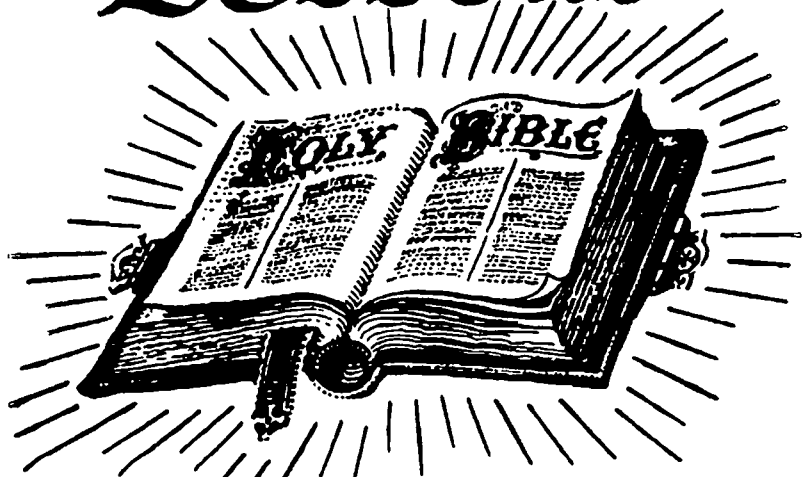


Bible Lessons



**Beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord,
we are CHANGED” II Cor. 3:18**

ADULTS -- YOUNG PEOPLE

**Vol. 4, No. 4
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Bible Lessons for Adults and Young People

Vol. 4 October, November, December, 1972 No. 4

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THEME FOR FOURTH QUARTER, 1972



We will finish the book of John in this quarter. It has been a precious study this year. All through the book, one can feel the deep love that the Apostle John had for Jesus, his Saviour and Lord. John wrote what he had seen and known about. He did not write "cunningly devised fables." He recorded facts. John's book is therefore not fiction, but a record of divine truth, testifying to the divine Sonship of Christ (John 19:35). The signs which Jesus did were not done in a corner. They were done in the presence of faithful men, some of whom suffered martyrdom, and all of them were persecuted for their faith, thus witnessing to the sincerity of their testimony. The Church or people of God today are still witnessing that believing on the name of Christ brings life into the soul and therefore persecution. Happy are they who tell others of this wonderful record, so they are moved to believe, and attain to eternal life.

We have taken three lessons from other writings of the Apostle John. He wrote First, Second, and Third John, also the book of Revelation. —Sis. A. Marie Miles

October 1, 1972

WITHERED BRANCHES

John 15:1-5; Galatians 5:22, 23; John 15:6-8, 10, 11, 16

John 15:1 I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman.

2 Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit.

3 Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.

4 Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.

5 I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.

(1)

Galatians 5:22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,

23 Meekness, temperance; against such there is no law.

John 15:6 If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.

7 If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.

8 Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.

10 If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love.

11 These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full.

16 Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.

Memory Verse: Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Matthew 7:19.

Central Thought: Only that which bears the stamp of eternity can really be called fruit.

Word definitions: Wither means, "to dry up; shrivel; wilt; to become decayed or wasted." Purge means, "to cleanse of guilt, sin, etc.; to remove by cleansing." More is used as the comparative of much which means, "greater in amount, quantity or degree." (Webster's Dictionary).

LESSON BACKGROUND

We notice that the Apostle John wrote much about the love that the Father and Son had for each other and for those who would love them. He often said that those who loved Jesus would keep His sayings. He repeated the words of Jesus which told of His love for the world and how that He gave His life for it because of that love.

My father, Bro. Fred Pruitt, had a chart drawn that he would preach from sometimes. He had the true vine connected to heaven and the false vines were from the earth. Jesus said, "I am the true vine." This would imply that there are some false vines. You might give this further thought. From

what source do the branches on the false vines receive their instructions and backing? In other words, from where do they receive their strength to put out false teachings, which are often filled with many correct Bible teachings? Are not "men gathering" those who refuse to live according to all of God's Word and filling sectism? What will be the end of those who are "withered branches"? What a huge gathering that will be in the eternal fires after the judgment. Surely, we need not be among that number. Christ is the true vine, through Whom eternal life flows, bringing us into close relationship with Him. "Ye are in Christ and Christ is in God." Christ is the husbandman of the Vine. Branches may wither, but His Church will endure. It cannot perish. The Church has weathered many storms, but one of these days it will enter heaven in a grand and glorious manner.

Lesson References: Phil. 1:11 (fruits of righteousness); Matthew 3:10 (axe laid to root); Matthew 7:15-20 (good tree and corrupt tree); Acts 15:8, 9 (purifying hearts by the Holy Ghost).

QUESTIONS:

1. Discuss the true vine and the implied thought that there is a false vine. 2. Compare the branch to the life of a child of God and its connection with Christ. 3. The Bible says, "By their fruits ye shall know them." Discuss the fruit of the the Spirit and works of the flesh. (Galatians 5:19-26). 4. How can we abide in Christ and what is the promise to those who are abiding in Him? 5. Discuss "withered branches" and why they wither, also their end.

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLES' COMMENTS

When we have a bush that is green and has healthy branches on it, we appreciate it. We know that it's doing well. When we see a branch begin to wither, we know that something is wrong. As we look closer, we might see some foreign objects on it, or it might have been broken from the main stem. If it is a bush or vine which we prize highly, it makes us feel sad to see it withering.

We rejoice when we know that a soul has been born again. We thank God for the fruit that we see him produce. He no longer seeks the ways of the world nor partakes of his former habits. He walks in the light and loves to listen to the Word of God and be in services. He is eager to do something for his Lord and Saviour who died on the cross, taking his punishment for sin so he can enter heaven. Time passes

on and again we look at the life of that soul who was so gloriously saved and changed. He has slackened in his prayer life and isn't so attentive when the Word goes forth. He lets prayer meeting pass and is without a testimony. He seems to have lost his burden to work for God. What has happened? If we check closely we might find that he has not gone on to perfection, or, sanctification. The Word went forth and he was not willing to consecrate his all to God. He did not seek for the Holy Spirit to fill his heart and cleanse him of that inherited sin that passed on all mankind from the fall of Adam. He was not willing to let God purge him and cleanse him. He has begun to wither. He murmurs when the pruning-knife of trial, affliction, etc., cuts deeply. In his weakened state, some false prophet might come along and he will fall for some false doctrine and be led astray, or be overcome through temptation. Oh, how sad! He has become a withered branch. He has lost contact with the vine, Jesus Christ. He can't draw strength from Him, therefore, he can't live a life acceptable in God's sight. He is cut off. What happens to those who wither and die? They are cast into the fires of hell, just as withered branches from the plants that are growing in the earth are gathered and burned. Oh, dear ones, be sure that this doesn't happen to you. Abide in Christ, let Him purge you and cause you to bring forth much fruit. —M. Miles

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

"For without me ye can do nothing." Here is the essence of the entire lesson, and a fundamental truth that is applicable to every life. Any life can accomplish works, whether the individual be saved or unsaved; therefore, it is a mistake to accept effort expended, or even goals accomplished as a gauge to measure spirituality. The Scripture plainly teaches us that there is much labor being done in the earth with which He has nothing to do. Read the twenty-third chapter of St. Matthew. May God help us to realize and accept the fact that everything that comes along quoting Scripture and claiming God's support is not the work of the Lord! Jesus has but one vineyard, and this is the one over which He has complete authority. The laborers who go forth to perform service for Him are first "hired" by Him. (Matt. 20:6). There are no strangers laboring in His vineyard. Work that is done void of His direction and supervision is some other than His work. Working, laboring, physical activity, are not synonymous with spirituality, nor is it indicative of the condition of the soul.

It is entirely possible to have drifted completely away from the basic fundamental teachings of the Word, to be withered

up, and dried out so far as real contact with the true vine is concerned, and yet he doing a great "work."

The man who is in constant contact with the Vine is the man who is in constant submission to the Husbandman of the vineyard. Never will the Husbandman sacrifice quality for volume. He is rigid in His requirements, and unyielding in His demands. His vineyard must be kept clean for nothing else can enter heaven. The branch attached to the vine has no potential within itself, nor will it ever acquire any! The sap that flows through it comes from the vine to which it is attached. It receives all that the vine supplies, using it to the greatest advantage, and then waits for more to come from the vine. Never does it set up machinery to manufacture some of its own. Sever a branch from the natural vine, place it in fertile soil, keep it watered, and it will then develop processes of its own to supply its need. This is a literal vine and branch, but there is no life outside of Him for the spiritual branch, for He is the way, the truth, and the life. Little wonder He declared, "Except ye abide in me ye have no life in you!"

—C. W. Wilson

HOPELESS SORROW

The following is a legend from the Mahabharat that may help us to comprehend in some measure the vast difference between "the glorious gospel of the Blessed God," and the miserable teaching of Hindu mythology. The Bible gives hope to the sorrowing and bereaved, but the Hindu Shasters send forth no ray of light into the darkness. "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" are words of comfort that every believer in Jesus knows; but the idolaters of India have no such source of consolation. Their sorrow is without hope, as the translation here given will show:—

Bosheesto was a sage. Wild with grief at the news of his sons' death, he determined to destroy himself. He threw himself from the top of the North Pole, but fell upon the peaks of the hills below as upon piles of cotton wool. Then he made a great fire in the forest and leaped into it; but though it flared up well it did not consume him. Indeed, it rather refreshed him. Still sorrowing, he bound a large stone upon his neck and tumbled into the sea; but was cast up on the shore again by the waves. Returning to his hermitage, and seeing it without his sons, he went forth again. This time he saw a great river, the strong current of which was carrying along fallen trees and reeds. The sorrowing sage resolved once more to drown himself, and, tying his hands together, leaped into the

stream. But the rope was broken, and the water cast the loosened hermit on the shore again. No power on earth could end his sorrow or his life. Though an ascetic and a hermit, he had no ray of hope concerning the departed, or comfort for his own troubled spirit. All Hindus are thus hopeless in sorrow and;

"Can we, whose souls are lighted
With wisdom from on high,
Can we, to men benighted,
The lamp of life deny?"

No, but we will preach to them "our Saviour, Jesus Christ, who abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel." "This is the true God, and eternal life."

October 8, 1972

THE WORLD HATES CHRIST'S DISCIPLES

John 15:13, 14, 19, 20; 16:2; Matt. 7:15-17; Romans 1:29-32

John 15:13 Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.

14 Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.

19 If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.

20 Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also.

John 16:2 They shall put you out of the synagogues: yea, the time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service.

Matthew 7:15 Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.

16 Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?

17 Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit.

Rom. 1:29 (Paul writes) Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, malicious-

ness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers,

30 Backbiters, haters of God, spiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents,

31 Without understanding, covenant breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful:

32 Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.

Memory Verse: Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. John 15:14.

Central Thought: Christ foretold that in this world, hatred and persecution would come to all those who love Him and have partaken of His Spirit.

Word Definitions: The term "world" in the Scriptures has several meanings: (1) "The world" means the earth, or the material world; the heavens and the universe; (2) the inhabitants of the world, without any reference to their character; (3) the inhabitants of the world, viewed from the moral point of view. In this view, it is called the "present evil world." (Galatians 1:4). Friend means "one attached to another by esteem, respect and affection; an intimate." (Webster's Dic.) Friendship is a union of our finest feelings; a binding of hearts; a sympathy between two souls; trust, response, a support of each other, love and a refuge in time of trouble. Persecute means, "to pursue in a manner to injure; specifically, to cause to suffer because of belief, especially religious belief; to afflict, harass, or annoy with urgent attacks." (Webster's Dictionary).

LESSON BACKGROUND

Jesus loved His disciples, as well as He loves us. He did not want them to be dismayed if, because of their love for Him, the world or the people hated them. Jesus wanted to prepare them for His going away and make them know that just as He had been hated and mistreated, they would be also. To be forewarned is to be forearmed.

False prophets, (Catholicism, Communism, false religion, etc.) will be, and have been, the saints' greatest persecutors. By their fruits you will know them. Yet those in the world will persecute you because their deeds are evil and yours are righteous. In our lesson we have a number of the fruits of those who are corrupt or have not yielded to the Spirit of

God, but to the spirit of Satan. Let us examine ourselves to see if we are being tempted on any of these lines.

"The Rabbis taught that 'everyone that sheds the blood of the wicked is as he that offereth an offering.' (See Westcott)." —the Homiletic Commentary.

Lesson References: Philipians 2:6-11 (Jesus took on the flesh of man); 1 John 4:4 (can overcome the world); 1 John 4:1-4 (false prophets); Galatians 5:19-21 (works of the flesh).

QUESTIONS:

1. Tell about Christ's great love for us. 2. Why does the world hate us? 3. Tell how Christians have suffered in years past. 4. Discuss the fruits from the corrupt tree. 5. What will be our reward if we are faithful through persecutions?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLES' COMMENTS

How precious Jesus assures His disciples that He loves them and that they are His friends. He does not carelessly tell them this but He makes them know that He will prove this to them by laying down His life for them. He will take their punishment for their sins. Oh, what great love! Yes, He did it for you and me. Listen to Jesus as He states the conditions of our being His friends. He says, "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you." We surely want Him to be our friend. We need Him. Let us be careful to obey Him and keep in good standing with the Friend of friends.

After telling His disciples about His great love for them and assuring them of His being their Friend, He then warns them that it will cost them something to be His friend. They will feel the hatred of the people of the world, who are evil. The spirit of the world and the Spirit of Christ will not mix. They are opposite to each other. When we are a friend of Christ and are obeying Him, we are not of the same spirit as the world. This brings a cross and a clash. Your living right causes those who are not, to be condemned. "How can two walk together unless they agree." One says that it's all right to lie, steal, etc., and the other disagrees. This brings a break in fellowship. Just so, when one loves Jesus and seeks to please Him and the other person does not, that brings a breach. Or it might be that they just feel the Spirit of God in you and dislike it. The lesson states that they hated Christ "without a cause." These fires of hatred continued against the disciples and the early church. The flames of hatred burned in all the martyrdoms and persecutions of the true followers of Christ from the early church to the church of

today — sometimes openly and sometimes in many covered, subtle ways. But thank God for the Comforter that comforts and sustains us. We can safely rely upon the Friend of all friends. He will never leave us, nor forsake us. —M. Miles

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

We often hear it expressed that the world hates the Christ. This seems at first a little hard to understand. Why would anyone, either now or then, hate someone who did no man any harm, who, in fact, went about doing good for needy humanity? It is a little hard to visualize anyone deliberately determining in his heart that he has no use whatever for this Christ, and then actively taking up a hatred against Him. No one living today ever saw the Christ in the flesh, so why would they hate someone who lived and worked almost 2,000 years ago? This just does not make sense, does it? What, then, is the root of the problem? It is simply this: It is not the personal Christ that men of wicked mind and heart hate; it is His life and everything that He stood for! He is the personification of purity, holiness, virtue, and uprightness in every way; and those qualities are in direct contrast to everything the world has to offer. That is what produces the clash. One may profess Christ, but fail to incorporate into his life the qualities of character which Christ taught, and that one will experience no conflict with the world about him. But when we embrace Christ for what He really is, and begin to manifest in our daily life, walk and conversation what He taught as becoming to those who are His sheep, we will automatically experience the frown of the world about us. Paul taught us that "the carnal mind is . . . not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." (Rom. 8:7). There is no possible way to follow a carnal nature and at the same time be in obedience to God's holy law. There is no carnality in God; therefore, He could not possibly transmit to His own a quality which He does not possess. Carnal minds reject holiness in all its forms, and we take on His form when, through His blood, we are made holy; therefore, the world hates us.

—C. W. Wilson

HIS OWN PILOT

"I once heard of a bright, blithe boy, who loved the sea, and very young he entered on a sailor's life. He rose to quick promotion, and while quite a young man he was made the master of a ship. One day a passenger spoke to him upon the voyage, and asked if he should anchor off a certain head-

land, supposing he would anchor there, and telegraph for a pilot to take the vessel into port. 'Anchor! no, not I. I mean to be in dock with the morning tide.' 'I thought, perhaps, you would signal for a pilot?' 'I am my own pilot,' was the curt reply. Intent upon reaching port by morning he took a narrow channel to save distance. Old bronzed and grey-headed seamen turned their swart faces to the sky, which boded squally weather, and shook their heads; cautious passengers went to the young captain and besought him to take the wider course, but he only laughed at their fears, and repeated his promise to be in dock by daybreak. He was ashore before daybreak; his vessel wrecked, and he was tossed upon the beach—dead! He was his own pilot. There was his blunder—fatal, suicidal blunder."

We need Jesus to pilot us through this world. The devil has all the named evils in our lesson to keep us from making that "Haven of Rest." You need not commit all the sins mentioned, but just one, and that will sink you into eternal damnation where the devil and all of his followers will be placed at the Judgment day. There is a hell and there is a heaven. Choose to let Jesus be your Pilot in life. He will guide you right. We can't be our pilot. We must take advice from God's Word, the Bible. To reject His Word means eternal destruction.

—M. Miles

October 15, 1972

CHRIST'S PRAYER

**John 16:32, 33; 17:1, 2, 4, 5, 12, 13, 19, 20, 21, 23;
18:1, 2.**

John 16:32 Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is now come, that ye shall be scattered every man to his own, and shall leave me alone: and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me.

33 These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.

John 17:1 These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come: glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee:

2 As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him.

4 I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.

5 And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.

12 While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled.

13 And now come I to thee; and these things I speak in the world, that they might have my joy fulfilled in themselves.

19 And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth.

20 Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word:

21 That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.

23 I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me.

John 18:1 When Jesus had spoken these words, he went forth with the disciples over the brook Cedron, where was a garden, into the which he entered, and his disciples.

2 And Judas also, which betrayed him, knew the place: for Jesus oftentimes resorted thither with his disciples.

Memory Verse: And all mine are thine, and thine are mine; and I am glorified in them. John 17:10.

Central Thought: Christ's prayer was first for His glorification, next for the apostles and teachers who would present the Gospel to the world, and finally for the church, whose members should, through the apostles' preaching, believe on Him.

LESSON BACKGROUND

It would be well to read the precious words of Jesus that we have in our unprinted lesson, verses 14-31 in chapter 16. He tells His disciples that "a little while, and ye shall not see Me; and again a little while, and ye shall see me, because I go unto the Father." (verse 17). Soon He would go to the

cross and be away from them for a little while, but He would appear to them for 40 days before His ascension to heaven. But in another little while—fifty days—He would again, by His Holy Spirit, come to dwell in them, in the wondrous baptism of power at Pentecost. He verified His promise, "Lo, I am with you alway." How precious is the living Spirit of Christ dwelling within the heart of the believer! He is speaking to us today, in a little while, you that are often burdened with the cares of this life and the persecutions from the world, will be at rest in the arms of our blessed Lord forever.

"A few more struggles here,
A few more conflicts o'er;
A little while of toils and tears,
And we shall weep no more."

The garden of Gethsemane was located not far from the brook Cedron or, Kidron Wady. It was a place He often retired for prayer and meditation. The owner probably was friendly to our Lord and His disciples.

Our lesson today begins with the words of the end of His discourse with His disciples, in which He forewarns them of His death and their great hour of trial.

Note that there are 26 verses in the Lord's prayer in the seventeenth chapter of John.

Lesson References: 1 John 5:4 (faith overcomes); Ephesians 3:14, 15 (kept them in the Father's name—Church of God).

QUESTIONS:

1. How can we be of good cheer when we face tribulations?
2. Who receives eternal life?
3. What did Jesus ask His Father to do for Him?
4. Through whose name did Jesus keep His own which had eternal life?
5. Did Jesus also pray for you and me?
6. How can we answer Jesus' prayer, and what makes us one?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLES' COMMENTS

Aren't we glad that our Lord did not just stop at telling us that in this world we would have tribulations, but He wanted us to take courage and be of good cheer, because we had within us His overcoming power? What force or power can overcome the mighty host of heaven? Why should we be dismayed? Because He overcame, we too can be more than conquerors.

There was a man of God who wanted the prayer of Jesus read three times to him on his deathbed. He especially loved this chapter. Jesus was facing the cross. He was leaving

those whom He loved dearly in this life. He felt the sting of rejection from those whom He longed to have love Him. He knew that the suffering that would come to His body would be severe. He poured out His heart to God, His Father, to whom He soon would be reunited. The depths of His prayer are beyond us, yet He prayed for you and me. His desire was that we be kept from the evils of this world. Verse 20 makes us know that we are those that believe on Him through the words of the disciples. He wanted a sanctified church. He wanted His people to be one, even as He and His Father are one. Unity is a must, because through that unity the world will believe that God has sent Jesus (verse 21). We can't make unity. Only by being in Christ and obeying His words will there be unity of believers. The Word and the Spirit make us one in Christ. We are taught to "come out from among them, and be ye separate." If we are to be one in Christ, we must be separate from sinners. We cannot touch the unclean thing. God calls us away. In planning our lives, choosing our pursuits, and preparing our families we should realize that to be truly Christ's, we must be separate. Jesus did not pray that we be taken out of the world, but that we be kept from the evil. We mingle with the world, help them, and love their souls, but keep a holy, spiritual separation from all sin and uncleanness.

The Bible teaches us to endeavor "to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." Ephesians 4:3. The devil hates unity. He is always trying to divide. We must put forth every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit. —M. Miles

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

"That ye shall be scattered every man to his own." This was a unique experience, never again to be found among men. These men, the apostles, had heard His teachings, witnessed His mighty works, had seen His mighty power manifested, and experienced His kindness, goodness, and generosity to all. They had come to believe in Him that He was the Christ, the Savior of the world, and that according to His word, they were pillars in that work. Now, comes the word that they were to be scattered! How strange that He would say He was telling them all these things to bring them peace! How could it possibly offer any degree of peace of mind or soul to know that the One whom they had believed and trusted was to be taken, and they left alone and scattered? Jesus had been true to them, and told them what He knew to be fact. There is nothing that can shield a man from the power of sin but the grace of God. Jesus is that grace, but before that grace could

be made available, He must be offered a sacrifice. That is what the prophet foretold when he declared that the shepherd would be smitten and the sheep scattered. (Zechariah 13:7). Christ was going to the cross, not a mediator, but a sacrifice, and in that short space of time the sheep were left helpless, as it were. Without the grace of God standing between, Satan takes souls captive at his will. That is exactly what happened then. Some point out that determination would have prevented the scattering, but if human determination were sufficient to overcome sin without the grace of God, we needed no Savior.

But thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through Christ, the sacrifice was made, the plan completed, the Christ resurrected to life again, and elevated to the right hand of the Father on high where He is continually making intercession for His saints. We will never face what the apostles faced for one offering for sin by our faithful High Priest is sufficient. There will never again be a scattering of His sheep because of a smitten shepherd, for His own Word before He left to go to His Father was, "And lo, I am with you all way even unto the end of the world." The grace of God that came by Jesus Christ will never be withdrawn from those who will walk uprightly before Him and do His will. —C. W. Wilson

A MOTHER'S PRAYER

Thomas McCrie, an eminent Scotch preacher, and the biographer of John Knox, used to tell with strong feeling an anecdote of his mother. He was not a Christian when he left home for a university education in Edinburgh. The mother's heart was troubled at parting with her boy, and, full of anxiety at the thought of temptations to be met in the city and college life, she walked with him some distance on the road to give a few parting counsels. Then climbing over a fence into a field, she led him behind a rock, where, shielded from the view of passers-by, she put her hands on his head and prayed earnestly for God's blessing on her boy, to keep him from evil and make him a noble and useful Christian man. To that prayer he always referred as changing his whole life.

October 22, 1972

THE CUP OF SUFFERING

John 18:3-11; Romans 8:32; 2 Tim. 2:12; John 18:12-15

John 18:3 Judas then, having received a band of men and officers from the chief priests and Pharisees, cometh thither with lanterns and torches and weapons.

4 Jesus therefore, knowing all things that should come upon him, went forth, and said unto them, Whom seek ye?

5 They answered him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith unto them, I am he. And Judas also, which betrayed him, stood with them.

6 As soon then as he had said unto them, I am he, they went backward, and fell to the ground.

7 Then asked he them again, Whom seek ye? And they said, Jesus of Nazareth.

8 Jesus answered, I have told you that I am he: if therefore ye seek me, let these go their way:

9 That the saying might be fulfilled, which he spake, Of them which thou gavest me have I lost none.

10 Then Simon Peter having a sword drew it, and smote the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear. The servant's name was Malchus.

11 Then said Jesus unto Peter, Put up thy sword into the sheath: the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?

Romans 8:32 (Paul says) He [God] that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?

2 Timothy 2:12 If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us:

John 18:12 Then the band and the captain and officers of the Jews took Jesus, and bound him,

13 And led him away to Annas first; for he was father-in-law to Caiaphas, which was the high priest that same year.

14 Now Caiaphas was he, which gave counsel to the Jews, that it was expedient that one man should die for the people.

15 And Simon Peter followed Jesus, and so did another disciple: that disciple was known unto the high priest,

and went in with Jesus into the palace of the high priest.

Memory Verse: For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. Hebrews 10:36.

Central Thought: Jesus became obedient to what lay before Him. He was made perfect as the incarnate Son through suffering. (Hebrews 10:7). He is an example that we should follow in His steps.

Word Definition: "A band of soldiers and officers" This probably was "a detachment or part of the Roman garrison and the officers were members of the Jewish temple guard." —Homiletic Commentary.

LESSON BACKGROUND

John seemed to write scenes omitted by the other Apostles, but does leave out the agony that our Lord suffered in the Garden of Gethsemane. Even though the disciples fell asleep, yet they heard the bitter cry, "If it be possible" or "If Thou be willing, let this cup pass from Me." Matthew 26:36-57. In that garden the final trial of the strength between the Second Adam and our cruel foe was fought. Satan easily prevailed through his lies in Eden, but in Gethsemane he met the Second Adam who was the promised seed of the woman. Truly he is the One who "strives and shall prevail." The contest was fearful as the sweat like great drops of blood fell to the ground. In the Second Adam, "the prince of darkness [Satan] found nothing," and then he sent his workers to kill the body of Jesus. Surely, he did not know that the end would be the bruising of his head, and his utter overthrow. Thank God for our Lord and Saviour that went forth to conquer, and He did conquer. There is a struggle in the Garden of Gethsemane for each of us. Through Him we can conquer.

Notice the Redeemer's self-sacrificing love when He said to His captors, "If therefore ye seek me, let these [His disciples] go their way." Truly He is our example. But note His care and love. He is the same today.

Today the deepest cry of the soul is seeking something. Men are seeking for many things but underneath it all is the desire for satisfaction and peace. To all seekers Christ answers, "I am He." He is the "Bread of life," and the "living water." "Whom seek ye?"

"They went backward and fell to the ground." We notice the mighty power Jesus had and which He used in only a small

way. "The very breath of His mouth confounded, drove back, and struck them down to the earth. Thus by the blast of God they might have perished, and by the breath of His nostrils they might have been consumed. Job 4:9." Clarke's Com. They took Him to Annas. "This man must have had great authority in his nation: (1) Because he had been a long time high priest; (2) Because he had no less than five sons who successively enjoyed the dignity of the high priesthood; and (3) Because his son-in-law, Caiaphas, was at this time in possession of that office. It is likely it was to him in that office that Christ was first brought." Clarke's Com.

We studied earlier that Caiaphas was a wicked person. But we must know that Jesus was not to receive justice, therefore it had to be that he be arraigned before such a person.

There are different opinions as to who that disciple was which followed Jesus and went into the palace with Him. I agree with most that it was John, the writer of this book.

Lesson References: Matthew 26:36-57; Luke 22:39-54; Mark 14:32-49; Matthew 27:1-10 (Judas' end).

QUESTIONS:

1. Tell what took place in the Garden of Eden, and tell about the promise of victory through the seed of the woman. 2. How did the Second Adam (Jesus Christ) come through the struggle against the devil in the Garden of Gethsemane? 3. In our Christian experience, when will we go through the Garden of Gethsemane experience? 4. Jesus told Peter to put up the sword, "for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword." Matthew 26:52. Has Jesus let us take up the sword literally again? 5. Discuss the cup that we are to drink, and the victory in the end.

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLES' COMMENTS

There is a cup for you and me to drink. It is not the same as our Lord and Saviour's, but it is one designed by Him just for each of us. Jesus acknowledged that the cup that He had to drink was given to Him from His Father. He willingly accepted it. "He was obedient unto death." If it came from His Father, then it must be just right. It must be the best for Him to further the plan that His Father had for Him. Just so, the cup that you and I will drink is just right for us, and is planned by our Father. At times the flesh might cry out, "If it be possible let this cup pass;" then as we think of it being our Father's will and "if we suffer, we shall also

reign with him," then we say, "Not my will but thy will be done." We truly love our Lord and Saviour and we want to reign with Him. There is a purpose in the cup of suffering that we drink, just as there was in the cup that Jesus drank. It might be different, but it is needed. It has been said that the martyrs were the seed of the growth of the church. Suffering causes others to take note of the great graces that God gives to His people. Suffering causes souls to be brought into the kingdom of God. There is a divine purpose in the bitter cup that is given to us. We must not doubt the divine love of the One who has given it to us. We want to be submissive as our Saviour was.

Others might try to shield us from drinking the cup. We must not let those who have well meaning desires turn us away from the purpose in life God has for us. Jesus refused to let Peter defend Him. With His touch, He healed Malchus' ear that Peter had cut off. He remedied the damage done and refused to glory in the fact that those who loved Him desired to defend Him. He said, "Thinkest thou that I cannot pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?" Matthew 26:53, 54. Can we endure the persecutions, and drink the cup so that souls can be saved? Jesus has promised to give us that sufficient grace.

—M. Miles

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Nobody likes to suffer, for it is an unpleasant, uncomfortable experience, and all would rather avoid it. Even the Savior, when confronted with prospect of suffering, made the appeal to His Father that if there be any other way, to let the cup pass by. Since no other provision was made for His only begotten Son, then it becomes obvious that no other avenue was available. What is the cause of suffering, anyway, and what part does it play in the over-all picture of mankind? Suffering is the direct and inevitable result of sin. Eve's transgression brought the penalty of suffering and sorrow in childbirth upon all women. Enmity was to exist between the woman and her seed and the serpent and his seed, and a bruising was to result. A bruise produces suffering. The man was to till the ground in sorrow all the days of his life. All who have performed physical labor know the result: sore, aching muscles, tired, weary bodies, etc., which all speak of suffering—a direct result of sin. When Jesus came on His mission to effect our salvation the plan was that He take upon Himself our sins, and even

though He did no sin, He was to become sin for us. Along with that sin which He took upon Himself came the suffering that is sin's constant companion. Suffering, sorrow, death—these are always found where sin is. Jesus would have to accept all of these in order to reach the cause, and deliver us from the power of sin.

All have sinned and come short of the glory of God, and in like manner, all will be required to suffer as a result of that sin. The suffering somehow has a part in our reigning. The result of sin does not seem to be confined to the committer of the sin. Multitudes of people are suffering as a direct result of someone else's wrong-doing, yet the penalty must be paid. Sin is ruthless in its demand for it even required the life and suffering of God's own Son! Everyone suffers for sin. Even God has suffered as a result of it, but here is a comfort and consolation for God's children—if we accept the cross and its reproach and suffering here and prove faithful, we may look forward to a time when the battle will be over, the victory won, and the suffering closed forever. But, oh, how terrible to think of the result if we refuse the cross, reject the suffering here and then pay the penalty through the endless ages of eternity! There will be weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth.

—C. W. Wilson

A WOMAN'S CONVERSATION WITH GOD

I've got to do some mental housecleaning, God. I brood, I fret, I stew. I waste all this energy carrying on little dialogues with people who have offended me, or who aren't doing what I think they should.

Just listen to my mind this morning, going a mile a minute along the paths of misery—and not just the misery of the moment. No, it's got to go plowing up the past, finding things to scold about. It doesn't just scold other people—it decides it's got to accuse and quarrel with me, too.

I'm getting sick and tired of all this, God. It gets me nowhere and it wears me out. The people I'm mentally trying to reform aren't being changed—not by an eyelash. I'm only multiplying my own distress. I don't even benefit from my tirades against myself—especially against those things of the past that can't be helped.

Now, God, I'm going to stop all this nonsense, and you're going to give me the power. Praying power. I've begun to realize that the only way to say, "Out, thoughts, out!" and to keep them out is to replace the bad ones with good.

So first I'm going to call on you for help. Then I'm going to ask a blessing—yes, a blessing—on the person I'd otherwise

battle. Then, instead of doing all this mental damage to myself, I'm going to improve myself. I'm going to learn or practice something: a poem, a psalm, a quotation, a formula, another page of French. And when I run out of things to learn or practice, I can always pray.

Thanks, God, for giving me a hand with this mental housecleaning. I expect to get a lot of learning done, and get in a lot of praying. —Selected

2 Corinthians 10:5 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.

Isaiah 26:3 Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee.

Philippians 4:7, 8 And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.

October 29, 1972

PETER'S FALL AND RESTORATION

Luke 22:31-34; John 18:16-18, 25b-27; Luke 22:61, 62;
Mark 16:7; Acts 2:32

Luke 22:31 And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat;

32 But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.

33 And he said unto him, Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into prison, and to death.

34 And he said, I tell thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day, before that thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me.

John 18:16 But Peter stood at the door [of the palace where Jesus was taken, bound] without. Then went out that other disciple, which was known unto the high priest, and spake unto her that kept the door, and brought in Peter.

17 Then saith the damsel that kept the door unto Peter, Art not thou also one of this man's disciples? He saith, I am not.

18 And the servants and officers stood there, who had made a fire of coals; for it was cold: and they warmed themselves: and Peter stood with them, and warmed himself.

25b They said therefore unto him, Art not thou also one of his disciples? He denied it, and said, I am not.

26 One of the servants of the high priest, being his kinsman whose ear Peter cut off, saith, Did not I see thee in the garden with him?

27 Peter then denied again; and immediately the cock crew.

Luke 22:61 And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice.

62 And Peter went out, and wept bitterly.

Mark 16:7 (The angel told the women at Jesus' empty tomb) But go your way, tell his disciples and Peter that he goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see him, as he said unto you.

Acts 2:32 (Later, Peter being filled with the Holy Ghost said,) This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses.

41 Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.

Memory Verse: Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour. 1 Peter 5:8.

Central Thought: God has sufficient grace so that one will not need to fail; but if he fails, he can cast himself upon the mercy of God and find pardon.

Word Definitions: Thy faith fail not: "But I have supplicated for you, that your faith may not utterly fail" which means, "fall utterly or entirely off. Peter's faith did fail, but not utterly; he did fall, but he did not fall off, apostatize, or forsake his Master and His cause finally as Judas did." When thou art converted: "Restored to a sense of your folly and sin,

and to Me and My cause—establish these thy brethren.” Clarke’s Commentary. The cock shall not crow this day: “Matthew and Mark say ‘this night’; both expressions are right, because the Jewish day, of twenty-four hours, began with the evening, and ended at the evening of the following day.” Clarke’s Com. The cock crew, which was shortly after midnight, when Peter first denied our Lord, the second crowing was between our two and three a. m. and the last may have been at three or during the space of the third Roman watch.

LESSON BACKGROUND

We are using scriptures in our lesson about Peter’s strong assertions of his determination to stand by Jesus at all costs, then his trial or temptation, and how he did fall. Yet he did not fall to the point that he lost all faith in the cause of Jesus’ mission or his love for Him. He was under strong pressure and failed to declare with boldness his mutual associations with Christ. “He that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.” We are pointing out by the scriptures Peter’s repentance, his forgiveness by Jesus who was expecting him to be with the disciples in Galilee after His resurrection, and then his boldness after being filled with the Holy Ghost. Peter’s experience should help those who falter or fail the Lord to know that God does have grace for us if we will obey Him and keep prayed up. It’s dangerous to live an up and down life. Jesus might come or call for that person when he is down. It is a reproach on the cause and not according to the scriptures.

Lesson References: (Jesus prayed for Peter) John 17:9, 11, 15; (After Peter was converted) John 21:15; (Think he standeth) 1 Corinthians 10:12; (Power after receiving the Holy Ghost) Acts 1:8.

QUESTIONS:

1. Were the disciples saved before Jesus left them and died on the cross? (John 15:3; 13:10). 2. How did Peter fall from grace or backslide? 3. Was he warming by the fire with the wrong crowd? Is this a lesson to us? 4. How did Peter know he was forgiven? 5. After Jesus was crucified and ascended, He sent the Holy Spirit. How did this affect Peter?

ADULTS’ AND YOUNG PEOPLES’ COMMENTS

We read in a past lesson about Peter sleeping when Jesus had asked him to “Pray that ye enter not into temptation.” (Luke 22:40). Peter slept, but Jesus wanted his faith not

to be destroyed through his failure to watch and pray and be prepared. Peter was so sure of himself and felt he could face all things. He did not feel keenly his dependence upon God, therefore, he did not pray. [Oh, how much he needed help to face the soldiers who came for Jesus, Judas' denial and betrayal of Jesus, Christ's rebuke when he used the sword, and his Lord and Saviour being taken to be tried.] His little world had suddenly collapsed. Jesus, who had worked mighty miracles, was being led away. Where could he turn? What should he do? Then, when he was about to be classed with Jesus, who was now bound, he denied that he knew Him or was one of His followers. Surely Peter was severely tried by Satan. But Jesus turned and looked at him. Oh, I wonder what all was in that look! Does Jesus look at us when we fail? Does He care today if we turn away from Him? Does it grieve Him? Oh, yes, He does care. He wants us to love Him and choose to let the world know that we are His disciples. That look was everything that Peter needed. It broke his heart. Big, strong Peter who was called a stone, wept bitterly. This is the only kind of repentance that counts or touches the heart of God. He passed the trial of these who were wanting to count him as one of Jesus' crowd, but he did not pass the trial of being Christ's faithful follower. It's not so important what the world or others think of us, but it is important what Jesus thinks of us. He holds our eternal destiny in His hand. We need Him in this life, in death, and in eternity. We need His comfort and blessings to face life with all of its perplexities. Peter knew this, and he cleared his soul with God through repentance.

Jesus had the angel tell the women that He forgave Peter by expecting him to meet Him in Galilee. Later, after Peter was filled with the Holy Spirit, he no longer was afraid to face those who had crucified Jesus. He boldly pointed them to Jesus. "Ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be my witnesses." —M. Miles

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

It is indeed a blessing to recognize the fact that though one may miserably fall below what the Lord had in mind, yet there is an avenue of escape. We are so remarkably human until it seems hard for us to comprehend the mind of the Lord and the way He would have us go. The writer of old reminded the Lord, Thou knowest that my frame is of but dust! It is good that God recognizes that, and takes it into consideration when He deals with us; otherwise He might be requiring of us something beyond our ability. More important

than the Lord being aware of our frailty is the need for us to be aware of our frailty. If we deem ourselves sufficient within ourselves, we feel no urge to lean upon God. When we cease to lean upon Him, we soon lose a working contact with Him, and before we hardly realize what or how it all happened, we find ourselves going our own way without the Lord. The enemy is so sly and cunning and he works with such stealth that unless one is living really close to the Lord, he will not be aware of what is happening. But, thank the Lord, when such has occurred and one finds himself caught in a snare of the enemy, all is not lost even then. That age-old, tried and true method known as humility will break the spell and afford release. If one will openly and honestly acknowledge himself at fault when he is actually guilty and plead the Lord's mercy, then He will forgive him and restore him to his former position. The secret is humility. No need to attempt to hide anything from God for He knows all, all the time, whether we acknowledge it or not. What is it folks are reluctant to face then? Why, the other people, of course! To acknowledge oneself wrong will diminish his image in the eyes of the people. But real humility will face the truth, correct the wrong completely and God will restore.

—C. W. Wilson

BIBLE FACTS—"SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES"

(John 5:39)

The learned Prince of Granada, heir to the Spanish throne, imprisoned by order of the crown for fear he should aspire to the throne, was kept in solitary confinement in the old prison at the Place of Skulls, Madrid. After thirty-three years in this living tomb, death came to his release, and the following remarkable researches taken from the Bible, and marked with an old nail on the rough walls of his cell, told how the brain sought employment through the weary years:

"In the Bible the word Lord is found 1853 times; the word Jehovah 6855 times, and the word Reverend but once, and that in the ninth verse of the 111th Psalm. The second verse of the 117th Psalm is the middle verse of the Bible. The ninth verse of the eighth chapter of Esther is the longest verse; the thirty-fifth verse, 11th chapter of St. John is the shortest. In the 107th Psalm, four verses are alike—the 8th, 15th, 21st, and 31st. Each verse of the 136th Psalm ends alike. No names or words with more than six syllables are found in the Bible. the 37th chapter of Isaiah and the 19th chapter of 2 Kings are alike. The word Girl occurs but once in the Bible, and that in the 3rd verse and 3rd chapter of Joel. There are found

in both books of the Bible, 3,586,483 letters, 773,693 words, 31,373 verses, 1179 chapters, and 66 books."

November 5, 1972

WHAT IS TRUTH?

John 18:24, 19-23, 33-40.

John 18:24 Now Annas had sent him bound unto Caiaphas the high priest.

19 The high priest then asked Jesus of his disciples, and of his doctrine.

20 Jesus answered him, I spake openly to the world; I ever taught in the synagogue, and in the temple, whither the Jews always resort; and in secret have I said nothing.

21 Why askest thou me? ask them which heard me, what I have said unto them: behold, they know what I said.

22 And when he had thus spoken, one of the officers which stood by struck Jesus with the palm of his hand, saying, Answerest thou the high priest so?

23 Jesus answered him, If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil: but if well, why smitest thou me?

33 Then Pilate [to whom Jesus was sent] entered into the judgment hall again, and called Jesus, and said unto him, Art thou the King of the Jews?

34 Jesus answered him, Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or did others tell it thee of me?

35 Pilate answered, Am I a Jew? Thine own nation and the chief priests have delivered thee unto me: what hast thou done?

36 Jesus answered, 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.

37 Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice.

38 Pilate saith unto him, What is truth? And when

he had said this, he went out again unto the Jews, and saith unto them, I find in him no fault at all.

39 But ye have a custom, that I should release unto you one at the passover: will ye therefore that I release unto you the King of the Jews?

40 Then cried they all again, saying, Not this man, but Barabbas. Now Barabbas was a robber.

Memory Verse: And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. John 8:32.

Central Thought: Amidst the thousands of jarring creeds which declare themselves to be truth we must remember Jesus' words, "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit [truth], and they are life." John 6:63.

Word Definition: "Truth" means "reality; actual existence; an established or verified fact; agreement with a standard, rule, etc: correctness." Webster's Dic. (Jesus is Truth in the sense that He is a "reality" and is in "actual existence." What He has taught is "an established or verified fact." If we live by the truth, we will be in an "agreement with a standard" that Jesus taught because we will have "Truth," which is Jesus' Spirit, living within us.)

Jesus did not receive justice or He would not have died. They sought false witnesses against Jesus so they could put Him to death. They did not seek truth. At last, someone testified that Jesus had said He would rebuild the temple in three days if someone destroyed it. Jesus would not defend Himself. It was not a legal trial. Jesus refused to answer. The high priest said to Him, "I adjure you by the living God, tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of the living God." Jesus said to him, "Thou hast said: Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven." (Matthew 26:59-65). When the high priest heard this, he rent his clothes and said that Jesus had uttered blasphemy and they did not need anymore witnesses. The Sanhedrin agreed that Jesus deserved death. (verse 66). And so it was that sentence was passed on Jesus before His trial really began.

The power of the Sanhedrin was limited. From the time Judea became a Roman province, the power to inflict death was reserved for the procurator. Sometimes the Sanhedrin did have some killed and the Roman authorities often overlooked it. The Jews at this time did not want to risk a riot

by the people and incur the wrath of Rome. So after the council had deliberated, they bound Jesus again and led Him away to Pilate. (Mark 15:1).

The Jews accused Jesus before Pilate saying He had been perverting the nation, and forbade them to give tribute to Caesar, also declared Himself to be Christ, a king. (Luke 23:2). This was a serious charge so Pilate was duty bound to investigate it.

It was during this time that Pilate's wife sent a message to her husband telling him to have nothing to do with Jesus because of a dream she had concerning Him. (Matt. 27:19). This might explain why the ruthless Pilate tried to release Jesus. Really, Pilate, the high priest, and the Jews were on trial. They were guilty and Jesus was innocent.

Releasing a prisoner was a symbolic reminder to the people of their own deliverance from Egyptian bondage. The chief priests moved upon the people to ask for Barabbas. (Mark 15:11). Peter says they did it through ignorance. (Acts 3:17). Yet Pilate tried to shift the blame.

Lesson References: (Is of truth who heareth) John 8:47; 1 Peter 1:23; 1 John 3:19. (My kingdom) Daniel 2:44; Luke 12:14; Luke 17:20, 21; 2 Corinthians 10:4.

QUESTIONS:

1. What is the dictionary definition of truth? 2. What did Jesus say was a test for those who were "of the truth"? 3. Many false teachers teach us that Jesus will set up a kingdom here on earth. How does this correspond with His statement that "my kingdom is not of this world"? (Read Luke 17:20, 21). 4. Discuss Pilate, his manner in which he conducted this trial, and his decisions, and compare his actions with people today concerning what to do with Jesus. Everyone has to face Him. 5. Why did Jesus willingly suffer all of this?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLES' COMMENTS

Pilate was a man of the world. He knew the world's business and policies. No doubt he had come across a multiplicity of opinions and saw them overthrown by another. But now he met a man that was different from any other who told him of His kingdom which was not of this world. He acknowledged to be the King of this kingdom and came into this world to bear witness of the truth. Truth? Pilate pondered about that. Then he asked the question, "What is truth?" Somehow he knew in his heart that Jesus could answer that question

and before he could think, the question in his mind came out. He knew that in this situation in which he had been placed, as being the one who was to pass sentence on Jesus, who he felt was innocent, truth was not prevailing. The Jews were clamoring for the death of an innocent Man. Yet this Man Jesus, had said that "everyone that was of the truth heareth my voice." All was a puzzle and yet Pilate did not wait for an answer. Many today know that Jesus' words are the truth, but are not willing to find out just what He does say. They turn away to something else and try to find truth from another source. They can find truth from only one source and that is from Christ. Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life; no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." John 14:6. Truth is more infinite than the firmament. To find truth, we first must know that we alone are responsible for the destiny of our soul. We must not rely on anyone else to take care of our soul. Then with humility we must seek to know where to find truth. When we find that it is in Christ, the next thing to do is to act upon that knowledge. Regardless of what changes have to be made, confession or action, we must be willing or we will not know the truth. Regardless as to what the world thinks is wrong, it must be right to follow Christ, listen to His voice, be pure, just, tender, merciful, and honest with ourselves and our fellowman. It must be right to deny ourselves and do the will of God with all our hearts, etc. "Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free."

—M.Miles

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Jesus in His prayer to His Father requested that the Father would sanctify them "through thy truth, thy Word is truth!" John in his accounting of the appearance of Christ upon the earth described it as the Word, or Truth, being made flesh and dwelling among us. Another, reflecting upon the life Christ lived, described it as one which committed no sin and where no guile was at all present. Truth is a principle and a virtue in its own right which by its very nature is fixed and established and cannot be changed. The truth was even before Christ, and He tells us that He simply bore witness of it. Now, here are some serious points to ponder: truth cannot be found where there is dishonesty, deceit, guile, or a double-tongue, for none of these can be depended upon to present absolute truth. Any of them will fluctuate loosely about with truth for they are not dedicated to its unwavering support but rather they seek to support some other cause. The true child of God is committed to support the truth as a principle in his heart and

life without wavering regardless of the cost or consequence. To begin to deny it, or side-step it, or cause it to appear something else besides what it really is, is to commit spiritual suicide. Ye cannot serve God and mammon. God is the embodiment of truth. His Son is a member of the Holy Trinity, and God denominated that Son the Word—the truth. To deny or carelessly handle the truth is to deny or carelessly handle God. He will not tolerate that. There is no way any mortal can double-tongue God and He not know it, for His Word—the truth—is a discerner of the thoughts and the intent of the heart. The words one speaks may sound good and acceptable, but if the heart is dishonest or has practised deceit, God knows it all the time. Truth will stand at the very judgment and face every man. To him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin, and the truth will reveal it.

—C. W. Wilson

SEARCHING FOR TRUTH

Several years ago, I was riding on the train to Chicago and when it came daylight I looked around me to see if there might be someone to whom I could talk to about the Lord. I began a conversation with a lady across from me and soon was sitting beside her. Our conversation soon was on the Bible. She began to tell me about some of her experiences in her search for truth. She said that she went to one group and there she searched to find truth, but did not find it. She then went to another group. They told her that she could receive a message from God if she would sit every afternoon at her desk, holding a pen in hand and wait. She said she did this. After several times of doing this, one afternoon a rumble seemed to come down the stairway and soon her hand began to write. She said that her whole body was affected. She said she had written a message but her arm was limp. She said the message was telling about something that was to come to pass. But now, her arm was limp. She didn't know what to do. She then knew that this group did not have the truth so she quit going to that place. She said one day she was in her basement washing her clothes and was praying. She said it seemed that someone told her that if she would tell her family what happened to her arm, it would be all right. So she told them, and her arm became normal again. She said she still was hungering for truth, so she went to another group. There she fell into another deception and she felt that it was right. She thought that she was to be the mother of the Messiah that was to come again into the world. She said also that she and her sister had seen people who

had a radiance about them and then they would just disappear. She said that God was taking His people, one at a time, up to glory. I tried to help her to see that this was a great deception. I tried to quote her some of Paul's teachings in the Bible and she said that she didn't believe all Paul said and that Peter even said that he said many things that were hard to understand. I then would try to quote her some of the teachings of Jesus and she said that no one could live up to that. So I saw that she was not really seeking truth. She wanted something, but was not willing to take what God said in His Word.

How sad it is today that many are just like her. They are being "tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine." They will not read God's Word and be honest before God and be willing to live according to it. They want another way. But there is only One Way and that is God's Way. When we confess our sins, humble ourselves before God, and are willing to obey His Word, then we can find peace and know the truth. If we know the truth, the truth will make us free from sin and satisfy our souls.

—M. Miles

November 12, 1972

BEHOLD THE MAN

John 19:1-11, 14, 16-18

John 19:1 Then Pilate therefore took Jesus, and scourged him.

2 And the soldiers platted a crown of thorns, and put it on his head, and they put on him a purple robe,

3 And said, Hail, King of the Jews! and they smote him with their hands.

4 Pilate therefore went forth again, and saith unto them, Behold, I bring him forth to you, that ye may know that I find no fault in him.

5 Then came Jesus forth, wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe. And Pilate saith unto them, Behold the man!

6 When the chief priests therefore and officers saw him, they cried out, saying, Crucify him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Take ye him, and crucify him: for I find no fault in him.

7 The Jews answered him, We have a law, and by our law he ought to die, because he made himself the Son of God.

8 When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he was the more afraid;

9 And went again into the judgment hall and saith unto Jesus, Whence art thou? But Jesus gave him no answer.

10 Then saith Pilate unto him, Speakest thou not unto me? knowest thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee?

11 Jesus answered, Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above: therefore he that delivered me unto thee hath the greater sin.

14 And it was the preparation of the passover, and about the sixth hour: and he saith unto the Jews, Behold your King!

16 Then delivered he him therefore unto them to be crucified. And they took Jesus, and led him away.

17 And he bearing his cross went forth into a place called the place of a skull, which is called in the Hebrew Golgotha:

18 Where they crucified him, and two other with him, on either side one, and Jesus in the midst.

Memory Verse: Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree. Gal. 3:13.

Central Thought: "The cross of Jesus on Golgotha is the meeting-point of the ages." Jesus is the "Lamb slain from the foundation of the world."

Word Definitions: Scourged; "It is probable that he was scourged in the Roman manner, which was more severe than that of the Jews. The Jews never gave more than 39 blows; for the law had absolutely forbidden a man to be abused, or his flesh cut in this chastisement, Deut. 25:3." Clarke's Com. "Jesus was handed over to the cruel executioners and rough soldiers of the guard, bound to a pillar, so that the back was bent and the skin tense. The blows were inflicted with switches or thongs, at the extremity of which were pieces of bone or lead. These were wielded by callous men, usually slaves. Even at the first blow blood was drawn, and ere the ten or fifteen

minutes of the punishment were ended streams of blood flowed from the lacerated and wounded frame."—Hom. Com. "By whose stripes ye were healed." 1 Peter 2:24.

Crown of Thorns — "Breaking off twigs from a thorny plant abundant about Jerusalem, they wove it . . . into a rude wreath or crown, and thrust it down over the Saviour's brow, the sharp thorns lacerating the flesh and causing great pain."—Hom. Com.

"Crucifixion properly means the act of nailing or tying to a cross. The cross was made of two beams, either crossing at the top at right angles, like a T, or in the middle of their length like an X. There was besides a piece on the center of the transverse beam, to which the accusation or statement of the crime of the culprit was attached, and a piece of wood which projected from the middle, on which the person sat, as on a sort of saddle: and by which the whole body was supported. This punishment was the most dreadful of all others, both for the shame and pain of it: and so scandalous, that it was inflicted as the last mark of detestation, upon the vilest of the people. It was the punishment of robbers and murderers, provided they were slaves; but if they were free, it was thought too infamous a punishment for such, let their crimes be what they might.

"The body of the criminal was fastened to the upright beam by nailing or tying the feet to it, and on the transverse piece by nailing and sometimes tying the hands to it. As the hands and feet are the grand instruments of motion, they are provided with a greater quantity of nerves; and the nerves in those places, especially the hands, are peculiarly sensitive. Now as the nerves are the instruments of all sensation or feeling, wounds in the parts where they abound, must be peculiarly painful; especially when inflicted with such rude instruments as large nails, forced through the places by the violence of a hammer; thus tearing asunder the nervous fibrillae, delicate tendons, and small bones of those parts. This punishment will appear dreadful enough, when it is considered, that the person was permitted to hang (the whole weight of his body being borne up by his nailed hands and the projecting piece which passed between the thighs) till he perished through agony and lack of food. Some, we are informed, have lived three whole days in this state. It is true that, in some cases, there was a kind of mercy shown to the sufferer, which will appear sufficiently horrid, when it is known that it consisted in breaking the bones of their legs and thighs to pieces with a large hammer, in order to put them the sooner out of

pain! Such a coup de grace as this, could only spring from those tender mercies of the wicked, which God represents as cruelty itself. Some were permitted to hang on the cross, till eaten up by birds of prey, which often began to tear them before life was extinct."—Clarke Com.

LESSON BACKGROUND

We notice that Jesus' crucifixion was "about the sixth hour." We are sure that the sorrows they faced would not give thought to looking at the sun-dial or clepsydra to note the exact hour. This would be toward noon on Friday when Jesus was lifted to the cross. All the evangelists but John say that the darkness lasted from the sixth to the ninth hour, i. e. twelve to three o'clock.

Golgotha taken from the Hebrew which means, "a skull." There probably were many skulls around from others who had been crucified.

It seems that Jesus bore His cross part way but Clarke's Commentary tells us that Simon, the Cyrene, was obliged to "assist Christ, by bearing a part of it." Matthew says that Simon was "compelled to bear his cross." Again in such a time and crowd there could be seen only part of the actions.

At this time, the Jews were preparing to kill the paschal lamb. The lamb under the old law was a type of Christ who was to die as a sacrifice for our sins. The Jews did not recognize the true Lamb of God who was being sacrificed.

Pilate was a ruthless man. Luke 13:1 states that Pilate slew some in the temple as they were offering sacrifices.

Luke records that Pilate sent Jesus to Herod to be judged but after questioning, Herod sent Him back to Pilate. Pilate had to face Jesus.

Lesson References Isaiah 53:1-12 (prophecy of Jesus' death).

QUESTIONS:

1. In beholding the Man, Jesus, what does it mean to you? One has asked, "What have I done for Thee?" after beholding the Man.
2. What does scourging mean, and what did Jesus suffer it for?
3. Tell about the sufferings of crucifixion.
4. If we belong to Christ, does anyone or anything have any power against us "except it be given . . . from above"?
5. Will Pilate be among those who will see Jesus coming in the clouds with power? How was Pilate on trial rather than Jesus?
6. Why did Jesus die on the cross?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLES' COMMENTS

Pilate did not know all that he said that day when he said, "Behold the man!" Pilate, the Jews, chief priests, and the Sanhedrin may have thought they were the judges on that memorable occasion, but really their Judge stood before them. He was meek, lowly, and bruised, yet He was their Judge. Pilate found that it was hard to deal with such a man. I am sure he could not look Him straight in the eye. No doubt he felt the power of some other force coming from this Man that no other man who came before him had. He knew it was the truth when Jesus spoke those memorable words, "Thou couldest have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above." This shook him through and through. Pilate sought in a greater way to find a way to free Jesus. He wanted to get Him off his hands. In his distress, he cried out, "What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ?" When the mob cried, "Crucify Him," he called for water. He washed his hands before all of them. He said, "I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see ye to it." But it takes more than water to wash away sins. Pilate was in trouble. "Behold the man" standing there looking at all of them. Here stands the holy, divine, Son of God. Not only was this holy Man the Son of man, but the Son of God. He is the spiritual Adam, representative of humanity; the God-man who, in oneness with men, willingly submitted to endure suffering and by His sacrifices of Himself brought in for them eternal salvation. Jesus was the holiest and best man that earth has seen; He is "Emmanuel, God with us." It seems that a glimmering of this truth visited Pilate. This made him dread to deliver up Jesus to the Jews for them to crucify.

Today we want to "behold the Man." What does He mean to us? We had sinned. Sin has to be punished. Jesus took our punishment. May God melt our hearts into humble submission to Him is my prayer. Oh, for more self-sacrificing service and a deeper, lively gratitude in our hearts. "Even Christ pleased not Himself." Let that unspeakable love manifested from that Man move us to a deeper consecration.

—M. Miles

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

No man can behold the Christ and deny that he has ever seen God. Jesus taught the disciples that if they had known Him, then they had known the Father, or, in other words, He was just like His heavenly Father! If that be true with the disciples, then it would of necessity be true with all men for

they were no different from the rest. Only Jesus was different. He was the only begotten of the Father; the only One conceived of the Holy Ghost; the only One full of grace and truth; the only One in whom the Father was well pleased and yet aside from all that, the only One able or fit to become the propitiation for our sins! It seems almost a little ironic that the deepest smudge and blight of humanity would require the very best that heaven had to offer to effect its correction!

Little wonder, then, that Pilate hardly knew what to do with the Christ. The reason he could find no fault in Him was because there was none to find. He was baffled to explain this relentless clamoring of the Jews for the death of this innocent man, and he was reluctant to comply with their wishes. There is no question but that he recognized in Christ a man out of the ordinary and One who merited greater esteem and honor from the people than He was getting. Moreover, the people refused to allow him to bestow upon the Man the recognition that he felt was due Him.

But this was just the beginning! Over and over again in millions of cases down through the ages, individuals have found the Christ on their hands with some disposal to be made of His presence, and all too often the appeal of the crowd and the whim of the multitude has done its work and the Christ is put to death in their hearts and lives.

Strait is the gate and narrow the way that leads to life and few there be that find it, but wide is the gate and broad the way that leadeth to destruction and many there be that go in thereat.

—C. W. Wilson

November 19, 1972

"IT IS FINISHED"

John 19:19, 25-34, 38-42

John 19:19 And Pilate wrote a title, and put it on the cross. And the writing was, JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS.

25 Now there stood by the cross of Jesus his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalene.

26 When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by, whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son!

27 Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother!
And from that hour that disciple took her unto his own home.

28 After this, Jesus knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst.

29 Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar: and they filled a sponge with vinegar, and put it upon hyssop, and put it to his mouth.

30 When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.

31 The Jews therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the sabbath day, (for that sabbath day was an high day,) besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away.

32 Then came the soldiers, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with him.

33 But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs:

34 But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water.

38 And after this Joseph of Arimathaea, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews, besought Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus: and Pilate gave him leave. He came therefore, and took the body of Jesus.

39 And there came also Nicodemus, which at the first came to Jesus by night, and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pound weight.

40 Then took they the body of Jesus, and wound it in linen clothes with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury.

41 Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden; and in the garden a new sepulchre, wherein was never man yet laid.

42 There laid they Jesus therefore because of the Jews' preparation day; for the sepulchre was nigh at hand.

Memory Verse: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. Luke 24:47.

Central Thought: Since our sins are horrible in God's sight, Jesus had to die a horrible death to complete the plan of God and satisfy His demands for justice.

Word Definitions: "Vinegar" "This was that tart, small wine which we are assured was the common drink of the Roman soldiers." Clarke's Com. The prophecy concerning this is written in Psalms 69:21. (It is sad that He was denied even a cold drink in His suffering.) Woman "conveys no idea of disrespect, nor of unconcern." "The disciple" meant John. "It is probable that because of the keeping of the blessed Virgin was entrusted to John that he was the only disciple of our Lord who died a natural death. It is likely that Joseph was dead previously to this." Clarke's Commentary.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Many of the Jews passed by the place of the crucifixion and read the title above the cross which was written in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin. The Jews wanted Pilate to write that Jesus said He was King of the Jews, but Pilate replied, "What I have written, I have written." He would not change it. This was the sentence pronounced against our Lord.

"So it appears that there were four soldiers employed in nailing Him to and rearing up the cross." Our Lord's garments were divided into four parts. The Scripture was fulfilled, "They parted my raiment among them, and for my vesture they did cast lots. These things therefore the soldiers did." (verse 24; reference, Psalms 22:18.)

Another part of our unprinted lesson says that John saw these things done and he bares record that they were true so we might believe. In referring to His legs not being broken, verse 36 in our unprinted lesson portion says the Scripture was fulfilled, "A bone of him shall not be broken." (Psa. 34:20).

"The day before the sabbath [is] what we would call Friday evening. As the law of Moses had ordered that no criminal should continue hanging on a tree . . . till the setting of the sun, Joseph of Arimathaea, fearing that the body of our Lord might be taken down and thrown into the common grave with the two robbers, came and earnestly entreated Pilate to deliver it to him, that he might bury it in his own new tomb." Clarke's Commentary.

"Every Sabbath had a preparation which began at the ninth hour [that is, three o'clock] the preceding evening." It was around this time that our Lord expired on the cross. Before He cried out, "My God why hast thou forsaken me?"

It seems that God could not look upon His Son's sufferings and turned His head. When it was borne sufficiently, God took Him out of the body and His sufferings. (God will do the same for us.) The veil of the temple was rent in twain. All now have access through Christ to the throne of grace. Matthew 27:46, 51.

Lesson References: This same account can be read in Matthew 27:37-55; Mark 15:25-39; Luke 23:38-56. Prophecy of Jesus' death etc. is recorded in part in Isaiah 53:8-12. ("He made his grave with the rich in his death" and "he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of man.")

QUESTIONS:

1. Discuss the example of Jesus seeing that His mother was cared for after His death. 2. What did Jesus mean when it says that He knew "now all things were accomplished"? 3. Tell some of the things that were finished for us on the cross by the death of Jesus. 4. When did we hear of Nicodemus before this time? 5. What Scriptures were fulfilled in the Old Testament concerning the death and burial of Jesus?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLES' COMMENTS

There was a plan by the Trinity of a creation of mankind. God wanted someone that He could delight in and take special glory in. But God knew that the devil would oppose His plan. He would try to hinder mankind in loving and delighting in God where there could be a mutual communion and fellowship. Man would sin and would need a Saviour. Jesus Christ, the Son of God would be that Saviour and bring mankind back into fellowship with God. He would be a sacrifice for their sins so mankind could come into the presence of a holy God. Therefore Jesus Christ was a "Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." (Rev. 13:8).

When Adam and Eve promised, God promised them that the seed of the woman would bruise Satan's head. In other words, Jesus would be born of a virgin and God would be His Father. This would be the Saviour's way of entrance into the world, so He could break the power of Satan from those who wanted to be children of God and enjoy communion with the God of all creation. ("For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil." 1 John 3:8b.)

Jesus lived here in this world. "Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: who when he was reviled, reviled

not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously; Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness; by whose stripes ye were healed." 1 Peter 2:22, 24. Before He went to the cross, He taught others the way to live acceptably in God's sight and to be ready to meet God with a pure heart when death overtook them. Through the words of the disciples we today know about God's way. "That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you that ye also may have fellowship with us and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ." 1 John 1:3.

They took Jesus and put Him on the cross. Through His death the plan of salvation was completed. He was the perfect sacrifice without sin. Through His blood we are saved. Through His blood we are sanctified. (Heb. 13:12). His mission here on earth was completed. No wonder, in His agony of bearing the sins of the whole world, He cried out, "It is finished." Praise our loving Saviour for His great love to you and me! Without His sacrifice we would still be in our sins.

Some day, when our life's work is over, we, too, can say with Christ, "It is finished." We have finished the race set before us and have gained the victory. We have suffered with Christ, therefore, we will reign with Him. —M. Miles

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

I wonder if we as humans realize the impact of the three words, "It is finished"? Men have grasped it with great fervor and began with zeal to herald it to the world at large that "it is finished"! The plan of salvation is now complete; the Christ has appeared and the work is done, and yet the world goes on plunging headlong deeper and deeper into the pit of sin. What was actually finished anyway? Was the full and complete restoration of humanity effected and all sin abolished? Christ died for sin, we know. No, sad but true, everything for man's redemption was not complete. What was finished was God's part of the plan. His offering of a perfect sacrifice, the giving of His own Son to be offered for sins, the opening of the way for men to enter in had taken place. There was nothing more that needed to be done of a divine nature that hadn't been provided for. God's part of the plan of salvation was complete and established and forever settled in heaven. It was finished. All men can readily grasp that and many accept it, but here is where the stumbling comes. The work that was done then is still done today—nothing more added to

it, nothing taken from it, but know this: With nothing more than that, not a single individual would be saved! When God prepared His perfect sacrifice and sent Him into the world and offered Him on the cross for man's salvation, He did everything possible that He could do without violating the will of free moral agents. God would not force men to bow and accept His salvation. He and His Son had done their part and opened salvation to the whole world and invited whosoever will, let him come and take of the water of life freely. If no one willed to be saved, Christ would have died in vain! God's performing of His part put the responsibility of man's salvation fully and squarely upon the shoulders of the men it sought to save. No wonder the prophet of old looked down through the ages of time and exclaimed, "Multitudes, multitudes in the valley of decision!" The plan of salvation that Jesus finished makes the eternal destiny of every normal individual a direct result of his own decision. "Choose ye this day whom ye will serve!" —C. W. Wilson

SALVATION COMES TO THE DANCE HALL

While passing over the Cumberland Mountains in the early 1800's, the preacher was compelled to stop over night at a house where there was to be a dance. Many of the people had never heard a sermon. The minister (Peter Cartwright) sat in one corner of the room watching the dance. He made up his mind to stay over next day (Sunday) and preach to the people. "I had hardly settled this point in my mind," says he, "when a beautiful ruddy young lady walked very gracefully up to me, dropped a handsome courtesy, and pleasantly, with winning smiles, invited me out to take a dance with her. I can hardly describe my thoughts or feelings on that occasion. However, in a moment I resolved on a desperate experiment. I rose as gracefully as I could; I will not say with some emotion, but with many emotions. The young lady moved to my right side; I grasped her right hand with my right hand, while she leaned her left arm on mine. In this position we walked on the floor. The whole company seemed pleased at this act of politeness in the young lady, shown to a stranger. The colored man, who was the fiddler, began to put his fiddle in the best order. I then spoke to the fiddler to hold a moment, and added that for several years I had not undertaken any matter of importance without first asking the blessing of God upon it, and I desired now to ask the blessing of God upon this beautiful young lady and the whole company, that had shown such an act of politeness to a total stranger.

"Here I grasped the young lady's hand tightly, and said, 'Let us all kneel down and pray,' and then instantly dropped on my knees, and commenced praying with all the power of soul and body that I could command. The young lady tried to get loose from me, but I held her tight. Presently she fell on her knees. Some of the company kneeled, some stood, some fled, some sat still, all looked curious. The fiddler ran off into the kitchen, saying, 'Lord, a marcy, what d matter? what is dat mean?'"

"While I prayed, some wept, and wept out loud, and some cried for mercy. I rose from my knees and commenced an exhortation, after which I sang a hymn. The young lady who invited me on the floor lay prostrate, crying for mercy. I exhorted again, I sang and prayed nearly all night. About fifteen of that company professed religion, and our meeting lasted next day and next night, and as many more were powerfully converted. Later I sent them a preacher."

November 26, 1972

MARY SEEKS AND FINDS JESUS

John 20:1-4, 6, 8-18

John 20:1 The first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulchre.

2 Then she runneth, and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple, whom Jesus loved, and saith unto them, They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him.

3 Peter therefore went forth, and that other disciple, and came to the sepulchre.

4 So they ran both together; and the other disciple did outrun Peter, and came first to the sepulchre.

6 Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and went into the sepulchre, and seeth the linen clothes lie.

8 Then went in also that other disciple, which came first to the sepulchre, and he saw, and believed.

9 For as yet they knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead.

10 Then the disciples went away again unto their own home.

11 But Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping: and as she wept, she stooped down, and looked into the sepulchre,

12 And seeth two angels in white sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain.

13 And they say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him.

14 And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus.

15 Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? she, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away.

16 Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni; which is to say, Master.

17 Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and to my God and your God.

18 Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that he had spoken these things unto her.

Memory Verse: He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. Matt. 28:6.

Central Thought: Those who have risen with Christ should seek things above the level of that tomb which with Him and through Him, they have left behind.

Word Definitions: Napkin is a cloth tied about the chin. Touch me not, or, cling to me not. First day of the week is Sunday.

LESSON BACKGROUND

The Jewish leaders remembered the words of Jesus that He would rise again so they asked Pilate to make sure that no one stole the body of Christ. Pilate told them to put a guard of soldiers around the tomb and make it secure. The soldiers put the Roman seal on the tomb of Jesus. This meant

that anyone who broke that seal would be punished with death. God was not afraid of man's seal. We find that it was broken and Jesus came forth. The soldiers fell down as dead men around that tomb. When the soldiers recovered, they went into the city and told the elders all that had happened. The elders gave them large sums of money to tell that His disciples came by night and stole Jesus away while they slept. They assured the soldiers that if the governor heard about it that they would help them out of their problems. So they took the money and told the lie. Matthew 28:11-15.

Lesson References: Jesus' resurrection is recorded in: Luke 24:1-12; Mark 16:1-11; Matthew 28:1-10. Jesus as the firstfruits of the resurrection: 1 Corinthians 15: 21-24. The dead will arise: 1 Thess. 4:13-18. No time between His appearing, the resurrection of the dead, and the judgment: 2 Tim. 1:1.

QUESTIONS:

1. Why is the day that we studied about one of the greatest days the world has known? 2. What other eye-witnesses do we have of this wonderful resurrection than is mentioned in our lesson? 3. What blessing did the disciples miss by leaving the tomb and going on back to their homes? 4. Does seeking Christ for a blessing bring results? What blessing did Mary receive? 5. Jesus told the converted thief on the cross beside Him, "Today, thou shalt be with me in paradise." Luke 23:43. In our lesson He said He would ascend to His Father before He appeared to the disciples. How long had He been in paradise, the waiting place of the dead?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLES' COMMENTS

With the breaking of the dawn on that early Sunday morning a new day began. Not only a new day in this world, but a new day for humanity. It was a new spiritual day. Neither the seal nor the heavy stone could hold our Lord and Saviour in that tomb. God shook the ground with an earthquake and Jesus came forth triumphantly. He arose with power over all the powers of darkness. The devil had to stand back. The men that he worked through quaked and looked on with awe at the things that God had done. Jesus had voluntarily laid down His life and He had power to take it again. John 10:18. His cry, "It is finished" could not be fully understood until He arose from the grave. This brought hope to humanity. It brought reconciliation and peace of mankind to God. What a glorious day that was! Today we rejoice in a risen Saviour.

Today we have hope in our souls that because He arose we too will arise from the grave.

What a touching record the Apostle John gives us of Mary Magdalene. She is last at the cross and first at the tomb. Her great love for Jesus is manifested by her lingering at the tomb. She was seeking for Him. No one seeks for Christ with tears and in earnestness without finding Him. She, in her grief, talks to the angels as if they were her common associates. She looks into the tomb and then turns wildly around looking through the garden for Jesus. Our compassionate Saviour could not leave Mary in such a state, but He had to speak to her. Often we try to imagine what tone He used in speaking her name. Through that name the memory of by gone days brought back to her the loving tone that He used. She fell at His feet and cried out, "Rabboni!" She at last found her Lord and Saviour. This was the first resurrection cry. Just so, when a soul finds Christ, he is resurrected from a dead state of sin into a new creature. He can then call the Lord and Saviour, his Master. He wants to serve Him. We are heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ. Jesus told Mary to go and tell "my brethren" that He had ascended to His Father. This was the greatest message the world had ever heard.

—M. Miles

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Part of the "finishing" that took place on the cross was the mortal aspect of the Saviour. From then on, He would be divine and able to perform things that are not possible to the flesh. He could appear and disappear at will. He was able to ascend directly into the presence of His Father and abide there while no flesh can behold God and live. His stature changed. He was no longer a warrior, but a conqueror. While in the flesh He constantly contended with the forces of evil, resisting and reproving, rebuking and refusing, but now He had conquered death, hell, and the grave and was now the Master over them all. It is through this power that we are made more than conquerors through Him that loved us. We conquer by faith in Him that we, too, can enter into the conquest He made for us. If He had never conquered, we could have no hope of being able to conquer.

As insensitive as they of old seemed to be at being able to perceive the deep things of the Lord, there is reasonable doubt as to whether or not the attraction to the burial site was much more than a sentimental attachment to one who was loved and appreciated. Their astonishment at His being

alive and gone convinces that they certainly did not anticipate nor expect His resurrection. But be that as it may, Jesus used the circumstances of the moment to present Himself arisen and to build within the hearts of those concerned an assurance that He was indeed alive forevermore. This is a conviction that is necessary yet today for if we do not believe Him to be arisen and alive, then we will have no faith to call upon Him for help in our need. If we believe Him dead, then it would be useless to cry unto Him for there is no response from the dead. If we will accept Him as risen and alive, then He is able to become a savor of life unto life to us. That will allow us to also enter into that experience. If we live with Him, we shall also reign with Him. —C. W. Wilson

LET US BE THANKFUL

How many are God's blessings?
Count the leaves on every tree,
Add the grains of sand that glisten
On the shore beside the sea!

Count each bud and count each blossom,
Count each bird that's winging by,
Count every tender blade of green
And each star in the sky!

Add each shining crystal raindrop,
Add each falling flake of snow,
Count each cloud that hovers over
The world that lies below!

Count each day, each hour, each minute
In the vast expanse of Time,
Count each mighty towering mountain,
Snow-capped, awesome and sublime!

Add the Height and Depth of Heaven,
Yet the sum will only be
A mere beginning, though you count
Through all eternity!

—Selected

(NOTICE: Have you ordered your Bible Lessons for the first quarter of 1973, the first Sunday of which is on January 7th?)

December 3, 1972

BE NOT FAITHLESS, BUT BELIEVING

John 20:19-31

John 20:19 Then the same [resurrection] day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you.

20 And when he had so said, he shewed unto them his hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord.

21 Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you.

22 And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost:

23 Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained.

24 But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came.

25 The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe.

26 And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you.

27 Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing.

28 And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God.

29 Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed.

30 And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book:

31 But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.

Memory Verse: Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed. John 20:29.

Central Thought: Those who through faith have learned to rest on Jesus who is the same yesterday, etc. (Hebrews 13:8) have an unmovable foundation on which to build life's activities.

Word Definitions: Remit means "to send back, forgive or pardon." Retain means, "to hold or keep."

LESSON BACKGROUND

We notice that John did not feel it necessary to go over ground already covered in the other three books which gave the accounts of Jesus. He needed not to tell about Christ's ascension as a resurrection implied an ascension. The great truths he presented was to lead those who received them to faith and those who already believed to a deeper trust, a closer, and abiding union with Christ. John was an eye-witness of all that was done.

Notice that the disciples began to meet together on the first day of the week which was Sunday. On what other day could we honor our Lord more than meeting together in memory of His resurrection?

Lesson References: Keys of the kingdom: Matthew 16:19. Walk by faith: 2 Corinthians 5:7. Things not seen are eternal: 2 Corinthians 4:18. Jesus in our midst: Matt. 18:20; Hebrews 10:25. Thomas missed meeting, and a blessing: Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 16:2.

QUESTIONS:

1. Should we close the door of our heart and mind to the perplexity of the problems etc., or close it to God? 2. When Jesus comes in, what does He bring with Him? 3. Discuss why the disciples were fearful, doubting, and perplexed. 4. Would Thomas have seen the Lord if his faithlessness had kept him away completely from the other disciples? Notice he was not there the first Sunday and missed that blessing. (Read Matt. 18:20.) 5. What commission did Jesus give to the disciples?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLES' COMMENTS

The disciples met together on Sunday evening, but Thomas was not there. The doors were closed. It was at the close

of the first Resurrection day, but gladness had found its entrance into but a few hearts. There was the fear of the Jews in their hearts. There were doubts and some were half-believing, half-persuaded, some were believing, but all were sorrowful and troubled as they remembered how most of them forsook their Lord, and one even denied Him. They wondered what might befall them. Are not some like this at times? God wants to bless them but He has to push through closed doors to get to their hearts and minds. Doubts and fears close Christ out many times, even though He has plainly told us we have to fight for faith. But, oh, how tender our Lord is! How loving and kind! He knows us altogether. Jesus went right through the closed doors. The first thing He said was, "Peace be unto you." Their groping for assurance was over. Their fears fled like the darkness with the coming of light. Among them and right in their presence the Life Himself now appeared. The mists of doubts disappeared and they were glad. They rejoiced, for now the mystery of the cross and the grave was becoming clearer to them. Even though they had forsaken Him in their distress and confusion, He had not forsaken them. When they got in a place of quietness and closed the door to the outside, He came to them.

Jesus gave the disciples anew their mission in the world. He said, "So send I you." He also equipped them by breathing on them and giving them power to receive the Holy Ghost. And then He gave them authority. To those who would receive the Word of God they could pray for them and their sins would be forgiven. But if people rejected Christ and His name, their sins would be retained. They were given the gift of discernment.

Thomas was not there. It seems his faith was almost gone, but later he did decide to meet with the disciples on the next Sunday evening. No doubt he shook his head and said that a man, crucified and buried, could not come alive and arise. But because he met with the disciples we know that his faith had not completely fled. Jesus dealt with him so tenderly. When Thomas saw Him, he said, "My Lord and my God." But Jesus said that we are blessed because we believe and yet see not with our natural eyes. —M. Miles

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Here is a basic, fundamental rule that cannot be overlooked without disaster. Man cannot possibly believe or have complete faith in anything until he is thoroughly convinced of its merit and reliability. This is one thing that the Lord is faith-

ful to do for every man just as He did for Thomas of old. It was after He had presented Thomas with overwhelming evidence that He instructed him to be not faithless but believing. Attempting to maintain faith in any thing that one is not sure of is a dangerous business. That is building without a foundation, and when overwhelming storms that assail begin to strike, those doubts wash out and leave nothing solid to stand on. On the other hand, when the Lord has thoroughly convinced the heart on a matter, then to turn away and deny is to absolutely betray the Lord. God wants us to be convinced, thoroughly and completely, and then He commands us to be steadfast, immovable. It is not difficult to extend confidence to that life that is constant and steadfast, continually demonstrating a solid mooring in the Word of truth. But the life that is in and out, here and there, one thing one time, something else the next, up and down and constantly wavering is hard to feel very confident toward. The Word is not that way. If we do not understand, He invites us to seek and assures us that we will find. If we need an instruction, He bids us knock and it will be opened unto us. His admonition is to make our requests known unto God who giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not. Many do not believe and possess faith to become steadfast simply because they will not allow themselves to be convinced. When one is thoroughly convinced, he is then responsible to abide by that conviction. No one can prosper spiritually who fails to abide by what he knows to be right. Movements become unstable and insecure when they fail or refuse to maintain the solid doctrines and teachings of the Word. The Word advances the complete truth and the group which denies part of that is unable to convince us of all the truth. The more it denies, the less it is able to convince its converts. The more it will accept and practice, the more it will convince its practitioners. No wonder Mt. Zion is so secure, for she embraces, practices, and convinces of all truth.

—C. W. Wilson



December 10, 1972

PETER RESTORED TO APOSTLESHIP

John 21:1, 3-6, 11, 14, 15, 17-22, 25

John 21:1 After these things Jesus shewed himself again to the disciples at the sea of Tiberias; and on this wise shewed he himself.

3 Simon Peter saith unto them, I go a fishing. They say unto him, We also go with thee. They went forth, and entered into a ship immediately; and that night they caught nothing.

4 But when the morning was now come, Jesus stood on the shore: but the disciples knew not that it was Jesus.

5 Then Jesus saith unto them, Children, have ye any meat? They answered him, No.

6 And he said unto them, Cast the net on the right side of the ship, and ye shall find. They cast therefore, and now they were not able to draw it for the multitude of fishes.

11 Simon Peter went up, and drew the net to land full of great fishes, an hundred and fifty and three: and for all there were so many, yet was not the net broken.

14 This is now the third time that Jesus shewed himself to his disciples, after that he was risen from the dead.

15 So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs.

17 He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep.

18 Verily, verily, I say unto thee, when thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not.

19 This spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God. And when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, Follow me.

20 Then Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following; which also leaned on his breast at supper, and said, Lord, which is he that betrayeth thee?

21 Peter seeing him saith to Jesus, Lord, and what shall this man do?

22 Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, What is that to thee? follow thou me.

25 And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written. Amen.

Memory Verse: And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men. Matthew 4:19.

Central Thought: The test of our love for Christ will be the devotion to the duty He has laid upon us.

Word Definition: Loving God affectionately, ardently, supremely, and perfectly, would take in "Lovest thou me?"

LESSON BACKGROUND

The seven were fishing when Jesus appeared on the shore and called to them. In our unprinted portion of this chapter we read where John told Peter that it was the Lord who told them to cast their nets on the other side and they caught many fish. When Peter heard this he jumped into the water and swam to shore. The other disciples brought in the boat dragging the fishes. When they came to land they saw coals of fire with fish and bread on it. Jesus told them to "Come and dine." They all knew it was Jesus, and He served them food.

First, Jesus asked Peter, "Lovest thou me more than these?" Then he said, "Feed my lambs."

The unprinted 23rd verse tells us that the saying went abroad "among the brethren" that Jesus said that John should not die. Do reports that have been twisted go out "among the brethren" today? We notice that Jesus' words and conduct were falsely reported. We have to suffer the same as our Master did even "among our brethren." But John was clearing up this point. John said that Jesus said, "not unto him, He [John] shall not die; but, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?" I am sure that none of the disciples intentionally told an untruth. It was a misunderstanding as the seven were there and heard what was said. We are likely to misunderstand at times what has been said. Sometimes we do not listen closely enough to follow the thought that was spoken. So dear ones, let us be more forbearing with one another. If someone has misunderstood, let us accept it that way and not that they were intentionally falsely reporting something.

Lesson References: God knows all things: Romans 8:27; Psalms 7:8; 1 Samuel 16:7. Love God with all thy heart: Mark 12:30. John leaned on Jesus' breast: John 13:23-25.

QUESTIONS:

1. Discuss Peter's call from fishing, and his return. 2. What happens when we take up things again that God has told us to leave? Read Galatians 2:18. 3. Discuss Jesus' patient dealings with the disciples. 4. Peter denied Jesus three times. How was he tested, and what was he told to do? 5. Seven of the disciples were there when Jesus told Peter not to concern himself about John. What false report went out "among the brethren"? Can we misunderstand and should we be patient with others who misunderstand? 6. What is the last verse in the book of John?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLES' COMMENTS

God had called these disciples away from the fishing trade. He said for them to follow Him and He would make them "fishers of men." Now they went back to what God had called them away from. Notice the influence of Peter. He said, "I go a fishing." The others said they would go with him. When God calls us away from something, He doesn't want us to go back to it. But Peter had failed the Lord. He had denied Him three times. Even though he had been forgiven, he needed another call. When we backslide, we lose much ground and vision of God's truths. When one goes into darkness, the Bible teaches us that "great is that darkness." Jesus dealt so tenderly with Peter. No doubt as He pointed to the nets filled with the 153 fishes He said, "Lovest thou me more than these?" Don't you love Me more than fishing or doing the things for worldly gain? Didn't I call you to be fishers of men? I want you to cast your net in places of My choosing. You must cast out a net of faith expecting to catch many people for God. You must boldly cast it out even in the face of the sneers and scoffs of men of the world." After Peter was filled with the Holy Spirit, he spoke to the mixed multitude of men from every nation under heaven. Acts, chapter 2. God spoke through him and in strong faith he cast out his net, as well as others, "And the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls." Acts 2:41. That day on the seashore, Peter was reinstated as an Apostle and served God faithfully until in A. D. 64 in Rome where he was crucified with his head downward. Thus fulfilling the prophecy from Jesus that when he was old, "another would carry thee whither thou wouldest not."

We must not draw back. We might face difficult times and much opposition, but we want to press on for God. Each of us has a calling from God. There are no lazy people in the Church of God. We must be forgetful of self. Our lives must be buried in the love for God and for souls. It is a life of faith. "Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him." Hebrews 10:38.

—M. Miles

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

It seems rather a noteworthy thing that these twelve, just plain ordinary, common men like any of us, were receiving such attention from the Savior. All back through the record of God's dealing with man before, the ones He selected to bestow attention upon were chosen from youth. Think of Moses, David, Solomon, Joseph, Samson, etc., but now the appeal seems to have changed. Jesus selected His followers from the rank and file of the people and indeed this would seem to us fitting and proper for His following from then on would be from all walks of life. He did not allow them to separate themselves into special groups of social class or race or of geographic distinction, but taught them plainly that they were all brethren and were all to treat one another with that respect and consideration. He gave the Holy Ghost to all and He called forth and bestowed His gifts upon whom He saw fit, without regard for human considerations, such as nationality. The Lord was acquainted with Peter before He called him, just as He is acquainted with everyone before he gets saved. The Lord knew exactly what it would take to make Peter a vessel He could use in His vineyard, just the same as He knows what it will take to make every one of us a useful vessel. All of that was taken into consideration when He counted the cost of building His spiritual house and He concluded that after starting He would have the means to finish. He went ahead with the project. He is able to make every one of us into just exactly what He wants us to be and not only that, He is able to fashion us all together into one body that is just exactly what He wants His Body to be. He cannot use the one who will not allow himself to be fashioned.

—C. W. Wilson

BURN THE BOATS

Cortez landed on the shores of Mexico. The men were grumbling and homesick. They wanted to go home, but Cortez wanted to explore the land. He was not wanting to turn back. He ordered the boats burned.

Have you "burned the boats"? Have you cut every tie to the things of the world? Are you still holding on to something back there and when things are hard, do you intend to get into your boat and leave the shore-land where God has placed you? Oh, dear ones, burn every boat. Launch out into the unexplored field of labor where God has called you. Put your mind, soul, and heart in that work. Labor with an earnestness and with fervency of spirit. Cut every tie of the world and turn your back on every call. Set your face like a flint heavenward. Be determined to love God and please Him above everything else. Don't be like Peter; when things looked dark, he went back to his fishing. Be like the Peter who after that was filled with the Holy Spirit and boldly faced the Jews and declared unto them that they had crucified the just One. He pointed them to Jesus who could take away their sins. Peter had cut every shore line. He had burned the boats. He was determined to obey His Lord and help others to love Jesus. He did not recant even though he was put to death for his stand. Heaven will be cheap at any cost. Be encouraged to press on. Victory is yours if you will be faithful to the end.

—M. Miles

December 17, 1972

FORGIVENESS FOLLOWS CONFESSION

1 John 1:1, 5-10; 1 John 2:1, 2, 12, 14-17

1 John 1:1 That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life:

5 This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.

6 If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth:

7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

1 John 2:1 My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:

2 And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for our's only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

12 I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake.

14 I have written unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one.

15 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.

16 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.

17 And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.

Memory Verse: If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 1 John 1:9.

Central Thought: God hates sin of all kinds. He wants sins forgiven and forsaken.

Word Definitions: "Light implies every essential excellence, especially wisdom, holiness, and happiness. Darkness implies all imperfection; and principally ignorance, sinfulness and misery. Light is the purest, the most subtle, the most useful, and the most diffusive of all God's creatures; it is, therefore, a very proper emblem of the purity, perfection, and goodness of the Divine nature."—Clarke Com. Our lesson says, "God is light" and we are to "walk in the light, as he is in the light," then all those who are saved from sin and filled with the Holy Spirit "have fellowship one with another." Advocate means there is someone to plead for you. Propitiation means to satisfy, atone, render favorable, or reconcile.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Our lesson today was written by the Apostle John in 69 A.D. The Apostle re-affirms the virgin birth of Christ and that they are witnesses of His life here on earth. He declares that Christ was real and was in the fleshly body like our bodies. He felt pain as we feel pain, etc. Yet He was divine. He was the Word of Life.

"The lust of the flesh (is) sensual and impure desires which seek their gratification in women (or men), strong drink, delicious viands and the like.

"Lust of the eyes (are) inordinate desires after finery of every kind, gaudy dress, splendid houses, superb furniture, expensive equipage, trappings and decoration of all sorts.

"Pride of life (is) hunting after honour, titles and pedigrees; boastings of ancestry, family connections, great offices, honourable acquaintance, and the like."—Clarke Com.

Lesson References: Seen and handled—John 1:14; Luke 24:39. Confession—Psa. 32:5; Pro. 28:13. Eve sinned—Gen. 3:6. Christ overcomes Satan—Matt. 4:1-11.

QUESTIONS:

1. What message did John declare unto us? 2. What will bring true confession of sins? 3. If a person sins, is he in a hopeless condition? 4. How did Eve fall? 5. How did Christ overcome? 6. How are we to overcome?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLES' COMMENTS

Real godly sorrow brings salvation to the soul and a deep sense of forgiveness. Even in conviction of sins a person turns away from the things of the world. There is power given to everyone who turns to God. "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him." John 6:44. So that drawing power of God causes a person to quit the sinning business. They turn their attention toward God and godly things. When confession of sins is made, then God for Christ's sake forgives the soul and they are clear before God. We then walk in the light of God. We desire to please the Lord. We forsake sins and love not the things of the world.

Three things are listed that the devil works through to cause us to love the world. If we have those lusts ruling us, we will pass out of the knowledge of God and from communion with Him. The world will be set on fire in the end and all that are of that lust will pass away with it. The souls of lustful people will be cast into eternal fires.

In the beginning Eve was tempted to fall through these three ways. "And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food [lust of the flesh] and it was pleasant to the eyes [lust of the eyes], and a tree to be desired to make one wise [pride of life], she took of the fruit thereof." Gen. 3:6a. By her yielding to this temptation, and Adam also partaking, it plunged the whole human race into sin. Rom. 5:12. We cannot say we do not have sin for "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." Romans 3:23.

But thank God, if we "sin we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ." He was tempted through these three elements. He came forth victoriously. In Matt. 4:1-11 we read of His temptations from the devil. Christ was asked to work a miracle by turning the stone to bread to satisfy the cravings of the flesh. Then Satan would give Him all He could see if He would submit to him, and if he would tempt God he would win glory by a miraculous rescue or preservation. Thus, through the lust of the eye and pride of life He was tempted. But since Jesus overcame Satan we can overcome and be more than conquerors through Christ. —M. Miles

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The great and first truth that Jesus had to convince the people of was that they were all sinners. Jesus is the only one we know of who was never contaminated with sin. Any plan designed to effect man's salvation would, of course, require man to recognize and acknowledge himself a sinner. If we felt we had no need of salvation, then we would make no move to obtain it. But this is only the first step. Many folks will acknowledge, "Why, I'm nothing but just an old sinner," but that doesn't bring them forgiveness or salvation. No man will obtain forgiveness without confessing, but more is required than just a confession. The soul who acknowledges himself a sinner has admitted that he is in spiritual need. What is the purpose of confessing anyway? Is it to let God know what condition we are in? No, He already knows. It is an act designed to focus our attention on the acuteness of our own need.

When a man comes to the realization that he is lost and undone before a just God and that he is certainly doomed for a devil's Hell unless he effects some sort of change, this puts him in a good position to begin to repent. The man who laughingly confesses, "Why, I'm just a sinner," gives no thought to the implications involved nor feels a need for his soul. This is not heart felt confession. The honest soul who realizes his

condition and the result unless he does something about it and becomes troubled and burdened for his own need is the one who will not only confess his condition, but will proceed on and cry out for mercy and pardon for his troubled soul. That man will be blessed and the need of his soul met. His plea will be heard and his sins forgiven, for the Lord is seeking just such ones to worship Him. The man's confession started the process and according to the texts of the lesson, it resulted in his complete forgiveness of sin and a cleansing from all unrighteousness! That is indeed a joyous experience for the sin burdened, troubled soul who is seeking to be delivered.

—C. W. Wilson

LOST—BUT FOUND

Doctor Arnold, seated on top of a London bus—had slowly arrived at a horrible decision.

"There was nothing in life but pain, sorrow, sighing, and death!"

Now we all know there is nothing more natural than to grow tired. It is a friendly warning that the body is ready for rest, and that this mortal frame must not be overtaxed.

If Doctor Arnold had been tired in his body only, he would have felt refreshed now, and ready to return to his vast work, but he was tired and sick in his soul and spirit!

He had lost his early faith in the Bible, and his trust in a living Saviour.

He watched the children returning from their Sunday school with pity and envy. Then a strange incident occurred.

At the corner of a street nearby a mission chapel a little Jewish girl (perhaps six years of age) climbed into the bus. Her pretty clothes set off the beauty of her brilliant smiling face and glossy, dark curls. She climbed safely to her seat and sat contentedly smiling at everybody. She was clasping a three by four piece of cardboard in her chubby hands. She looked several times at this card and Doctor Arnold noticed the beauty of the dark, curling lashes as they swept her cheeks, while the full red lips repeated softly some words that she was evidently learning.

Suddenly, as the bus swung around a corner and met with a gale of wind, the air was rent with a piercing, agonized cry:

"Stop the bus! Stop the bus! I've lost my faith in God!"

The small Jewess was standing upon her seat, waving her hands in tragic despair, while all aboard were aroused to earnest inquiry.

"My dear!" cried an old deaf lady, trying to pull the child down to her seat, "don't you know that it's wrong and naughty

for little girls to swear? Sit down at once and behave yourself!"

"I'm not swearing!" screamed the offended child in an agony of tears. "I've lost my faith in God!"

"Whatever is the child talking about?" said the bewildered passengers.

Only Doctor Arnold had seen what had caused the cry. The dearly-prized card had blown into the air, disappearing from the child's sight.

In a second the doctor had notified the driver, and was out upon the road in search of the card. In a few minutes he returned, card in hand.

"Oh, I'm so happy! I'm so happy!" shouted the little maid, jumping with glee, while she clasped the young doctor's knees with her fat impassionate arms. "It's so kind of you to give me back my faith in God."

She snuggled herself into a seat by his side and, gazing up into his amused face with glistening eyes, she rattled on, "I thought I'd lost it forever! I've been to the Christians' Sunday school ten times; and Miss Brown said when I had been ten times she would give me this prize, and I know the words on it: they're—"Have faith in God!"

"Aren't you a very small girl to be traveling around this way by yourself?" asked Doctor Arnold, with a quizzical look at his companion.

"Do you know why I'm not afraid?" she answered with a gurgle of laughter. "'Cause my father drives this bus!"

"And your father allows you to attend a Christian Sunday school?"

"My father and mother and Moses and me are Christian Jews," she answered proudly. "We love Jesus!"

The bus stopped suddenly at the end of the road where a young woman stood, waiting, with a baby in her arms.

"There's my mother and Moses!" cried the child proudly.

"Come, little one, tell me your name and I will lift you out," said Doctor Arnold, lifting her into his arms.

"My name's Zilla," said she, clasping his neck with her plump, soft arms and denting his starched collar well into his neck. "You're so kind—I—think I'll give you my faith in God."

He placed her on firm ground, and she stood for an instant smoothing the large silver lettering on her prize with one chubby finger while looking wistfully at the brilliant red poppies stamped upon it, and the bit of red cord to hang it by, in a place she had decided upon—long before winning this prize.

"No, no! little Zilla. Hold tight to your faith in God, and don't part with it!" cried Doctor Arnold.

That night he was called to the bedside of one nearing the "Great Beyond," a young Oxford student, injured internally.

"Arnold," whispered the young fellow, "I'm going out—I feel it—and it's dark—dark! I have no hope! My faith is shattered!"

Doctor Arnold sat silent before his friend, holding his pulse. "Lee," said he gently, after a painful pause, "do you remember when we were boys together, and we attended our Sunday school?" "Yes." "In those happy days we had faith in God!" "Yes." "And we believed that Jesus Christ shed His precious blood to save us!" "Yes, oh, yes!" whispered the young man sadly.

Then Doctor Arnold told about the true incident of the afternoon.

"The little creature was so desperately in earnest she was ready to hold up the whole traffic of London town to regain her lost prize," said the doctor, with an awakened conscience. "Lee, old friend, I believe with all my soul that God is more ready to restore our lost faith to us than we are to have it restored."

"Do you think," said the sinking voice of the dying man, "do you think that you could restore my lost faith to me? I—I feel I would stop the traffic of the world if I were able to get back to my childhood faith!"

Ten years before this date Doctor Arnold had been a sincere Christian worker. Tonight with the urgency of this call, he fell upon his knees and turned his eyes toward "Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith," crying to Him who was there ready and willing to bestow the saving gift. Some hours later the crisis was passed, but Doctor Arnold still sat by the side of his friend.

"Lee," he whispered, "we certainly have every reason to have faith in God! It is nothing short of a miracle! You will live to prove to the world that He hears and answers the prayer of faith."

—Selected

December 24, 1972

THE GLORIOUS REST-GIVER ARRIVES

Isa. 11:1, 2, 6-10; Matt. 2:7-11.

Isa. 11:1 And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots:

2 And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord;

6 The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them.

7 And the cow and the bear shall feed; their young ones shall lie down together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.

8 And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den.

9 They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain: for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.

10 And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek: and his rest shall be glorious.

Matt. 2:7 Then Herod, when he had privily called the wise men, enquired of them diligently what time the star appeared.

8 And he sent them to Bethlehem, and said, Go and search diligently for the young child; and when ye have found him, bring me word again, that I may come and worship him also.

9 When they had heard the king, they departed; and, lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was.

10 When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy.

11 And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treas-

ures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.

Memory Verse: Therefore, if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. 2 Cor. 5:17.

Central Thought: Jesus came to purify our nature and take out the wolf and lion-like elements and cause us to be at peace with others and give us that "glorious rest."

LESSON BACKGROUND

We have chosen the prophecy of Isaiah, which was written in 713 B. C., of the coming of Christ. We know that the lineage of Jesus Christ came from Jesse, the father of David. The "holy mountain" refers to the spiritual mountain of the Lord which is described by the Apostle Paul in Hebrews 12: 22-24. "But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem; and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect (sanctified people), and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant. . . ." Isaiah prophesied that this would come to pass "in that day," which means the gospel day after Jesus came.

Isaiah is called the gospel prophet.

The gold that the wise men gave would be like us giving ourselves to Jesus and loving Him with all of our heart, mind and soul. Luke 10:27. The frankincense was a sweet-smelling spice. That is our praises and prayers given to the Lord. Rev. 5:8. The myrrh is a bitter spice. That would be like our giving all of our troubles and sorrows to the Lord. We must cast all of our cares upon Him. Matt. 11:28; 1 Peter 5:7.

Notice the fox-like nature of Herod. He didn't want to worship the baby Jesus, but he wanted to kill Him. Later in the same chapter we read where he had all the baby boys killed. He thought sure he had gotten the baby Jesus, but God had His mother and Joseph to take Him to Egypt.

Lesson References: David's lineage—Isa. 53:2; Acts 13: 22, 23; Matt. 1:17. Nature changed—Eph. 2:1-4; Eph. 4:24, 25, 32.

QUESTIONS:

1. What glimpse did God cause the prophet Isaiah to get of Jesus Christ's birth?
2. Jesus said, "Except ye become

converted and become as a little child, ye cannot enter the kingdom of heaven." Our lesson refers to the little child. Compare statements. 3. How can a person who growls around like a bear or has a wolf-like nature be changed and be like a lamb? 4. Discuss our memory verse in connection with the prophecy of the change which takes place in all who are in God's "holy mountain" or church. 5. Herod sought to know about the child Jesus to kill Him. How is that same spirit working today to kill the life of Christ out of those who have been "born again"? 6. Does Jesus want the bitter things that touch our lives as well as the incense of praise?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLES' COMMENTS

Thank God for that glorious rest that came to all who believed on the new-born King that came into this world! The old Bible prophets got a glimpse of what would take place when Jesus, the Son of God would come into this world in the form of a baby and grow up to die on the cross for our sins. They saw it only in part, but today we know it fully. We are living "in that day," or, the gospel day to which they referred. What God will do for all who will humble themselves before Him and confess their sins is known about in the earth. The prophet said that "the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord." There are more Bibles in print than any other book. No one in the whole earth needs to be in darkness, yet so many will not believe. But it is up to them to believe, or not believe.

Many are wanting to put it over to a future date when we can have a change of heart. The reason that they do is because they do not have the experience in their soul. They are not willing to pay the price to receive a change of heart. The prophet Isaiah used the wolf, lion, and leopard to bring out the nature some people have. When they are saved or "born again" and become a new creature in Christ Jesus they will be changed. Those with a wolf-like nature will be able to get along with those who have a lamb-like nature, those who are born again. Their nature will be purified and they will become a new creature. We know that Jesus referred to Herod as a fox. He did not mean he was a fox, but that he had a fox-like nature. He was sly and deceitful. Read Luke 13:32.

We have witnessed the change in those who had an evil nature. Those who would growl around like a bear and were ready to fight like the lion became like the lamb. They were easy to get along with. One brother said that even his cows knew when he got saved. He quit kicking and hitting them.

Surely, our Lord and Saviour is to be praised today for all that He gave to us. We bow before Him and give Him our all.

—M. Miles

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Nothing else in all the history of mankind has had the impact on society in general and the population as a whole that the coming of the Son of God has had. Reformers come and go. Great leaders rise and fall, but only the Word of God endureth forever. It is a rare thing for philosophers and great thinkers to perceive the idea that man is sub-standard in moral virtue, although some have discerned it even as far back as the ancient Greeks. But discovering a problem and supplying a satisfactory solution for that problem are two different things. Men often admit that they ought to do better, but somehow they don't. Why? The apostle Paul described the condition very well in the seventh chapter of Romans. His ultimate conclusion, as must be the conclusion of every one who finds a satisfactory answer, is, thank God, through our Lord Jesus Christ. It takes more than a knowledge of sin to correct a problem. Sin is stronger than men and overcomes them. But in Christ we find grace, for grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. The truth reveals to us the exact seat of the real problem and divine grace from above makes us able to solve the problem and overcome. No other system, no other philosophy, nothing known to mankind ever provided that elevating moral grace that enables a man to be what he ought to be morally. This is the unique feature of the work that Jesus did, for He offered power to change men's lives toward the good. Men who will yield their hearts and lives to God can enter into that blessed state free of condemnation or guilt from wrong committed and thus, they are able to enter into rest.

—C. W. Wilson

CHRIST HAS COME

Today the angels sang and shepherds watched
While Wise Men followed yon brilliant star.

Today a tiny Babe in a manger lay
For the Inn was full, no room for Him!

Today a lofty king beheld the star
And feared its meaning—the prophet's word.

Today a King was born all men to save
And sin to conquer—the Christ has come!

—C. Wilson

December 31, 1972

THE BOOKS WERE OPENED

1 John 3:11-15; Revelation 20:11-15

1 John 3:11 For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another.

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.

13 Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you.

14 We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death.

15 Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him.

Revelation 20:11 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.

12 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.

13 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.

14 And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death.

15 And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire.

Memory Verse: For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works. Matthew 16:27.

Central Thought: Your thoughts, attitudes and feelings of love or ill-feelings are all on record and will be revealed in the judgment day.

Word Definition: Judged means, "to determine on the merits of a person's guilt according to their obedience to the

law." God is the supreme Judge who judges all men with justice. He knows all things, even our deepest desires or hidden thoughts.

LESSON BACKGROUND

This is our last lesson of this year. Today we are studying some of the Apostle John's writings. He wrote the book of Revelation and the book of 1 John.

John was banished on the isle of Patmos, but there God gave him a message to the church. It is a marvelous book, when rightly divided and interpreted by the Holy Spirit. Yet it is one of the most misinterpreted books of the Bible. One thing we do know, is that all of the people who have lived on this earth will be judged by a righteous Judge who judges all men rightly. Man may feel he can rule a lot of people and his word will stand, but no man can stand before God. God will have the last word.

Lesson References The last day: 2 Peter 3:7-12; Daniel 12:1-3; 1 Corinthians 15:50-58. Fire: Rev. 21:8; Mark 9:43-48.

QUESTIONS:

1. Do love and ill-feelings mix?
2. Why did Cain kill Abel?
3. What vision did God give to John on the Isle of Patmos?
4. Is there a record kept of everything we do, think, or of all our attitudes?
5. How can we live righteously before God daily?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLES' COMMENTS

Envy and Jealousy will bring many heartaches not only to the one who is jealous, but to the one who is the victim of a person's jealousy. The Bible says, "Who is able to stand before envy?" In other words, when a person is envious or jealous of another, that person can't do anything right. Their words are twisted and their actions are misinterpreted. Just as the Jews tried to "catch him in his words," even so the person who is jealous of another will do that. How sad it is to know that a person will let the devil work in such a manner. Jealousy and love for another will not mix. Cain, in the beginning, was touched by this terrible monster and it caused Abel to suffer. Ill-feelings grow into jealousy and hatred. Hatred grows into murder. No wonder the Apostle John urged everyone to keep love in his heart for his brother. We must work at it or it will get to us. One person made a remark to me, and after we left that person's presence

another said to me, "That person surely gave you a slap in the face." I told her that I wasn't going to accept it that way, but that one did not mean it like they said it. We must keep our souls clear and refuse to let any feelings harbor there that will not be in the spirit of bearing and forbearing. Only God can help us. We must forgive and commit all things to God.

God gave the Apostle John a vision of what will take place. He told him to write what he saw in a book as this was the word of the Lord. If we will let the impact of the truth of the facts that we are told come to us, just like it is I am sure it will work a carefulness in our very mind, heart and life. If we can always remember that all of our deeds are being recorded and that our attitudes will be judged I am sure we will watch and pray in a greater way. It's a serious thing to trifle with God.

—M. Miles

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Who can imagine what it will be like in the last day? When one thinks of the multitudes of people on the earth today, and how crowded we think we are, and then all the people who have ever lived on the earth coming forth, one wonders how the whole earth will be able to contain them. Our minds cannot take it all in; but all will be there from the least to the greatest. Some folks decide they will foil God's plan and thwart His decree so they have their bodies cremated and the ashes scattered out over the sea or the jungle or some other secluded place, but rest assured that when the trumpet sounds and the summons goes forth, all will respond and go out to meet the great King. In the societies we live in, which are filled with hypocrisy and deceit and all other works of carnality until it is almost impossible to obtain a fair trial, it is hard for us to imagine a proceeding involving so many individuals without even one mistake being committed. No one will be defrauded; no one will receive unjust due, but to all will be meted a just recompense of reward according to the deeds done in the body. No man will be able to influence truth or righteousness in his favor, neither will any man be able to hide unjust motives and intentions. On the other hand none will be awarded virtue which he did not deserve, for God will judge on fact, not appearance. Justice is a blessing, by and large, but true justice, which will take in every case will certainly change the appearance of a great many cases. Men judge according to the information they have on hand, but God knows all the information that pertains to every case; therefore, He can render a righteous verdict without mistake.

—C. W. Wilson

THE POWER OF LOVE

A lady brought a little ragged orphan girl to her house for a playmate for her three daughters. But the little thing would venture no further than the lobby, where she sat crying as if her heart would break. The lady said to her daughters there was one secret of four letters she thought would win the little one. The eldest girl tried her doll, the second her new muff, but still the little stranger kept on weeping. At length the youngest sister ran into the lobby, sat down beside her, began to weep with her, and then put her arms about her neck and kissed her, till at last she easily got her into the room; and then it was found that the secret was love.

A SWEET PROMISE

A Christian visitor was once visiting a very poor and sorely afflicted believer in Dublin, and sought to comfort him with the text, "In my Father's house are many mansions." "Stop a minute," said the dying but happy sufferer, "that is a beautiful text, but there is one sweeter than it in the next verse: 'I will come again, and receive you unto myself.' "

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