



The Advocate of Truth



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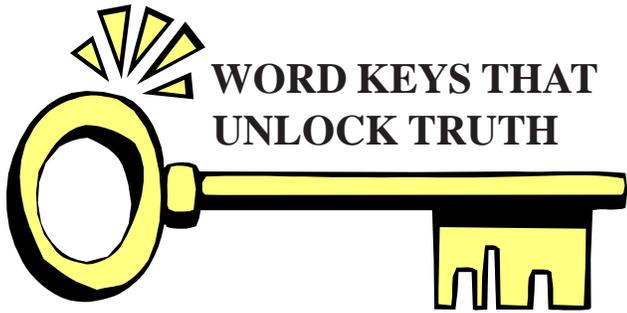
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VIGILANT

The definition of vigilant as found in Webster's Dictionary reads: staying watchful and alert to danger or trouble. I am sure most of us have connected our Word Key with watchful or alert, but have we associated it with danger or trouble? In Scripture we read, "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour" (1 Peter 5:8).

In what ways can we be vigilant? First we must realize there is a danger. We see in Genesis 3:1, "Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?" We must be aware of our danger and its traps. Satan, the serpent, the Father of all lies, the Great Deceiver is our great adversary. "And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him" (Revelation 12:9).

When we are alert, we are prepared, ready to act. We must know all we can about our adversary the Devil. We can do this by reading God's Holy Word. We must

know what to expect and how to react. We must be attentive to God's Word. We must be cautious and wary of any snares that might be lying in our path on the road of life. We must be observant and acknowledge both the presence of God and the Devil. He is as real as God and a real threat to our salvation if we are not on guard and allow him to enter our lives.

What happens when we are not on guard? The church in Sardis was warned, "Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God. Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee" (Revelation 3:2-3).

Something can be taken from us or never given to us if we are not ready, if we are not prepared. We will be like the five foolish virgins mentioned in Matthew 25, who took their lamps, and took no oil with them. The five wise virgins had taken oil in their vessels with their lamps, and when the bridegroom came, they were ready and went in with him to the marriage, and the door was shut. We read in verses 11-13, "Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not. Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh."

Let us be vigilant and be not deceived by the Devil. Let us be vigilant so we may enter into the City. "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates in to the city" (Revelation 22:14).

THE BIRTH OF THE SPIRIT

BY SEPTIMUS JOHN

"Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.

The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit" (John 3:5-8).

A spirit creature is able to move like the wind, with



no one being able to see him or even know of his presence. That's the third birth spoken of by the scriptures. Each birth does have a conception before it. We all had to have been conceived in our mother's womb before our birth into this world. When one is placed beneath the watery fluid, that is his conception of the water, and when the minister brings him up from the water, that is his birth of the water. The minister would then lay his hands upon the individual and pray that God would give him of his Holy Spirit, and if that person is properly prepared, then the Lord will place a portion of His Spirit into the heart of that individual. This is not the birth of the Spirit, because that person cannot go and come like the wind. It is simply the conception. Like a woman with child has to be careful to avoid an abortion, so likewise we with the Spirit of God have to be very careful to avoid the grieving of it. Ephesians 4:30 says: "And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption."

When one is born of the Spirit, he cannot sin any more. In I John 5:18, we read, "We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not." The Spirit of God in our hearts is to give us direction as we travel along life's journey. "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God" (Romans 8:14).

"Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: Therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is." (I John 3:1-2). John here is speaking of the birth of the Spirit, when all the saints will put on immortality, to be like Jesus is now.

Let us turn to Romans 8:22-23. "For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body."

Before the resurrection of our Lord, the Jews tried many times to kill him, but Jesus often times made His escape by mingling with the people. Luke 4:28-30 tells of one such instance. "And all they in the synagogue, when they heard these things, were filled with wrath, And rose

up, and thrust him out of the city, and led him unto the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast him down headlong. But he passing through the midst of them went his way".

And again in John 8:57-59 we read: "Then said the Jews unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham? Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, before Abraham was, I am. Then took they up stones to cast at him: but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by."

After the resurrection of the Lord, He was able to appear and disappear. He was able to go and come like the wind because He was now born of the Spirit. Luke 24:30-40 gives account of this: "And it came to pass, as he sat at meat with them, he took bread and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them. And their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight. And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures? And they rose up the same hour, and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them, Saying, The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon. And they told what things were done in the way, and how he was known of them in breaking of bread. And as they thus spake, Jesus himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit. And he said unto them, Why are ye troubled? And why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have. And when he had thus spoken, he shewed them his hands and his feet."

John chapter 20 verses 19 and 20 also have amazing information concerning the birth of the spirit. "Then the same day at evening, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. And when he had so said, he shewed unto them his hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord."

The entire body of believers have to wait until the resurrection at the last day to receive that new body, when we shall be born of the Spirit. II Corinthians 5:1-5 tells

us: "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life. Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit".

I Corinthians 15:50-54 reads: "Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of

God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I shew you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. 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."

When this will be a reality, we shall be born of the Spirit. Earthly transportation will not be necessary to carry us around anymore.



PURGATORY BEFORE DEATH

BY BOND TENNANT

The purgatory of the Dark Ages is unscriptural both in its nature and also with respect to its time relationship to the plan of God. This erroneous theory is that those not good enough to go to heaven when they die, go immediately to a purgatory of suffering, and, after being purified, go to heaven. However, the Bible teaches that both saints and sinners become unconscious when they die. They remain asleep in death until their resurrection. In the first resurrection, those who have died as saintly children of God will receive a heavenly reward. They will be united with Jesus, and, together with Him, be the rulers over this earth for a period of a thousand years.

As we have seen, the term 'purgatory' means a place, or condition of cleansing, of purging. There is much written in the Bible about Christian cleansing or purging from sin. But unlike the traditional view of purgatory, which

claims that believers pass through purgatory after death, and finally enter into heavenly bliss and glory, the Bible shows that the child of God's purgation or cleansing takes place before death. "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God" (II Corinthians 7:1). The child of God is expected to do this before he dies, not afterward! Jesus likened Himself to a vine and His followers to branches of that vine. Read John 15:1-8. Then He said that His Heavenly Father purged, or pruned the branches in order that they might bring forth more fruit. Here again is described a work of purging which takes place in the child of God before death, not afterward.

The Apostle Peter, whose word is accepted with so much authority in the Catholic Church, wrote to Chris-

tians, saying, "Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you. But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy" (I Peter 4:12-13). Here is the unmistakable mention of fire in connection with Christian experience. It has no reference to literal fire which it is alleged will torment people after death, but of the purging experiences which come to the child of God in this life.

The Apostle Paul wrote, "FOR WHOM THE LORD LOVETH HE CHASTENETH, AND SCOURGETH EVERY SON WHOM HE RECEIVETH" (Hebrews 12:6). There is nothing in this text to indicate that the scourging mentioned is to take place after death. The apostle is telling children of God what to expect in this life. If we love the Lord, and He loves us and is dealing with us, we must expect to be scourged or disciplined, in order that we might learn His will more perfectly and be trained to do it more faithfully.

Some of the purging experiences of the child of God are at the instance of the Lord, for by His kind provi-

dence His people are properly trained. But the child of God is also expected to take himself in hand and do some of the purging on a voluntary basis. Paul wrote, "But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway" (I Corinthians 9:27).

All of these passages from God's Word indicate beyond doubt that purging work must go on in the life of every follower of the Lord. The Scriptures also reveal that the great objective of this purging work is that children of God may be developed into the character likeness of their Lord. "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed for the image of his son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren" (Romans 8:28-29). There are many promises in the Bible to indicate that those who now repent of their sins, accept Jesus as their Redeemer, are baptized, and then follow faithfully in His steps of sacrifice will, in the First Resurrection, enter His holy city, the New Jerusalem, and reign with Him for a thousand years.

THE TRUE MINISTER'S AND TEACHER'S DUTY TOWARD FALSE TEACHING



The true minister faces false teaching at every turn of life. The secular world and the religious world are bombarded with false teaching. Let us see what the Scriptures say about false teaching. What is the duty of the true minister toward false teaching? Scripture is very clear on how the true minister must deal with false teaching!

The minister must make sure that he is genuine, that



he is not a false teacher nor a ravenous wolf in sheep's clothing. "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves" (Matthew 7:15). This thought might be offensive to some minister, but the minister must constantly examine himself. Let each minister ask himself: "Am I sure that I am not a false teacher, nor a ravenous wolf in sheep's clothing?":

Let us all remember this: every false prophet or teacher claims to be a minister and to be representing and teaching the truth. But he is not a true minister nor does he teach the truth of God, not the truth which God has revealed in His Son and His Holy Word.

False teachers appear in sheep's clothing. This means that they appear to be committed to Christ just like true ministers and believers. They profess to know Christ and behave just like true Christians. They claim to be called ministers, and they hold the position of ministers within churches and use Bible verses or texts for their messages. They appear to be messengers of light. "For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteous; whose end shall be according to their works" (I Corinthians 11:13-15). They appear harmless, innocent, and good. They start out as excellent examples of society, but they lack a life and a testimony changed by the Word of God.

Some false teachers are just like wolves in that they may not be what they should be. They go about doing what they know to do, not knowing that what they do is corrupt and evil. "Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit" (Matthew 7:17). They appear as sheep, but consume all they can in order to fill whatever appetite, personal conviction, or doctrine they may have.

Some false teachers are just like wolves in that they are out for self and personal gain; ego, recognition, fame, prestige, position, livelihood, career, and comfort. They are concerned primarily with realizing their own motives and purposes and with pushing their own thought and formula for succeeding in life.

Some false teachers are just like wolves in that they want a pack in which to move and with which to identify. They want a following to acknowledge their lead in intelligence and creativity or knowledge and ability. They appear as sheep, but they howl their own formulas (false gospels, crying aloud: "This is the way; walk in it." When possible, they use all the media they can; screen, radio, journal, magazines, books, newspapers, pamphlets, and tracts.

False teachers preach heresies. They proclaim justice, morality, righteousness, and good. They teach men-

tal and emotional and physical strength; self-image, self-improvement, and positive thinking. These are all high ideals and commendable ideas of men. However, they never preach the true gospel of the living Lord. "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ" (Galatians 1:6-10). "But he that is a hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep" (John 10:12). Many have not been put into the ministry by God. I Timothy 1:12 tells us that the men which God chooses are faithful. "And I thank Jesus Christ our Lord, who that enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry."

The confession and preaching of a minister is to be examined by believers. Why should believers do this? Let us let the Scriptures answer this question: "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth the Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God. And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world" (I John 4:1-3). "Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me" (John 5:39). "These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so" (Acts 17:11).

The true teacher and minister confesses Jesus. The name Jesus means Saviour. It is believing that Jesus Christ did come for God to save man, to be the Savior of the world. The true teacher and minister will confess Christ. The name Christ means Messiah, the Anointed One of God. It is believing that Jesus Christ is the promised Messiah of Scripture; that He is the Anointed Saviour sent from God to earth. This is the confession of the true min-

ister and teacher. True ministers and teachers are indwelt by the Holy Spirit. Therefore, the true minister and the true teacher will always confess the wonderful truth that "Jesus Christ is come in the flesh." Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel" (Isaiah 7:14). "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, The everlasting Father, The prince of peace" (Isaiah 9:6). "And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shall call his name JESUS" (Luke 1:31). "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth" (John 1:14). "And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world received up into glory" (I Timothy 3:16). "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage" (Hebrews 2:14-15).

The false minister and teacher does not believe that Jesus Christ is the Savior of the world. He may accept Jesus Christ as a great teacher and a great religious leader, perhaps the greatest, but he does not believe that Jesus Christ is the Savior. He believes that there are other ways to God, that other people who believe in God will be as acceptable to God as a follower of Jesus Christ.

The false minister and teacher does not believe that Jesus is the Christ, the promised Messiah and Anointed One from God. He doesn't believe that the Scriptures are the inspired Word of God. He accepts them only as the writings of great religious people of the past. Therefore, there are no prophetic promises of a Messiah, no promise of a coming Saviour. To the false minister and teacher, Jesus Christ is only a religious teacher, only one way to reach God. He is not the Anointed One sent from God to save all men. He is not the only way to God.

The false minister and teacher doesn't believe that Jesus Christ has come from God. He doesn't believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. He does not believe that God sent His only begotten Son into the world as a man. Again,

the false minister and teacher believes that Jesus Christ is only a man just like all other men - a great man, perhaps the greatest, perhaps the man who got closer to God than any other man. Nevertheless, to the false minister and teacher, Jesus Christ was only a man who taught. The false minister and teacher would say;

a. That Jesus Christ was not sinless. He lived close to God, but no man can achieve sinlessness..

b. That Jesus Christ died, but not as a substitute for man's sins. He died as a great martyr showing us how we should face death and how we should be willing to die for the great cause of righteousness.

c. That the resurrection of Jesus Christ did not take place. It is only a picture of the spiritual truth that man can live in God's presence.

Let us now consider the true minister and false doctrine. The true minister must not teach the traditions, ideas, and commandments of men as doctrine." ...Thus have ye made the commandment of God of no effect by your tradition]. Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, THIS PEOPLE DRAWETH NIGH UNTO ME WITH THEIR MOUTH, AND HONoureth me WITH THEIR LIPS; BUT THEIR HEART IS FAR FROM ME. BUT IN VAIN THEY DO WORSHIP ME, TEACHING FOR DOCTRINES THE COMMANDMENTS OF MEN" (Matthew 15:6-9). "Not giving heed to Jewish fables, and commandment of men, that turn from the truth" (Titus 1:14).

Christ was attacking the fact that some ministers put their traditions before God's Word. Some keep their traditions while neglecting and ignoring God's Word. The true minister must guard himself against this danger. "Making the word of God of none effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things do ye" (Mark 7:13). Too many are religiously deceived like the Pharisees and Scribes. They study, witness, show care, help the needy, and keep the rules. They struggle and would fight to maintain religious tradition, yet Christ says they are hypocrites. Why? It is because their heart is not God's. They just do not know God personally. He is not in the depths of their heart. "Wherefore the Lord said, For as much as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men" (Isaiah 29:13). The true minister must guard against worshipping with an empty heart. Our Lord

Jesus Christ taught:

a. that true worship must be "in spirit and in truth." "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and truth" (John 4:24).

b. that a person who denies Christ or denies God's Word cannot truly worship God. "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6). "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth" (John 17:17).

c. that a person can worship, but his worship may be empty, worthless, and unacceptable. The religionists of Christ's day were professing religion with their lips, but denying Christ, God's Son, in the heart. "And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment" (John 3:23). Tradition is man's idea of what should be done or what should not be done. "For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe" (I Thessalonians 2:13). "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness" (II Timothy 3:16).

The true minister must not be carried away with different kinds of teaching. He must not teach the fables, myths, speculations, ideas, and false doctrines of men. "Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines. For it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace; not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein" (Hebrews 13:9). "As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine, Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith; so do" (I Timothy 1:3-4). "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables" (II Timothy 4:3-4).

The true minister is to preach the Word of God and the Word of God alone. Note that in I Timothy 1:3-4 the

word "charge." It was a strong word! It is a military word that means to pass commands down through the ranks. Scripture gives the minister of Christ three negative charges, three negative orders:

a. He must not add to the doctrine of God's Word.

b. He must not take away from the doctrine of God's Word.

c. He must not formulate new doctrine for the church.

The true minister must not begin to think there are defects in the Word of God that need correcting. He must not change or alter the Word of God in anyway whatsoever. In the clear words of Scripture, he has his charge and orders. He must teach no other doctrine. "As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine" (I Timothy 1:3).

The true minister must not give attention to the fable (false teachings) the genealogies of men. Why? It is because they arouse questions rather than godly edification. The word "fables" refers to all forms of false and fictional teaching or doctrine. It means false ideas and speculation of men about God and Christ and about the teachings of God's Word. The doctrines of men are only speculations.

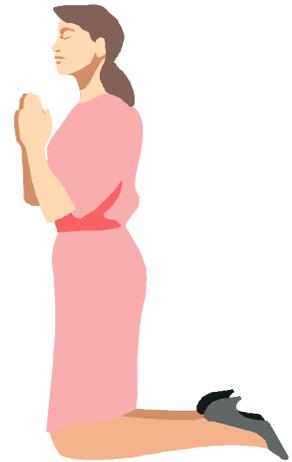
The word "genealogies" mentioned in I Timothy 1:3-4 refers to those who take comfort in godly heritage and tradition. The Jews were guilty of this. They took great pride in their godly forefathers, so much so they felt that the godliness of the forefathers rubbed off on them. The more godly forefathers they had in their roots, the more prestigious and acceptable they felt before God and men. They felt the stronger their roots, the more man and God would accept and esteem them. Note reference to "endless genealogies." They were apparently those who were spending generous amounts of time in structuring and discussing godly heritage of the past. Apparently, the practice had steeped into the church. Let no such practice be in the Church of God.

As a true minister or teacher of Christ, you must teach the Word of God and the Word of God only!

NOTE: This concludes our article on the true minister and teacher's duty toward false teaching. I know that some facts in this article may seem to be repetitious, but all the facts are VERY important.

Contributed

WHAT ABOUT PRAYER?



WHY PRAY?

We pray because God's Word, the Bible, commands us to do so! "I would therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without worth and doubting" (I Timothy 2:8). Our Lord was a man of prayer. If He felt the need of it, how much more should we? "Pray without ceasing. In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you" (I Thessalonians 5:17-18). "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints" (Ephesians 6:18).

How often should we pray?

It is good to pray at set times during the day. It is good to pray upon arising in the morning and upon returning at night. During the day, we should look to the Lord when problems arise, when help is needed or when we want to thank Him for something. Every child of God should bow his head and give thanks before eating his meals, whether in public or at home.

For what should we pray?

The following Scriptures will help us answer this question. "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God" (Philippians 4:6). "I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; For Kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour" (I Timothy 2:1-3). "Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest,

that he will send forth labourers into his harvest" (Matthew 9:38). There is nothing too small and nothing too great for prayer. Many children of God find it helpful to keep a prayer list on which they record such items as:

- a. names of unsaved relatives and friends.
- b. names of those who are sick or in need.
- c. names of those who are church leaders.

What are the conditions for answered prayer?

1. If we abide in Christ, our requests will be answered. "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you" (John 15:7). Abiding in Christ means keeping His commandments. "And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight" (I John 3:22).

2. Our prayers must be according to His will. "And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to His will, he heareth us" (I John 5:14).

3. Our requests must be offered in the name of Christ. "And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son" (John 14:13).

4. Our motives must be pure. "Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts" (James 4:3). If our motives are selfish and sinful, we cannot expect an answer.

What are the dangers in praying?

1. Don't pray just to be seen of men. "And when

thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou has shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly" (Matthew 6:5-6)

2. Don't ask God to do something you can do yourself. No sane person would step in the path of an oncoming vehicle and then ask God to take him back to the sidewalk. God gave him legs to take himself back.

3. Avoid meaningless repetitions. "But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking" (Matthew 6:7). "Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be nasty to utter anything before God: for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few" (Ecclesiastics 5:2).

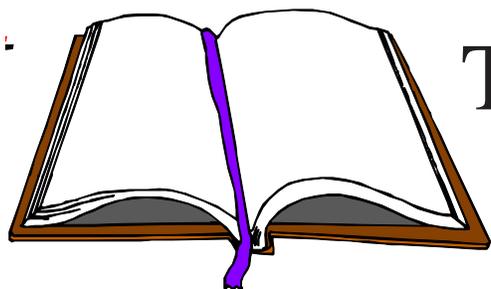
What are some other thoughts about prayer?

1. If you find that your mind wanders when you are on your knees, try praying out loud. This may help you to concentrate.

2. We must not be discouraged if our answers do not come immediately. God's answers are never too early lest we miss the blessedness of waiting upon Him, and never too late lest we think that we have trusted Him in vain.

3. If God's answers are not exactly what we asked for, let us remember that God reserves the right to give us something better than we asked for. We do not know what is best for us, but God does. He gives us more than we could ever ask or think. "For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me" (II Corinthians 12:8-9).

Contributed



The Encouragement To Timothy

By Sigefried Maywald

When men of world renown pass away, the world wants to hear their last words to find insight, wisdom, and encouragement. This is also true with loved ones when the family is gathered around them. They also want to hear the last words whether they are blessings, advice or encouragement because these will be their final words. One of these most notable, beloved, as well as influential men was the Apostle Paul. He was a man with strong faith, constant hope, conviction and insight. He truly cared for his friends in Christ. He was inspired by the Holy Spirit to give us God's message.

Paul was facing death, and his condition was deteriorating. He was not in a hospital with friends surrounding him, but he was in a cold Roman prison cut off from the rest of the world. Luke was the only visitor. He continued to write letters. Paul knew that he was close to his death,

so he wrote the final letter to his "son" Timothy. He encouraged him to take up leadership, to carry the "torch" so to speak. He reminded him of what is truly important in life and encouraged him in his faith. Just imagine how Timothy must have felt while reading Paul's letter over and over again, remembering this was the last letter from his beloved friend and teacher Paul. Because of this incident and its teacher student relationship, it is the most moving and motivating letter of Paul. It shows where his heart and priorities were. It reveals a steadfast, faithful, enduring and living man. However, we should remember that, although this letter was primarily intended for Timothy, it is recorded into the scriptures for our learning, for our admonition and encouragement, for every one who finds himself in some difficult situation.

Paul's introduction reveals a very touching and tender

relationship. His concern and care is shown just like a true father would show for his son as we read II Timothy 1:2-8: "To Timothy, my dearly beloved son: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord. I thank God, whom I serve from my forefathers with pure conscience, that without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day; Greatly desiring to see thee, being mindful of thy tears, that I may be filled with joy; when I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also. Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands. For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind. Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner; but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God." "Hold fast the form of sound words, which thus hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. That good thing which was committed unto thee keep by the Holy Ghost which dwelleth in us" (II Timothy 1:13-14).

This letter of Paul was written about two to four years after his first letter. Timothy had been his travel companion on the second and third missionary journeys, and Paul had left him in Ephesus to help the church there (I Timothy 1:30-4). Paul constantly prayed for Timothy. The tears showed the depth of their relationship. He reminds Timothy of his qualities which are necessary for a faithful servant minister of Jesus Christ. He reminded him of his calling and his talents and encouraged him to use his God-given gifts in boldness and keep the truth and prepare others for the ministry. Timothy must have been somewhat discouraged to bring about such a letter from Paul. Who really knows what happened? Don't we all at times get discouraged and need up lifting? Then it is really nice to have a true friend like Paul at one's side, one who truly cares and sticks up for you. He seemed to have been lonely when he wrote the letter, but he still encouraged Timothy with these words, "Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus. And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also. Thou therefore endure hardness, a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier" (II Timothy 2:1-4). "Consider what I say; and the Lord give thee understanding in all things" (II Timothy 2:7).

He told him to exercise discipline and be ready to endure hardship while keeping focus on Jesus Christ to

fulfill His commission. He urged Timothy to hold on to sound doctrine, avoid error, or godless chatter and stick with the truth, handle it correctly and keep his life pure. "Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to my gospel" (II Timothy 2:8). "It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him: If we suffer, we shall also reign with him: if we deny him, he also will deny us (II Timothy 2:11-12). "Of these things put in remembrance, charging them before the Lord that they strive not about words to no profit, but to the subverting of the hearers. Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (II Timothy 2:14-15).

Paul goes on to warn of opposition from other believers who do not like him and from self centered people who use the church for their own purposes to gain a following after their own liking. "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: From such turn away" (II Timothy 3:1-5). "Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith. But they shall proceed no further: for their folly shall be manifest unto all men, as theirs also was" (II Timothy 3:7-9). Be not afraid of them, but prepare yourself and remember my example and understand the real cause of this opposition. It is Satan's work to discourage you. Be advised and gain power and strength from God's word. Go to fulfill His commission." Thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, charity, patience, Persecutions, afflictions, which came unto me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra; what persecutions I endured: but out of them all the Lord delivered me. Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them" (II Timothy 3:10-14).

Paul goes on to remind Timothy, "And that from a child thou has known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture is given by inspiration of God,

and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (II Timothy 3:15-17). "I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom: Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine" (II Timothy 4:1-2). "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry. For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing. Do thy diligence to come shortly unto me: For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thesalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia. Only Luke is with me. Take Mark, and bring him with thee: for he is profitable to me for the ministry. And Tychicus have I sent to Ephesus. The cloak that I left at Troas with Carpus, when thou comest, bring with thee, and the books, but especially the parchments" (II Timothy 4:3-13).

Paul's letter with this last request for some personal items and literature show a loneliness but a strong love for his brothers and sisters in Christ. From prison would be the last place one would expect a letter of encouragement, but that is exactly where Paul's letter originated. It gave assurance, reminded of heritage and responsibility, and told that only the one who perseveres, whether farmer, athlete, minister or any other servant of Jesus Christ, will reap eternal life which in the faith of God is given to allow them to come to Him. He warned Timothy that his teachings would come under attack as men desert the truth for those "ear itching" words, but he got to rely on his teacher's example, on his guide and on the power of the Holy Spirit, and God's word, which will strengthen him, especially in a time of growing opposition which is yet to some, referring to the last days. He encourages him to maintain the characteristics of a faithful servant and refrain from all appearance of evil, maintain discipline, diligence and endurance. Jesus told us, "... , If you have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you" (Matthew 17:20).

In the conclusion of this article, we note that Paul's personal letter to Timothy is advice which is also applicable for our lives. We also need love, compassion and care toward one another. Just like Timothy had to face opposition and persecution and had to overcome fear, so we also will have to overcome trials and tribulations. Life is not always a bed of roses. It has its ups and downs. Paul reminded him to utilize his gifts of preaching and teaching which the Holy Spirit had given him. We likewise should not neglect our God given gifts, but utilize them to the benefit of the church. Jesus Christ was faithful to the end, as was the Apostle Paul, and so should we remain faithful and draw strength and encouragement from God's word. This is true especially in the time of the end when deception will become so intense with the rise of false Christs and false prophets. "For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; in so much that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect" (Matthew 24:24).

Upon close examination of what is going on in the religious world today, it becomes clear that many nice sounding messages we hear from many pulpits today are simply not in agreement with God's word. They are designed to please people and make compromises to politically correct humanitarian issues. Two examples are the same sex marriages and the idea that all people in fact believe in the same "God" but only in different ways. It becomes evident to all who know the Scriptures that this is a man made religion which leads people into the broad way and to destruction. "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat" (Matthew 7:13). Only a solid foundation in God's word is our insurance which can equip us to recognize those errors, situations and half truths which represent God's word. We have to pray that the Holy Spirit helps us to become strong in faith and understanding even when we have to suffer for it. Do not follow men on what they may say or do! Focus on the will of God. Look to Jesus Christ and the example He has given us and remember His invitation in Matthew 11:28-30, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

I challenge you to trust God and read your Bible. Read it in such a way that you hear God speaking to you. He then will not only give His character to you, but also offer limitless provisions for your lives. Provisions like forgiveness of sins, guidance for your daily lives and the promise of eternal life.



THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES

If you have any items of interest that you would like to submit to this segment, please send them to The Church of God Publishing House, PO Box 328, Salem, WV 26426-0328.

The following article appeared in the Houston Chronicle.

WHEN CHRISTIANITY GOES COMMERCIAL

**By John Leland
New York Times News Service**

MOUNT UNION, Pa. - By the third day of Creation East, the granddaddy of Christian rock festivals, Dave Lula could pick a winner among the merchandise he was selling. It was a \$12 T-shirt of his own design that said "I Mosh for Jesus." The crowd was young, Lula figured, and this appealed to their sense of humor and independence.

Since the summer began, Lula has lived a nomadic existence, sleeping mainly in his van, part of a new mobile tribe of bootstrap entrepreneurs that has grown up along with those who profit from Christian rock festivals, mixing creative capitalism with novel expressions of faith.

At booths all around at the festivals the vendors spread their wares, mostly Christian CDs, T-shirts and hats (the ones reading "I Love Christian Boys" seemed to be the most popular), in a sprawling bazaar that was part mall, part invitation to witness. The tents cleared only for twice-daily sermons.

"It's kind of a business-slash ministry," said Lula, 36, who lives in Los Angeles when he is not on the road. In a summer, he said, he can sell 3,000 shirts.

"I travel to all the festivals, dozens of them, all summer long, then to smaller events in California during win-

ter," Lula said, standing over T-shirts that read, "hard-core Christian," "Hetero-Boy" and "Religion Is Dead. Jesus Is Not." He said he was not simply selling concert souvenirs. "I feel I'm getting the word of God out," he said.

Before the rise of the live Christian rock circuit, such overly Christian merchandise was largely limited to Christian bookstores, which in 2002 did \$2.4 billion in business, according to the CBA, formerly the Christian Booksellers Association. But as festivals and tours have multiplied, drawing younger evangelicals who express their faith through alternative music, tattoos and skateboards, they have opened a market for products that do not fit easily into more decorous Christian bookstores.

Only items that "have really stood the test of time" sell in Christian stores, said Bill Anderson, president of the CBA. "Whereas at an event, it could end towards the impulse side" - more flashy, less wary of giving offense, he said.

At this year's festival, which drew 50,000 people over four days, at \$73 for a four-day ticket, families, youth ministers and church groups camped on the hilly grounds; skateboarders thrashed over ramps; teenagers offered hugs to anyone who passed by.

Amid the loud music and mohawks, there are occasional reminders that the rebellion being cultivated was specifically Christian and came with its own standards of comportment: When a teenager took off his wet shirt after being baptized in the pond, a staff member made him put it back on.

As the festivals have become their own world, and as young Christians have been attracted to more extreme

expressions of their faith, the merchants has followed suit.

Irreverent trend

T-shirts screamed or punned for attention. One shirt declared, "Body Piercing Saved My Life," and His hand had a nail through it. Other brisk-sellers said "Jesus Freak" or mimicked the Mountain Dew advertising logo, tweaking the slogan to read, "Do the Jew," meaning to emulate Jesus. Booths promoted Christian colleges, foreign missions and a DVD player that skips over racy material in movies.

Irreverent and trend-driven, the goods reflect what is happening in Protestant churches, where people are leaving formal, tradition-steeped denominations in favor of independent, informal but theological servitude churches. As many young Christians are pursuing faith outside the church, in rock bands or free-floating ministries, they are also seeking wares outside established Christian markets.

"I was never comfortable with the shirts in Christian bookstores," said Jeremy Limpid, 28, who is selling his own line of punk - the need T-shirts and hats at about 10 Christian festivals this summer. Having come to Christianity from punk rock, he found the goods in Christian bookstores too tame or pious. So he started his own company, One Truth, and began selling his designs at concerts and over the Internet.

His most popular shirt shows a tiny head with 10 long pistols pointed at it, which he said represents the sinfulness of which we are all guilty, deserving of the limpid, whose main business is Web design, said he was sometimes uneasy about the intermingling of faith and commerce at the festivals. "You come in these places and it's a major Christian marketing scene," he said "there's a quick buck to be made for Christ. But the way I see it, I'm going to make mine in a secular way of expressing my faith. We make clothing that's going to initiate Christian dialogue."

For some shoppers, like Gary and Laura Scheffler of Glanders, N.J., who were carrying an armful of DVDs, T-shirts, posters and Bibles, the tented mall was a part of the festival experience, just like the bands. "This is our biggest purchase for the year, so I knew exactly what I wanted to buy," said Laura Scheffler, 26, who runs a hair salon.

"I'd rather see this kind of thing supporting Christian messages than just a regular mall," she said "You've got to

buy clothes - why not have a message."

Differing opinion

At a crowded booth, Heath Farner, 32, a banker from Baltimore, tallied her purchases. She had a T-shirt that said "Abortion Stops Beating Hearts" for herself and an "Eternal Riders" T-shirt, from an extreme sports ministry in Hawaii, for her daughter.

Where else are we going to find this kind of stuff?" she asked. "We can't buy it in a mall and Christian bookstores won't carry band T-shirts."

Tim Landis, 48, who started the festival and still produces it, said he is sometimes dismayed by some of the T-shirts that offered cute puns on advertising logos. "On the other hand," he said, "some people find that meaningful. It's easy to be elitist and look down on the T-shirts as gaudy or tacky."

Landis and his staff approve all items sold in the booths. Vendors pay a variable fee for booth space, plus a percentage of their sales. "It's all needed" to keep the festival afloat, Landis said.

As evening settled over the bonds, three teenagers sat around a campfire, taking a break from the music. A speaker earlier in the day had called for donations to mission in the developing world. At the end of a long day, the boys had come to regret their purchases.

Learning lessons

"I spent all my money on five CDs," said Scott Hanson, 13, in a tone of self-reproach. "If I'd waited, I'd be able to spend that money on someone other than myself."

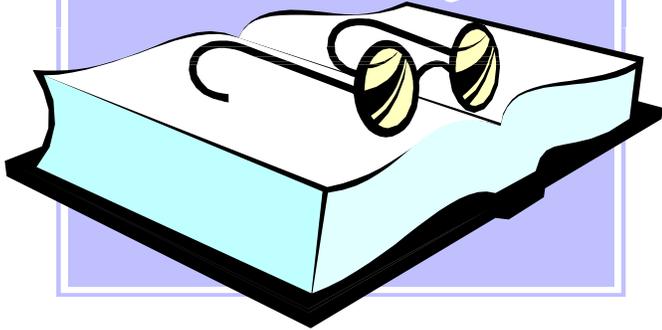
His friend Luke Beckmeyer came away with a similar lesson. He had been reluctant to come because he didn't like music, he said. But the band, Pillar, had converted him. "I came here hoping to get a new video cord for my computer, but after doing small groups and hearing the music, I realize it's not all about me," he said. "The speakers really get to you. Too bad I spent all my money on a 'Pillar' T-shirt and CDs."

Comment

When we read the above article, we should remember that God looks upon our hearts and not upon our outer appearance. We can display and wear all of the commercial Christian items we want, but that is only a show. It does not identify our true heart condition.

BIBLE

Study



Questions and Answers

Question: Since the New Testament says nothing about how the tithe was to be applied, please let me know exactly how to proportion my tithe today.

Answer: Your statement that the New Testament says nothing about how the tithe was to be applied is not correct! First, the New Testament says enough about tithing that we know that we must continue it. Second, we are told that Jesus enforced the tithing system and how He was in favor of paying all of it to the temple in front of which the High priest officiated at the altar. There is no need to proportion the tithe. The ten percent belongs to the Lord. He is the one that is able to proportion it.

Jesus said, "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cumin, and have omitted the weightier matter so the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone" (Matthew 23:23). We come to Christ though faithful Abraham. "Now consider how great this man was, unto whom even the patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of the spoils. And verily they that are of the sons of Levi, who receive the office of the priesthood, have a commandment to take tithes of the people according to the law, that is, of their brethren, though they come out of the loins of Abraham: But he whose descent is not counted from them received tithes of Abraham, and blessed him that had the promises. And without all contradiction the less is blessed of the better. And here men that die receive tithes; but there he receiveth them, of whom

it is witnessed that he liveth. And as I may so say, Levi also, who receiveth tithes, paid tithes in Abraham. For he was yet in the loins of his father, when Melchisedec met him" (Hebrews 7:4-10).

The Lord ordained the tithing system of the Levitical priesthood. We read this in I Corinthians 9:13-14, "Do you not know that they which minister about holy things live of the things of the temple? and they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar? Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel."

Question: In what sense was Christ royal?

Answer: When Christ said "Follow me," and when He told His disciples that the test of their affection for Him was that they keep His commandments, He took a position that is not even now fully realized by men who call themselves by His name. We're so accustomed to speak of Jesus as being meek and lowly that we often forget how high were His claims that He put forth and how implicit is the obedience He requires.

Christ insisted that He was a King, and, at the very last, when clothed with the royal robe in mockery, He would abate not one jot of His claim, even when He knew that He was furnishing Pilate with an excuse for putting Him to death. He firmly believed in His own royalty, and, in simple majesty, He preformed its functions.

Question: Since we are still to receive "The Atonement," why should we not keep "The day of Atonement?"

Answer: The Day of atonement takes place every day

for different individuals. As a person becomes baptized and wishes to become a part of the family of God, the atonement takes place. It is today an "AT-ONE-MENT."

"And not only so, but we also joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the atonement" (Romans 5:11). Children of God have their lives based on the death of Christ as the one great Atonement - for them. As they are buried with Christ, they are also risen with Jesus to a walk in newness of life.

The Bible teaches that more than just feeling sorry for our sins is necessary in order to receive the atonement. A mere example of piety is not enough in order to effect our salvation. "For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life" (Romans 5:10). If sinful men were to return and then follow perfectly the outward example of Christ's right doing, this course would in no wise dispose of the sins of their past life. For men can not have surplus obedience as a result of their present righteousness and thus make reparation for their sins. "...Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures" (I Corinthians 15:3). Those who repent and are converted have their sins blotted out. They are washed from their sins in his own blood. Read Revelation 1:5.

While one purpose of that is meant to change the relationship of God with men, it is also designed to change the attitude of men toward God. When the transgressor is made to realize that awful nature and extent of his sin, and to see that he is deserving of infinite punishment, his heart sinks in despair. If his attention is then turned to Calvary, to the dying agonies of Jesus, as the one who "Gave himself for us," hope revived, love for the Redeemer springs up in the sinner, and faith begins to hold on to Jesus, the Saviour of men, with the glorious result that the blood washes away the guilt of all past transgressions. Thank the Lord for His wonderful plan. Then He is ready to exclaim it as did the Apostle John, "We love him, because he first loved us" (I John 4:19). This is the meaning of atonement today. It is the mystery of regeneration.

Question: If the earth is not to be destroyed, please explain II Peter 3:10.

Answer: II Peter 3:10 reads, 'But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are within shall be burned up.'

In verses 5 and 6 we read: "For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water: Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished." Notice that the words "heavens," "earth," and "world" are used in connection with the destruction wrought by the flood. Certainly neither the literal heavens nor the literal earth were then destroyed. But the world, or social order, symbolized by this, was destroyed.

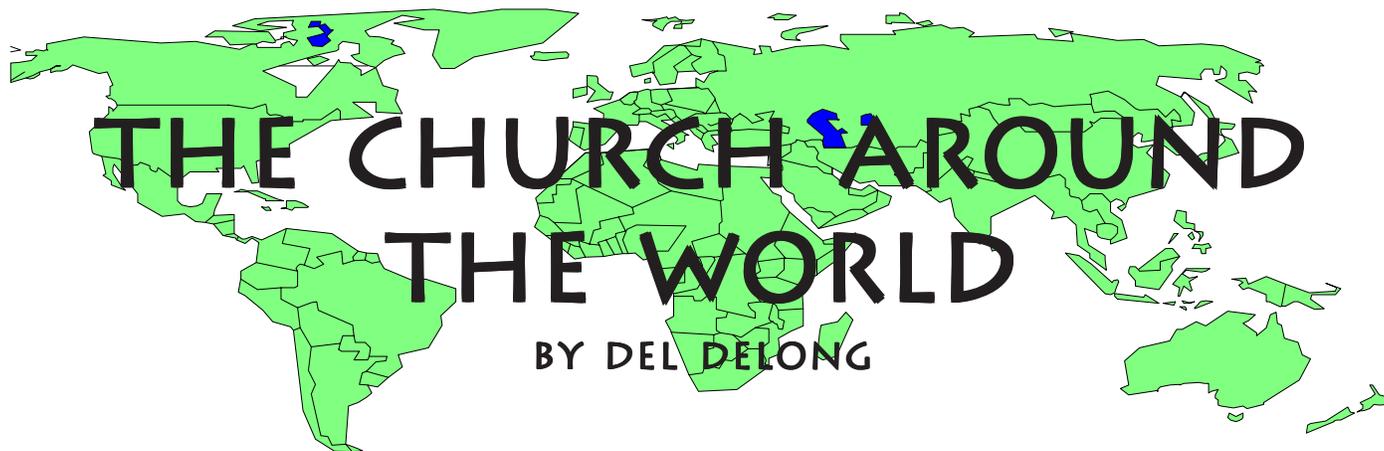
Likewise, it is a symbolic heaven and earth that will again be destroyed. In the place of the social order symbolized by these, there will be established the kingdom of God, symbolized as "new heavens and a new earth, where dwelleth righteousness" (verse 13). God has established the literal earth that it may be man's everlasting home. "One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh: but the earth abideth forever" (Ecclesiastes 1:4). "For thus saith the Lord that created the heavens; God himself that formed the earth and made it; he hath established it, he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited: I am the Lord; and there is none else" (Isaiah 45:18). "Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth" (Matthew 5:5).

Question: Does the Church of God (7th Day) practice fasting?

Answer: Yes, we believe in fasting and practice it when necessary. Fasting is biblical. It is a religious deed, but it has spiritual consequences. Every person is not able to fast because of his body makeup (Metabolism). If you are able to fast, the Holy Spirit can work in a more magnificent way because the flesh has been put aside. So if you are led to fast, and are able to, by all means practice doing it. I will lift you up to a higher plane of having "Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Colossians 1:27).

There is a danger concerning fasting. Beware of becoming a Pharisee. There is only one step from being a Pharisee or a saint. The Lord Jesus reminded us in Matthew 6:16, "Moreover when ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast Verily I say unto you, They have their reward."

By the way, it takes 32 muscles of the face to frown and look sad. It takes only 7 muscles to smile and be happy.



Los Angeles, California

These three photographs depict our new church building in Los Angeles.





places did he judge? I Samuel 7:15-17.

LESSON I

THE ARK RESTORED TO ISRAEL

Scripture Reading: I Samuel 7:1-17.

Golden Text: I Samuel 7:8.

"And the children of Israel said to Samuel, Cease not to cry unto the Lord our God for us, that he will save us out of the hand of the Philistines."

NOTE: We have learned that the ark of the Lord was in the hands of the Philistines seven months. After the Lord brought great destruction upon them, the Philistines decided the ark should be returned to Israel. When the men of Bethshemesh looked into the ark, thousands were smitten because of this act. Now, let us learn how the Philistines were subdued and the ark restored.

1. Where was the ark taken, and who was to keep the ark? I Samuel 7:1.
2. How long was the ark in Kirjath-jearim? I Samuel 7:2.
3. What did Samuel tell the people of Israel to do if they wanted to be delivered out of the hand of the Philistines, and did they listen to what Samuel told them? I Samuel 7:3-4.
4. What did Samuel then do for the children of Israel? I Samuel 7:5-6.
5. When the Philistines heard that the children of Israel were gathered at Mizpeh, what did they do? I Samuel 7:7.
6. While Samuel was offering the burnt-offering to the Lord, what did the Philistines do? I Samuel 7:9-11.
7. Did the Philistines pursue the Israelites anymore? I Samuel 7:13-14.
8. How long did Samuel judge Israel, and how many

LESSON II

ISRAEL DEMANDS A KING

Scripture Reading: I Samuel 8:1-22.

Golden Text: I Samuel 8:19.

"Nevertheless the people refused to obey the voice of Samuel; and they said, Nay; but we will have a king over us."

NOTE: In our last lesson we learned how the ark of God was restored to Israel. Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life. Israel still was not satisfied, and now they desired a king to reign over them. Let us study about it in I Samuel 8.

1. When Samuel became old, who did he make Judges of Israel? I Samuel 8:1-2.
2. Did Samuel's sons walk in the way they should? I Samuel 8:3.
3. What request did the elders of Israel make of Samuel? I Samuel 8:4-6.
4. When Samuel prayed to the Lord about his request, what did the Lord tell him to do? I Samuel 8:7-9.
5. Did Samuel tell the people the words of the Lord? I Samuel 8:10-18.
6. Did the people still refuse to obey the voice of Samuel? Did they insist upon having a king over them? I Samuel 8:19-20.
7. Samuel again took the words of the people to the Lord. What did the Lord tell Samuel to do? I Samuel 8:21-22.

LESSON III

SAUL CHOSEN TO BE KING (PART 1)

SAUL CHOSEN TO BE King (PART II)

Scripture Reading: I Samuel 9:1-10.
Golden Text: I Samuel 9:2.

Scripture Reading: I Samuel 9:11-27.
Golden Text: I Samuel 9:17.

"And he had a son, whose name was Saul, a choice young man, and a goodly: and there was not among the children of Israel a goodlier person than he: from his shoulders and upward he was higher than any of the people."

"And when Samuel saw Saul, the Lord said unto him, Behold the man whom I spake to thee of! this same shall reign over my people."

NOTE: In our last lesson, we learned that the people of Israel would not obey the voice of Samuel, and they asked him to give them a king to reign over them. Samuel took their plea to the Lord, and the Lord said to hearken unto them and make a king to rule them. Let us see now who was chosen for this position.

NOTE: In our last lesson, we learned about Saul and the journey that he had with his servant. The servant suggested that they find the man of God in the city to show them the way that they should go. Let us continue to see what happens when they meet this man of God also called a seer.

1. Who was Saul, and what type of person was he? I Samuel 9:1-2.
2. On what kind of mission was Saul sent? I Samuel 9:3.
3. Through what land did Saul and his servant go on this mission? I Samuel 9:4.
4. When they came to the land of Zuph, Saul wanted to return to his father. What did the servant suggest that they do? I Samuel 9:5-6.
5. What was Saul concerned about if they should visit the man of God? I Samuel 9:7.
6. What did they have to give to the prophet for telling them their way? I Samuel 9:8.
7. Did Saul agree with his servant to go to the city to see the man of God? I Samuel 9:10.
8. In Israel, what was another name for a prophet? I Samuel 9:9-10.

1. When Saul and his servant arrived, where the man of God was, whom did thy meet? I Samuel 9:11.
2. What did the young maidens tell Saul to do? I Samuel 9:12-13.
3. Saul did as the maidens had told him to do. Who did he meet in I Samuel 9:14?
4. What had the Lord told Samuel the day before Saul arrived? I Samuel 9:15-17.
5. Saul inquired of Samuel to find out where the seer's house was. What was Samuel's answer to Saul? I Samuel 9:18-20.
6. Did Saul understand what Samuel was saying to him? I Samuel 9:21.
7. Where did Samuel take Saul, and what did they do? I Samuel 9:22-24.
8. Discuss what Samuel and Saul did when they came down to the city. I Samuel 9:25-27.

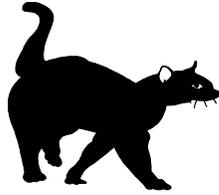
LESSON IV

A VERSE TO REMEMBER

"In thee, O Lord, do I put my trust:
 let me never be put to confusion."

Psalm 71:1

PATIENCE IN A BUCKET



"Did you bring a kitty home tonight, Daddy? Did you? Did you?" asked Danny, as he met his Daddy at the door.

Night after night Danny asked his Daddy that same question. Night after night Daddy replied, "Not tonight, Danny. But I will find a kitty for you soon. You must be patient."

Every night after supper Danny sat beside Daddy in the big chair while Daddy read the ads about kitties in the newspaper. Danny listened quietly. Sometimes there were kitties for sale. Sometimes the kitties were free. And Danny wanted the kitty in every ad.

Danny got excited each evening when Daddy read the ads in the newspaper. "Maybe tomorrow night, Daddy? Maybe tomorrow you will bring home a kitty?" he would ask.

"I will try, Danny, but you must be patient," Daddy always answered.

Each day Danny waited and hoped that Daddy would bring a kitty home that night. Sometimes Daddy said, "Not tonight, Danny. The kitties cost too much money. You must be patient." Or the times Daddy said, "Not tonight, Danny. The kitties were free, but when I got there they were all gone."

Danny and mother often talked about the kitty while Daddy was at work. Mother tried to help Danny find a name for the kitty. But Danny always thought more about wanting the kitty than he did about naming the kitty.

Finally, one night when Daddy came home again without a kitty. Danny started to cry. "I want a little, baby kitty so-o-o-o ba-a-a-ad. I have asked everyone for a kitty. I have even prayed for a kitty, but no-o-o-one gives me a kitty. Even Jesus did not hear my prayers. "And Danny put his arms around Daddy's neck and cried.

Daddy patted Danny's back and gave him a big squeeze. When Danny stopped crying, Daddy kissed away the tears. "Danny, Daddy said softy, "one of these days we will find the right kitty for you. But you must be patient and be happy while you wait. Jesus will help us find a

kitty. Jesus wants you to have a kitty. Jesus always hears and answers our prayers."

"Come and eat," called Mother from the kitchen. While they were eating, Mother said "Danny, I have an idea! I think we should name your kitty 'Patience,' because you have waited so long to get it."

And that would remind us always to wait happily, too, would it not?" said Daddy with a smile.

After supper Danny climbed up beside Daddy in the big chair and Daddy opened the newspaper and looked on the ad page. "I am sorry," said Daddy, "but there are not any ads for kitties in the paper tonight." Danny was having a hard time waiting happily. His lip quivered. He blinked his eyes. He put his head down on Daddy's shoulder.

"Well, now here is something," Daddy continued. "Listen to this, Danny. It says here in the paper that the firemen found a little kitty. It was stuffed in an old bucket and hidden under some bushes. Let us take a ride down to the fire station right now. Maybe you will have a kitty tonight."

Danny held Daddy's hand tightly as they walked in the big fire station. There in a box on the fire chief's desk was a little kitten.

"So you want a kitten, do you, young man?" boomed the big fireman. "Well, here you are!" And he put a soft little black-and-white kitty into Danny's open hands.

Danny gently snuggled the kitty up under his chin. Danny's eyes were big and shiny. He was smiling. He was so happy.

"What are you going to call your kitten?" asked the fireman.

"I am going to name my kitty 'Patience,' cause I have waited so long for my Daddy to get it." The fireman laughed. "That is a good name for this kitten," he said. "It has been waiting, too. You know it has been waiting for a good home."

On the way home, Daddy told Danny that sometimes Jesus does not answer our prayers right way. Sometimes Jesus has a reason for waiting a little while. Maybe Jesus has something special for us. Or maybe Jesus is teaching us a lesson. When we pray, we must have patience. That means we must wait happily, knowing that Jesus always hears and answers our prayers.



A LITTLE CHILD

L.J. Holder

I am only just a little child,
 But not too young to die;
 For many a little child I know
 From this fair world has had to go:
 In death their bodies lie.

I am only just a little child,
 Yet not too young to sin;
 My heart is full of evil ways,
 And those who sin, the Bible says,
 Heaven cannot enter in.

I am only just a little child,
 But Jesus died for me;
 For me the Saviour came from Heaven,
 That I might have my sins forgiven,
 And ever with Him be.

I am only just a little child,
 But Jesus calls to me;
 He wants me now to come to Him,
 And He will wash away my sin,
 And make me His to be.

I am only just a little child,
 But Jesus, Lord, I come:
 I thank Thee for Thy love so free;
 I thank Thee Thou didst die for me-
 Oh, make me all Thine own!

Bible Lady Answer - Hannah

WHAT BIBLE LADY IS THIS?

My first letter is in white, but it isn't in black,
 My second's in bag, and it's also in sack.
 My third is in end, but isn't in start,
 My fourth is in hand, but it isn't in heart.
 My fifth is in fast, but not in quick,
 My last is in thin, and it's also in thick.
 My whole is the name of a woman who prayed,
 And God granted her the petition she made.



FIRE FROM GOD

I Kings 18:17-39

Elijah told King Ahab his troubles were caused by idol worship. Elijah and the prophets of the idol Baal had a contest to see if God or Baal would send fire to burn their offerings. The idol worshippers prayed to Baal all day, but nothing happened. When Elijah prayed to God, God sent fire to burn the offering and the altar. Then the people said, "The Lord, he is God!"

GUESS WHO!

He worshiped idols instead of God.
 He was the king in the land of God's people.
 He was warned by a man of God that there would be no rain.

He sent his soldiers to look for the man of God.

WHO WAS HE?

He was a good man who loved and worshiped God.
 He was sent to tell the king it would not rain.
 God sent birds with food for him.
 He had a contest with the worshippers of Baal.
 He prayed to God, and God answered his prayer.

WHO WAS HE?

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

"The Lord will give strength unto his people; the Lord will bless his people with peace" (Psalm 29:11).

Many times when we are faced with new or different situations, a certain amount of anxiety may cause us some uneasiness. Perhaps a new job, a new relationship or traveling to some unfamiliar area may bring about such feelings. Sometimes it is helpful if we ask ourselves why we are feeling anxious and what actually is the object of our fear. Coming up with answers to these questions may be the start of overcoming our fear. We should understand that being away from familiar surroundings and people can at times be stressful. Obviously these are not overwhelming fears, or we would never do anything or go anywhere. However anxieties and stress are a part of our lives. We have to learn to deal with them.

The Bible tells us that we should cast all of our care (anxiety) on our Lord. "Casting all you care upon him; for he careth for you" (I Peter 5:11). We should not be anxious about anything! We should, "Be careful for nothing (do not worry); but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your (our) requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:6-7).