



Requirements and Enablements

By R.H. Oldridge

In my endeavour to convey to you what is on my heart perhaps I should begin with a text from Micah 6:8 "He hath shewed thee, O man what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God? A similar quotation is in Deuteronomy 10:12.

There are three requirements mentioned here. First to do justly. That means without blame. To love mercy covers much ground. It means the great sacrifice of Calvary in being able to extend His mercy to all mankind. Not only was that accomplished on Calvary to reconcile the world unto Himself, but we are to be ministers of the reconciliation so that instead of judgment men can receive abundant mercy.

One could enlarge much on these two requirements but I wish to zero in on the third one, namely, to walk humbly with God. Much is given in the New Testament concerning our walk. That walk in the Spirit will bring us to full maturity in Christ, even to the fullness of sonship which will bring deliverance to all of Creation and bring in His everlasting kingdom. There is a chorus that goes like this: "What you are speaks so loud that the world can't hear what you say. They are looking at your walk and not listening to your talk, they are judging by your actions every day. Don't believe you'll deceive by claiming what you've never known. They'll accept what they see and know you to be. They'll judge by your life alone."

I fear that we fail to see the fullness

of the Revelation of truth that God has opened up to us. We may revel in gifts, ministries and blessings which are all wonderful and necessary, but do we use these to go on to the fullness that God wants us to enter into. God's earthly people Israel should be a good example to us. They failed to obey and go in and possess the land and as a result failed to go over the Jordan to the glorious land of promise but rather died in the wilderness. Let us never forget that an early admonition was to walk on with God, partake of His life until the Resurrection would be just another step. We seem to embrace these things with our mind but fail to press into the reality of them. A whole creation is on the brink of disaster if there is not an intervention. As Romans 8 declares the whole of creation is groaning and travailing in pain unto now, waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God. What if the sons of God in preparation fail to come into the fullness and place of deliverance God has called them to? Certainly the state of the groaning creation is worsening day by day and one wonders how long till the condition of Matthew 24:22 will be fully upon us. It simply states that unless the days were shortened or something intervened no flesh would be saved, but for the elect's sake the days would be shortened.

I think we sometimes neglect our responsibility by saying God will do it in his own good time. But many admonitions are given such as it's high time to awaken out of sleep for now is our

salvation nearer than when we believed. In the darkness that was over the land of Egypt and the darkness Isaiah spoke of covering the earth in the latter days it states, "But the light shall arise upon thee and his glory seen upon thee." It is through these earthly temples of clay that God is going to manifest His glory. We look at our lives and our accomplishments and it seems they are reduced to ashes, but never forget the promise that He will give "beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness that we might be trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord that He might be glorified."

In this article thus far we have been dealing somewhat with what God's requirements are and we are being made conscious of the fact that we could never in ourselves fulfill the purpose that God is revealing. It will take place as we behold the glory of the ushering in of His glorious kingdom. The verse of a hymn has been a great blessing to me and I quote:

Oh it's not then by feeling, but by faith
Lord we stand

And it's not in the past where we've failed

But it is in the promise of a soon coming day.

Paul declared after walking with God for some time that "...in me, that is in my flesh dwelleth no good thing." We are commanded to see no man after the flesh, but to see the Christ in one another. In our infancy we were con-

tent to live on feeling and be swayed by emotion and nourished by nothing but blessing. Glorious as they seemed to be they have fulfilled their purposes but a new day is dawning. A life triumphant is beginning to flow. Failure has dogged the footsteps of God's children and we have grasped for complete and full victory in Christ. It is coming and I believe we even now stand on the threshold. We are in the greatest day of preparation the world has ever known. On the outside darkness is enveloping the earth and one is blind who cannot see the onslaughts of the wicked one. Daniel prophesied on three occasions that the enemy is trying to wear out the saints of the most high but I never like to stop reading that portion until I come to the part that says, "But the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom and reigned forever and forever."

The light of the Spirit has made us aware of our nothingness, our emptiness and that neither service, nor sacrifice or anything that we can produce can bring us into that for which we long. It may be that God is taking from us every leaning post, that we might receive of Him the sufficiency in order that His plan and purpose may be fulfilled even in these vessels of clay, here on this earthly sod. As Paul said, "We are not sufficient of ourselves to think anything of ourselves. Our sufficiency is of Christ." We must cast ourselves and our insufficiency into the hands of Him who rose triumphantly over all these things.

I would like in the remaining part to dwell on the enablement God has provided. While we have shown the futility of man to accomplish the purposes of God, we do not want in any way to conclude that the wheels are not already in motion. This great deliverance began at the cross, when we were delivered from our sinful past and a new birth had taken place but we must realize that we were simply newborn babes in Christ with capacity for growth, growth to maturity, growth to sonship. Eye cannot see, nor ear hear the things God has in store in the offing but it declares God is revealing them by His spirit and that we are beholding these things as in a glass (reflected light) and are being changed into the same image from glory to glory even as by the Spirit of the Lord.

The prophecy of Ezekiel seems to be divided into a number of parts but in

the 47th chapter it deals with the ushering in of the kingdom and the fulfillment of the purposes of the Lord by the flowing of a river. Let me quote from Chapter 47:8,9 "Then said he unto me, These waters issue out toward the east country, and go down into the desert, and go into the sea: (which being) brought forth into the sea, the waters shall be healed. And it shall come to pass, (that) every thing that liveth, which moveth, whithersoever the river shall come, shall live: and there shall be a very great multitude of fish, because these waters shall come thither: for they shall be healed; and everything shall live whither the river cometh." It states, "Whithersoever the river comes everything will live, they will be healed wherever the river comes." What a glorious liberation and how we need it. Not only are the inhabitants of the world becoming sicker every day in spite of all the medical advancement but in the Church it can be stated as before, "That many are weak and sickly and many sleep." The answer was, "Because ye do not discern the Lord's body," but the above brings us great hope and consolation.

In the light of these glorious truths there must be preparation on our part. While we cannot accomplish it by the law or self effort, there must be a reaching out after God and obedience to His words of admonition. First there must come again a time of intense seeking of God. Every Spiritual Move or Revival has come through times of much waiting on God. A scripture that is always vivid in my mind is, "If my people who are called by my name will humble themselves and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sins and heal their land," II Chronicles 7:14.

He also said in Deuteronomy 7:12, "Wherefore it shall come to pass if ye hearken to these judgments and keep and do them that the Lord will keep unto thee the covenant and the mercy which he swore unto thy fathers." I will pass over the next two verses, please read them for yourselves, but verse 15 says, "The Lord will take away from thee all sickness and will put none of the evil diseases of Egypt which thou knowest, upon thee; but will lay them upon all that hate thee." All these are certainly promises of restoration. There must be obedience on our part to enter into the provision He has made. Obedi-

ence is better than sacrifice or as the hymn writer has expressed it and I quote: "Trust and obey, for there's no other way to be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey." One verse also says, "If we walk with the Lord, in the light of His word; what a glory He sheds on our way. While we do His good will, He abides with us still, and with all who will trust and obey."

When God poured out His Spirit in 1948, He revealed to those who had ears to hear things that had been hidden for ages and generations. The revelation that came restored many things to the Church and I believe is still restoring until we come to that fullness in Him. We sing a chorus, "God is leading us on to a fullness in Him, through a door that stands open; It remains that we must enter in. Jesus said, 'I am the door to the kingdom. To enter you must seek my face. I am the Way, the Truth and the Life. The door to the Holy place.'"

This is indeed a high standard of attainment, but it is the one God holds open to his elect. Some think that everyone who names the name of Christ will receive and enter in to this glorious place in Him but Jesus spoke to the multitudes in parables but to His disciples plainly and when asked why, said, "Eyes have they but they see not, ears have they but they hear not. Blessed are your eyes for they see." Many have desired to see the things which ye see but have not been able. When God does a new thing it has always started with a remnant. He said to just eleven disciples one day, "Fear not little flock, It is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." By the way, it has been said, all we do is talk Kingdom Truth. If John's message given two thousand years ago was, "Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand," and Jesus spent much time speaking of the coming kingdom, how much more we who live on the threshold of that great event being ushered in.

It seems that I reverted back to the requirements to enter in and the terrible conditions that exist and of the hopelessness of trying to attain by human effort. I have also spoken of our part in obeying the admonitions given of the preparation we need to make. I will try in the remaining portion to speak of the enablement God has provided that we can enter into those heavenly realms, above the principalities and powers

that hinder us.

Paul spoke of a sacred mystery and it is indeed a mystery to any who do not partake of His life. Paul declared it was simply this, "Christ in you, the hope of glory." When Christ comes in at the new birth He takes up His abode but we must let Him have full possession of our being. The Galatians tried to accomplish it by self effort but Paul said, "Oh foolish Galatians, are you so foolish having begun in the Spirit, think that you can be perfected by the flesh." We have the opposite in the letter to the Ephesians where we read in chapter 3:17-20 "That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being rooted and grounded in love, May be able to comprehend with all saints what (is) the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God. Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us..."

No wonder the Book of Ephesians has been described as the Alps of the New Testament, as chapter by chapter it literally lifts us into those heavenly realms in Christ. May we so walk, that Christ will have full control of our lives, rather than worldly pursuits and carnal ambitions. Again, Paul said in Galatians, "I travail in birth until Christ be formed in you." Paul did not boast of having fully attained and neither can we, but we can press in as he said that he might fully apprehend or take hold of that for which I am apprehended of Christ Jesus.

I believe that as I close this article I could do no better than leave with you some quotes from the pen of our dear brother, Charles S. Price who walked close to God and left us so many wonderful nuggets of truth that he experienced in such a wonderful way. Earlier in this writing I referred to the River that Ezekiel saw and here is what our Brother penned concerning the same: "The flowing of the River is the picture of a glorious climax and a prophecy of Eternal triumph. The river flowed first in the desert and then outward to the sea. So vitalized are the powers of the Living Waters that whithersoever the river shall come everything that moveth shall live. The River started at the threshold of the temple as a mere trickle but as it flowed it became wider and deeper.

May it be so in our experience. We started as babes, but babes have a capacity for growth. Growth to maturity! Growth to sonship! That River will flow through the blood-washed and redeemed of the ages that we might count all things but loss that we might win Christ.

If we are content to stay paddling around in our own little puddles may God help us at the flowing of the ocean. We must begin to see the Christ flowing in one another's lives, then we do not deal with the vessel but the Christ who lives within. This River flowed toward the east. It is streaming from beneath the throne and we feel the heaving and throbbing with the life of the ages. There will be no need for the recitation of the genealogies in that day. Describing the lives of the patriarchs of old it says they lived so many years and they died. There will be a generation of people of which it will be said, "They lived so many years and death had no more power over them."

They will be like Enoch. Thus the Son is bringing many sons to glory. They follow in His train and will press ever onward to full maturity. So the Spirit is leading the sons of God from the beginning or the inception of their salvation through many stages to the day that is now upon us, Sons of God by the power of Calvary, children of the adoption. In Revelation 19 it says that these follow the lamb whithersoever he goeth. This will stagger the earth dwellers as they see this remnant of His seed springing forth into an eternal harvest. Yes, the earth will tremble, morning stars will break forth into song. On its very foundations the universe will shake pulsating with the throb of Divine Life, staggered by the glory of it all, as they hear His voice saying, "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last."

In a closing word, the glory of it makes me want as never before to yield my life wholly unto Him, that He may be all and in all.

The Gospel Of The Kingdom

By Peter Siemens

The Gospel of the Kingdom is a message of complete dedication, separation to the Lord. The scriptures are full of this subject, but the flesh does not want to hear it. The end of all flesh is come.

Jesus said, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross (to die to self) daily, and follow me.", that is why Jesus preached, "Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." We repented when we bowed our knee at Calvary, but there will be daily repentance, asking God to help us overcome various things in our lives, till we are overcomers.

John 10:4, 5 Jesus said, "He goeth before His sheep, and they follow Him, for they know His voice (the voice of the Spirit) and a stranger they will not follow." We still have so much self life. Jesus said, "The foxes have holes, the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man has no where to lay his head." I do not know just what God will require of us, but I do know the self life will have to go. We have too many gods before us.

Rev. 14:4, 5 "...These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth. These were redeemed from among men, to be the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God." Overcomers.

Romans 8:1 "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk after the Spirit," (because in Christ it is a life in the Spirit). You cannot abide in Christ and sin, and if we are free from the curse of sin, there is no judgment. May God help us to live above the law of sin and death, and enter into the experience of the Spirit of life. Christ is the Resurrection and the Life. What Paul is telling us in Romans 8:5-8 is to get our priorities right. We should not make excuses for the flesh, and the flesh can never overcome the flesh, but Romans 8:13,14 gives us the answer, "But if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. (To mortify means to kill, destroy.) For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." It is by yielding to the

Spirit that we become overcomers. Some people believe it is heresy to believe this. (You have to die physically, or be raptured to be free from sin.) II Peter 1:4 says, "Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust." Divine nature cannot sin, it is Christ living in us.

We must overcome all corruption. We must never make excuses for sin or the flesh; we must allow the Word of God and the Holy Spirit to reveal what is in the heart of man, in order to be overcomers. The Word is quick and powerful; the Word is like a mirror to reveal what is in the heart of man. If the Word brings condemnation, it is because of sin. The more we read the Word, the more we understand what God is dealing with. He wants to bring us to perfection. Today people can be living in adultery and fornication and think they are wonderful Christians, and some will bless them. God help us to see sin as exceedingly sinful.

If any thing could be worse, we have people who utterly hate their brother in the Lord, and be part of the Church, minister in the Church, and be blessed by the Church. Great deception. God will not tolerate it. "Repent, for the Kingdom of heaven is at hand." Galatians 5:21 says, "They which do such things shall not enter the kingdom of God." It does not say cannot, because if we will repent and turn from our wicked way, we can.

I John 1:9, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." Romans 14:17 "The kingdom of God is not meat and drink (not a lot of do's and don'ts) but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." The kingdom is a life in the Spirit, doing the will of the Father. "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, in earth as it is in heaven."

As has been said many times, salvation is free, but the kingdom will cost us everything. God has set ministries to bring the Church to perfection, to full maturity. He will have a glorious Church without spot or wrinkle, that

will be holy, not a weak or sick one in its midst, because life shall flow like a river when we enter into our place in Christ. "Therefore let us lay aside every weight, every distraction and sin, which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith. Who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross."

Revelation 3:21 "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."

God is going to establish His kingdom in earth first by us presenting our bodies a living sacrifice, holy acceptable unto Him, by His Holy Spirit strengthening us. Then He will establish His kingdom on earth, by the judgments of God as we rule and reign with Christ. If we suffer with Him, we shall also reign with Him. May God help us to hasten His appearing.

BOOKS AVAILABLE

- The Church • Government
- The Nine Gifts of the Spirit

TRACTS AVAILABLE

- The Move of the Spirit of God
- A Word to the Wise • Born from Above
- A Testimony • Sexual Intimacy
- The Baptism of the Holy Spirit
- Growing in Christ • You Are Loved

Moses had been tending his father-in-law's, sheep. Upon herding the sheep in the vicinity of Mt. Horeb he came upon the miraculous sight of the bush that was on fire but was not consumed.

Exodus 3:2. It was then he heard the voice of the Lord instructing him to take the shoes off his feet because he was standing on "holy ground". Then the Lord told Moses that He wanted him to deliver the children of Israel from Egypt, from their hard taskmasters and lead them to a land flowing with milk and honey, but Moses answered the Lord, "Who am I?" Instead of revelling in the fact that he was chosen to such a responsible task, Moses thought of many reasons, why he could not fulfill such a calling. They will not believe me, they will say, "You have not really heard from the Lord", "I am not eloquent, I am of a slow speech and of a slow tongue." The Lord was upset with Moses, however He told him to take his brother Aaron to help him. "He will be your mouthpiece and I, the Lord will teach you what you shall do."

Gideon was another man who had trouble believing that God had really spoken to him, and required extra confirmation. He put out a fleece twice. The first morning the fleece was wet and the ground around it dry and the second morning the fleece was dry and the ground around it wet. Through obedience Gideon and his small army of 300 men won a great victory against the Midianites.

Both Moses and Gideon felt weak and insufficient in themselves, yet the mighty power of God was manifest through their ministries.

After Isaiah saw the glory of the Lord he said (Isa. 6:5), "Woe is me, for I am undone: because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips, for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts."

I am sure it is good if we realize that in ourselves we are weak and insufficient to stand against the enemy of our souls and the powers of darkness.

Who Am I

found faithful."...: and then shall every man have praise of God."

By Albert Hannigan

Paul said in Romans 12:3 "Forsay, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think (of himself) more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith." Verse 16, "...Be not wise in your own conceits."

On the other side of the coin however, there are those who like to have pre-eminence like Diotrefes in 3 John 9, who spoke against the brethren and tried to prevent others from going on with God. In Luke 22:24-27 "And there was also a strife among them, (the disciples) which of them should be accounted the greatest. And he (Jesus) said unto them, The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors. But ye (shall) not (be) so: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve."

The Pharisees loved to be seen of men and would stand on the street corners praying to show how spiritual they were.

However, looking at things from a different perspective we can say like Moses, "Lord who are we?" Can not we rejoice to know that we are children of the King of kings and Lords of lords. We have been called with an high and holy calling to walk in the realm of the spirit. We have been made recipients of the blessed Holy Spirit who is leading us in paths of service and love. God has called us, not to glorify ourselves but rather to lift up the holy name of Jesus. For he said "If I be lifted up I will draw all men unto me." It is good if we do not have too high an opinion of ourselves.

Also Jesus said "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven." Oh that God would help us to be hid behind the old rugged cross and that Christ would receive all glory. Quoting from I Corinthians 4:2, 5b "Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be

how weak we are in ourselves. Romans 7:18 Paul states, "For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but (how) to perform that which is good I find not."

Even the Apostle Paul, the great servant of the Lord that he was, said in I Corinthians 2:1-4 "And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching (was) not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power."

Praise God, there is tremendous potential in your ministry and mine as we yield to and are led by His Spirit. God has so graciously imparted unto his sons and daughters of His precious Holy Spirit. He said, "When he the Spirit of truth is come he will guide you into all truth and show you things to come. You shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you and you shall be witnesses unto me in Jerusalem and Judea and Samaria and unto the uttermost parts of the earth." What a privilege to be witnesses and ambassadors for Christ. Hallelujah!

Jesus said, "The works that I do shall ye do also, and greater works than these shall ye do." We may sometimes be discouraged, feeling that we are far from fulfilling that promise of our Lord. And I am sure we would all confess that we fall far short. Nevertheless I believe we should thank God for all that He has done for us and through us. As we seek God with all our hearts and endeavour to function faithfully in the ministry He has given us, He will most surely lead us. So often we tend to judge our spiritual status by the spectacular, but what God requires is that we walk in love

and faithfulness toward Him and our fellow man. In I Corinthians 15:58 Paul says, "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord." II Corinthians 3:18 "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, (even) as by the Spirit of the Lord." God is interested in growth; - going on from glory to glory and from light to light. God is interested in you and I feeding on the living bread, partaking of that "manna" from heaven, day by day, and growing, and growing, and growing. He expects that growth to result in the bearing of fruit, much fruit for his honor and glory. Let us not be weary in well doing for in due season we shall reap if we faint not. I John 3:1 "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."

WHO ARE WE?

"Beloved now are we the sons (or children) 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." Oh hallelujah! What a promise! What glory lies in store for the people of God. As we are led by His spirit, what transforming power and glory and deliverance lies in store for this old sin-sick world. Christ rose triumphant and victorious over death, hell and the grave, and through Him, God's people shall rise from glory to glory to shoulder the responsibility of sharing with our Head, Christ Jesus, the rulership of this world.

"Not with swords loud clashing, Nor sound of rolling drums, By deeds of love and mercy Thy heavenly kingdom comes." Let us take courage, let us press on, that we might apprehend that for which we have been apprehended of God. Let us not fail to enter into the rest God had for us. Let us not fear the future but let us believe and fit in with God's great plan and purpose for the ages.

In thinking of who we are, not only are we children of the most high God

but we are also members of the Body of Christ with Christ as our blessed Head. I am sure we cannot really comprehend the tremendous privilege to be a part of His Body, the Church. As he says in Romans 12:5 "So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another." Oh, glory be to God. What a close relationship we have with one another. How could it be any closer than to be members of the same Body and members one of another? The truths concerning our relationship and the coming together of the Body of Christ have been a wonderful revelation, having become more and more real to us since God moved so wonderfully in 1948.

As members of the same Body we are exhorted by scripture to come to know each other after the spirit and not after the flesh. It can be so easy to see the natural or carnal side of one another with our carnal eyes. We are to see Christ in one another through the eyes of the Holy Spirit, those are eyes of love, eyes of understanding, eyes of forgiveness, eyes of appreciation.

One thing that our Lord emphasized so much was that we love one another. Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ. Can we have the same love for one another that Christ had for us? Jesus saw beyond the faults of Peter. He said (Luke 22:31-32) "Satan has desired to have you that he may sift you

as wheat, but I have prayed for you that your faith fail not and when you are converted, strengthen the brethren." Our attitude should be to pray one for another also, and to do everything we can to encourage and lift up one another.

I remember one dear brother quoting the scripture many years ago, in a meeting, "Love covers a multitude of sins." That quote stood out to me very strongly then and has meant much to me over the years. May we open our hearts to the Holy Spirit, for He is the one who is able to enable us to love one another, for love is a fruit of the Spirit.

"Who are we?" We are a people who have been called to lay down our lives for the brethren and also for all mankind. As we fulfill the ministry that God has given us through prophecy and the laying on of hands, God will most surely lead us on to a fulness in Him and into that blessed kingdom prepared for us from before the foundation of the world.

May we day by day walk in thankfulness and praise to God for what He has done in the past, for what He is doing today and for what He will do in the coming days.

"They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings as eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint." Praise His holy Name! God bless you all!

To the Young People and the Rest of Us "Church" Manners

Recently, it was necessary for me to sit in the back row in the church service. This area in our assembly has often been the domain of young people, and the place where families with young children sit. I was saddened by what I saw. I wondered how much people received back there, because there was so much other activity in those rows than what actually pertained to the service. I began to wonder if we parents have become lax in teaching our children "church" manners.

In our family, our parents taught us how to act, at home, at school, on the job, and at church. The training began early, while we were still babes in arms. We all gathered in Family Worship once a day. The Brethren have taught us that the family is like miniature church. So when the family gathers for Worship, this is a miniature church service. Father is the Elder, and mother is his helper. And the children are the people in that little assembly. So the behavior used in Family Worship is similar to what is used when we gather as an Assembly. And the home is a wonderful place to practice that behavior.

In our home, everyone from our aged grandfather, to my baby sister attended Family Worship. So we had to find a time in the day when everyone was present. Most often when our friends came calling, we just told them we were busy with Family Worship now. They were welcome to join us. Generally, we kept a specific time of day for Family Worship, and we worked other things around Worship. And it wasn't long before others began to respect that time of day. They began calling at a different time. The point I want to make is that Worship was important, and other interests were secondary. In time we came to also appreciate the time for Service, and other things, including sports and work, were secondary. I saw a young lady work on

her schedule at work, until she had every Sunday morning off, and she was blessed for her diligence. I met another family who hesitated to put their son into football, because it meant that he would miss a number of Sundays, and church. It was hard for that lad to miss out on football, but to this day he thanks his parents for encouraging him to go to Service, he is a valued member of his Assembly.

We all, including baby sister, had to sit quietly as the Word was read. In fact, as we got older we followed along in our Bibles, or even took turns reading. Then we were encouraged to ask questions about what we had read, or we could add some insight we had gained from what we read. We began to participate in this tiny church service. And as we participated we began to feel we were part of that service. When the children became older teenagers, they were given a particular day to tell what they had been reading in their own devotions. And they were encouraged to tell what it had meant to them. And this was all practice for Sunday Service. They had to be still, and listen and participate in an orderly manner.

The first Family Worship after our Sunday meeting, each child would be asked if they had a verse from their own reading they would like to memorize for next Sunday service. If they didn't then my parents had one ready for us. We practised that verse ALL week and we knew it well before the next Sunday service. It was so well learned it stuck with us well into adulthood. Often I rely on those verses I learned long ago at Family Worship.

My folks were sticklers for us being quiet and sitting during Family Worship and Sunday Service. It took real persistence on their part, to keep a full-of-life brother anywhere near still, but it was important for him to learn to be still so he could hear the voice of God's Word. It also taught him reverence. I

can still hear my mother, who really looked up to Queen Elizabeth, ask him, "Would you wiggle around, and make such a fuss, if the Queen were here." Of course he wouldn't; he would be in awe of her regal presence. And we must teach our children to be in awe of His presence. We must also teach them that the Bible is the word of God that is to be revered. When someone prophesies that is the Word of God too or sings in the Spirit, or exhorts, or teaches or ministers in any way. That is the Word of God, and is to be respected with quietness. Also it is a good idea to close one's eyes when praying, or singing or listening to a prophecy, because it shuts out other things that would disturb and take one's mind off the message. This is taught in childhood, before the years of adolescence when they are so self-conscious of what their peers think if they close their eyes, etc.

My parents were also strict about us moving about in church service. We went to the bathroom, before we entered the assembly room. Then we only left that room in the most dire of circumstances. We picked a moment when no one was praying or prophesying, so we wouldn't disturb the meeting. If we were taken out of the meeting room by our parents, we knew we needed correction!

I remember my mother prompting me. "They are singing, now, so you should sing too." This was not a time to be flipping through my Bible, or looking around; it was a time to sing. And when the order of the meeting was prophecy, then I later knew it was time for me to focus on prophecy. I encourage parents to teach their children at an early age to participate as much as they can. Sing when the people are singing, clap when the people are clapping, close your eyes and pray along with whoever is praying, lift your hands in praise and submission, etc. If it is taught early, they are much more aware of

what is going on in the service.

It is hard to keep a toddler quiet for extended periods of time, so we brought along a favorite book and a small toy, even a small snack if the meeting was longer. They were only brought out as a last resort, and by the time a child could understand, we left those things at home. Church is not a time to play or eat, but to praise and worship our Lord.

Now, I want to talk directly to the Young People. You are wonderful, and I don't want to scold you. I only want to encourage you in your walk with the Lord. When I became an older teenager I wanted to sit with my friends rather than Mom or Dad in Service. But you know the farther back I got, the easier it was to lose track of what was going on. I knew I was there to meet the Lord, and closer to the front where there were fewer distractions, I got more out of the Service.

Often the week seemed so long, and by Saturday night I was anxious to see my friends. We often got together Saturday evening. And the more fun we had, often the hour got pretty late. Next morning it was hard to get up in time for church, and harder still to concentrate on what the Meeting held for me. Finally, I realized if I had fun with my friends Friday night, and then kept Saturday night free to go to bed early, I was up much earlier, and got much more out of the service.

Finally, Adults, are you in your seat, quietly meditating, praying or reading the Word for a length of time before the Meeting starts? Are you built up, ready to give that psalm, hymn or spiritual song, that prophecy, teaching or exhortation? are you respectful of all the member of the Body? We are examples to our children, and it is us they will imitate.

When I was a child I heard much about the Order of the home and the Order of the Church Manners are part of that Order. They help you and others to get the most out of a Service. They portray reverence for our Lord, and consideration for others.

— A Member of the Body