circumcision of the heart.” (Romans 2:29.) This circumcision is said to consist in our “putting away the sins of the flesh.” (Colossians 2:11.)

The process of grafting in the 11th chapter of Romans is described as breaking off the natural branches and grafting in others. Naturally, in grafting, an incision must be made and the new graft inserted. This is equivalent to this process called “circumcision of the heart.” It is described as putting away the sins of the flesh (the old branch is broken off), an incision is made (an operation takes place), and the graft is inserted. From then on the fruit is according to that which was grafted in.

Lining the long driveway leading into the saints’ campground in Pacoima, California, are 15 orange trees on either side. This is all grafted stock, which means that a part of a tree bearing a different kind of fruit has been grafted in on a different root stock. These trees all produce good oranges. But something happened to two of these trees. They got broken off, and then grew out from beneath the bud, and produced a different kind of fruit to what they did before. The fruit produced on these two trees have a really thick, rough, pale peeling, and are really sour, like a lemon. We used them to make lemonade. In this case the root was different from the tree, and when the tree got broken off and grew out from beneath the bud, it grew from the old root and produced different fruit.

So it is in the justified experience. The Christ-life is grafted into the incision made in circumcising the heart, and the putting away of the sins of the flesh, and the fruits of the Christ-life are born. As long as the person is very watchful, prayerful, careful, keeps a close contact with God, and keeps victory over sin in his life by the grace of God, he will continue to bear the fruits of the Christ-life. As long as he does well, he will be accepted. (Genesis 4:7.) But if by any means he becomes a little slack, gives advantage to Satan, succumbs to his temptations, fails of the grace of God, loses his victory and his contact with Him, and lets sin get into his life, then that grafted tree is broken off and the tree will grow up from the old root and a different kind of fruit will be produced.

Romans 11:24 declared grafting to be contrary to nature. A person in the justified experience is not altogether according to nature either from the standpoint of sin or holiness. When in sin, we are by nature the children of wrath (Ephesians 2:3), and naturally produce the fruits of wrath which is sin. Likewise, the wholly sanctified person is a partaker of the divine nature (II Peter 1:4), and by nature he produces his fruit unto holiness—the fruits of the Spirit. But the justified are more or less in an intermediate state (unnatural). The Christ-life has been grafted in contrary to nature (his depraved nature), and he is more or less in a dual state, still possessing the inherent depravity of nature but having a grafted in Christ-life which

is holy. Anyone in such a condition, we would readily see, would be unestablished, and therefore we can easily see the urgent need of such an one pressing on to the completion of his salvation and obtaining that grace wherein we stand or are established. (Romans 5:2.)

A clear type of this is seen in the children of Israel. In Egypt, which is a type of sinful bondage, they lived off the natural fruit of the ground; leeks, garlic, onions, lintels, melons, etc., which all grew from the natural soil. In the wilderness they had no natural products of the soil to sustain life, but God sent them manna from heaven. This was only a temporary arrangement for them and a very unenduring substance. When they got into the land of Canaan, which is typical of the sanctified experience, they again lived off the natural produce from the soil and ate the old corn of the land. There never was any more manna after they arrived in the land of Canaan, which shows it to be only a temporary provision. (Joshua 5:10-12.)

I see it this way with one's life. When in sin one produces fruit according to his nature, which is a depraved nature. When he becomes justified, or born again, he receives a grafting in of the Christ-life, and produces fruit according to that graft and not according to his nature. When he presses on into the wholly sanctified state and experience, he again bears fruit according to his nature but in that experience his nature is changed and now he possesses the divine nature.

I have been challenged on this point and was told that we were inducted into Christ or grafted into Him and not Him into us. My answer to that argument is that the Bible teaches just as much about Christ being in us as it does us being in Him, and our being born again is plainly declared to be our receiving Christ. (John 1:12-13.)

It is taught and believed that the two compartments or rooms of the Old Testament tabernacle, the holy place and the most holy place, are typical of two parts of our salvation. If that be the case, the holy place would be typical of the first part of our salvation, or justification, and the holiest of all, or most holy place, would be typical of the second part of our salvation, or sanctification, and if one still possessed the depraved nature in his justified state, would that mean there was corruption in the holy place? If not, why not, since the justified person was in that place and still had his depraved or corrupt nature?

The thought (that the two compartments in the tabernacle are typical of two parts of our salvation, or two degrees of grace) has already been dealt with. The first compartment is typical of the first experience of divine grace, which in the Scriptures is called justification, conversion, the new birth and regeneration. That is what we are dealing with now, and all the conditions for it; repentance, confession and restitution. This all has reference to the way we have been living and the things we have actually done. (The sins we have committed.) It does not deal with the inward condition of inherent depravity with which we were born. Therefore, that depravity of nature is not dealt with in this experience.

However, as we have seen, a person is made a partaker of the Christ-life in this experience, and that life is holy. He is saved from all sin and receives deliverance from the power of sinful habits, thus enabling him to live a life free from sin. When we lay the pattern down on his experience and understand that that holy place covers his actual life, and not his inward, there is not corruption there. That life must be kept free from sin with no corruption in it for one to retain his justified relationship with God and be free from condemnation. If corruption and sin get into that life, it cancels his relationship with God and puts him clear outside the tabernacle.

Perhaps right in this area is one of the most common stumbling blocks to understanding the two parts of man's salvation. Some do not discern the difference between a holy life and holiness, or purity of heart. But it is clearly taught in the

Holy Scriptures. In II Corinthians 7:1, “holy life” refers to the manner of life; “perfect holiness” to the state or condition of the heart. The term, “perfecting holiness,” is a superlative describing an advanced degree of holiness. We all were born with a depravity of nature, for which we are not accountable, and therefore we cannot repent of. When we came to be saved (justified), we came repenting and seeking forgiveness for the sins we had committed, and for which condemnation was bearing heavy on our conscience. We wanted liberation from that condemnation and wanted peace with God. But this depravity of nature we could not repent of because we did not commit it. We were conscious of its existence only through teaching. This depraved nature is a very deceptive thing. It is only in our efforts to maintain a holy life according to New Testament standards that we become conscious of a power deep within us rising up and asserting itself, and contesting our efforts to live a holy life and maintain victory in our experience. Unless a person has been well instructed in this truth, when this begins to happen in his life he may be thrown into confusion and wonderment, and will become a victim of accusation and be found returning to the altar time after time seeking the cause of this conflict. But he needs to understand that it is “the foe in the temple not subject to God” (the carnal nature), and begin to seek God to purge his heart from that native depravity by the blood of Jesus, and to fill him with a perfect love of God.

This is that most holy place, or that second compartment of the tabernacle which we enter and abide therein after we have “presented our bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.” (Romans 12:1.) We have consecrated and dedicated our lives to Him without any reservation for ourselves, on the golden altar before the second veil, and He fills us with His Holy Spirit and admits us into that most holy place to abide in His presence continually. There the purging process starts which purges us from the imperfections which God sees in us, but we had not yet seen. In this advanced state of grace we do not only do good things, but we are good from the heart out. We do not only commit holy acts, but we are holy from the heart out.

I was thinking recently of how God gave His Son as a sacrifice for our sins, of His humiliations, insults, shames and reproaches, and His unspeakable sufferings and agonies at Calvary, until He actually felt forsaken even of His father. My thought was this: God did not permit all this because He did not love His Son, but because He did love us and realized it would take such a sacrifice as that to break our hard hearts and bring us to repentance. Then I thought of some of the injustices, reproaches and persecutions that I have seen some of God’s holy and innocent saints suffer. Why did He allow it to happen? It was not because He did not love the one who was suffering, but He did love his adversary, and saw that for him to see the clear image of Christ being manifested in the suffering child of God was the only way He could reach him. This is a right God reserves to Himself in dealing with us when He admits us into that sacred, sanctified relationship with Him. But, alas, some are not able to sing the song, “In the heated furnace, Father, let me stay, Precious gold refining, purge the dross away, Till thy glorious image is reflected there, Till the costly jewels of thy grace I wear.” So they mar in the making and have to come out being less than what God, by His grace, is able to make them. The good news I bring to all of you today is that you do not have to settle that way. God has already generated sufficient grace to enable everyone of us to come to the fullness of the measure of the fullness of Christ in every area and phase of our lives, if we will only consecrate and dedicate our lives to Him to that depth.

We have been considering some of the difficult stumbling blocks to the two works of grace doctrine of justification and sanctification. We will here consider another important scripture that has been a major stumbling block to some in understanding this wonderful truth.

Romans 8:9 says, "...Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." The reason this has proven a stumbling block to some, is that they have interpreted this scripture as referring to the Holy Spirit, and consequently conclude that one could not be saved without possessing the Holy Spirit. Hence the conclusion is, that a complete salvation is obtained at one time. But I do not interpret this text that way for the following reasons.

We would certainly agree that Christ's spirit was holy. There's no argument there. He knew no sin. (II Corinthians 5:21.) "Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth." I Peter 2:22. He was tempted in all points as we are, yet without sin. (Hebrews 4:15.) Hence He was holy and possessed the spirit of holiness.

Christ also possessed the Holy Spirit within Him (He came upon Him in the bodily form of a dove at His baptism), the same as we possess Him when we are sanctified or baptized with the Holy Spirit. But the Holy Spirit is a distinct, definite personage, and is always identified in His own person, the same as Jesus the Son, and God the Father.

The Holy Spirit is a member of the triune Godhead and is coexistent with God, the Father, and Jesus Christ, the Son. In Hebrews 9:14 He is called the eternal Spirit. And He is as distinct a person as either of the other two. Therefore, it would be no more proper to refer to the Spirit of Christ, meaning the Holy Spirit, than it would be to turn it around and say the Christ of Holy Spirit. In either case, we would be failing to observe the proper distinction between distinct persons.

Now let us notice some other scriptures which use the term "spirit of." In the one referred to above (Romans 8:9), we read of the Spirit of God and the Spirit of Christ. But let us look closely at this as we pass. It is said in the first part of this verse that, "...Ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you...." I agree this could refer to the Holy Spirit because that is the name of the entire Godhead. But there is a period at this point, making the sentence complete. It expressed the complete thought. Then the verse goes on to say, "Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ (not the Spirit of God this time), he is none of his." Then the next verse goes on to say, "And if Christ be in you,..." Here it seems to me that the Spirit of Christ in the last part of verse 9 and Christ Himself in the first part of verse 10, are used interchangeably.

This seems to me to correspond quite well with a couple of texts in the third chapter of II Corinthians, verse 6, that say God has "...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." Verse 17 says, "Now the Lord is that Spirit:..." Here it is declared the Lord is that Spirit, and it is clear that it is not the Spirit of Christ, but Christ Himself is the spirit, or heart, or life, of the gospel message. Surely there would be no question in anyone's mind but that the Spirit and the Lord are used interchangeably in these two texts.

But let us go further in considering texts which make reference to the "spirit of." In Ephesians 4:23 it says, "And be renewed in the spirit of your mind." In I Corinthians 2:11 it says, "For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him?..." I Corinthians 2:12 says, "Now we have received, not the spirit of the world," etc. Revelations 16:14 says, "For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles,..." etc.

In all the foregoing texts we read of the spirit of God, spirit of Christ, spirit of man, the world, the devil and spirit of your mind, but nowhere do we read of the spirit of the Holy Spirit. Again I say that He is a definite personage, and is always identified in His own person. This distinction must be maintained to produce proper sense.

It would, no doubt, be easy for us to understand that the "spirit of your mind" would refer to the tendencies, disposition, nature, actions and controlling influences

of one's mind. The "spirit of the world" would refer to the natural tendencies, dispositions, controlling influences and behavior of the world. Then the "Spirit of Christ" would refer to the nature, disposition, tendencies and behavior of Christ.

In I Corinthians 6:17 it says, "But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit." This corresponds with Romans 8:9 which says, "...Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." Surely all who are saved and joined unto Christ are made a partaker of His Spirit, which, as has already been observed, is His nature, disposition and characteristics of life and behavior.

In II Corinthians 3:17 the Spirit of Christ is declared to be a spirit of liberty. It is a spirit of obedience, as stated in Philippians 2:8 where it is said that He became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Hebrews 10:9 says, "Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God..." Matthew 26:39 says, "And he went a little farther, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt." Matthew 26:42 says, "He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done." John 4:34 says, "Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work." John 8:29 says, "And he that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him."

We receive that same spirit of obedience when we get saved. John 14:15 says, "If ye love me, keep my commandments." And John 14:21 says, "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me:..." In Hebrews 5:9 we read, "...he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him."

The Spirit of Christ is a spirit of humility. Philippians 2:5-8 says, "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: 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." In Matthew 11:29 Jesus said, "...I am meek and lowly in heart:..."

But we are instructed in Philippians 2:5 to let this mind, or disposition, or nature, or characteristic be in us. Jesus said in Matthew 5:3, "Blessed are the poor in spirit (humble spirit): for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Again Peter says, "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." I Peter 3:4.

Christ's spirit is a spirit of mercy. Matthew 12:20 says, "A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, till he send forth judgment unto victory." This same spirit is to dwell in them who are joined to Him. In Matthew 5:7 Jesus said, "Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy." Again in Luke 6:36 Jesus said, "Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful." This comes in line with the very same thought as is dealt with in the fifth chapter of Matthew which concluded in verse 48 with these words of Jesus: "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." It is the same thought and sums up to being perfect in mercy and in our attitude toward our fellowmen. (Read Luke 6:35 and Matthew 5:43-48.) Jesus forgave His enemies and died to save them, praying, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." Luke 23:34.

In Malachi 4:5 there is a prophecy concerning John the Baptist, which comes in good place here. It says, "Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord." To prove that this was John the Baptist, we refer you to Matthew 11:10-14. "For this is he, of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare the way before thee. Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not

risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force. For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John. And if ye will receive it, this is Elias, which was for to come."

Now someone may say, "How could John the Baptist be Elijah or Elias?" But this is clarified in the statement of the angel to Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist, in Luke 1:17, "And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children,..."

This makes the point clear and throws some light on the text in Romans 8:9. John came at a time of deep apostasy and great spiritual darkness, such as Elijah, the most outstanding of all the prophets, came to Israel. John turned the hearts of the people to God, as Elijah had done in his day, and he manifested the same vehemence against error, and the same zeal and boldness for truth that Elijah had shown in his day. It brought a great spiritual awakening, the same as Elijah's work had brought, so it is said he went in the spirit and power of Elijah in so much that he was called Elias.

This is the way I see our having the Spirit of Christ. It is in our possessing within ourselves that same vehemence and righteous indignation against sin and error, the same zeal and boldness for truth and righteousness, the same humility, meekness, gentleness, mercy, obedience, behavior and every other characteristic of Christ Himself, and doing His work. Colossians 1:27 says, "...Christ in you, the hope of glory." Ephesians 3:17 says, "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith;..." John 6:56 says, "He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him."

The way, then, that I interpret having the Spirit of Christ is to have Christ living within us, and the Christ-life predominant in all our behavior because the Lord is that spirit.

BEHOLDING IN A GLASS THE GLORY AND IMAGE OF GOD

Greetings to all readers

Since no one has sent in a question to be discussed this month, I have elected to discuss II Corinthians 3:18.

II Corinthians 3:18, in its entirety, reads as follows: "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." This verse gives to us a clear and concise formula for becoming more like our Master, day by day, as we earnestly seek a closer proximity to Him. In the first place it opens with the statement, "We all." Thus we conclude that what is said in this verse is for every child of God, without respect to age or station in life. God has no respect to these things and does not exclude anyone from the special benefits referred to in this scripture on those grounds. He does have special respect to the disposition, attitude and condition of the heart of each individual. Consequently, some people are able to gain a closer relationship with the Master and have a richer, fuller relationship with Him, and reflect His glory in their lives more than others.

In Ephesians 3:17-19 we read of another "all." "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 fulness of God." The word "comprehend," in verse 18, means to "seize

upon together.” God wills for every one of His saints to possess this divine fullness; yet some do not because of an imperfect disposition toward Him in not having an all-consuming desire to possess His fullness in their hearts and lives.

The next statement in the verse is, “with open face.” “Open face” refers to having an open countenance, heart and mind. Hebrews 4:12 tells us that the Word of God is a discernor of the thoughts of the heart. Verse 13 says, “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.” We surely all know this is so. What God wants out of us is a disposition of heart in which we do not want anything hidden from Him, but are anxious for Him to search us out and know us altogether, thereby helping us out of any defective condition He discovers in us. The Psalmist said, “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.” Psalm 139:23-24. Ah, folks, if we come before the Lord with an open face, an open countenance and an open heart, and with the prayer of the Psalmist, we are in a position to enter into the full benefits set forth in this verse.

The next clause in the verse is “beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord.” In James 1:22-24, a comparison is drawn between the Word of God and a glass (mirror). He says a person looks into the Word of God and sees himself. We all should look into God’s Word to see ourselves and discover what we need to do to be made like Him. But there is a clearer scripture than this that shows the glory of the Lord is revealed in the Holy Scriptures. In Romans 1:16-18 Paul says, “...I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ:... For therein is the righteousness of God revealed... For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven...” The Bible is a book about God. It does not undertake the proposition of proving there is a God. It just assumes the existence of God and the opening statement in it is, “In the beginning God...” In the Bible we learn what kind of God God is, and we see Him depicted clearly and beautifully in the life of His Son Jesus who was the express image of His person. (Hebrews 1:3.) Jesus Himself said in John 14:9, “...He that hath seen me hath seen the Father;...” And it is in the four gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John) that we see Jesus living, teaching, and revealing the Father in every detail. Therefore we conclude that representing the Word of God as the glass into which we look in order to behold the glory of the Lord is a right and scriptural conclusion. The glory of the Lord is surely revealed there.

We see Christ’s mercy, longsuffering, forbearance and love in dealing with His apostles. They had many defects and shortcomings, but He taught them, and sometimes rebuked them, in love and meekness. In the end He was able to bring them out and make them foundation stones in the Church of God, except for Judas. Christ was able to look past what He saw and heard, and look into their hearts and discern what was there, and act upon that.

We see Christ in John 8:4-11 dealing with a sinful woman taken in the very act of adultery, which seems to be the most grievous sin in the catalog. But Jesus saw her penitence and willingness to accept His mercy, and He forgave her sins and started her in a life of righteousness. In John 5:1-9 we see Him coming to the pool of Bethesda where there was always a multitude of sick and invalid people waiting for the water to be troubled, that they might be healed. He walked right past the multitudes of sick and infirm people, to perhaps the most hopeless and helpless person there, and healed him and sent him home carrying his bed. In Luke 19:41 we see Him looking over the city of Jerusalem which was filled with His enemies, and where a few days hence He would be crucified; but He looked ahead 40 years or so and saw the indescribable calamity that was to befall that city, and His heart was broken and He wept.

These and many more examples are all very beautiful and reveal the glory of the Lord, but we want to move on to the end result and see how it works in us to conform us to His image which we must have before we are ready for heaven. The process is this: We look into the Word of God today and see Jesus in some particular part of His character, in His dealings with whatever group He is among, and see how He deals with them. As we pursue this thought, let us think of the fleshy tables of our hearts as a camera. When you load your camera with film and focus it on any particular object, and flip the lever or button that opens the lens, an impression is made on the film of the exact likeness of the object your camera was focused on when you opened the lens. When the film is developed, the picture will come out exactly as you had it focused when the picture was taken. But it is important to remember that if you move the camera the instant the lens opens, the picture will be blurred and unclear, and you will not be happy with it. It takes time to be holy and we do not want to be nervous nor moving about when taking these shots and making these pictures on the fleshy tables of our hearts as we behold the glory of the Lord and His character and likeness; as we meditate on His Word.

We may be looking into the Word today where we see Jesus in one aspect of His life as He dealt with people—friends, foes, adversaries, common people or top brass, so to speak, etc. Whatever the situation and the people involved, it is showing Jesus in some particular segment of His character and likeness. As we continue a while in deep meditation and holy devotion before the Lord, a picture begins to form and take shape of Jesus in that particular aspect of His character. Then as the picture comes out clear and beautiful and we continue in quiet meditation and devotion before the Lord, and submit ourselves to the Lord to make us like that, and open the lens of our souls to Him, that image is stamped on the film of our souls. Then as we repeat that process day after day, looking into God's Word, perhaps in another passage, revealing Jesus in His dealings with another group of people, and in other conditions or circumstances which emphasize other aspects of Jesus' character, and we repeat the same process of humbling our hearts and submitting to God to make us like that, opening the lens of our soul, that picture is stamped on the fleshy tables of our hearts, which is the film of the soul.

God has His own developing process. The ordinary routine of living, the trials, tests and provocations of daily living, brings out the exact reproduction of what our vision was focused on when we opened the lens of our soul and the picture was taken. As we behold in the Word (glass) the glory of the Lord—His character—in all of its aspects and open our hearts and minds to the Spirit of the Lord, He performs His work in us to conform us to that same image. Amen.

THE WISDOM OF THE BIBLE

"The Bible is the greatest book in the world. It has been a greater influence on mankind than all other forces put together. It is the most significant literary work existing in the world because it excels in beauty, power, and depths of contents. In this Book are infinite wisdom and infinite love. Between its covers are the mind and heart of God; for man's good, for his guidance, and his spiritual nourishment. It is a book of faith, a book of morals, and a book of religion; but it is also a book which teaches man his own individual responsibility, his own dignity, and his equality with his fellow man.

"The Bible teaches us how to find joy in sorrow, strength in weakness, and light in darkest days; how to bear adversity and scorn and how to fight life's battles courageously. The Scriptures teach us the best way of living, the noblest way of thinking, and the most comfortable way of growing. The Bible is God's chart for us

to steer by; to show us where the harbor is; helping all who come to it to live above the problems and troubles of life.

"The Bible stimulates the conscience and defines principles of right and wrong. It strengthens the will and this forms character. It can restore to us faith in the values of truth, beauty and goodness. Points of view found in the Bible have their value for today.

"Men cannot be well educated without the Bible, for knowledge of the Bible is a liberal education. Throughout the centuries men of many faiths and origins have found in the Bible words of wisdom, counsel and inspiration, and it has been to them a fountain of strength and an aid in attaining the highest aspirations of the mind and soul. The more we read the more it will become plain to see what things are worthwhile and what are not and what things make men happy. The Bible can give men fortitude and steadiness of faith and vision. It has continued to be a source of power in the lives of men.

"To the influence of this great Book are we indebted for all the progress made in civilization.

"In II Timothy 3:15, Paul wrote, 'And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation...' The eighth chapter of Proverbs glorifies wisdom throughout. Beginning with verse 22 it goes on to tell how wisdom was with God when He created the heavens and the earth and all things therein.

"In II Timothy 3:16-17 (And here I insert the full text which was not in the original manuscript): 'All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.' "Since God inspired all of the holy scriptures, we see that the Bible expresses the thoughts of God and is a source of true wisdom.

"In Matthew 7:24 Jesus said, 'Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock.'

"Colossians 3:16 says, 'Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom;...

"I Corinthians 1:25 says, 'Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men;...'

"I Corinthians 2:6-8 says, '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 naught: 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.'

"Job 28:12 says, 'But where shall wisdom be found? and where is the place of understanding?' Then Job 28:28 says, '...Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding.' (And let me insert right here that you read all the intervening verses between Job 28:12 and Job 28:28, extolling wisdom.)

"The Bible shows us ourselves. It is the only dependable mirror in which we can see ourselves as God sees us.

"May God teach us to cherish the beauty and greatness of His wisdom and how to live so as to bring joy and blessings into the lives of others. Any may God lead us on to the highest wisdom; to know ourselves and to know Him." (And I insert here my own 'Amen' to this thought.)

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