

771

Bible Lessons



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

ADULTS -- YOUNG PEOPLE

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Bible Lessons for Adults and Young People

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Jesus Christ and His Church**
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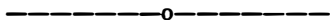
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Theme for Second Quarter, 1987

We have a varied series of lessons for this quarter from the precious Word of God. We have not followed any definite subject as a whole, but have looked earnestly to God in prayer that He would inspire us with just the lesson for each time that He would want us to have. And He has so faithfully inspired our hearts each time. We trust that each lesson will be a spiritual uplift and a benefit to each one. The first three lessons lead us up to the Easter Sunday morning, dealing with death and God's victory over death that He wrought in Jesus. Along with other lessons that deal with our blessed relationship with Christ, the Lover of our souls, we have included two lessons on marriage and how to have success in married life. We have been greatly blessed and inspired in preparing these lessons, and it is our prayer that they will be a channel through which each Bible student may receive inspiration and comfort, also.

—Bro. Leslie C. Busbee



April 5, 1987

THE SENTENCE OF DEATH

Gen. 3:17 And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life;

18 Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field;

19 In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.

22 "And the Lord God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever:

23 Therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken.

24 So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.

Job 14:1 Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble.

2 He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down: he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not.

7 For there is hope of a tree, if it be cut down, that it will sprout again, and that the tender branch thereof will not cease.

10 But man dieth, and wasteth away: yea, man giveth up the ghost, and where is he?

12 So man lieth down, and riseth not: till the heavens be no more, they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep.

Psalm 39:12 Hear my prayer, O Lord, and give ear unto my cry; hold not thy peace at my tears: for I am a stranger with thee, and a sojourner, as all my fathers were.

13 O spare me, that I may recover strength, before I go hence, and be no more.

Psalm 90:3 Thou turnest man to destruction; and sayest, Return, ye children of men.

7 For we are consumed by thine anger, and by thy wrath are we troubled.

10 The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away.

Memory Verse: What man is he that liveth, and shall not see death? shall he deliver his soul from the hand of the grave? Psalm 89:48.

Central Thought: Because man disobeyed and sinned against God, he was deprived of access to the tree of life (the partaking of which would have preserved and sustained life) and sentenced to hard labor and trouble which would eventually bring on decay, old age, and death. This death and its woeful sentence has passed unto all men.

Word Definitions: *Cherubims:* Winged Heavenly beings, or angels. *Ghost:* breath, or spirit. *Sojourner:* Alien resident; by-dweller, one who is a temporary inmate or a mere lodger. *"Thou turnest man to destruction":* Thou turnest man to death.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Man was created to live, not to die. But, being a created free moral agent, he was given the choice between life and death. He was instructed, warned, and admonished what his

limits were, and of the consequences of disobedience. He was furnished with everything necessary to make a success of his being alive. But Romans 5:12 declares that by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned. Death was passed upon the human race because of sin entering their hearts. And so it has been ever since. With the exception of two men (namely Enoch and Elijah) every person who ever lived has had to die. Every person who ever came into the world came with the sentence of death upon them. It is an appointment that everyone will meet. What a wonderful thing it was to be in the garden of Eden and, among the other blessings, to be able to partake of the blessed tree of life! There was something of the particular blessings of God found in that tree that would heal and preserve life and health to those who partook of its wonderful fruit. But after man had sinned God was no longer willing for him to partake of the tree of life. Thus we see the sad separation fall upon man and his wife. They were driven away and kept from life everlasting. They knew that sooner or later they would die. This sense of death has followed the human family thereafter. The rich and the poor, the wise and the foolish, the beautiful and the homely, all these have had to die. Job spoke of it, and so did the Psalmist. Death still takes its daily toll from the ranks of men. After death comes the judgment where we will give an account of this short life.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What was the sentence that was placed upon man because of his sin against God?
2. How has this affected humanity and how is it affecting us today?
3. What is death?
4. Should we reckon with this sentence of death or should we keep it out of our minds?
5. What profit is there in remembering that we will one day die?
6. Can we and should we pray to God about it?
7. What was the prayer of the Psalmist in our lesson?
8. Is it normal for a person to want to live and not die?
9. What is the best course of action that we can take with regard to the matter of dying?
10. What was it that caused man to fall under the sentence of death?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

Death is such a common thing and such an ordinary subject that we are prone to overlook its value and importance. And we are also prone to fail to see what a terrible thing this was that man brought upon himself because of his sin. Death is the ceasing of life for the human and mortal part of man. The spirit continues its existence because it is of the elements of God Himself, who is eternal. But the body that once moved, thought, spoke, and lived is silent and cold. It is fit only to be buried out of sight. The grave takes in the lovely form and beautiful face, the hands that once were so busily engaged in the duties of the home, and the feet that traveled on the shores of time. The voice that spoke is silent, and the flashing eyes are closed. This is death. It will come to all. It is not a pleasant thing to have to face. But we all have to face up to it. And it all came about because one man failed to obey God. Because Adam and Eve partook of the forbidden fruit, death has passed upon all men. Perhaps you may think, "Why go on about this? Let us forget death and let us enjoy our life while we may!" Yes, you may do that. Most people do. But it is folly to hide one's self from the reality of the sentence that we are all under. It is wisdom to come to grips with it, to recognize that death is on our trail and the chilly hand of death will reach for us one day. Do not joke about it and try to laugh it off. Face up to it. Acknowledge it as Job did and plead with God as the Psalmist did that you may recover strength and be saved before you go hence to be no more. Reckon with the fact that your days are short. They will soon be gone. Wisdom tells you to fear God and turn to Him with all of your heart. Hear the good news that God sent His only Son to die for you. He is ever living, resurrected from the dead, to intercede for you. You can conquer and overcome sin and have hope of living again.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

How foolish Adam and Eve were to forfeit their right to the tree of life. Just as Satan is doing today, he did not tell them the consequences of their actions. The full weight of their misdeed must have been quite fearful when God passed sentence upon them. This penalty of death has been passed on to all mankind and as a result man still fears death.

We read in history of men who have searched diligently for a way to live forever, but have been unable to find it. It

would be interesting to know just what became of the tree of life. It is hard to imagine that something so full of everlasting life could have died. It would only seem appropriate that God would have placed it elsewhere, perhaps in heaven. We find that the tree of life came once again to this earth in the form of a human being. Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth and the life." John 14:6.

Just as God set the Cherubims to protect the tree of life, not everyone has free access to eternal life. We must still pass by the sword of God. "For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." Heb. 4:12. The Word of God is a sharp sword which turns in every direction to thoroughly eliminate the sin in our lives.

—Wayne Murphey

Oh, Why Should the Spirit of Mortal Be Proud?



Oh, why should the spirit of mortal be proud?
Like a fast-flitting meteor, a fast-flying cloud,
A flash of the lightning, a break of the wave,
He passeth from life to his rest in the grave.

The leaves of the oak and the willow shall fade,
Be scattered around and together be laid;
And the young and the old, and the low and the high,
Shall moulder to dust and together shall lie.

The child that a mother attended and loved,
The mother that infant's affection who proved,
The husband that mother and infant who blessed,—
Each, all, are away to their dwellings of rest.

The maid on whose cheek, on whose brow, in whose eye,
Shone beauty and pleasure,—her triumphs are by;
And the memory of those who have loved her and praised,
Are alike from the minds of the living erased.

The hand of the king that the sceptre hath borne,
The brow of the priest that the mitre hath worn,

The eye of the sage, and the heart of the brave,
Are bidden and lost in the depths of the grave.

The peasant whose lot was to sow and to reap,
The herdsman who climbed with his goats to the steep,
The beggar who wandered in search of his bread,
Have faded away like the grass that we tread.

The saint who enjoyed the communion of heaven,
The sinner who dared to remain unforgiven,
The wise and the foolish, the guilty and just,
Have quietly mingled their bones in the dust.

So the multitude goes, like the flower and the weed,
That wither away to let others succeed;
So the multitude comes, even those we behold,
To repeat every tale that hath often been told.

For we are the same things our fathers have been;
We see the same sights that our fathers have seen,—
We drink the same stream, and we feel the same sun,
And run the same course that our fathers have run.

The thoughts we are thinking our fathers would think;
From the death we are shrinking from, they too would shrink;
To the life we are clinging too, they too would cling:
But it speeds from the earth like a bird on the wing.

They loved, but their story we cannot unfold;
They scorned, but the heart of the haughty is cold;
They grieved, but no wail from their slumbers will come;
They joyed, but the voice of their gladness is dumb.

They died,—ay! they died; and we things that are now,
Who walk on the turf that lies over their brow,
Who make in their dwellings a transient abode,
Meet the changes they met on their pilgrimage road.

Yea, hope and despondence, and pleasure and pain,
Are mingled together in sunshine and rain;
And the smile and the tear, the song and the dirge,
Still follow each other, like surge upon surge.

'Tis the twink of an eye, 'tis the draught of a breath,
From the blossom of health to the paleness of death,
From the gilded saloon to the bier and the shroud,—
Oh, why should the spirit of mortal be proud?

—William Knox

April 12, 1987

GOD'S PROMISE OF VICTORY OVER DEATH

Job 14:13 O that thou wouldest hide me in the grave, that thou wouldest keep me secret, until thy wrath be past, that thou wouldest appoint me a set time, and remember me!

14 If a man die, shall he live again? all the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change come.

15 Thou shalt call, and I will answer thee: thou wilt have a desire to the work of thine hands.

Psalms 102:18 This shall be written for the generation to come: and the people which shall be created shall praise the Lord.

19 For he hath looked down from the height of his sanctuary; from heaven did the Lord behold the earth;

20 To hear the groaning of the prisoner; to loose those that are appointed to death;

21 To declare the name of the Lord in Zion, and his praise in Jerusalem;

22 When the people are gathered together, and the kingdoms, to serve the Lord.

23 He weakened my strength in the way; he shortened my days.

24 I said, O my God, take me not away in the midst of my days: thy years are throughout all generations.

25 Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth: and the heavens are the work of thy hands.

26 They shall perish, but thou shalt endure: yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed:

27 But thou art the same, and thy years shall have no end.

Isaiah 25:8 He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth: for the Lord hath spoken it.

Hosea 13:14 "I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plagues; O grave, I will be thy destruction: repentance shall be hid from mine eyes.

Memory Verse: So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. I Corinthians 15:54.

Central Thought: Holy men inspired by the Holy Spirit foretold the great victory that would be accomplished by Christ over the power of death and the grave.

LESSON BACKGROUND

From four different writers in the Old Testament, we gathered promises and assurance of victory over death for us who will seek the way of the Lord for our lives. As we saw in our previous lesson, we are all under the sentence of death because of sin. But in the light of these Scriptures unfolds a wonderful hope of us being loosed from this sentence of death. Job possessed in his faith in God a steadfast hope of living again. Along with the sublime expressions we have in our lessons, he says further, in 19:25, 26: "For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God." In the midst of great suffering and sorrow the Psalmist wrote in our lesson a prophecy fragrant with the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. He saw the Lord looking down from heaven to do three things: 1. to hear the groaning of the prisoner, that is, the prisoner in the prison house of sin; 2. to loose those that are appointed to death; and 3. to declare the name of the Lord in Zion, and his praise in Jerusalem, when the people are gathered together, and the kingdoms, to serve the Lord. Christ fulfilled all three of these things, praise His wonderful name! The last three verses from this Psalm in our lesson are directly quoted and applied to Christ in Hebrews 1:10-12. Our Scripture in Isaiah 25:8 is very clearly referred to in our memory verse from the writing of Paul. Instead of death swallowing up us, we will swallow up death in the victory of Christ. Paul also quotes at that same place from our Scripture in Hosea, using more the expression in the Septuagint which we will give here: "I will deliver them out of the power of Hades, and will redeem them from death: where is thy penalty, O death? O Hades where is thy sting?" All of these are clear promises of an ultimate and final triumph promised to man over death through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What did Job desire for the Lord to do for him?
2. What is the answer to Job's question: If a man die, shall he live again?

3. Our bodies are the work of God's hands. What is the desire that He has to our bodies?
4. What did God purpose to do when He came down from heaven in Christ?
5. What was the hope of the Psalmist in his expression?
6. How is death going to be swallowed up in victory?
7. To whom are all of these prophecies pointing to?
8. Where do we get the assurance that all of these prophecies are going to come to pass?
9. What must we do on our part to line up with the hope that these inspired writers had?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

We must read and study all of these Scriptures in the light of their fulfillment in Christ. The fear of death is what holds men in bondage away from the blessed hope of the gospel. The fear of death is because of sin in the heart and life. The forgiveness of sins and the cleansing of the heart from the sin principle or nature must be effected. Death came by sin. Death was in two phases: first was the spiritual death, the separation from the fellowship with God, and then the second phase was the physical death, the separation of the spirit from the body. Both of these were specifically dealt with in the work of the redemption of Christ. We are delivered from spiritual death when we are born again and made one with the Lord in spirit. We are made alive in Christ, quickened from the dead state of sin, passed from death unto life. We are new creatures in Christ, the old things of sin and the world passing away, and all things new in Christ we receive. We walk in newness of life, being resurrected in Him. This first resurrection gives us hope of the physical resurrection that will take place at the last day when Jesus comes again. Most of us will die before that great day and our bodies will crumble away back to dust in the grave while our ransomed spirits will be with the Lord in the paradise of God. But when God sees that earth has had all the mercy and chance that can righteously be given, He will send Jesus to come in power to destroy this present world and call all mankind to the great judgment. The dead shall be raised, the righteous and the evil, and the rewards will be given. How earnest should be our desire and decision to serve the Lord Jesus and escape the awful woe that will be on all those who refuse to accept His grace and salvation!

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The Scriptures in this lesson point toward that day when Christ shall return and our bodies will be resurrected. Through salvation, our spirits are quickened unto eternal life, but our bodies are still subject to a physical death. When our bodies are resurrected then will the statement, "Death is swallowed up in victory." be fully realized. The joy of that new life will make the death and all that we passed through seem insignificant. This victory of a resurrection will obliterate death from our minds. It seems that just for our spirits to dwell with God in eternity would be pleasure enough, but God has something better for us. He is preparing a reward that our bodies, which will put on immortality, can enjoy.

Job was questioning the thought of a resurrection, but then he took courage and declared, "For I know that my redeemer liveth." Something that God has put within man, convicts him that there is more to life than what can be seen. Victor Hugo once said, "I feel in myself the future life. I am like a forest cut down; the new shoots are stronger and livelier than ever. I am rising, I know, toward the sky. The sunshine is on my head. The earth gives me its generous sap, but heaven lights me with the reflection of unknown worlds. For half a century I have been writing my thoughts in prose and in verses, but I feel I have not said the thousandth part of what is in me. When I go down to the grave, I can say, like many others, 'I have finished my day's work.' Life is a thoroughfare. It closes on the twilight; it opens on the dawn."—Wayne Murphey

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April 19, 1987

**THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST
FROM THE DEAD**

I Cor. 15:1 Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand;

2 By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain.

3 For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures;

4 And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:

5 And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve:

6 After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep.

7 After that, he was seen of James; then of all the apostles.

8 And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time.

16 For if the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised:

17 And if Christ be not raised, our faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins.

18 Then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished.

19 If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.

20 But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept.

55 O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?

56 The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law.

57 But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Acts 17:30 And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent:

31 Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.

Memory Verse: Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to His abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. I Peter 1:3.

Central Thought: The resurrection of Jesus Christ generates power for the salvation of our souls, and assures us of coming Judgment, and gives us hope of being a partaker of His resurrection in that last great day.

LESSON BACKGROUND

For our lesson today, concerning the resurrection of our beloved Lord and Saviour, we turn to the testimony of the apostle Paul, a man who at first not only doubted but actually combated the faith of the disciples of Christ with violence and persecution. In his ignorance and unbelief, Paul sought to stamp out this religion that seemed to threaten the Jewish traditions. His conversion to Christ is one of the most marvelous experiences we have on record and truly one of the most convincing proofs of the truth of Christ. Those who fight Christ the hardest have often been made His most devoted disciples. Paul treats the subject of Christ's resurrection with great joy, respect, and honour. The resurrection of Christ was the gospel, the good news that he was seeking to spell out to the nations. But not only from the Jews and the unbelieving world did he meet opposition, but right from the ranks of those who were supposed to be believers came adverse contentions that sought to deny the resurrection of the dead. In this 15th chapter of his first epistle to the Corinthians, Paul seeks to show the folly of such unbelief. We are principally pointing out in our lesson those statements that fully affirm his persuasion in the truth of Christ being risen from the dead and what it is to mean to us who trust and obey Him. We draw also from a statement that he made to the people at Athens in his speech to them. The assurance that comes to us from the truth that God raised up Jesus from the dead is a blessed assurance as well as a fearful one. God has given assurance of the coming Judgment which shall be carried out through Christ. And this assurance comes to light in the fact that Christ is risen from the dead, alive forevermore. He will be right there when God calls this old world to judgment. Oh, may God help us that we will not allow this risen life of Christ to be in vain for us!

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Why did Jesus have to die?
2. Why did He not stay dead?
3. Who were some of the eyewitnesses of His risen glory?
4. Why did Paul count himself as one born out of due time?
5. If Christ is not risen from the dead, where would that put us?
6. If Christ is not risen from the dead, what would be the fate of those who have died trusting in Him?
7. What is our earthly existence to be, if Christ is not risen triumphant over death?
8. Wherein is the sting of death?
9. What is the victory of the grave?
10. Who has the victory now?
11. In what way does Christ's resurrection give us assurance that He will judge the world in righteousness?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

Just think of the witnesses who saw and communed with Jesus after that He had come forth from the grave! These men and women have left their testimony for the ages. Cephas, or Peter, and the twelve were given the commission to herald the risen life of Christ to the world. The five hundred brethren were probably those disciples who had believed on Him up in Galilee where Christ met them along with the twelve whom He had instructed to meet Him there. What joy filled their hearts as they realized beyond all doubt that their Lord had indeed risen from the grave! This truth is still the consolation and salvation of men today. In that Christ has arisen from the dead, we can find power and victory for ourselves over sin and the grave. No longer is death a dreaded foe, and no longer is the grave sorrowfully anticipated! This short life that so often has been the scene of sorrow, strife, fear, and pain can now be spent rejoicing in hope. For the same power that brought up Jesus from the tomb brings to us a soul-quickening life that enables us to live victoriously over all sin and wrong. We believe the gospel and the report that has come to us through the witness of these faithful ones. Our Lord has arisen from the grave! He has ascended up on high to sit at the right hand of the Father and make intercession for us who still linger in this dark world. We know that Christ lives for He sends the blessed witness of His Holy Spirit deep into the very innermost part of our being. He bears our souls above

this sordid earth of strife and evil. We lift our eyes up above the things of the flesh and feast with Him on things above, things that are eternal and satisfying. Great comfort and courage we have as we feel the blessed assurance within our hearts that Jesus is ours! On this day we rejoice anew and praise Him who lives forever and ever for the great salvation that He has purchased and made available for us.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The apostle Paul, in writing to the Corinthian church, first offered proof that Christ was resurrected, by the fact that he had been told about Cephas, the twelve disciples and the five hundred brethren who had seen Christ after the resurrection. Paul further stated that he had seen Christ "as of one born out of due time." Undoubtedly Paul was speaking of his experiences on the road to Damascus. Paul considered this enough proof for the Corinthian church, and it should be reassuring to us also.

"But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept." Christ was the first to have been resurrected to eternal life. We have record of others being resurrected from the dead prior to this, but every one of them had to pass through death again. Christ was declared the firstfruits of the resurrection. Most fruits are reproduced through a seed. The gospel is likened unto a seed. When we accept the gospel, or the seed, into our life, we have something within us that will blossom and eventually come into full fruition of the resurrection. Before a seed can grow it must first die. So also, before the resurrection there must be a death, unless we are still alive at the coming of Christ. After we die, the seed may be in a dormant stage for some time, but some day Christ will return with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the trump of God, and the gospel seeds planted all over this earth will burst forth with eternal life.

—Wayne Murphey

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April 26, 1987

ABIDING IN CHRIST

John 14:18 I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.

19 Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me because I live, ye shall live also.

20 At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you.

21 He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.

27 Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

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.

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.

9 As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love.

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.

16:33 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.

Memory Verse: But of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption. I Corinthians 1:30.

Central Thought: Through prayer and communion with Christ through the Holy Spirit we are to draw from Him the strength, guidance, inspiration, anointing, and wisdom to go forth and bear the fruits of righteousness and divine love before the world.

Word Definitions: *Husbandman:* landworker, or farmer. *"He purgeth it":* He prunes or takes away undesirable growth. *Abide:* to stay, remain, and continue.

LESSON BACKGROUND

In the 14th through the 17th chapters we have on record in the beloved John's gospel the scene of Christ's last address and prayer for His disciples before they went out to face what was before them. Jesus was looking beyond the cross and the tomb. He was looking at that time when He would be taken back up into the heavenly realm to sit at the right hand of His Father. Although sorrow would fill the hearts of His beloved disciples, yet He knew that this was the plan of God. Christ could never be the effective head of the Church and the blessing to His own that He needed to be if He tarried bodily and in visible form in this world. It was a beautiful plan that the Lord had in mind. Christ, after that He had paid the supreme penalty for sin, would be resurrected from the dead and then later received back up into glory. His disciples would, through the Holy Spirit that later would come, be able to abide and relate to Christ in such a way that He would be a living reality to every individual disciple regardless of where in this wide world he would be. It would be a two-way communication. Through prayer and constantly feasting and obeying His word, the soul conditions one's self to be in an attitude and frame of heart that would enable him to hear the voice of Christ and understand His leadings. Thus Christ illustrates the point by likening Himself to a vine, and all who will relate to Him in spiritual blessings, He likened them to branches attached to and remaining with the vine. The vine brings the nutrients and vitality from the soil which flows into the branches where, coming into contact with the open air, will

begin to form into buds, then blossoms, and then fruit. Even so we who remain attached to Christ and commune with Him in the Spirit will bring forth the fruit that Christ desired to be made manifest in the earth. —Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. How are we to see Christ when He is no longer visible?
2. How do we prove that we love Christ?
3. Christ is to be in us, and we in Him. Can you explain how this can be a reality?
4. What does Christ have to give us that the world cannot give?
5. What did Jesus liken our relationship to Him unto?
6. Is it possible for a person to be in Christ and not bear fruit? What is to be done if this occurs?
7. Is there any way that we can accomplish anything really beneficial without His guidance and help?
8. What are some of the things that we must do to truly abide in Christ?
9. How can we overcome the pressures and opposition of the world?
10. What is Christ made unto us?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

There are all kinds of substitutes in our world today for really abiding in the Lord. There are many man-made and man-orientated systems that we can employ to put on a show of religion. One of the greatest things that sets God's holy Church off from all the rest is that it is led, governed, operated, and controlled by the Holy Spirit. Every member lives in constant communion with Christ in their daily lives of righteous living and prayer and the Word of God inspiring and enlightening them. These do not need pulpit committees to decide on who should speak and at what time they should speak and what they should speak on. There is no need of boards of men for the various spiritual functions of the Church to decide on who is to be pastor, or where and when should the evangelist go forth, etc. In institutions that are void of the Holy Spirit unction and anointing, these things are readily resorted to. In the Church where the members are all abiding constantly in the Lord there is no need for promotions to raise more money. When our earthly possessions are on the altar for God, He is faithful to direct us where He would have us freely give. There will be times when the members of

Christ meet together to communicate and counsel with one another, but in such times much prayer is offered beseeching God to have His way. Human machinery in the Church is one of the greatest woes to stay away from. It will begin to work and come in when the Holy Spirit is grieved away or not allowed to operate. Jesus warned and instructed us about abiding in Him. We do not need programs for the worship of God, cut and dried before hand. No, we need the living presence of Christ that He promised to send through the Holy Spirit to bless and inspire in our service to Him. And He is faithful, saying in another place that "where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." Matthew. 18:20.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

It is through our ability to abide in Christ that we can remain unspotted from sin. As we stay connected to Christ, His Spirit will reveal to us the path of righteousness. When Jesus taught the disciples to pray, a part of the prayer was, "And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors." Matt. 6:12. At that time the disciples did not have the Holy Spirit to guide them, so they needed this prayer. There are many today who still believe that they have need to pray this way. One time God told the Israelites that He was weary of their repenting. (Jeremiah 15:6).

The next part of the prayer that Christ taught His disciples was, "And lead us not into temptation." As this part of the prayer is fulfilled in our lives, we will have no need to pray for forgiveness of sins. But in order to be led of the Lord we must be abiding in Him so that we will be close enough to hear His voice.

Our memory verse describes the traits that will be prevalent in our lives if we are abiding in Christ. The first is wisdom. The world is lacking in good common sense. If we conduct our lives wisely, we will be a real light to the world. This would include openness and honesty, integrity and charity in all of our dealings. Such a life will lead to the next trait mentioned, which is righteousness. To be righteous means to be just in the sight of God. We may fool men with a profession, but we are not righteous unless we are actually living it before God. When we are pure before God, we can be set apart for His service, or sanctified. Every man and woman who is abiding in Christ will have a desire to be used of Him.

That desire towards the Lord will prove to be our redemption on the great Judgment Day. —Wayne Murphey

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May 3, 1987

“BE STILL, AND KNOW THAT I AM GOD”

Psalm 46:8 Come, behold the works of the Lord, what desolations he hath made in the earth.

9 He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth; he breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder; he burneth the chariot in the fire.

10 Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth.

Isaiah 30:7 For the Egyptians shall help in vain, and to no purpose; therefore have I cried concerning this, Their strength is to sit still.

15 For thus saith the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel; In returning and rest shall ye be saved; in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength: and ye would not.

Isaiah 32:17 And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever.

18 And my people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting places;

Lamentations 3:26 It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord.

27 It is good for a man that he bear the yoke in his youth.

28 He sitteth alone and keepeth silence, because he hath borne it upon him.

I Thess. 4:9 But as touching brotherly love ye need not that I write unto you: for ye yourselves are taught of God to love one another.

10 And indeed ye do it toward all the brethren which are in all Macedonia: but we beseech you, brethren, that ye increase more and more;

11 And that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you;

II Thess. 3:11 For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies.

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

Memory Verse: But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. I Peter 3:4.

Central Thought: All strife, pride, selfish clamor, and unbelief must be stilled into meekness and quietness of heart in order that we can be taught of God and know Him as He really is.

Word Definitions: *Busybody:* The Greek word means "one who works all around; officious." Officious means offering unnecessary and unwanted advice and services; meddling. *Study to be quiet:* Be eager and earnest to be quiet.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Psalm 46 is a tranquil healing balm for us in the midst of the turmoil and noise of human strife. It speaks in verse four about the river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God. The songwriter in *Evening Light Songs* Number 57 says, "that river, sweet river is PEACE!" All the instruments and weapons of war, the hum and bustle of human activity, and the noise that disquiets the happiness and soul rest of man—all these must be brought to desolation. The wrath of man works not the righteousness of God. Elijah learned his lesson well on the mount of God when he saw the wind break in pieces the rocks and rend the mountain, when he felt the earthquake and saw the fire break forth. The Lord was not in those things of noise and commotion. After these things had passed off there came "a still small voice." I Kings 19:12. The book of Ecclesiastes, in 9:14-18, tells of a great king beseiging a small city and how that it was delivered by the wisdom of a poor wise man whose wisdom was overlooked in the excitement. He summed it up very wisely when he said, "The words of wise men are heard in quiet more than the cry of him that ruleth among fools." God, through the prophet Isaiah, seeks to point us to quietness and stillness. In it is our strength. It takes real strength to hold one's peace, and wait on God to work. Jeremiah, in his Lamentations, takes up the same theme in the midst of Israel's woes. Complaining, murmuring, fault finding, blaming and criticizing others, gossip,—all of these indicate a soul disquieted. God fades from the scene when strife and human racket take over. God wants us all to learn

the great lesson of being quiet, leading quiet and peaceable lives in all godliness and honesty. I Timothy 2:2.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What does the Lord have to make desolate in our lives before He can make Himself known?
2. What does the bow, the spear, and the chariot signify?
3. What kind of strength does it take to sit still?
4. What causes a person to not want to have this holy quietness?
5. What kind of effect does true righteousness have upon a person?
6. How much good is accomplished through strife and vainglory?
7. What kind of yoke do you think the Lord wants everyone to bear in their youth? What effect will this yoke have upon a person?
8. Is human nature more apt to be noisy or quiet?
9. Can you name some of the causes for a person not being quiet as they should?
10. What is the real root of the problem that God is dealing with here?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

I remember an occasion when I was delivering some office goods to an insurance firm in Springfield, MO. I had my merchandise on a two-wheeled cart and was rolling it down the hallway, when I began to hear a noise. I wondered if it was my cart or from some other source. To find out, what did I do? I stopped dead still. The noise kept right on. I resumed my moving knowing that the noise was not in me. I got a thought from that as the Scripture in our lesson came to my mind. "Be still, and know!" I saw what a great benefit it is to study to live a quiet and peaceable life. I saw the value of a meek and quiet spirit. How much trouble and confusion are in the world because mankind has not learned this wonderful lesson! One person said, "Silence is golden, but talking is more fun!" Yes, that is the philosophy of many today. Young people many times want to be noticed, so they think that being rowdy and noisy will gain for them the attention that they are craving. How much better is a meek and quiet spirit! When a person is upset and grieved or displeased about something, the tongue will go in motion. I have heard it said that an empty wagon

makes more noise than a wagon that is loaded with goods. Anyone can be a big talker. But it takes the grace of God to keep quiet. A brother told about a time that he was sick in bed suffering, rolling, tossing, moaning, groaning, and carrying on in a most pitiful way. The Lord spoke to him and said, "Be still, and know that I am God." It took some concentrated effort on his part, but he obeyed and quieted down and God touched his body. Oh, how the Lord wants us to learn the great lesson of being still. One of the hardest punishments that my mother administered unto me as a child was to sit on a chair for a time. It is still hard for people to be still. But we had better learn the lesson and learn it well if we are to succeed in the Christian life. —Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

There is something very attractive about the person who is not loud and boisterous. The forward person may get the attention, but the quiet person will receive the honor and respect. Some people feel obligated to talk a lot to show how much they know. True wisdom is discerned in actions and not words.

The motivating force to a busybody is curiosity. Curiosity has a way of getting people in trouble. There is a saying that, "Curiosity killed the cat." Some information will backfire on you. In many cases, it is better not to know the private affairs of others. One person wrote, "One who is too wise an observer of the business of others, like one who is too curious in observing the labor of bees, will often be stung for his curiosity." The inspiration of curiosity is seldom to do good to another, but may spring from wanting to know something that others don't. Those who are busy keeping up with other's affairs, may neglect their own duties.

As we maintain a meek and quiet spirit, God can speak to us and bless our souls. In the book, "Evolution of Church Music", mention is made that in their worship services, the early Christians "reproduced the spirit of their religion; an inner quietude." As God blesses, there will be rejoicing, but to make a commotion in an attempt to bring a blessing is the wrong approach. —Wayne Murphey

May 10, 1987

MARRIAGE, THE INSTITUTION OF GOD

Genesis 2:18 And the Lord God said, it is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.

20 And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him.

21 And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof;

22 And the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man.

23 And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.

24 Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.

25 And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.

Gen. 3:12 And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat.

16 Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.

Matt. 19:4 And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female,

5 And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh?

6 Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.

8 He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so.

I Tim. 2:11 Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection.

12 But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence.

13 For Adam was first formed, then Eve.

14 And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression.

15 Notwithstanding she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety.

Memory Verse: Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favour of the Lord. Proverb 18:22.

Central Thought: God instituted the uniting of man and wife in the beginning to be a lifelong venture where the woman answers to man's need for help, comfort, joy, companionship, pleasure, and faithful service. It was meant to benefit man in every way. Because of sin woman was given a special place of being subject to the man, which subjection must be properly handled by the man.

Word Definitions: *Help meet:* In the Hebrew this word means "a helper corresponding to the man." *Cleave:* To cling or adhere.

LESSON BACKGROUND

We have in our lesson today the account of God's initial institution of marriage, what was added concerning the man and wife relationship because of sin, the words of our Lord Jesus with regard to the permanency of the marriage rite, and Paul's counsel with regard to the subjection that a woman must have to her husband because of the woman being the one who was deceived in the transgression. Now each one of these subjects would be a big subject to cover and would take more space and time than what we can allow in the format that we are using in these lessons. The real burden of our heart in this lesson (which we see as a main problem area) is the relationship of man to his wife and that of the wife to the husband, and how far this was affected by the fall into sin. It is a good thing to seek the Lord for Holy Spirit enlightenment here. We need to visualize God's purpose in instituting marriage. What was the real purpose of Him giving man a wife? What is her place, and how is the man before God to handle it? First, we can see that marriage was meant to be a very close, intimate relationship. The very thought of the woman coming from the man, fashioned from a part of his body (the absence of which I am sure that he was aware of) is enough to open the floodgates of affection and endearment on the part of the man to be directed in a sweet and gracious ministration to her. It would be wonderful if every marriage that is ever put together today would have some similarity to this. The founding of a home and the uniting of a man and woman should be

approached with the utmost care, reverence, and seriousness. A man must feel the need of the woman. It is evident that Adam felt a lack or an emptiness when he saw all the animals with their corresponding mate. I am sure that he thought much about it. It is good for a man to go through a season in his life when he experiences the need for a woman. Now, we need to remember that this relationship was affected by the fall into sin. The punishment that was put upon the woman was as much or more than anything a safeguard. It was not given for the man to take advantage of and be a beastly, overbearing tyrant with full authority to make his wife bow to his every whim and desire. Such a dominion over his loving wife should be a challenge and a matter of careful consideration and prayer. As Peter said, the man is to give honor unto the wife as the weaker vessel and as being heirs together of the grace of life that their prayers be not hindered. I Pet. 3:7. But on the wife's part, the charge of being in subjection to her husband is still in force. May God help each one to understand the mind of the Lord concerning these things.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Why was it not good for man to be alone?
2. What did the Lord make the woman out of, and from what part of the body did it come from?
3. What was man's reaction upon his first sight of the woman?
4. What should be the general feeling of a man for his wife?
5. How should a woman feel toward her husband?
6. What was the main reason for God giving the woman a subject role to the man after the fall into sin?
7. What should the reaction of the man be toward this?
8. What would have happened to the woman and man relationship if the hardness of man's heart had not been dealt with by a divorce?
9. How does the salvation in Christ affect the marriage bond?
10. What is the ray of comfort and hope given to the woman in her role of being subject to the man and bearing the pain and sorrow of childbearing?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

Marriage is ordained of God, and can only be successfully carried out according to His will and grace. The failure in

many marriages is a heart-rending, tragic condition in our land. Marriage should be approached with prayer and submission to Almighty God. Marriage is for life. It is not God's will that couples break up and go get another companion while the first companion is still living. This is a violation of His divine law. And it is also not pleasing to the Lord for a man and his wife to be at odds with each other and not getting along together, but staying together just because they should stay together. They should stay together all right, but there is something much more to marriage than just living continually in the same house and sharing the same bedroom. God wants the heart and the affections and joys of both the man and wife to be blended together. A truly happy couple has to work at their marriage every day. One mistake that so often is made is when couples take each other for granted. They should continue their courtship after coming together as man and wife. A marriage is not designed to be an enduring and unpleasant staying together. It is meant to be preserved in that sweet harmony and joy with one another that was started out in the first place. God can and will help men and women have a happy marriage. To be loving, patient, kind, forbearing, affectionate, and helpful to one another is the law of happy wedded life. The reason so many marriages fall apart is due to the fact that in either, and in many times in both, a vital ingredient is left out. Although man and wife are to be one flesh, they are still two different individuals. The unity must be accomplished in practicality as much as in principle. Much more could be said, but we have sufficient Scripture here to instruct as well as challenge us all to work and strive harder for that happy married life that God wants us to have.

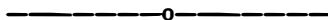
—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The first year or two of married life could well be, and quite often is, the footing upon which the union stands or falls. Two people from different backgrounds, different families, different habits, different patterns of thinking, in fact, two almost strangers suddenly take up residence together and begin to share their twain lives as one. No matter how well folks may feel they know each other before marriage, they will soon discover that they actually were pretty much strangers when they begin the business of living together. How thoughtful of the Lord to arrange it so this would be the time when all

the healing balm of love would be so prominent. More adjustments will need to be made more quickly than perhaps at any other one time in all the adventure of life. This is the time to learn a great deal about your lifetime companion—likes and dislikes, habits, traits, dispositions, and a multitude of things. These are definitely times when the newly-weds need to be alone together. Learn to make decisions together, to counsel together, to work together and play together, to learn to be at ease and comfortable together. This is where, from two entirely different backgrounds and cultures, there begins to emerge from the blending of the two the setting that will surround a succeeding generation. Newly married folks need and must learn how to work all these out for themselves, between themselves. Failure to do that could very well lead to trouble.

—Clifford Wilson
(Written in 1969)



May 17, 1987

A SUCCESSFUL AND HAPPY MARRIAGE

Eph. 5:22 Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.

23 For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body.

24 Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing.

25 Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;

26 That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,

27 That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.

28 So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself.

29 For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church:

30 For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones.

33 Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband.

I Cor. 7:3 Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband.

4 The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife.

5 Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency.

Col. 3:18 Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord.

19 Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them.

Memory Verse: For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Matthew 19:5.

Central Thought: Husbands should love their wives as Christ loves and cherishes the Church, and wives should love, respect, and honor their husbands the same as the Church loves, honors, and reverences Jesus, the Bridegroom of our souls.

Word Definitions: *Benevolence:* kindness; good feeling, inclination to do good; charitableness. *“Power of her own body”:* the word “power” means control or to have authority over. *Defraud:* to keep back or deprive. *Incontinency:* lacking self-control and self-restraint.

LESSON BACKGROUND

In last week's lesson we studied God's purpose and plan for marriage. In today's lesson we will consider some Scriptures that are valuable counsel in helping to make for a successful and happy marriage. These are all from the writing of Paul. No mention is ever made of Paul being married, but we can see that he draws his teachings from the parallel that exists between the marriage relationship and that between Christ and the Church. I believe that every problem will be resolved and every marriage will be successful if these guidelines are carefully and earnestly followed. There is a great sorrow and blight upon hearts who have had a marriage failure that is not easily overcome. And on the other hand, what a blessing and benefit to a person who enjoys and maintains a happy successful marriage in the order of God!

The husband has his part in the responsibility and the wife has hers. Some of the greatest woes come when the understanding of this is darkened. A man can become so domineering over his wife to her sorrow and his hurt. A wife can become so selfish and inconsiderate in her attitudes. These are things that must be avoided if a happy marriage is to be enjoyed. Note the fact that God never told the husband to rule over his wife. In our previous lesson, God told the wife that her husband shall rule over her. But he did not tell the husband to rule. There is a difference here. Some may say that it is implied that the husband is to rule. But that is not what He told the husband. There is to be rule, yes. But the rule must be administered in the proper manner. And Paul tells us the manner here. Love is the only way to rule. There is but one way that you can rule, truly rule someone. And that is by love. How does Christ rule us? Is it by force, driving harshness that He gets us to serve Him? No! He wins our love and keeps courting and wooing our love to where He needs not to force anything. This is the law of a happy successful marriage. Love and benevolence must be on the part of both husband and wife. The wife is to be submissive. But it will not be hard for the wife to submit to the husband if he treats her with the right spirit and attitude. There will be problems, but that love will help to settle every one. Much is said about leaving the first love in the Christian life. How about the matter of retaining the first love in a marriage? This first love gets away from many couples. It is something that you have to keep working on every day. Please consider these Scriptures in our lesson today. They hold the key to happy and successful married life.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. The husband and wife relationship is compared to what?
2. How does Christ control the Church?
3. What is the vital link between the husband and wife?
4. Can a husband love and cherish his wife if he allows his mind to dwell on her faults?
5. Would Christ have wanted us if all He saw in us were our faults?
6. What did Christ do for our faults?
7. Who owns and controls the woman's body? Who owns and controls the man's body?
8. Is it possible for us to become selfish and deprive one another of that love and desire that is rightfully theirs?

9. Is it possible for a man to become bitter toward his wife?
In what way? Why?
10. Summing it all up, what would you say is the real price to pay to have a successful and happy marriage?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

There are three main phases of the marriage life. There is first of all the spiritual side. There is a spiritual relationship in marriage that must be maintained. Both must keep their spiritual life with the Lord in good condition. Then they must be consistent in their spiritual relationship with one another. They must be able to pray together, heart to heart, in perfect agreement. This involves being humble to one another. Two people living in close quarters can and will rub each other the wrong way many times. But as we humble ourselves and keep in touch with the Lord, grace will be given for those difficult moments. The spiritual relationship is the most important. Then there is the physical relationship. They are one flesh. Paul counsels us in our lesson that the wife does not control her body, but the husband does. And, in turn, the husband does not control his body, but the wife does. Now this does not mean that the husband is to have no control over his body. But, rather, it means that he will have more control over it than ever, because he is controlling his body and its desires with his wife in mind. In other words, her pleasure and satisfaction is what is in his mind. It is in this way that she controls his body. It is not a literal control, but rather that through the love that is in the heart of the other. This is the same relationship that Christ has with us. We are to control our lives with Jesus in mind. Thus He controls us through the love that is in our hearts for Him. The wife is not to deprive the husband of the physical embrace unless she has his concurrence or consent. Caution should be exercised on both parties that their bodily passions and strong desires do not get out of hand. A man can become a beast, demanding and running everything too far. This kind of thing will put a marriage on the rocks very soon. Then there is the domestic part of a marriage. This has to do with money, property, home life, cooking, cleaning, business, and, generally speaking, everything that has to do with the earthly and material realm of life. Sometimes a difference in culture and upbringing will cause problems. Much patience and longsuffering will need to be employed in these matters. The husband should let the wife manage the house, and not boss her, but help her what he can.

They should seek to work together in matters of business and earthly affairs that need to be seen about. Husbands are warned about being bitter toward their wives. Paul knew what he was talking about. Men can become bitter, and so can the women. Oh, this is to be greatly avoided. No matter what your companion does, there is never any just cause for becoming bitter about it. Bitterness will defile your soul. Consider these things, and may the Lord impart understanding to every one.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Our lesson today outlines the duties of marriage for both the husband and wife in order that they might have a successful life together. It must be realized that there will be problems in a marriage no matter how suitable for each other the couple might be. A marriage without the least difference is a marriage of indifference.

According to Paul's admonitions, a wife has no more right to have equal rule with the man than the man does with Christ. Many marriages end up in divorce because the woman tries to usurp authority. The story is related of the time when Prince Albert and Queen Victoria had a falling out. In wrath Prince Albert locked himself in his room. No less furious, Queen Victoria knocked to be admitted. "Who is there?" he asked. "The Queen of England" was the answer. He did not move, and again there was a hail of knocks. The question and the answer were repeated many times, but at last there was a pause, and then a gentle knocking. "Who is there?" came once again. This time the reply was different. "Your wife, Albert." The door was opened immediately.

A husband is enjoined to love his wife as Christ loved the Church. To dominate is not to love, but is selfishness. Some men seem to have the calloused mentality of the husband who remarked as the ambulance took his wife away to the mental hospital, "I can't for the life of me understand what is wrong. Why, she hasn't been out of the kitchen for twenty years."

It is vital to a marriage for a husband and wife to express their love for each other. It makes the marriage go smoother and there are a lot less regrets. One man wrote in his diary, after his wife died, "Oh, if I could see her once more to let her know that I always loved her . . . She never did know it."

Perhaps the greatest key to a successful marriage is the fact that the closer you are to the heart of God, the closer you will be to one another.

—Wayne Murphey

HOW IS THIS FOR A SUBMISSIVE WIFE?

A married woman was effectively called by divine grace, and became an exemplary Christian, but her husband was a lover of sinful pleasure. When spending an evening as usual with his jovial companions at a tavern, the conversation happened to turn on the excellencies and faults of their wives. The husband just mentioned pronounced the highest praises of his wife, saying she was all that was excellent, only she was religious. "Notwithstanding which," said he, "such is the command she has of her temper, that were I to take you, gentlemen, home with me at midnight and order her to rise and get you a supper, she would be all submission and cheerfulness!"

The company regarded this merely as a vain boast, and dared him to make the experiment by a considerable sized bet. The bargain was made, and about midnight the company adjourned as proposed.

Upon being admitted to the house: "Where is the madam?" said the husband to the maid servant who sat up for him.

"She is gone to bed, sir."

"Call her up," said he. "Tell her I have brought some friends home with me, and desire she would get up and prepare them a supper."

The good woman obeyed the unreasonable summons. She dressed, came down, and received the company with perfect civility. She told them she happened to have some chickens ready and that supper should be prepared as soon as possible.

It was accordingly served, at which time she performed the honors of the table with as much cheerfulness as if she had expected company at a proper time.

After supper the guests could not refrain from expressing their astonishment. One of them particularly, more sober than the rest, thus addressed himself to the lady: "Madam," he said, "your civility fills us all with surprise. Our unreasonable visit is in consequence of a bet, which we have certainly lost. As you are a very religious person, and cannot therefore approve of our conduct, give me leave to ask what can possibly induce you to behave with so much kindness to us?"

"Sir," she replied. "When I married, my husband and myself were both unconverted. It has pleased God to call me out of that dangerous condition. My husband continues in it. I tremble for his future state. Were he to die as he is, he must be

miserable forever. I think it therefore my duty to render his present existence as comfortable as possible."

This wise and faithful reply affected the whole company. It left a deep impression on the husband's mind. "Do you, my dear," he said, "really think I should be eternally miserable? I thank you for the warning. By the grace of God I will change my conduct."

From that time he became another man, and a good husband. We trust he saw the goodness of God and was brought to repentance and lived the rest of his days with a new heart.

—Selected

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May 24, 1987

THE INHERITANCE OF THE SAINTS IN LIGHT

I Peter 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

4 To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you,

5 Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

Ephesians 1:9 Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself:

10 That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him:

11 In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:

12 That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ.

13 In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise,

14 Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.

18 The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,

Col. 1:12 Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light:

13 Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son:

Matt. 5:5 Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.

Psalms 37:11 But the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.

Acts 20:32 And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.

Memory Verse: He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son. Rev. 21:7.

Central Thought: For those who forsake sin and this present evil world is given an eternal inheritance, the pledge of which is revealed in the indwelling Holy Spirit, and the full reception thereof shall be at the end of the world in eternity.

Word Definitions: "*Dispensation of the fulness of times*": The word dispensation here means the giving out, or distributing and administrating of the grace of God in this gospel day. The Greek word is the basis of our word "economy" and is also translated "stewardship" in other places. *Earnest*: The Greek word for this means a pledge, part of the purchase-money or property given in advance as security for the rest. *Meet*: Fit or qualified. *Earth*: More properly rendered "land."

LESSON BACKGROUND

An inheritance is a gift or a bequest, a grant that comes from one who wills to bestow such favors and blessings upon a specified person or persons. People are thrilled and excited and full of joy when some rich ancestor names them in their will to receive wealth or property. Usually upon the death of the testator, or the one who makes the will, the inheritance is bestowed. And what a blessing that this is done and carried out in this life. We are studying today concerning an inheritance that goes far beyond what grandfather, uncle, or aunt could ever leave us. It is the inheritance of the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ. According to these Scriptures, we that receive Christ and follow Him all the way will share in this wonderful inheritance. Through the resurrection of Jesus Christ we are raised from the dead state of sin unto a living hope of an inheritance that is reserved in heaven for us. We receive the earnest, or pledge, of this inheritance when we are sealed with the Holy Spirit after we are saved. The Holy Spirit working in our life consists of the same life, substance, and eternal things that make up what we will receive in Glory. The Holy Spirit, living and abiding in the soul, is the true inheritance of the saints in light. He is the promise of the Father that comes to us through Christ. Through the Holy Spirit we are sanctified. The Holy Spirit is a fulfillment of the land of Canaan, which was the inheritance of Israel. When Jesus said that the meek would inherit the earth, He was referring to this spiritual inheritance, and not this literal earth, which will pass away. We who partake of the life of Christ in the Holy

Spirit will be accounted worthy to inhabit that blessed world to come, the new heaven and the new earth. That will be our inheritance forever. What a glorious privilege it is to be a partaker of this inheritance now in sanctification and to possess a living hope of sharing it all with Christ forever in glory!

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What kind of inheritance are we begotten to?
2. Who is it reserved for?
3. What is God's purpose in the economy of the grace of Christ in this fulness of times?
4. How is the Holy Spirit the earnest of our inheritance?
5. What do we need in order to be able to see and to know the riches of this inheritance?
6. Can you name some of the things that must take place in our lives before we can be meet to be a partaker of this inheritance?
7. Did Jesus mean this literal earth when He said that the meek would inherit the earth?
8. What was He really referring to?
9. What does "inheriting the land" mean to us?
10. What is the inheritance among all them which are sanctified?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

Oh, how rejoicing our hearts are as we contemplate and survey our glorious inheritance in Christ! When we were unsaved and dead in trespasses and sins we were unaware of the riches that we were doing without. Our hearts were so blinded! But, oh, when we gave our hearts to Jesus and started living that meek and lowly life in conformity to His blessed holiness, we were illuminated by light from the eternal world, and we were made fully aware of the wonderful wealth, the unsearchable riches of Christ. Now, the things of this material world have dimmed and lost their value. We have found a richer treasure, one that fadeth not away. How much better it is to seek to qualify for eternal blessings that are so freely willed to us of God! This world and all of its commodities will vanish like mist before the dawn when Jesus comes again. It will all melt away into nothing at the face of His glorious appearing. Only one thing will endure, and that is this everlasting inheritance that we are studying about on this

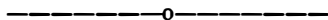
day. But we do not have to wait until the end of the world to enjoy this inheritance! God has promised to every believer the gift of the Holy Spirit. We do not receive the Holy Spirit in His fulness when we are first saved. But when we come in faith before the Lord, seeking Him with all of our hearts, consecrating all upon the altar of sacrifice and service to Him, God responds to our need by pouring out the Holy Spirit into our lives. And, oh, there is no earthly value that will come up to this. The Holy Spirit living and abiding with us is the greatest blessing we can ever have in this life. He will enable us to live for God and be victorious over all the works of the devil. And, when our short life here is through, we will embrace the fulness of the great inheritance of the saints and enjoy it with them and the Lord forever and ever! —Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

“Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.” We could write extensively about the beauties of the inheritance of the saints, but that which should thrill our souls is that we can be made worthy to receive it. It would be of little value to discuss something that we had no hope of ever obtaining. All thanks and praise goes to the Father and His Son, Jesus, that we can enjoy the benefits of a wonderful salvation.

A scoffing infidel, of considerable talents, was once in the company of a person who did not possess much of this world’s education, but was a real Christian. Supposing, no doubt, that he should obtain an easy triumph in the display of his ungodly wit, he put the following question to him: “I understand, sir, that you expect to go to heaven when you die. Can you tell me what sort of place heaven is?” “Yes, sir,” replied the Christian, “heaven is a prepared place for a prepared people; and if your soul is not prepared for it, with all your boasted wisdom you will never enter there.” We should be challenged to have our eyes of understanding opened so that we will know what is the hope of God’s calling and be prepared to be a partaker of God’s inheritance.

—Wayne Murphey



May 31, 1987

CASTING ALL YOUR CARE UPON HIM

Luke 12:22 And he said unto his disciples, Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat; neither for the body, what ye shall put on.

23 The life is more than meat, and the body is more than raiment.

24 Consider the ravens: for they neither sow nor reap; which neither have storehouse nor barn; and God feedeth them: how much more are ye better than the fowls?

25 And which of you with taking thought can add to his stature one cubit?

26 If ye then be not able to do that thing which is least, why take ye thought for the rest?

27 Consider the lilies how they grow: they toil not, they spin not; and yet I say unto you, that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

28 If then God so clothe the grass, which is to day in the field, and to morrow is cast into the oven; how much more will he clothe you, O ye of little faith?

29 And seek not ye what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, neither be ye of doubtful mind.

30 "For all these things do the nations of the world seek after: and your Father knoweth that ye have need of these things.

31 But rather seek ye the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you.

Luke 8:14 And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to perfection.

Luke 21:34 And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares.

35 For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth.

36 Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.

I Peter 5:6 Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time:

7 Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.

Memory Verse: Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee: he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved. Psalm 55:22.

Central Thought: Our Heavenly Father has great care and concern for every phase of our lives, and has promised to provide all of our needs if we will but trust and obey Him.

Word Definitions: *Overcharged:* weighted down or burdened. *Surfeiting:* too much, excess, extreme indulgence in fleshly appetites. *"Casting all your care":* This word "care" in the Greek means distractions and solicitous matters that pertain to this present life. *"For He careth for you":* This care in the Greek means interest or concern.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Life in general is attended with many cares. It was the desire of our Saviour to get it across to His disciples and to us that God knows, understands, and is concerned with the legitimate cares of this life. There are not only legitimate, or lawful, cares, but there are also overburdening cares that we can become so heavy laden with that will choke out the place that the Word of God should have in our hearts and lives. When Jesus said to take no thought for your life, He meant to not allow it to be a heavy burden or to be anxious about it. He said this because He would have us to know that the Heavenly Father, the One who created us and brought us into this life, really is dutiful in His concern for us to supply every need that we have. We are including what Jesus said about these things from Luke's Gospel. I am sure that Jesus spoke similar words to these and gave forth this lesson of trusting in God's care for us many times and in many places. It was a needed message then, and it is surely a needed message now. Look around you and see the heavy load that many are caring for from day to day. Their hearts and minds are so anxious and worried about their financial state that they have no place in their hearts for spiritual blessings or interests in eternal values. They are literally taken up with the fleeting things of this life of vanity. The sad thing is that it will (if not corrected) render them not prepared for the Lord's coming. Oh, what a privilege to humble ourselves under God's hand of love, and know that we do not have to worry about anything, for God has promised to care for us and see to it that every need we have will be supplied in due season.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What are some of the cares that we have as human beings?
2. How does the Lord want us to handle these cares?
3. What will the cares of life have a tendency to do to us?
4. How can we keep from allowing the cares of life to weigh us down?
5. How does God feel about the cares that we have in this world?
6. What does He want us to be more concerned about than earthly cares?
7. Does Satan have any advantage in causing us to doubt God's interest in our cares?
8. What did Jesus compare us with as being the objects of God's care?
9. What kind of food does a raven eat?
10. How well are the lilies of the field dressed?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

I heard about some people who picked up a traveler and let him ride in the back of their pick-up truck. The man had a little bundle tied to a stick that he carried over his shoulder. They noticed that as they carried the man down the road he continued to keep the stick on his shoulder. The pick-up was carrying both him and his burden, but still he carried his burden. That is like many people and some of us. The Lord is carrying us and our burdens, but we insist on carrying our burdens, too. We do not cast them on Him as we should. We are the ones to blame for this. We let the Lord carry us, but we do not let Him carry our cares and burdens of life. Oh, the Lord wants us to be free from all care. He wants us to devote our time and hearts strings principally to Him. He knows that we have these cares to see about, but He does not want us to be overburdened with them. Yes, we will have to work, and tend to the duties and responsibilities of life. But things in this world have a way of going beyond what is needful and beneficial. The main thought of our lesson is that God cares. God cares that we have to have food to sustain our bodies and clothes to cover them from the elements and for modesty's sake. He knows and cares that we have to have a roof over our heads, a place to live. And He also is interested that we have things to do with in the home and on the job. He knows that there are taxes to be paid, upkeep on our houses and automobiles and such like. Therefore He has promised to not leave

us nor forsake us, but rather to faithfully attend to our every need. How wonderful is our Heavenly Father! How thankful we should be for everything He provides and works out for us! Let us allow Him that place that He so much desires and let us give ourselves to His will and attend upon Him without being distracted by the cares of this life.

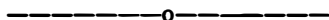
—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Providence decrees that everyone will have their burdens. There will be times in life when it seems everything is going our way. At other times, everything will go against us. The Greeks symbolized Providence as a wheel. Their foundation for that philosophy comes from a story of two kings who were at war with each other. Finally one king triumphed over the other. The victor bound the loser to his chariot and started down the road. As the conquered king walked along with the chariot, he watched the wheel going around. He would look at the wheel and frown. Next he would look at the king in the chariot and smile. Noticing this, the king asked him what he was smiling about. He replied, "I was thinking how this wheel is like our lives. Today you are at the top, but tomorrow you may be at the bottom biting the dust and I will be at the top." This is so true of life and why we need so desperately to have someone we can cast our cares upon.

The story is told of a woman who climbed on a train and continued to hold her heavy burden as the train sped along the rails. A conductor, noticing her, said: "Madam, if you will set your burden down, the train will carry both you and it." The song says, "Oh, what needless pain we bear. All because we do not carry everything to God in prayer."

—Wayne Murphey



June 7, 1987

WITH JESUS

Col. 2:18 Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind,

19 And not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God.

20 Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances,

21 (Touch not; taste not; handle not;

22 Which all are to perish with the using;) after the commandments and doctrines of men?

23 Which things have indeed a shew of wisdom in will-worship, and humility, and neglecting of the body; not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh.

3:1 If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.

2 Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.

3 For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.

4 When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.

II Timothy 2:11 It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him:

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

I Thess. 5:9 For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ,

10 Who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him.

I Thess. 4:16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

17 Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

Memory Verse: To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne. Rev. 3:21.

Central Thought: If we will fellowship Christ now in His grace, life, holiness, and suffering we will be with Him in the glory of His resurrection when He comes again.

Word Definitions: *Voluntary humility:* pretended humility exercised to have or make a good impression. *Will-worship:* self devised worship not really inspired by the Spirit of God. *"Not in any honour to the satisfying of the flesh":* The apostle's meaning seems to indicate that while some people put on a big show and outwardly seem to be worshippers of God through their severe bodily discipline, etc., it can be in reality merely the flesh craving for attention and recognition.

LESSON BACKGROUND

We see in our lesson today the importance and blessing of fellowship with Christ. We are to die with Him from the rudiments, or elements of this present world. Christ has died to everything carnal, material, and fleshly. He takes no pleasure in the physical and worldly vanities that the unregenerated go after. He has died to the law spirit and to every man made religious system that can be invented. It means much for us to die with Him to these things. We are to be dead with Him from the pleasures and lusts of this world. We are to be dead to human praise and honor. It really means something to be dead with Christ. We will still be alive as human beings, but our affections and joys are centered on things above. We are dead and our life is hid with Christ in God. Paul said in another place that he was crucified with Christ: nevertheless he lived; yet it was not him, but it was Christ that lived in him. Gal. 2:20. Jesus wanted His disciples to be with Him. He prayed to the Father in John 17:24, "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world." It is a heart-ravishing thought to think of being with Jesus in eternal glory! But let us remember that we must first be with Him now and here in His grace and suffering. Let us press closer to Him and make our calling and election sure that we are truly WITH Him in every thing.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. Is it possible for a person to be very religious and not possess the life of Christ?

2. What does the Head minister to the Body and by what means?
3. How can we intrude into things which we have not seen?
4. What are we to be dead with Christ from?
5. If we are dead with Christ, what else are we with Christ?
6. If we are risen with Christ, what are we to seek after?
7. Where are we to set our affections?
8. If we are hid with Christ in God, what kind of life will we live?
9. If Christ is our life, where will we be when He appears in glory?
10. How can we hope to reign with Jesus in eternal glory?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

What a wonderful experience to be with Jesus! How blessed when His Spirit inspires and comforts our hearts and we feel His presence and hear His sweet voice talking to our hearts! We want to walk with Him so that He will walk with us. The fellowship of Christ is the highest joy we can experience in this life. It is more than just a religion. The world has much religion. But it is going to take being in contact with Jesus to really make a go with God. From Christ through the members of His body flows spiritual substance to nourish those who really are with Him. To be with Jesus is to agree with His ways, His word, His life and teachings. Jesus spoke to some in this way, "Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things that I say?" Luke 6:46. Amos, the prophet, asked: Can two walk together, except they be agreed? Amos 3:3. We must fellowship Christ in His sufferings and in the shame and reproach of His cross. We cannot expect to share in the eternal glory with Jesus if we are not with Him now in the thorns of the narrow way. If we are not willing to die to this world and its pleasures, styles, fads, lust, and greed, we cannot walk with Christ in the Spirit. To live with Christ means that we are to be dead with Him. We must share in His rejection of the world and the sufferings that He suffered. To draw back from suffering with the Lord is to forfeit the share of His eternal riches in heaven. How we need to guard our affections! God will put us to the test to see where our real affections are centered. Many today profess Christ, whose heart-strings are wrapped around some earthly idol, not willing to surrender it up for Christ. We are not with Jesus unless we are with Him in every sense and all the way. Where Jesus is, there will His

disciples be, also. Let us seek to ever be with the Lord now and thus shall we ever be with Him in glory.—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

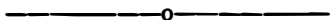
In order to fellowship Christ in this life, we must be humble. There is no room or need in a body for two heads. We must learn how to be lowly members and accept commands. Even Christ, as a son, learned obedience by the things which He suffered. (Heb. 5:8). It is easy to put on a front of humility, which Paul called voluntary humility, but true humility sometimes is rather hard to come by. However, if we are honest hearted, God knows exactly how to keep us humble.

Adam Clark quotes a paraphrase of Col. 2:18, that says, "Let no man spoil you of the prize adjudged to you, who delights in mortifying his body, and walking with the apparent modesty of an angel, affecting superior sanctity in order to gain disciples; intruding into things which he has not seen; and, notwithstanding his apparent humility, his mind is carnal, and he is puffed up with a sense of his superior knowledge and piety."

This is not the type of life to lead if we hope to reign with Christ. We will have to overcome pride in whatever form it takes. If we hold ourselves aloof from others we will find that we are out of fellowship with Christ.

The yoke of Christ is easy, but what little we do have to suffer for the gospel's sake, will be well worth it when we leave this world behind to meet Him in the clouds. That will be the beginning of an eternal reign of bliss with the Lord.

—Wayne Murphey



June 14, 1987

JESUS CHRIST, THE SOLID ROCK

Matthew 16:13 When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I, the Son of man, am?

14 And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist; some, Elijah; and others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets.

15 He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am?

16 And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.

17 And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.

18 And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

Matthew 7:24 Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock:

25 And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock.

26 And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand:

27 And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it.

I Peter 2:4 To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious,

5 Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

6 Wherefore also it is contained in the Scripture, Behold, I lay in Zion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded.

7 Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner,

8 And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed.

Memory Verse: Thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste. Isaiah 28:16.

Central Thought: Because Jesus was faithful and obedient to God and solid for that which was acceptable in God's sight, and according to God's prophecy, He was made the Head Stone, or Foundation, of the Church, becoming a solid Rock for us to build our experience upon.

Word Definitions: *Simon Bar-Jona:* Simon, son of Jona. *Elect:* choice. *Precious:* valuable, costly, rare, dear.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Jesus wanted to hear from His disciples an expression of their understanding of Him. He also wanted to show the difference in mere speculation and human judgment and that of divine inspiration and revelation. The proof of man's error lies in the multitude of his varied opinions and counsel. People do vary in their opinions because of the limitation of their mortal understanding. "But there is a spirit in man: and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding." Job 32:8. The Christ that is revealed to the heart of man from the Father through the Holy Spirit is that solid Rock that the Church is built upon. When something is revealed to the humble, lowly heart of the earnest child of God, it is fixed so solidly upon his life and he is so persuaded of its truth and value, that no power in earth or hell can move it from him. In a more practical sense, we have included Christ's discourse which concluded the sermon on the Mount where He likened those who heard and obeyed His sayings to wise builders upon the rock. This is how we build upon Christ, by hearing and obeying His Word. To profess to believe in Christ and to refuse to keep His holy Word is utter hypocrisy and a vain faith. Peter quotes and refers to three different Old Testament prophecies, all three of which foretell Christ as a Stone. He referred first to Psalm 118:22 which says: The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner. Jesus Himself quoted this text in connection with his parable concerning the vineyard which is cited in Matthew, Mark, and Luke. Concerning the thought of God taking the vineyard away from Israel and giving it to the Gentiles, Jesus quoted this Scripture and added, "And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind

him to powder." Matthew 21:44. Peter also quotes from Isaiah 8:14, where Christ is prophesied to be a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense. Uniting these three prophecies into one solemn truth, we are exhorted to build upon Jesus Christ, and become lively stones in the Church of God.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. How did Peter know that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the Living God?
2. What was the Rock that Jesus said He would build His Church upon?
3. How do we build upon Christ?
4. What are some of the pressures and adversities that will assail our faith?
5. What else do people often build upon besides Christ?
6. Can you name the principle reason why Christ is disallowed, or rejected, of men?
7. Who is Christ precious to?
8. To whom is He a stumbling-block?
9. Does God want people to stumble at His Word?
10. Why did God fix it so that people would stumble at His Word?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

How wonderful that we have a solid Rock to build upon today! As we look around us and see so many vain and uncertain things that people are building upon, we are sick at heart to foresee the awful disappointment that they are sure to have if they do not change. The pleasures and treasures of this life captivate many. They seem not to realize that this life is just a fleeting day. They toil, they scrape, they scheme, and all their endeavor is but sinking sand. But, oh, Jesus offers Himself for us to build our lives upon! Jesus is true, wise, faithful, kind, gracious, strong, and well able to meet every need of our life. Why do people reject Him and cast Him aside? It is because of the vanity and pride of their hearts that will not submit to the ways of the Lord. We are all born with this disposition. It is a miracle of love and grace that anyone turns to the Lord to be saved. Jesus is a solid Rock, a sure foundation to build upon. But to many He is a stone of stumbling and a Rock of offense. Instead of humbling down and applying the heart to know and to serve the Lord, many a person stumbles at the Word and draws back in disobedience. Because

he looks at things from a human standpoint of view, or in the eyes of the carnal mind, the way of the Lord is despised. The pull of the fleshly lusts and the influence from those around him who walk in the night: all of this keeps the soul back in the shadows. Deep inside he knows that he needs God and to be saved, but he keeps stumbling over what Jesus is requiring and Satan fills his heart with thoughts that it is too much and he cannot come up to it. But there are a few who will press over the offense of the cross, behold Christ in His beauty, and build upon Him a spiritual house to stand forever.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The thirst of Israel was quenched by water from a rock. (Ex. 17:1-6). They got their thirst quenched from the least suspected source. Today we often get our blessings from the place that we least expect them.

That Rock was Christ. That Rock followed them or went with them. From Christ there is a continuous supply of help. The mercy of Jesus Christ will never leave a trustful soul. Goodness and mercy follow them all the days of their life.

Christ, the Rock, was smitten. He was bruised. He bore the penalties of a broken law. God spared Him not. He died on the cross and arose again for our salvation. When they pierced His side, out flowed blood and water. "And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb." "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely." Revelation 22:1, 17. All who will drink of that water and be washed from their sins by the blood of the Lamb shall be in the church that Jesus built. The gates of hell shall not prevail against it. Thank God for the church triumphant! We become "lively stones" in that "spiritual house." We are made alive and quickened from being in a dead state of sin. Our hearts are full of praise and love for God and all mankind. Through our lives and from our hearts we offer up "spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ." That Rock is precious to all who believe on Him. But to those who will not believe He becomes a "rock of offense." They will not drink of the water of life. They are rebellious. They will be lost. Thank God for those who become His chosen, or "peculiar people."

—M. Miles

(Written in 1973)

June 21, 1987

LOVE FOR JESUS

Psalm 116:1 I love the Lord, because he hath heard my voice and my supplications.

2 Because he hath inclined his ear unto me, therefore will I call upon him as long as I live.

Psalm 18:1 I will love thee, O Lord, my strength.

2 The Lord is my rock, my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower.

Psalm 2:12 Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish from the way, when his wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in him.

Ephesians 5:1 Be ye therefore followers of God, as dear children;

2 And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweetsmelling savor.

I Cor. 6:17 But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit.

Phil. 3:7 But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ.

8 Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ,

9 And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith:

10 That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death;

I John 4:16 And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.

17 Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world.

18 There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.

19 We love him, because he first loved us.

20 If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a

liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?

Memory Verse: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength. Mark 12:30.

Central Thought: Beholding the love, goodness, and beauty of Christ, we are won to love Him supremely above everything; to follow, obey, worship, serve, and honor Him all the days of our mortal life, anticipating with joy our eternal dwelling with Him in heaven.

Word Definitions: *Buckler:* shield, or protector. *Kiss the Son:* embrace, receive instruction, worship purely, join to or attach one's self to.

LESSON BACKGROUND

We include in our lesson today the expressions of David, Paul, and the beloved disciple, John. David was won to a love for Jehovah from a youth. He observed the goodness of God as he heard the account of His workings of old with Israel, and saw that to love and serve God was the only sure way to happiness and true joy. He began to seek God and as God responded to David's outreach toward Him, David began to experience blessings manifold. The effect was with him like it is to anyone who sets his love upon God to seek and to serve Him. Love and worship swelled up in his innermost being. He began to express it in songs and poetry. He endeavored to live up to his love for the Lord, and, although he sinned at times and failed the Lord, there still was that deep earnest love in his heart for God. The apostle Paul at one time hated Christ because he counted Jesus a deceiver and a fraud. But when he was made aware that Jesus was the very Christ, the Saviour of the world, he bowed down before Him and was willing to go wherever Christ would lead. John, who leaned upon Christ's bosom at supper, possessed a deep and reverent love for Christ. He beheld in Jesus the fulfillment of every aspiration of his great heart. And we think of others. We think of the woman who washed Jesus' feet with her tears, drying them with the hairs of her head, anointing them with the costly ointment. She loved much, and Jesus recognized that. There was Peter who was asked three times after Christ's resurrection (who before had denied the Lord) if he loved Jesus. After affirming that he did love the Lord, he was given the charge

to prove his love by feeding the Lord's sheep and lambs. There is a love and deep affection that must be in the heart of man before he can really successfully live for the Lord.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What were some of the reasons David loved the Lord?
2. Is it possible for God to show His love and man not be aware of it?
3. Who does the love of Christ appeal to?
4. Why should we embrace Christ, worship Him, and give Him our lives?
5. What did He do for us that no one else could do?
6. How can we know that we really do love Christ?
7. What kind of effect will loving Christ have upon our every day life and our feelings and dealings with our fellow man?
8. How can we be dear unto God?
9. We are joined unto the Lord by what means and in what way?
10. What does our love for Christ cause us to desire concerning Him?
11. What does our love for Christ do with regard to us facing the Judgment?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

There are many people today who have not really fallen in love with Jesus Christ. They believe in Him, in a certain sense, but they have never been made aware deep in their hearts of how warm, real, tender, loving, and gracious that He really is. They have not been made keenly aware of His reality and person. It is because their hearts are so fondly wrapped around the earthly realm of life, and the love of Christ is not permitted to work within. How we need to hear the gospel and let the Spirit of God reveal Him to our hearts! When we see and understand how great, wonderful, blessed, lovely, gracious, kind, patient, tender, peaceful, gentle, wise, helpful, and sweet Jesus is, we will be won to love, worship, and serve Him the rest of our lives. I think of a sinner who is captivated by the devil and doomed to eternal night. He is full of fear and sorrow. He realizes that he needs help desperately. Then he looks up to Jesus and calls upon Him for mercy and salvation. As he looks earnestly, believing and turning from every sin, the grace of God takes hold and a witness is given that his

sins are gone and that Jesus accepts him into His fold. Oh, what joy fills the heart, and what love and devotion is begotten within for that Lord and Saviour who has heard his voice and supplication! This same love is to be guarded and kept faithfully until death. This first love of devotion and affection for Christ must never get away from a person. Through prayer, humility, faithfulness, and steadfast obedience, we can live our lives here below loving Him whom we have not seen, believing, and that with joy unspeakable and full of glory! Our love for Christ is the joy of our life, lifting us up above the shadows and sustaining us in every trial we face. Let us continue to love and adore our Lord and Saviour, love one another and the souls of men, and our lives will be happy and blessed always.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

“We love Him, because He first loved us.” It is much easier to love someone who loves back. If you give a child a doll, they will take it and love it and have a good time, but it will not be long until the doll will be set aside for something else. The doll cannot return affection. It becomes tiring to always be on the giving side of a relationship and never receive. God’s love could be likened unto a mother and her small child. There is a bond between the two that was nurtured when the child did not know what love was all about. A mother will love her baby and gladly sacrifice to meet all of its needs with the idea that the child will someday come to the realization of what has been done for it, and love her in return. This is what God does toward men. He loves and blesses even sinners with the hope that someday a realization will awaken within them and they will return His love.

“If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar . . .” There is much truth in this statement. Notice this illustration and see if you can relate to it. Once, a boy, after months of bashfulness, finally said to the girl he loved, “I have been loving you for a long time. I can’t talk much, but will you be my wife?” She replied, “Yes, John, I have been loving you, too. I’ll be happy to be your wife.” Late that night when John thought he was alone, he looked up at the stars contentedly and was heard to say, “O Lord, I don’t have anything against anybody now.” If we are caught up in the love of God, we are not so touchy about what others do to us.

—Wayne Murphey

June 28, 1987

BEFORE THE LORD

Psalm 89:14 Justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne: mercy and truth shall go before thy face.

15 Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound: they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of thy countenance.

16 In thy name shall they rejoice all the day: and in thy righteousness shall they be exalted.

Psalm 95:6 O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the Lord our maker.

Psalm 6:2 Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto him with psalms.

Psalm 96:9 O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness: fear before him, all the earth.

Psalm 116:9 I will walk before the Lord in the land of the living.

Luke 21:34 And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares.

35 For as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth.

36 Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man.

Rev. 7:9 After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands;

10 And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.

13 And one of the elders answered, saying unto me, What are these which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they?

14 And I said unto him, Sir, thou knowest. And he said to me, These are they which came out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

15 Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them.

Memory Verse: That he would grant unto us, that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve

him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our life. Luke 1:74, 75.

Central Thought: Only the humble soul who is washed in the blood of Jesus, who fears and trembles at God's Word, who lovingly obeys His precious commandments, and who keeps himself from the vanities of this present evil world will be able to stand before the Lord and abide forever in His presence.

LESSON BACKGROUND

Along with the Scriptures in our lesson are many more that express the blessedness and the seriousness of being accounted worthy of standing before the Lord. Sin and evil and pride cannot stand before God. The sinners will not stand in the congregation of the righteous, nor shall the ungodly stand in the Judgment. (Psalm 1:5) The Lord is of purer eyes than the behold evil with any favor, and cannot look on iniquity with any degree of acceptance. (Hab. 1:13) Although He bears with the souls of men in merciful ways, yet when it comes to what is accepted with Him, and what will stand approved before Him, we must be diligent to serve Him acceptably with reverence and godly fear. For our God is a consuming fire. Heb. 12:28, 29. We read in Psalm 24:3-5: "Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? or who shall stand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully. He shall receive the blessing of the Lord, and righteousness from the God of his salvation." Ecclesiastes 8:12 declares: "Though a sinner do evil an hundred times, and his days be prolonged, yet surely I know that it shall be well with them that fear God. which fear before him." It will mean so much for us to avail before God. What a beautiful scene we have in the Revelation of John when this great host of the redeemed of all ages stood before the throne of God. In Rev. 4:6 there was seen before the throne of God a sea of glass like unto crystal. And in the fifteenth chapter and verse two it says that this sea of glass was mingled with fire. Since both of these scenes presents something before the throne, then we can be assured that they are in RELATION to each other and in accord. The sea of glass represents the pure, unadulterated Word of God, the gospel and teachings of Jesus Christ, the only true doctrine that is accepted before God. The fire represents the Holy Spirit. This was a living reality in the hearts of this great multitude before the throne. His laws are in our hearts and we

live up to them because He works it within. Thus we can be always before the throne of God, serving Him day and night in His temple, and can live always so that we will be accounted worthy to stand before Him in that last great day.

—Leslie C. Busbee

QUESTIONS:

1. What is the habitation of God's throne, and what goes before His face?
2. What kind of sound is heard that proceeds from the throne, and who can hear it?
3. In what manner should we attempt to come before the Lord? What makes one feel like kneeling?
4. Is it acceptable to come before God with joy and thanksgiving and song?
5. What kind of beauty does God look for in our worship to Him?
6. What kind of walk should we have before the Lord in the land of the living?
7. What is it that we have to guard our lives from so that we will not fail to be able to stand before Him?
8. How should we feel about the thought of coming before the Judgment Seat of Christ?
9. What is the cleansing agent that will enable us to stand before the throne?
10. What is it that will keep us from approaching unto God?

ADULTS' AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S COMMENTS

Oh, to be able to stand before the Lord in that last great day! That is a real serious thought. But how about the present? Can we or are we in a condition to come before the Lord and have Him accept us? If we are not, we have One who has prevailed to open the Book of Life and loose the seals, and He has made it possible that we can come before God. No man alive is able to come before the Lord on his own merits. It is the acceptable sacrifice of Jesus Christ that renders man capable to be accepted with the Lord. We must plead Jesus Christ, the righteous. (I John 2:1). He has prevailed to atone for our sins and to bring the mercy of God down to us. Now we can come before the Lord with confidence because we know that Jesus has purchased passage for us, and we can gain an entrance to the throne room of the Almighty God and come to worship and to bow down before the Lord, our Maker. Is this not beautiful and blessed? In the presence of the Lord with our

sins gone and our hearts purged from the old leaven of malice and wickedness, we can draw nigh to God. We come not in the flesh, but in the Spirit. In the flesh we are far off and full of despair of ever ascending up to heaven to appear before God. But in the Spirit each and every one of us has the blessed invitation to come to God and to present ourselves before Him. Let us remember, that, as it was in the days of Job, when the sons of God came together to present themselves before the Lord, the devil came also. Let us be on our guard to resist the devil and cling to the precious promises of this our Lord and Saviour, that we can draw near and come before the Lord with thanksgiving, singing, praise, honor, worship, and an unwavering faith. Let us avail ourselves of this blessed privilege to come before the Lord and live in the light of His countenance.

—Leslie C. Busbee

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

“Justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne . . .” Anytime an organization is founded, it is done on certain principles. The instigation for the establishment of this country was, and still purported to be, freedom for all people. The founding qualities of God’s throne are justice and judgment. If we view God’s passion for justice and judgment in the light of man’s fallen condition and his frailty to live holy, it brings a real terror to our soul. When we read the rest of this verse and find that mercy and truth go before His face, it tempers His austere justice and judgment. Then, instead of fear, it simply brings a carefulness within us and in our walk before Him. No wonder the Psalmist said, “Blessed is the people that know the joyful sound.” When we experience God’s mercy and behold His truth, it brings good tidings of great joy.

There is coming a day when we will stand before God and His mercy will be gone and the day of salvation past. There will be nothing to temper the edge of His judgment then. That will be a time of great terror for the ungodly. We get a little insight into God’s wrath when we read that those who are unsaved will be cast into hell. (Matt. 22:13) To cast something shows utter contempt for it. I surely don’t want to be the recipient of such treatment. How much better it is to walk carefully before Him in this life.

No one deserves hell. We can’t do anything in life that is deserving of the eternal horror of hell, except one thing: rejecting God’s mercy and truth.

—Wayne Murphey

A REMARKABLE VISION OF HEAVEN AND HELL

By Flora Reid Coate

We are living in a day when hell is regarded, not as a reality, but as the product of a diseased imagination. If, however, those who are trying to believe in the nonexistence of a place of punishment for the wicked had been in Olivet, Illinois, one evening recently, they would have surely been convinced that they were being duped by their soul's enemy.

Among those who sat in the gallery of the University Chapel Tuesday evening (Nov. 30), while Brother Gaar, the pastor, brought a soul-stirring message, was a young woman about twenty years of age. For several years she has lived in Olivet and has studied in the institution. She has always been a young lady of greatest integrity and the highest moral principles.

After the service on Tuesday evening, this girl with another whose heart was moved, went to the study hall. They were followed by some of the workers, who encouraged them to seek the Lord. When urged to pray, the young woman previously referred to, replied, "It's too late. God will not hear me." In her eyes was a look of horror and bitter anguish, which seemed to gradually increase. Presently in a terrified voice, she cried, "Oh, they're coming! They're coming! Don't let them take me!" The whole room seemed permeated with an evil presence. One could feel the very breath of hell and the horrible blighting influence of the prince of darkness. The despairing wails of the terrified girl were enough to curdle one's blood. She sat there with a look of horror on her face, occasionally wringing her hands and tearing her hair, thus giving evidence of the awful agony through which her soul was passing. From time to time she cried out sharply, and seemed to be struggling with an antagonist who was visible only to her. Over and over again she moaned, "I'm lost! I'm lost!" or shrieked in a voice shrill with terror, "I'm in hell! I hear them wailing! Oh, those wails! Those flames!" When urged to pray, to call on God for mercy, she replied, "I can't pray! I can't even speak His name!"

She suddenly started up, and tried to get away from those who were trying to help her. They restrained her, even though she pleaded, "Let me go! Let me go home!" Finally she was prevailed upon to remain. An altar was improvised in the upper hall, and all those in the company about her who knew how to pray began calling on God in her behalf, while those

who could not pray looked on the scene with feelings to which their faces were an easy index. Some of the latter found a place to kneel, and cried aloud to God for mercy.

For some time the girl continued in terrible agony of soul. Brother Gaar and others tried to speak to her of hope, but she replied, "There is no hope! It's too late! I'm lost!" Then with eyes filled with terror she would cry out and cover her face with her hands to blot out the horrible sight which presented itself to her.

Meanwhile, God put such a tremendous burden on two of the students that their cries and groans mingled with those of the wretched girl. A mighty volume of prayer went up in behalf of this lost soul, and the God of heaven hearkened and heard. Presently she began to gaze steadily upward, the awful look of misery and horror left her eyes, giving away to one of comparative peace. Then she said beseechingly, "Is there any hope?" Being assured there was, she breathed a little prayer, "Oh, God, come back to my heart!" The spell which had bound her was broken; the demon power was driven back; another soul was wonderfully delivered from the jaws of death. Truly, "The Lord is pitiful and of tender mercy." James 5:11. Gradually there stole over her face a look of wondrous glory and peace—indeed such a look as we have never seen before on human countenance. It glowed with a radiance not of earth, and spoke more eloquently than any words could have described of the change wrought by the mighty power of God.

Her Own Story

We have learned since from this young lady something of the experience through which she passed on that night and during the two preceding days.

On Sunday evening the Lord deeply convicted her of sin. She was so burdened with a sense of guilt that during the following night she could not rest. The next day she spent several hours alone, feeling so wretched that she wished to avoid human companionship. Although she was conscious that her feet were in the way that leads to destruction, yet she made no great effort to change her course. Finally, in order to free herself from the conviction which was tormenting her, she defied the Holy Ghost. That instant He left her; the conviction was gone, but in its stead was a feeling of such utter misery that she longed for death. "Oh!" she said, as she told us of the circumstance, "I do not know how anyone can live when once the Holy Ghost has left them."

So great was her distress that she told the Lord if He would only come back to her heart again, she would gladly let Him in. Her wretchedness increased until, on Tuesday evening, it seemed more than she could bear. It was then that the Lord, for a brief time, slipped aside the veil and gave her a glimpse of the spirit world. She stood on the brink of the pit and looked into its mirky depths, where the darkness was thick and heavy. Demons gathered about her and tried to push her down into the awful blackness; but they were restrained by an unseen power. The look of unspeakable anguish in her eyes, the wails of despair which from time to time had broken from her lips, had been an indication of her terrific struggle with the emissaries of Satan, sent to drag her soul to perdition.

She tried to tell us something of the horror of the scene upon which she looked, but declared that she had no language with which to describe it, that it was beyond the power of words to express the misery of lost souls. She saw an innumerable company of them, weeping and wailing and gnashing their teeth, tearing their hair, and digging their faces with their nails until the blood ran. The unsaved soldiers who fought in the late war were still engaged in deadly conflict and fought and bled unceasingly. The misery of all was augmented by the torments of the demons, multitudes of whom thronged the pit, while hosts of others were driven out by the master demon to bring in the souls of men. They were faithful in the discharge of this duty, and were constantly dragging in their shrieking, terrified victims, whom they threw down in the midst of that seething mass of wretchedness. The most vivid impressions made upon the mind of the girl who viewed this horrible scene was that hell was enlarging its borders to make room for the throngs who were treading that way. Constantly was the prince of devils urging his co-workers to gather activity, encouraging them to repeat, "The harvest will be great! The harvest will be great!" Lost souls were vainly trying to escape to give warning to their friends of the depths of misery which await them if they refuse the mercy of God.

This was not told to us as a continued story, but was related slowly, with frequent pauses, as the terrible scene once more presented itself to the mind of the young woman. Frequently, she cried out in anguish, and covered her eyes with her hand as if to blot out her vision. "Oh!" she cried, "I cannot even think of it for a long time lest it drive me crazy."

How merciful is our God who, even when the door of mercy seems forever closed, swings it wide to admit the

penitent soul. Time after time, it has opened to those who were standing on the very brink of destruction, and has permitted a ray of light from the glory world to penetrate the blackness that is surrounding them always. Hence, on Tuesday evening, in response to the cry of a penitent heart and the prayers of God's people, the door of heaven was opened to the one who stood on the threshold of eternal death. She caught a glimpse of the place which Jesus, almost two thousand years ago, went away to prepare for those who love Him; she saw the white light which glorified the faces of those who basked in its radiance; she saw missionaries and others, who had in the city slum done faithful service for the King, each surrounded by a little group whom God had enabled her to win to Himself from some darkened corner of earth. She saw a missionary standing in the midst of a number of African children whose little black faces were radiant with light and glory. It seemed that those who had suffered most for Jesus' sake, those who had "come up out of great tribulation," were the ones whose faces shone with the most glorious and heavenly light.

The Practical Results of The Vision

Only in rare instances does God draw aside the veil and permit a human to look upon eternal things; but in this case He undoubtedly had a purpose, part of which is apparent. The young lady to whom He gave the vision had harbored doubts as to the truth of some of the things recorded in the Bible. These doubts have been forever dispelled. She proves her faith in God and His Word, and her desire to do His will, by her absolute devotion to Him. She has the greatest horror of displeasing Him in any way, and has told us that she is praying God to let her die rather than permit her to live to disobey Him or to fail in doing His perfect will. She declared, "I would do anything, I would suffer anything rather than go to that horrible place. Indeed," she adds, "I would, if necessary, go through the world on my hands and knees rather than lose my soul."

A number, possibly all, of the students who witnessed the struggle, through which her soul passed have since sought deliverance from sin and its terrible consequences. Still another effect has been that produced on those of us who have the assurance that our own souls are safe. As we watched this girl in the throes of despair, as we listened to her wails and screams of terror, we wondered what the judgment would be, when multitudes shall hear. "Depart, ye cursed . . . I never

knew you;" and in our hearts we purposed to do our very best to try to win souls to God and heaven. Every unit of energy which God has given us, every talent with which He has endowed us, must be engaged in behalf of the lost. What we do, we must do quickly.

Let us by unremitting prayer, and by every other means which God has given us, seek to turn men and women from the path which terminates in darkness and death to the path that leads to light and life.

—The Olivet Vision

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