



Born From Above

A collection of writings By
Bro. Doug Whitter

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“SHARON STAR”
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FORWARD

BORN FROM ABOVE

There is no way that we, as mortals can ever understand, measure, or fully grasp, the tremendous gift that God gave us in His Son, Jesus Christ. We can never begin to thoroughly understand all that Calvary has meant, and will mean, for you and I. As one of the brethren has often said, “God was totally satisfied with Calvary”. Calvary accomplished what God’s purpose and intent was, and we share in the benefits of Calvary. Before all these things can happen, before we can take our rightful place in the great plan and scheme that God has laid out for us, from before the foundation of the world there has to be a birth.

John 3:1, “There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him. Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother’s womb, and be born? 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 essence of this text is very clear, and I believe, very, very simple. But until taught by the Master, and quickened by the Holy Spirit, this scholarly Jewish leader, named Nicodemus, could not understand its simple message. It is very important that we notice what Nicodemus said to Jesus. “We know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.” Truer words were never spoken.

Jesus answered Nicodemus, “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.”

Birth is absolutely necessary in both the natural and the spiritual, and always comes in that order. I Corinthians 15:46, “Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual.” I want to emphasize that in both cases a birth had to take place. The spiritual realm needs the natural realm through, which to manifest itself. He needs this vessel, that which was born of the flesh, committed, yielded, and consecrated to Him, that through it He might manifest Himself.

The word birth means, “The act of coming into life, or the beginning.” Everything must have a beginning or a birth. Regardless of what level of creation we may explore, whether it be man, whether it be the animal kingdom, or whether it be vegetation, it must be brought to life in order to exist.

Notice how Jesus answered Nicodemus, who indicated that the reason he personally believed in Jesus and His ministry, was because of the miracles that He performed. Jesus ignored that when He answered him and said this, “Except a man be born again . . .” Nicodemus was looking at what Jesus did. We do it constantly but He ignored it. Think about this. Just any manifestation of God, by the Holy Spirit, will never bring about a birth. It can never bring us into a lasting relationship with God. **WE MUST BE BORN AGAIN. WE MUST BE BORN FROM ABOVE.**

John 6:26, “Jesus answered them and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled. Labor not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed. Then said they unto him, What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?” A very simple answer. John 6:29 Jesus answered and said unto them, “This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent. They said therefore unto him, What sign shewest thou then, that we may see, and believe thee? What dost thou work?”

They had to see before they could believe. For anything to ever be of any spiritual value to you and I, **IT MUST BE BORN BY THE HOLY GHOST.**

They didn’t follow Jesus for what they saw. They followed Him because He gave them a free lunch. There are a lot of people who follow the Lord for what they’re going to get out of it. I pray that this attitude may never be among us. We’ve got to get away from being so self centered that all we ever think of is “me”.

John 12:34, “The people answered him We have heard out of the law that Christ abideth for ever: and how sayest thou, the Son of man must be lifted up? Who is this Son of man?”

There are a lot of questions being asked today because there is a lot of uncertainty in this life. I pray that God will give us a greater knowledge and understanding, and that we might share a greater confidence in Him than we have ever known before in our life. It goes without saying that there is absolutely no hope in this world outside of the resurrected Christ. All the systems of mankind will never bring to fruition that which God ordained, before the foundations of the world were laid. All the political palaver that is in the earth will never bring us to perfection.

The only thing that will bring us into that victory which was bought and paid for a Calvary, is the glorious resurrection of Jesus Christ. He has come to make His tabernacle within you. He is the life you have. It's that resurrection life: May God take the scales from our eyes. May He pull back the veil that we may begin to behold Him in all of His glory, in all of His majesty, in all of His dominion, and in all of His power. **HE IS RISEN AND HE LIVES WITHIN YOUR HEART!**

John 12:35, "Then Jesus said unto them, Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth." We have to have the Light of lights in order to know where we are going, spiritually speaking as well. Never in the history of mankind has there been more confusion than we are experiencing right now. In the world and in Christendom we need to hear that voice once again saying, "THIS IS THE WAY, WALK YE IN IT."

"While ye have the light, believe in the light, that we may be the children of light. These things spake Jesus, and departed, and did hide Himself from them. But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on Him."

You'll never learn to know God by a miracle. The church today has gone absolutely crazy about miracles. You'll never know God by a miracle. **IT MUST BE A BIRTH, NOT OF THE FLESH BUT OF THE SPIRIT.** The mighty oak tree brings forth from the tiny, insignificant, lifeless, acorn. When you plant your garden, you put those lifeless little seeds in the ground where, with the sunshine, the rain, and the nutrients in the soil, it isn't long until you see little green things starting to pop up. **LIFE HALLELUJAH!**

Man, from a microscopic embryo! Even God's own Son who was conceived by the Holy Ghost went through the divine process of being formed in the human womb. He was delivered according to the ordained laws of nature, Mary being the vessel chosen of God. Have you ever wondered at that? I have many times. I never read that scripture that I don't think of it. Why Mary? Of all the women in the world, why Mary? God chose her that she might give birth to His only Son. What a wonderful, wonderful thing.

Everything must have a birth or a beginning. Every level of spiritual experience that you and I have entered into, had to have a beginning. Whether it be our salvation, justification, sanctification, the baptism of the Holy Spirit, water baptism, or healing, there had to come that birth, or the beginning of that particular level of experience. I believe in the laying on of hands. What I love to see when hands are laid on people, that by the Holy Ghost things just come alive within them. You don't have to coax them, you don't have to do anything. It is a birth. **THE SPIRIT HAS COME**

TO TAKE UP RESIDENCE IN A NEW AND LIVING WAY IN THAT PERSON. BLESS THE LORD!

From conception and birth to our education, our choice of work or profession, even a partner in life, had to spring forth from a beginning that we call birth.

Referring to the natural, and if I dare call birth, “natural”, there must be, according to a divine law, the proper elements put together. Those elements are a male and female, a husband and wife. Even after a couple are married, before birth can materialize, another divine law must be instituted. The husband and wife cohabit, and that seed of life is planted in the woman. She by divine law has the physical productive properties to deliver another human being. From the moment that child is born, a series of divine principles begin to fall into place. These have all been prearranged and predestinated by the Master builder, the creator, God. The child does not arrive in the world talking and walking, nor are they capable of exercising their potential abilities. There will actually be many beginning, many births, to bring about the full compliment of an adult.

Life is a tremendous thing. I’m sure you all realize that when you hold a newborn baby in your arms, what a sacred manifestation of the creative power of an almighty God. In the early stages of that life, the child is under tutors, and governors, until the time appointed of the father. Galatians 4:1. Hidden in the confines of this tiny, little, immature child lies great potentials, unknown, and dormant, until that birth of knowledge is brought forth. By inbred gifts or talents come forth the skills of whatever abilities God has given. I am sure that a person doesn’t come into the world playing the piano. Little do parents realize what potential exists in that little bundle of flesh - What power and dynamic force lie within its being - born of God! Through a chain of events and circumstances things begin to surface. These abilities are not discovered at the time of birth but according to the great creator’s timepiece. How absolutely dependant the human race is on the creator.

When a natural child is adopted into a family, they have already experienced one birth. Why they have become separated from their earthly father and mother, whether it be by death, a home splitting up, or whatever it is, the second family accepts this living child which was born to other parents, into their home by adoption. They are set and placed in that home, not as a guest, but as a member of that family, to be accepted and considered by every one in that family as a son or daughter. This child has possibly wandered from mountain to hill. The world is full of those who have no shepherd, no fold, no home, no parents. Now, by adoption, that same child has the right to say to that man, “father”.

That adopted child has every legal right to say, “My father”. Though

a man and a woman have the capacity to love an unwanted child, and are able to bestow the same love and affection upon that child, birth somehow, in a mysterious, unexplainable way, links parents to their offspring. I had a cousin who was always in trouble. He was like a wild Ass's colt and was into everything. He was forever getting speeding tickets, and his dad was forever bailing him out. My dad was talking to his brother one day and told him how foolish he was to be doing this. He stopped my dad dead in his tracks. He said, "What would you do if it was your son?" I know my dad well enough that he would have done exactly the same thing. Why? I may have lots of faults, but I'm his son. That is what makes the difference. That is also what makes the difference between a shepherd and a hireling. They are your sons and daughters, born of the same spirit.

A father and mother's love is able to embrace all the members of their family, whether conceived by their own seed or the offspring of another. That child becomes an integral part of that home. They have the same rights, they eat the same food, and they are looked after exactly the same way. If we who are evil know how to give good gifts unto our children, how much more then, can God enfold us in His arms. Every newborn child whether it be by birth, natural birth through adoption, or whether it is spiritual birth is the Gift of God.

I pray that this will create, first of all thought, and secondly desire. I think we have come to a time when we must face the truth. I have not been personally satisfied. With the growth of this spiritual family. I'm not speaking in the terms of revelation. When was the last time in your local church you experienced the joy of a second birth. I am not speaking of someone who has moved from one church to another. They're part of the family regardless of where they go. That is another wonderful thing. I am not speaking of someone who has been in a certain denomination and the Spirit of God, has been speaking to them, and they desire, as many people have, to be joined to this body. That is wonderful but they have already been born. I am speaking of one who has never been born again. Let us think of these things. The church is a living organism. IT IS ALIVE.

When a young man meets a young woman and they go through the process of dating and courtship, and decide to get married, it is almost a foregone conclusion that during the course of that relationship and union, they will produce their own kind. Birth brings life to a church that nothing else will ever do. I was reading an article written on the gifts of the Spirit. He spoke first of the Gift of the Spirit, which is the Holy Ghost. Then he spoke of the gifts of the Spirit which is the Holy Ghost working in you and I. But what a joy, what life it brings when a child is born.

I thought of this scripture where Jesus speaks of the man who prepared

a feast and none of the invited guests came. He said to his servants, “Go out into the highways and byways and compel them to come in. I am not thinking of going back to the old methods of evangelism. I believe that time itself has proven that that is not really what God has in mind. There have been more people born into the church through a one on one contact than in all evangelistic meetings. I wonder if we have lost our vision of souls I hope and pray that we haven’t. I asked myself the question if I had. Have we? Are we concerned about our neighbor?”

Another brother and I ate in a restaurant in a northern town a couple of times. A Chinaman runs that restaurant and he came out and talked to us. He is a Christian. He said we are in a minority here. We are the only Chinese family in the community. We were back in another time when a man who was drunk came and sat down two booths behind us. Immediately the man who had been talking with us went and sat down with him. He came back to us and said, “I would like you to talk to this man. He was off his drink for five months.” The drunk man pointed to the man and said, “My old buddy. He was a tremendous help to me. I never drank a drop for five months.” One of his friends talked him into having just a bottle of beer and that was it.

He set up a meeting for us to talk to this man. This wasn’t in a cathedral. It was in a restaurant. The brother who was with me talked to him. It is wonderful to see a ministry at work. He didn’t raise the roof and cause all the rest of the people to wonder what was going on. He sat and talked to him and found out his name was Jimmy. The world is full of Jimmy’s and we sit in our paneled houses, comfortable. I am so thankful to God many times when I get into bed, for a place to live. I thank God for food, I thank God for clothing, but there are many Jimmy’s that have neither shepherd nor fold.

This Chinese man asked if he could have prayer with him. He said, “Maybe in the morning when I am sober.” He realized the state he was in. The Chinese man answered him in a wonderful way. He said, “Jimmy, God will accept the human heart regardless of what state he is in.” He wouldn’t have to remember what happened the day before if a birth took place. He’d know. Then he said, “I would like to pray with you.” He said, “Alright my friend.” He put his other hand on top of my brother’s and there in the restaurant he prayed that God would forgive him of his sin.

Other sheep I have which are not of this fold, them also I must bring. I pray of young and old, if there is anybody that has not experienced that new birth; not coming in on Mom and Dad’s experience, but have you been born again? Always thank God every day that you breathe for their experience.

May God give us a vision. Prayer changes things. Maybe we have spent

a lot of time praying for this and that, when God wants to reap a harvest. Have we lost the vision. We just expressed our sympathy to a couple of brothers who have lost their oldest brother. One of them said, "I got good news." I understand that the older brother accepted the Lord before he passed on. But why should a man wait for a whole lifetime, when, no doubt there were in him spiritual abilities that God had entrusted to him, that could come to life, if he had first of all been born from above and then exercised them. The development of those spiritual abilities and talent that God has given every one of us, is your responsibility and mine, with the help of the Holy Spirit. Don't sit back and wait for something tremendous to happen. It has already happened.

It happened when Jesus Christ died on the cross and rose triumphant over death, over hell, over the grave, over cancer, over arthritis, and over heart trouble. He answered the call and went to be with the Father. He said, "It is expedient for you that I go unto the Father." It is extremely necessary, and it was, because He said, "If I don't go, then I can't send you the comforter, but if I go, I'll send you the Comforter." He was as good as His Word. When I think of that resurrected Christ who was brought forth from the tomb I haven't the capacity to understand it. When the women went to the sepulchre to embalm Jesus body, they found that He was not there, but there were angels there. They said, "Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here. He is risen." That changed the whole picture. If He had stayed in the grave, it would have been a whole different story. Christ has risen from the dead, and with all of those divine qualities He has come to take up residence in your life and mine.

When Jesus came to take up residence in your body, and mine, He brought life, more abundantly. He brought life, more abundantly. He brought truth, He brought light, and He brought with Him the known way. In that holy seed lies all those divine potentialities that should be part of your life and mine.

Whatever your ailment or my ailment might be, I believe in what the Bible teaches. If a man, or a woman be sick, let them call for the elders of the church, and let them anoint with oil and pray the prayer of faith, and the Lord shall raise them up. I certainly believe in the gifts of healing, but for any of it to come alive, it has to be born from within. Jesus Christ, the son of God, resurrected, lives in you.

When Paul prayed he said he knew that he had this house in heaven that one day he was going to go to. As he prayed to God he said, I would rather, than me got to it, for it to come to me and swallow up this life - put it right on over the top. He prays that life, that inheritance that I know is mine, through Jesus Christ, let it come to me. Oh, Holy Spirit, allow that embryo of life be released in every one of us. Let us go having partaken of

the resurrection, with He who is a Person, and not an experience. Let us realize that the power that brought Him forth triumphant is the same power that is in that seed that lives within you and I.

Little wonder, brother, we've got to get rid of self. Little wonder, we've got to do whatever God asks us to do. Don't rob yourself of the fullness of the manifestation of God's power in your life, through some foolish little thing between you and your brother, or you and your sister. That could literally hamper the growth of those things that are within you, and stop them from bearing fruit. That is a trick of the devil himself. What kind of a grudge could I have against you that God couldn't forgive? I Gd can forgive it, certainly I should be able to. But, do we want forgiveness? How badly do we want the kingdom? I'm not talking about some kind of cure-all, or going home and drinking some kind of spiritual aspirin, and then tomorrow morning you'll wake up and you'll be a different person. I am speaking of that relationship that we now have with Jesus Christ, who is the Son of God, who is the resurrection, who is the life, by whose stripes we are healed. He must increase but we must decrease. PLEASE BELIEVE THAT TO BE BORN OF THE SPIRIT IS YOUR GIFT FROM GOD.

REVERENCE - LIBERTY - FORMALITY

In the few lines to follow, I would like to endeavor, with the Lord's help, to distinguish between these three attributes which center around ones

Spiritual life and walk with God.

I am sure it may apply to us individually and collectively as members of the Body of Christ the Church.

REVERENCE - simply means to revere or honor. Proverbs 1:7 reads “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge; but fools despise wisdom and in-struction.” The word fear as it is used here, might better be interpreted reverence -to reverence and honor the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. A man is wise if he reveres the Creator of all things and endeavors to uphold His ways and to follow on to His statutes.

God in the past number of years has been teaching us how to reverence God, not only as the Almighty One who reigns and rules by the word of His mouth, but He has also taught us to honor one another and to reverence the office which He has invested in us and entrusted us with. Romans 12:10 reads: “Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love, in HONOR preferring one another.”

The most honorable possession a man or woman can have is that part of God which our heavenly Father has endued us with and invested in us, which enables us to express the true desire and will of God in earth which we call a ministry.

I remember while serving in the armed forces being taught that when we meet an officer and gave him the salute, we were not saluting the man as an individual, but the cap badge he wore as a representative, holding the office of an officer in the Naval Force. If you were to meet the same individual in civilian clothes or even in uniform without his cap on you were not to salute for he did not wear that distinguishing mark of the cap badge. It mattered not who the individual was, it was the “Code of Arms” he wore that you recognized and honored.

Too often we may find ourselves looking to a particular individual rather than honoring the office which we are ordained by God to hold.

Before a man or woman was entitled to wear the distinguishing emblem, certain requirements were necessary and after many weeks of strenuous, vigorous training they succeeded in fulfilling these qualifications, they were honored to wear the symbol which gave them their due and proper recognition.

So it is in this great army of the Lord, He permits many trials and difficulties to come to try us but has also promised that He would never allow us to be able, but will with the temptation also make a way of escape.

I would to God dear people, that He would give us such grace that when these problems and trials come our way that we may, by His grace and His Spirit, begin to realize that He has NOT forsaken us, but every son He scourgeth and chastens and permits us to work out our own Salvation with much fear and trembling, knowing that weeping cometh but for a season,

the morning, the dawning of that new day which He says will grow brighter and brighter, WILL COME, for yet a little while and he that shall come will come, praise His Name. The only thing that makes you different from anyone else is the office which God, the righteous judge, has appointed you unto.

What good would an army be if all were to hold the same office, but as each man functions in his respective place, then and only then, is progress achieved. Regardless, my friend, of who you are or where you are, or what circumstances may surround you at this very moment, may the Spirit of God enable you to see that YOU have an important part to play in the great economy of God. Therefore, "Be kindly affectioned one to another, with brotherly love, HONOR and prefer one another."

LIBERTY - or possibly better quoted - freedom. Galatians 6:1 "Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage."

There is nothing so cumbersome and binding as the ideas of man and man made restrictions. On the other hand, there is nothing so blessed, which can bring such peace and rest, like when one finds and enjoys the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free, and if a man be free he is free indeed.

May I insert right here a word of caution for fear any one may feel or sense the danger of just throwing open the door and allowing men to just live as they please. This we have no intention of doing or suggesting.

Paul, I believe spoke concerning such matters in his writing to the early church. In Romans 7:14-25 he says this, "For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin. For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. 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. For the good that I would I do not; but the evil which I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me. I find then a law that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after inward man: But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I THANK GOD THROUGH JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD. So then with the mind of myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin."

I Corinthians 6:12 Paul writes; "ALL things are lawful unto me, but ALL things are not expedient (profitable). ALL things are lawful for me, but I will NOT BE BROUGHT UNDER THE POWER OF ANY." I Corinthians 10:23, "ALL things are lawful for me, but ALL things are not expedient;

ALL things are lawful for me, BUT ALL THINGS EDIFY NOT.” These two verses in particular have opened for me a source of help and understanding that I have longed to see for many years.

Paul said ALL note ALL things were lawful for him not everything he could have done as a believer were profitable or edifying. Paul in writing to Timothy by way of instruction said and I quote I Timothy 4:14-16, “Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery. Meditate upon these things: give thyself WHOLLY to them; that thy PROFITING MAY APPEAR TO ALL. Take head unto THYSELF, and unto the doctrine; continue in them; for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself and them that hear thee.”

Paul in writing to the Ephesian Church said this, Ephesians 1:11,12 (Weymouth) “In Him too, we have been made heirs, having been chosen beforehand in accordance with the intention of Him whose might carries out in everything the design of His own will, so that we should be devoted to the extolling of His glorious attributes - we who were the first to fix our hopes on Christ.”

When we, as the term is used, become a believer or Christian, especially now in light of the glorious revelation of His Body the Church, we actually as it were, surrender or as Paul writes, we present our bodies as living sacrifices, which because of and through the blood of Jesus Christ, they become Holy and acceptable to God, which is our reasonable service and be not conformed to this world but be ye TRANSFORMED by the renewing of your minds, that YOU may prove what is that good, and acceptable and perfect will of God Romans 12:1. God’s ways are very practical and He desires that you and I prove for ourselves that which is good and acceptable and which IS the perfect will of God for our lives.

The easiest way in which to control our lives, but I might add, would only hinder and bring you into bondage, would be to make a creed or laws governing the “dos” and “don’ts” of our lives. This, dear people, is not the answer to the longing of your hearts to understand and know the way of the Lord better and in a fuller way. As one stops to realize what it means to be a member of Christ’s Body, a temple of the Holy Ghost, a Sanctuary for His Presence, I am sure that with little thought, many of the ever increasing evils of this age would immediately be illuminated at the very thought of permitting our lives to be so entangled. As Paul said they are neither profitable nor do they edify or build one’s life Spiritually, physically or any other way.

If I may be bold enough to use one or two simple things as illustrations, and before I do, may I make myself very clear, if per chance you are hindered by what illustrations I may use, the things I am about to say are in no

way meant to condemn you, for only the Spirit of God can bring to light the hidden things of our lives and make them appear as evil before us.

A common habit of both young and old, men and women alike, is that of smoking.

Common sense, without any illumination of the Spirit, tells us that such a habit is actually very unprofitable, if for no other reason than material and physical and one could hardly say it edifies and build the body, physically or spiritually, therefore as Paul said, and I say it now using my own words, though I may do such a thing it neither profits me nor builds me. For what reason then would one desire to smoke other than to be as those about them who in nine cases out of ten wish they could stop. Would it then be necessary to write a law declaring thou shalt not smoke - NO - common sense and the Spirit of God teaches us it would not be profitable nor edifying to fill or blemish the temple of the Holy Ghost, which Paul says is our bodies, with smoke.

Paul in writing to the Ephesians again said; 5:18, "Be not drunk with wine but be filled with the Spirit." I know it is not necessary for me to say thou shalt not drink. Again we see around us every day we live in devastating effects of alcohol on people's lives, it neither profits nor builds a sound body, home, or nation, or church, when we allow ourselves to as Paul said, BE BROUGHT UNDER such a habit or form. I realize what the scriptures teach in this regard in take a little wine for your stomach's sake, etc. There is a proper and improper use of such things, we do not see neither the sense nor the need of wine etc. to become a part of our social activities but to be used only as the scriptures teach its use.

There are so many things that could be referred to here which I feel best not mentioned for fear you would hang this article on the wall and say not this is what we believe, we shall not smoke, nor drink, etc., etc. You yourself can be the best law maker to govern your own life before God in order that by following after Him and neglecting not the gift given you, your profiting before God may appear to ALL and by so walking you are not only benefitting yourself but also those who see and hear you are sharing in the goodness of God shed abroad in your life.

FORMALITY - according to form or tradition.

God in the past fifteen years has been so good to us in shaking us loose of a lot of form and tradition, but being we are human mortals of the dust, we must ever be on our guard that we do not permit ourselves to slip from one type of formality into another. God never moves the same way twice in a meeting for example. We should never expect the meeting, to follow down the same channel week after week. One form or rut is just as dangerous as another.

Our lives as individuals can fall into the same vicious circle where life becomes a machine that we turn on at a certain time in the morning and shut it off at a certain time each night. Your prayer life can become just as habitual, your praise, your prophesying, your singing, can, if we are not careful, become very mechanical. This we must not allow to happen. If we see you lives falling into a definite given routine, break it before it breaks you.

I would like to dwell only briefly here, on an aspect of our Spiritual lives that I definitely feel is lacking sorely and that is the social part of our Spiritual Lives. Yes I said Spiritual Lives, because your walk with God begins and ends with God twenty four hours a day, seven days a week. Whether you are at work or at play or in a service you are walking or should be, as much in the Spirit at any time as when singing or giving a prophesy.

I believe I can generally fit all of our lives into one mold. Monday through Friday or Saturday, we rise early, have our breakfast and off to work. In larger areas you don't see home again until supper time. After supper you read the newspaper, possibly do some little job around the house, maybe sleep through a TV program then off to bed, to rise to the same routine the next morning and the next.

Sunday is much the same week after week. Go to service, visit for a few minutes after the service, then home, real exciting isn't it!

The last few years I have learned to really enjoy Sundays when at home with my family. We don't do much of anything, but what we do we do together and whatever we do we enjoy together. When away from home on the field visiting the Churches I miss home more on Sunday, it seems, than any other day of the week for this reason.

As it is in your own family, I believe it should be in a similar way in this wonderful Spiritual family. When have you called on some of the Saints and enjoyed an evening or afternoon together? You may not always be talking about Spiritual things but you are together enjoying one another's company and fellowship. You may say, as I have often said myself, I haven't time. No and you never will have time unless YOU FIND AND MAKE TIME, but I might say right here, we need such fellowship just as much as we need a service many times.

There is something about sitting down and eating together that nothing else can ever suffice for. When or has the Church ever had a love feast together? May I emphasize again we need such fellowship.

Today my wife and I took our two boys out with their sleigh and let them slide down a little hill a few times. I must confess I didn't feel too much like doing it and I certainly had a lot of, what would seem to be, more important things to do, but when I saw those little faces light up with delight at the big thrill of a simple sleigh ride, it was worth far more than the other things that had to wait because of it. Yes we are a people of form

and habit, but may God teach us to begin to walk by His Spirit and enjoy to the full the opportunities He has given us to revel in His presence, and we will find that He will lead us in the simple paths of life that bring rest and happiness such as we have never experienced before.

I have often thought and been greatly concerned about some of you young folks. I have often stood back and admired you and your courageous spirit. At times you must find it awfully lonesome and you often wish there was some place to go or something to do to sort of burn up a little of your surplus energy . Confer with your Elders, I am sure they will be co-operative in arranging a little social evening or something now and then so that young and old alike can get together and enjoy themselves. No one will ever know how close I was to jumping on that old sleigh today and going for a ride, but two thing held be back, the sleigh wasn't big enough for one reason and I didn't know how I would take the trip, but someday I'll venture out!

If you feel your life has slipped into a rut, don't do something foolish to get out of it, but prayerfully ask God to guide you in order that you may prove for yourself His ways are best and profitable for you. Help each other by getting together and enjoying each other's fellowship.

In closing may I say May God continue to help us to honor one another, to enjoy the liberty of the Spirit of God which is ours through Jesus Christ, not to become entangled with all the allurements of this age and allowing ourselves to be filled wit the Spirit thus conforming to His will and not to the forms and traditions of men. God bless you one and all.

THE DARKNESS HAS PASSED - It must be the breaking of Day

For sometime now I have been somewhat concerned with the constant burden and heaviness that has rested upon the Church. I have personally spent much time talking to God about it and in doing so have been made aware of a necessity of such times in the proving and pruning of God's people, however, I have also been made to realize that such conditions should not and WILL NOT last forever, in fact, I believe the breaking of the NEW DAY is upon us.

Sometime ago while in a service, the Spirit of God drew this to our attention that all the prophecies and spiritual songs were in the past tense,

which made us to believe we had passed through the valley and that we were approaching the glorious dawning of that NEW DAY, praise His Name forever.

This by no means indicates we shall never again witness perilous times or distressing moments, but as Paul revealed to the Corinthians “There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man, but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above what ye are able but with the temptation also make a way to escape THAT YE MAY BE ABLE TO BEAR IT.” I Corinthians 10:13. His grace is sufficient. His strength is made perfect in weakness” II Corinthians 12:9. Paul continues by saying in the 10th verse; “Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ’s sake, for when I am weak, THEN am I strong.”

When one, such as Paul did here, begins to realize that God has His hand in ones affairs, it takes the sting out of adversities and fills ones being with the glory of His Divine Being.

The time of THE CORONATION has come when WE, as His subjects, must crown Him, not with a crown of thorns, but CROWN HIM KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS. He HAS come to His own and His own received Him and we do honor Him as King of His Kingdom and our lives, for His Kingdom is WITHIN YOU. The time of Coronation is preceded by much preparation and making ready. It is time of much expectancy and happiness, we are about to crown our King.

The crowning of our King will bring with it what the world is seeking and longing for. Isaiah relates our Monarch in chapter 61, especially in the first three or four verses; “ The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord has anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound. To proclaim the acceptable ear of the Lord, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified. And THEY shall build the old wastes, they shall rise up the former desolations, and they shall repair the waste cities, the desolations of many generations. And strangers shall stand and feed your flocks, and the sons of thee alien shall be your plowmen and your vinedressers. But ye shall be named the Priests of the Lord; men shall call ye the Ministers of our God; ye shall eat the riches of the Gentiles, and in their glory shall ye boast yourselves.” The coming and crowning of the King now will be far removed from His first appearance, when He came to

His own and His own received Him not, but to as many as received Him to them gave He the power TO BECOME the sons of God, His Subjects, His people, the Sheep of His pasture.

Oh sing ye barren lands and rejoice ye waste places for He that shall come will come and shall not tarry, for the hour of His appearing is at hand and ALL shall rejoice at His Coming.

People of God, prepare ye for the hour of His coming , make ready for the feast, take thou the cruise of oil and trim thou your lamps for soon shall we behold the Glory of the Lord and shall we understand and know the greatness of His coming.

Paul in writing to Timothy speaks of His coming in a manner that perhaps not all who read this article may be aware of. II Timothy 1 he admonishes Timothy to stir up the gift that is within him which was given him by prophecy and the laying on of his hands, and he continues in verse 7 by saying, “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; Who have saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, BUT IS NOW MADE MANIFEST BY THE APPEARING OF OUR SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel”; Notice verse 10 where he says; “But is NOW made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ.” As He increases we must of necessity decrease. As He is enthroned in our lives (His Kingdom) we bow to His will and crown Him King of our lives. What great rejoicing there will be for then shall the world begin to see and understand for the first time the fulness and greatness of God manifest in His Son and through HIS SONS, for we are heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ. As I sat and listened to the positiveness of the songs and prophecies in the service a few weeks back, the Spirit of God impressed me with these few words of comfort to the Church, that although darkness has covered the earth and gross darkness the people, nevertheless, **THE GLORY OF THE LORD HAS RISEN UPON YOU.**

Saints of God, may His Spirit impress this truth upon you, begin as never before to think positively, to live in the expectancy of the fulfillment of His promises in your lives. Although at the time your read this article you may find yourself encompassed round about on every side as the children of Israel were crossing the Red Sea, mountains on one side and the enemy pressing in from behind, the Red Sea confronting them, take your problem to God as Moses did, you may, for you have such liberties as a child of God, tell God about it and you will find he WILL make a way of escape for

you as He did for Israel, it may not be your way out, but do whatever He asks you to do. He said to Moses. “What have you in your hand,” and he replied, “a rod,” a simple thing, but symbolic of authority, listen, to as many as received Him to THEM GAVE HE AUTHORITY, begin to learn how to apply and use that God given right which is your through Jesus Christ our elder brother. May I mention this in passing.

When trouble and adversities strike, YOU look to God. He no doubt longs for that intimate relationship and communication with you. There is nothing wrong in sharing it with others as you feel led by God to do, but don't push your problems off on somebody else and rob yourself of that close communion which often comes when discussing a matter with God. When you feel you are unable to cope with the situation realize God has made provision for such circumstances, share it with your Elders and the Saints and let them join with you in finding His perfect will, for we are finding our more and more each day the tremendous strength that there is in the wonderful body the Church. Yes it must be the breaking of THE DAY, the night is almost gone, the day is coming, oh it must be the breaking of THE DAY.

In closing may I just say this, realize in your heart, though weeping comes for a season, great joy shall come with the dawning of the morning. God has indicated that Israel has suffered double for all her sins, but be comforted by reading Isaiah chapter 40, the whole chapter. Space nor time would not permit writing all He speaks of here, but in finishing this article please read this chapter and may the Spirit of God bless it to your hearts.

Rejoice in the Lord and again I say rejoice. May the days that lie before us be filled with the gaiety and joy as the Spirit of THE CORONATION fills the air and our hearts.

All hail the power of Jesus Name, Let angels prostrate fall, Bring forth the Royal Diadem, And You crown Him Lord of All.

PREPARE YE FOR THE HARVEST

There have been a few things brought to my attention of late that I feel should be drawn to the attention of the Church universal and with the help of the Spirit of God I would like to, in an informal way point them out by this article.

May I bear out right from the start that what is about to be said has no bearing or relation to the past or what we often refer to as the old order. If you read and judge what you read on the basis of your past experience you will confuse yourself and end up saying “we are going back instead of forwards”. Listen dear people, there is no such thing as going back with God. If we have an open heart and mind towards God He leads us steadily

onward and upwards, praise His Name.

This article may not arouse too much excitement in you but I believe the time has come for us to face a few existing facts and allow the Spirit of God to guide in what steps we deem necessary to bringing about His Divine mind and will in all things.

Before we begin to outline what is on my heart may I also say this. Sometimes we have the deluded idea that everything pertaining to yesterday was wrong and out of order. This is the furthest from the truth. There was nothing wrong with yesterday, where the disorder arises is when we try and live the experiences of yesterday or live in the light of yesterday today. Hebrews 10:9 says, "He taketh away the first, that He may establish the second." If we honestly truthfully believe that God has taken away the first and has established us in the second then let us not be always referring and worrying about the first and getting back into the old order. It is as impossible for one to lapse back into the old order, (providing ones heart is genuinely right before God) as it is for us to live again the day just past, for **GREATER IS HE THAT IS WITHIN YOU**. We **MUST** have absolute, unshakable, confidence in the One who has brought us out, that He will perpetuate our lives in the way He has led us. In the great exodus of Israel the Lord said to Moses, Exodus 6:1-8: "Now shalt thou see what I will do to Pharaoh; for with a strong hand shall he let them go, and with a strong hand shall he drive them out of his land. And God spake unto Moses, and said unto him, **I AM THE LORD**: And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, but the name of God Almighty, but by my name **JEHOVAH** was I not known to them. And I have also established my covenant with them, to give them the land of Canaan, the land of their pilgrimage, wherein they were strangers. I have also heard the groaning of the children of Israel, whom the Egyptians keep in bondage; and I have remembered my covenant. Wherefore say unto the children of Israel, I am the Lord, and I **WILL BRING YOU OUT** from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I **WILL** rid you out of their bondage, and I **WILL** redeem you with a stretched out arm, and with great judgements; And I **WILL** take you to me for a people, and I **WILL** be to you a God; and ye shall know that I am the Lord your God, which **BRINGETH YOU OUT FROM UNDER THE BURDEN** of the Egyptians. **AND I WILL BRING YOU IN** unto the land, concerning that which I did swear to give it to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob; and I **WILL** give you for an heritage; **I AM THE LORD**." Deuteronomy 6:23 " **AND HE BROUGHT US OUT FROM THENCE, THAT HE MIGHT** bring us in, to give us the land which he swore unto our fathers." Please note repeatedly the scriptures say **I WILL**, and if He said that He will, then let us with fresh hope and confidence believe that **HE WILL** perform and

fulfill that which He has spoken. We cannot say after we have graduated with degrees from college that the elementary grades of school were wrong and out of order. One could never experience the thrill of achievement when receiving their diploma if they had not first succeeded in the basic elementary fundamentals of their education. I repeat, where the disorder arises is when one should have progressed to college still remains in the primary class, but grade one was preparatory for grade two and grade school for high school for university, etc. so please do not look on your Spiritual experience of yesterday as absolutely obsolete today. You could have never have the experience of today without what yesterday contributed to you. As of now stop worrying about going back or getting back into the old order, stop thinking of yesterday, don't discredit it, but we MUST look forward with great anxiety and anticipation to first of all today and then tomorrow. Thank God for yesterday and for the contribution it made to your life and then allow what yesterday taught you to guide you into the unknown realms that today make available to you.

There are many things the Church we KNOW, will experience in the good time and grace of God, but they as yet, are not permanently available to us today. Don't worry about that either, just allow the Spirit of God to bring you to maturity in His time according to His will. You will remember a year or so ago at Camp, the Spirit and I say, the Spirit led us to sing many of the old songs of yesterday such as: Pass Me Not Oh Gentle Savior; Lord I'm Coming Home; Jesus is Passing This Way, etc. And at the time it was brought to the attention of the brethren that some thought we were going back instead of forward. As you no doubt experienced, because of your walk with God and the varied experiences He permitted in your lives, those songs meant more than they ever did previously. One and one equals two means more as you receive your masters degree in math. Simply because you have over the years been able to add to this basic foundation that one apple plus another apple make two apples, you have allowed additional teaching and training to make its contribution to what you started off with in your first grade.

You have been taught that there are levels of experience. Each step prepares you for the next one. After climbing to the top of a ladder you cannot say you had no need of the bottom rungs, but each step prepared and helped you to take the next one, just as each experience in your Spiritual life has assisted you to where, by God's grace, you are today.

I trust you are able to receive what has been said as it will help you to receive what is on my heart.

We are all aware of the need that exists among our children and young people. Just what to do to combat this circumstance is not at this point

altogether clear, however, it is something that parents and Church alike should give considerable thought and attention to. Recently I had the privilege of being at a little get-together in one of the local churches. It was very informal and a few games were played one of which the children and some of the young people were given Bibles, (apparently they have none of their own, at least not with them,) and they were asked to see who could find a certain scripture verse the quickest. As we watched them, one of the Elders leaned over to me and said, “somehow we haven’t done it like Dad did.” I asked him what he meant and he said just watch these young fold try and find these scriptures. Most of them, almost all, had not a clue whether Isaiah was in the old or new testament. They would start from the back or front and flick the pages until they accidentally found Isaiah. When asked to name the four Gospels they had no idea. You may say what does that matter? I personally feel it matters a great deal. Do we want our children to grow up absolutely ignorant of the Bible and its use? Is there anything wrong with knowing where to find a book in the Bible and how to properly use the Bible for reference? Parents and Elders hear me please, its high time we gave heed to some of these, what we may term, elementary things.

The main emphasis in most churches is placed on ministering, ministering, ministering. Now please do not misunderstand what I’m saying. **IT IS AN ABSOLUTE MUST THAT EVERY MEMBER (JOINT) IN THIS SPIRITUAL BODY SUPPLIES OR MINISTERS**, to the increasing of the body in love, Ephesians 4:16, but this is not all there is to talk and think and teach about. We have a fresh new crop of Saints growing up among us someday in the not too far distant future, we will expect them to fill their roll in the Church and minister, but what are we doing to prepare these young folks for that great day? When the Sunday School was discontinued the emphasis at the time was placed on all the wrongs and faults of the Sunday School which we were well aware of existed, but have we fulfilled what the teaching gave us to take the place of Sunday School? Please let us be honest, have we? You will recall that we were taught that it was up to the parent to teach their children and between teaching at home and the Church this would far surpass the efforts of an inexperienced fifteen year old trying to teach your children. At least the inexperienced shared what little they in the ways of stories concerning David, Moses and such like, but I fear we have as parents failed to fill the gap and something now **MUST** be done to help these young folks who will someday fill the ranks we fill today. In ministering I have often said and heard others do the same, in referring to a certain incident in the scriptures have said, Well I won’t go into that, you know the story,” when actually these young folks have never possibly heard the story. We must begin to take the time to share with them the things that

are so familiar to us. Someone at sometime has taken the time to tell us the story or possibly we would not know it either.

We are fully aware that just knowing the books of the Bible and memorizing long passages of scripture or hearing Bible stories will never make a child Spiritual but we do feel the need of a sort of an equalizer here, we want them to know the way of the Lord by experience but we also do not want them ignorant of what practically every child in school knows, the two go hand in hand. I recall a saying I once read many years ago which said, "Organization without power is useless, but power without organization is wasted". Knowing the Bible without the enlightenment of the Spirit of God is useless, having the revelation without the word of God without the ability to apply it is wasted. There are two things that constitute a good musician, theory plus talent. I have seen people who could play any kind of music you set in front of them but it sounded very mechanical because they lacked talent. On the other hand I have heard others play that had loads of talent but were very limited because of their lack of theory or know-how. The two go hand in hand, both are extremely necessary.

Parents may I make a suggestion here, if your child is old enough to read and they do not own their own Bible, buy one for them, not a real expensive one but see to it that they have a Bible of their own and encourage them to take it to the services with them, also to read it at home and follow along when you have your family devotions. Get them acquainted with the Bible and how to use it properly.

Now concerning the Family Alter, we usually read a passage of scripture and have prayer which is good and very profitable, but let us let the Spirit of God guide us in this as well. There may be times when rather than read and pray you could just talk about various things that we feel your family requires, don't feel that you are tied down to a certain form. We are all people of habit and it is so easy to allow ourselves to get into a fixed way of doing things. Remember what God told Israel that when their sons and daughters asked why a certain custom was followed to explain to them why it was that way. Take time to explain carefully to your family why the Church does this or that. Joshua 4:1-7 reads: "And it came to pass, when all the people were clean passed over Jordan that the Lord spake unto Joshua saying Take you twelve men out of the people, out of every tribe a man, And command ye them, saying, Take you hence out of the midst of Jordan out of the place where the priests' feet stood firm, twelve stones, and ye shall carry them over with you, and leave them in the lodging place, where ye shall lodge this night. Then Joshua called twelve men, whom he had prepared of the children of Israel, out of every tribe a man; And Joshua said unto them, Pass over before the ark of the Lord your God into the midst

of Jordan, and take you up every man of you a stone upon his shoulder, according unto the number of the tribes of the children of Israel: That this may be a sign among you, that when your children ask their fathers in time to come, saying, what mean ye by these stones? Then ye shall answer them, That the water of Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the Lord; when it passed over Jordan, the waters of Jordan were cut off; and these stones shall be for a memorial unto the children of Israel for ever.”

Now concerning reverence I feel to say this. Although in most cases, the Church assembles in a hall, it still is the place which has been set aside for the Church to meet in. We should reverence it as such Before the meeting begins and you may be there a little early, which we hope you are, one should quietly sit in an attitude of prayer and meditation. Don't carry on a conversation and visit, take these few minutes to prepare yourself for the meeting. (We should not only do this here but also coming to the service). I have seen people in the middle of a prophecy or prayer get up and move around or leave the room, talk or whisper. This room, talk or whisper. This should not be, this God speaking, if He stood in visible appearance and spoke to us, but because He ordains to use one of the Saints we sometimes over look that it is still HE THAT SPEAKETH. Teach your children to be reverent, I know children will be children, we were children ourselves once, but they should be taught to reverence the House of the Lord and where it meets. After the service keep them from running around, playing the piano, etc. let them feel there is something very precious and sacred about the Assembling of the Church. The more I write it seems there is more to write but space will not permit, but may our minds be stirred up in the way of remembrance of these things that we were taught when we were young, they still stand us in good stead and are well worth passing on.

There is one more thing that I feel impressed to just to mention here and possibly at another time one of the other brethren will feel to review the teaching by the way of an article. Everyone in the Church should tithe. Here again we should teach our children how to tithe, why we tithe and how the tithe is administered and by whom. Possibly there are those who are themselves not clear on all these points, ask your Elders they will explain it to you so that you in turn can teach your children the proper order that exists in the Church. There is NO excuse for anyone not tithing, for the only one that is deprived is the one who robs God and disobeys the teaching He has set forth in the scriptures. The Church is not desirous of anyone's money, but the Church and God is very concerned for the individuals sake that they follow the order in this regard. You can never expect God's richest blessing on your life and home if your are not giving to God what is rightfully His. You can be assured that if you fail in this regard God has numerous ways

in which to withhold from you what is rightfully yours as an heir and joint heir with Jesus Christ our elder brother. You may say I can not afford to tithe. But the truth of the matter is that you can not afford not to tithe. If our children are instructed and taught to tithe as many have been they will not find it difficult to tithe when they begin to earn for themselves. If anyone should be having financial difficulties, see you Elders and they will help you to work things out and not only they but God will honor your faith and confidence in Him and will also make a way where there is no way.

Concerning the Communion. As you have been taught, you as parents are to be the judge as to when your child should be permitted to partake of the communion. Be sure they understand, in their own simple way, what the communion means, etc. You hold the right to allow or withhold them from partaking. If a child has during the week been very disobedient or rebellious, prohibit them from partaking but be sure they understand why you will not allow them to partake. Don't hold this constantly over their heads to put fear within them, but if a child continues to be rebellious etc. then they are not actually ready to enter in to the fulness of the blessing of the Lord's table. None of us should ever allow the Communion to become just a habitual thing, but with great reverence and respect we should partake of the goodness of God shared with us by the partaking of the body and blood of our Lord. I trust that what has been outlined here will in no way bring offence but will be of help and guidance to us all as we see these little things been over looked or unknowingly we have slipped away from them.

THE TREND OF THE AGE

There is an ever growing need for closer family ties in the world we are living in. In the society we live in today, there are so many factors which arise that are detrimental to good family relations.

All of us are aware that the Church as we understand and see it, can only hope to be as strong as its families are strong. The family tie is one of our strongest links in our relationship to God.

There is a slogan often referred to which says, "The family that prays together stays together." There is possibly more truth than fiction in this statement.

The adherents of this world's system tend to separate rather than unite the family. You find our children and young people cleaving to its attractions and seeking after its alluring activities. Before long you suddenly become aware that a schism has been wedged into your family which puts a great gulf between the thinking and the living of Mom and Dad and

their children. This need not be in the Church of the living God. God has instituted ways and means to strengthen rather than weaken that bond of relationship. Too often we submit to this worlds systems simply because we accept it by saying it's the "trend of the age." May I ask who sets the trend of the age, the world or the God whom we serve? That is up to us to decide which we are going to accept. God has not called us to walk and live as the world does, He has called us to be "a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that we should shew forth the praises of him who hath called us out of darkness(world systems) into his marvelous light, I Peter 2:9, Paul admonishes us not to be pressed into this worlds mold, saints we do NOT BELONG to this world or its systems, WE BELONG TO HIM. Let us not allow or permit ourselves or our children to be contaminated with all the schemes and programs of this present age, but with great anticipation let us begin to enjoy and receive the fulness of all He has in store in the realm of the Spirit and of the ages to come.

One medium we can use to strengthen our homes and our walk with God as a family is in our family is in our worship and devotion outside of the church service. We refer to this as family devotions or the family altar. Because we are people of habit, the family altar can become more of a ritual and form rather than a time of strengthening of the home life and your family. The worship period usually consists of the reading of the scriptures and a time of prayer, which is very good and can be of great help to all, but never allow this phase of your walk to become just a form. I can see no reason why we have to sort of limit this period of instruction, praise and worship to just one set way or particular time of the day. Deuteronomy 6:4-7 reads: "Hear O Israel The Lord our God is one Lord; and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all they might. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be IN THINE HEART, THOU SHALT TEACH THEM DILIGENTLY UNTO THY CHILDREN, and shalt talk of them when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up." Let the Spirit of God guide you in your devotions, read and pray as you feel it on your heart to do, but don't let your self get into a rut. There may be times you feel to gather your family around the piano and sing for a while, or tell or read your children a Bible story or have a good heart to heart talk to them, especially if you foresee a problem arising. Regardless of how your children think, the time has come for both parents and church to take a very firm stand regarding many things that young people and children are undecided as to whether or not they should do or should not do. Here is where they need help and guidance, leave absolutely no doubt as to your thinking on these matters and whether accepted or not, give them guidance that will

constantly follow them in thought where ever they may GO. If we leave those decisions unanswered they will be answered by the world which always leads to trouble.

God has not called us to be queer or odd though sometimes people may think such, but has ordained that we be separated from what we may term “the common run”. All of us can remember the day when we thought our parents were old fashioned and just didn’t understand but we have lived to see the day and so will our children, that they were not so off the track as we thought.

It is understood and fully realized that conditions and methods of living change somewhat with every generation, but it still gives no reason for the Church to change, bend or stoop to fall in line with “the trend of the age”. Instead of the church falling in line with the world and its ways, the time has come for the Church to set the trend and lead the way according to the mind and will of God. Paul in I Corinthians 11:1 says: “Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ”. The Church should be setting the pace by saying to the world in all of its unrest and disorder, you follow us and we will follow Christ. This is just the reversed procedure to what is accepted today. Just because a certain way or idea arises and seems to be generally accepted by the majority we for some reason get the idea that this is the trend and we must fall in line with it. As we have seen duplicated time after time throughout the scriptures and history the majority are not always right but would we have been if such inevitably are wrong. Where men as Luther, Wesley and such like, had not stood for what they knew to be the mind of God. It was contrary to the trend and teaching of that day but nevertheless it was the mind of God and proved such. It is all too easy to just drift with the crowd but the Church must begin to take her stand and to reach out and allow the spirit to make it felt and known throughout all of the earth. Why must we be constantly harassed with all of this worlds selfish ways and ideas when God has graciously made His mind and will known unto us, thought we may only see and understand it in part. Romans 12:12, “With eyes wide open to the mercies of God, I beg you, my brothers, as an act of intelligent worship, to give him your bodies, as a living sacrifice, consecrated to him and acceptable to him. **DON’T LET THE WORLD AROUND YOU SQUEEZE YOU INTO ITS OWN MOLD, BUT LET GOD REMOLD YOUR MINDS FROM WITHIN, SO THAT YOU MAY PROVE IN PRACTICE THAT THE PLAN OF GOD FOR YOU IS GOOD, MEETS ALL HIS DEMANDS AND MOVES TOWARDS THE GOAL OF TRUE MATURITY.**” (Phillips) With the revelation and understanding that we have we must once again consecrate our lives afresh, holding absolutely nothing in reserve, young and old alike. We **MUST** offer as Paul writes

“our bodies as living sacrifices” , which is consecrated to Him and note, accepted by Him.

In every channel and level of living today one must guard against being squeezed into this worlds mold. Young people say today everybody I go to school with smokes so I must, my friends take a drink so I must be sociable, they all attend the amusement houses to avoid being a “square” I must do like wise. My companions, boy friend or girl friend, expect me to participate in sexual immoralities, if I don’t they will leave me and associate with someone else. As parents often reluctantly, through silence, we veto such things because it seems to be “the trend of the age”, we say or think things we are so different than when we were young. Things may have changed but God hasn’t nor has the moral standards of His Church. Let us nor our children get caught in the squeeze, trends, ideas, schemes of this age but let us allow the Spirit of God to REMOLD our minds from within, so that we may prove in practice, or in actual life, that His plan, His ways, His ideas, His schemes, are good for us, and our children, and that they meet ALL HIS DEMANDS and moves all of us on towards the goals of sonship or true maturity. JUST BECAUSE EVERYBODY IS DOING IT IS NO REASON WHY WE SHOULD. Let us come to our senses and awake from our slumber and realize we MUST PROVE IN PRACTICE that what God has revealed to us over these past number of years is good for us or He would have never shown us the way and that this way will lead us and all who follow us unto that perfect day, into the fulness of the stature of Christ.

Sometimes one fears that emphasizing these basic facts and principles that produces good wholesome living and an enriched walk with God, may have a tendency to bring people under law or bondage. May we point out here that unknowingly our lives are constantly governed by laws, which possibly we are not always aware of. Paul in writing to the Galatians 3:24, “Wherefore the law was our (and still is if necessary) our schoolmaster to BRING US unto Christ, that we may be justified by faith.” Phillips translation says it this way: “before the coming of faith we were all imprisoned under the power of the law, with our only hope of deliverance the faith that was to be shown to us. Or, to change the metaphor, the law was like a strict governess in charge of us UNTIL we went to the school of Christ and learned to be justifies by faith in him. ONCE WE HAD THAT WE WERE COMPLETELY FREE FROM THE GOVERNESS’S AUTHORITY. We were completely freed from the law BUT NOT TO RETURN TO THE SAME WAY OF LIVING that the law was instrumental in bringing us out of. I declare to you my dear people we MUST NOT submit ourselves or our children to this worlds systems and ideas. If one cannot live properly without a law then let a law play its part in bringing that individual into

the focus and light of the glorious liberty and freedom of the Spirit of God. Our lives are constantly directed by laws that have not been just written in cold tables of stone but written and engraved upon our hearts. There are things I was taught as a boy that were enforced by a law by my parents that still reap results daily in my life. A child would never have good table manners, learn to be courteous and respect other people and their property etc. if these things had not been drummed into them, and I mean just that drummed, by their parents when at home. I'm sure you don't find the rules of cleanliness, good behavior etc. binding or burdensome to you not that you have matured, they certainly were when you were being schooled in them. The other day my son came to the table with his hair standing every which way so I asked him to go and comb his hair, he murmured a little and wondered why he had to comb his hair. The reason you enforce such rules is because you want your children to properly groom themselves and learn the importance of being neat and tidy. The day will come when he will not need that law to govern him, but by that time he has been brought up to properly care for himself etc. We as parents do not want to see our children's lives ruined by all the nonsense of this world and we may find that a few laws may be necessary in order to bring them up to the true matured life in Christ and as individual living in the world. I can remember plainly the first women I ever saw under the influence of liquor, now it's a common thing in the earth. You can remember when it was a rare thing to see women smoking in public, now I dare say there are as many if not more women smokers than men. Its not too many years ago that sexual immorality was uncommon especially among teenagers, today its as common as drinking or anything else, this ought not to be but in its place, men and women and children should be taught and instructed the proper use of sex and God's order for a happy home.

Paul wrote to the Corinthians in I Corinthians 2:6, "We do, of course, speak wisdom among those who are spiritually mature, but it is not what is called wisdom by this world, nor by the powers that be, who soon will be only the powers that have been. The wisdom we speak of is that mysterious secret wisdom of God which He planned before the creation. **FOR THE GLORY TODAY. NONE OF THE POWERS OF THIS WORLD HAVE KNOWN THIS WISDOM**-if they had they would never have crucified the Lord of Glory." (Phillips) The Church because of this impartation of Gods Divine wisdom can not help being some what of a "miss-fit" in the world. We do not speak the same language, it is impossible for us to live and see as the world lives and sees, but how will this world system ever be brought to naught or as Paul says in the powers that be, be made the powers that have been, if the Church rises not to declare and voice the whole counsel

of God and separates itself from all this worlds vicious circles and ideas. May there be no misunderstanding here and may I repeat, we are not called to be oddities or people who can never see any good in what the other man does, nor to rise up in revolt or in rebellion against governments etc. for when the time is right GOD will make room in the earth for His kingdom. Strife, rebellion, war etc. has never settled grievances nor gained anything, this is NOT what we refer to here what we do mean is that it is high time we arise to the challenge God has set before us to fulfill our simple humble roll in whatever part He has called us to fill in order that His sons prayer be fulfilled as He prayed to His Father and also taught us to pray “Thy kingdom Come, Thy will be done in earth even as it is in Heaven.”

Galatians 5 verse one reads “Plant your feet firmly therefore within the freedom Christ has won for us, **AND DO NOT LET YOURSELVES BE CAUGHT IN THE SHACKLES OF SLAVERY.**” (Phillips) Verse 13: “It is to freedom that you have been called, my brothers, only be careful that freedom does not become mere opportunity for your lower nature.” Verse 16: “Here is my advice; **LIVE YOUR WHOLE LIFE IN THE SPIRIT AND YOU WILL NOT SATISFY THE DESIRES OF YOUR LOWER NATURE,**” for the whole energy of the lower nature is set against the Spirit, while the whole power of the Spirit is contrary to the lower nature. Here is the conflict, and that is why **YOU ARE NOT FREE TO DO WHAT YOU WANT TO BE BUT IF YOU FOLLOW THE LEADING OF THE SPIRIT, YOU STAND CLEAR OF THE LAW.**” (Now let us note carefully this list of the lusts of the flesh:) “The activities of the lower nature are obvious; Here is a list: sexual immorality, impurity of mind, sensuality, worship of false gods, witch craft, hatred, quarreling, jealousy, bad temper, rivalry, factions, party spirit, envy, drunkenness, orgies and things like that; **I SOLEMNLY ASSURE YOU, AS I DID BEFORE, THAT THOSE WHO INDULGE IN SUCH THINGS WILL NEVER INHERIT GOD’S KINGDOM.**” Regardless of what some leading columnists say, those who indulge in sexual immorality will never enter into the Kingdom. We can never hope to enter God’s Kingdom if we have hatred in our hearts and we are forever quarreling with one another, harboring jealousy or always displaying our bad temper, envy or drinking in excess etc. There are no excuses for the existence of such things, God has made provisions for the washing, cleaning, and over coming of such lusts. Young People you may think, Mom and Dad and the Church are really hard on you but their judgment and correction is nothing to that to be experienced at the judgement seat of Christ. The scriptures say, “It is a fearful thing to fall into that hands of the living God” Hebrews 10:31.

Now let us read on further in the same chapter concerning the fruits or results of the Spirit; “The Spirit however, produces in human life fruits such

as these; love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, fidelity, tolerance and self-control and **NO LAW EXISTS AGAINST ANY OF THEM.**” There is no need for a governing law where the fruits of the Spirit exist. The lusts of the flesh requires the restraining hand of the law, but not the fruits of the Spirit. Our walk and relationship with God should be producing such fruits or results as love for one another and joy beyond measures. If you are always encumbered and weighed down with a load of care there is something wrong, for the scriptures say that the Spirit produces in human life **JOY and PEACE.** Romans 14:17 “**The Kingdom of God is not meat and drink; BUT RIGHTEOUS PEACE AND JOY IN THE HOLY GHOST.**” This love, peace and joy is not something you try to work up. It’s like faith, you either have it or you do not have it. Everybody can have it and it comes as we walk with Him, these fruits of the Spirit are enriched as we draw near to Him and stabilize and strengthen our relationship with Him. It is not possible for anyone just to decide they are going to stop hating or quarreling etc. It is only by God’s grace and with his help are we able to over come these obstacles, but be assured He has promised that He would help us in our present limitations, failures and weaknesses.

In closing let us turn and read from Ephesians 4:17-24 (Phillips) Paul writing says: “This is my instruction, then, which I give to you from God. **DO NOT LIVE ANY LONGER AS THE GENTILES LIVE.** For they live blindfolded in a world of illusion, and are cut off from the life of God through ignorance and insensitiveness. They have stifled their consciences and then surrendered themselves to sensuality, practicing any form of impurity which lust can suggest. **BUT YOU HAVE LEARNED NOTHING LIKE THAT FROM CHRIST, IF YOU HAVE REALLY HEARD HIS VOICE AND UNDERSTOOD THE TRUTH THAT HE HAS TAUGHT YOU,** No, what you learned was to **FLING OFF THE DIRTY CLOTHES OF THE OLD WAY OF LIVING,** which were rotten through and through with lusts illusions and, with yourselves **MENTALLY AND SPIRITUALLY RE-MADE,** to put on the clean fresh clothes of the new life which was made by God’s design for righteousness and the holiness **WHICH IS NO ILLUSION.**” The word **SIN** today means the same as it did twenty years ago and sin must and will be punished unless true repentance from the heart is offered and made unto God. May I appeal to young people, parents, and children that we stand on the very threshold of a brand new day, another step or level in God, but before we may enter therein, we must as the Psalmist said have clean hands and a pure heart. God indicated a year ago last camp that he would begin to speak to those without and I’m sure He has for we have seen the results of it, and He desires to continue to speak to the hearts of men and women everywhere for He said if He were lifted up He would draw **ALL** men unto

Himself, but in this present hour He is once again tidying up His own house and setting it in order, making preparations for the arrival of the new guests. His House must be clean and orderly for He said concerning this house, His Church, **NOT HAVING SPOT OR WRINKLE OR ANY SUCH THING;** but that it should be holy and without blemish.” Ephesians 5:27. May you be ready for the day of the Lord is at hand, praise His Name. These are wonderful but serious hours saints of God, allow the Spirit to speak and ask God for grace to do whatsoever He asketh.

We can only hope and expect to reap what we sow. If we sow to the flesh we will reap the results and fruits of our lower nature but if we sow to the Spirit we shall reap the results of the Spirit's inner existence and witness in our lives. I have seen it time and time again where children after leaving home have run into difficulties and problems which were a direct result of what was sown in their lives while at home. How can we expect anything any different, whatsoever we sow that shall we reap. If our children grow up in disorder they will also sow and reap disorder. If Mom and Dad do nothing but argue and quarrel this gives a child the impression that this is what married life consists of, which is far from the truth. Our lives and things that we do and say not only affect us but also our children and those around and about us. Remember what Paul said to Timothy, I Timothy 4:14-16; “Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery. Meditate upon these things; give thyself **WHOLLY** to them; **THAT THY PROFITING MAY APPEAR TO ALL.** Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them; **FOR IN DOING THIS THOU SHALT BOTH SAVE THYSELF AND THEM THAT HEAR THEE.**” If we sow unrest we can only hope for to reap unrest, if we sow trouble we will reap trouble etc. but if we plant love, joy and peace etc. we will harvest the same. The trend of the day is for the young people to marry and after they are married awhile if they can't get along with their partner, leave them and find another. May I emphasize again **THIS IS NOT RIGHT** even though a large percentage of marriages today end this way. If we do not instruct our children in the proper function of married life and live as an example of what we teach we can expect that their lives will result in disaster the same as thousands do. Consider thou thy ways, take heed thou to the counsel of the Lord Thy God and follow thou in the ways of life everlasting which brings with it the fruits or results of His Spirit dwelling in human lives.

God has ordained that His people be the head not the tail, the lender not the borrower. He call to us again today as in days of yore to come out from among them and be separate. He has opened unto us a fountain in the House of David, let us drink freely and partake afresh of the fulness of His blessing

and goodness for freely as we receive we may freely give. Together we can help each other to partake of all He has for us, Let us begin to set the pace, bring about the trend which will not only save us but all those that hear us as Paul instructed Timothy. Let us take heed to ourselves and by so doing we can participate in the establishing of the kingdom of God in the earth.

BEING A SON

Every hour and each day is a moment of destiny, it is in accordance with the foreknowledge of God and a fulfillment of His fore-ordained will. Especially of late have we been aware of this and of this present hour do we wish to speak.

The Church has come to a glorious hour, one of which is about to be literally born and brought into existence according to the predestined will of God, in the time ordained by Him since before the foundations of the world. We as members of the Body of Christ the Church, naturally play an all important role in this wonderful hour. I wonder if we are fully conscious of what our role is in the great economy of God. We are certain that the hour has come for the dawning of a new day - the light of which we see breaking on the horizon.

Before we speak much concerning the title of our thoughts, "Being a Son", I would like to, with the Lord's help, turn your attention to the first epistle of John, chapter one, reading from the Phillips translation. "We are writing to you about something which has always existed yet which we had opportunity to observe closely and even to hold in our hands, and yet, as we know now was something of the very Word of life himself!" John

says: "We are writing you about something which has ALWAYS existed yet which we ourselves ACTUALLY saw and heard; something observed closely, something we actually have handled and yet as we know now, was something of the very Word of life HIMSELF. John says, "We saw it, were eye witnesses of it, and are now writing and telling you about it." You my dear people have seen, have heard, have been eyewitnesses to the manifestation of the Spirit of God in the earth in our time. You have seen the lame walk, the incurable made whole, you have witnessed the power of God in healing, in the prophetic word, you have heard singing and music inspired by the Spirit of God, you have sat under the anointed ministry of the teaching of the word of God which has kept you sitting on the edge of your chairs for hours on end, you have seen miracles performed, acts of faith by believing prayer and the lavish hand of God meet your every need, all this and more have YOU had opportunity to observe closely which we are not hesitant to acknowledge as the very Word of Life HIMSELF, praise His Name. John goes on to say, we repeat, "we really saw and heard what we are now writing. We want you to be with us in this - in this fellowship with God, the Father and Jesus Christ his Son. We too desire for all who read these living words to join in fellowship with us who are already in it." The time HAS COME, NOT is coming, HAS COME, for the church to begin to share the good graces of God will ALL who will receive, for in so doing it brings great joy to us who are already in it.

At the beginning of this wonderful out pouring of Gods Spirit, He told us by prophecy NOT to try and write letters, etc. to people trying to describe what was happening as they would not receive nor understand, and that we have refrained from doing, however, during these last 17 years God has been preparing his people for this very hour when He might once again reveal Himself in the earth, this time through His Body the Church. I am sure we are all aware that God has much more in store than what we now enjoy. We would be foolish to think that the growth of the Church had come to its peak, oh no dear people, the Church has really yet to begin to make increase of itself in love. We now have existing in the earth that which constitutes the order of the Church, that upon which God can build, now we are about to see the super-structure begin to rise upon this permanent foundation that has been laid. I am sure that the true purpose for the existence of the Church in the earth would be hopelessly missed if it were not that God has ordained that She now begin to make increase of Herself. There are never happier moments in your lives as when God blesses your home with a child and that same spontaneous, overwhelming joy fills your heart as you see another child born into this Spiritual home.

Surely the days of just desiring large crowds of people etc. are behind

us. Surely the evangelistic techniques of yesterday have departed far from us to make room for the true desire of God's heart in accordance with His methods and plan to add to His Church daily such as SHOULD be saved, those who are ordained unto eternal life. I am not prepared to say just what methods God will use to move the hearts of men and women unto himself, but He has said, "If I be lifted up upon the earth I will draw ALL men unto myself." Praise His name. This is where we as sons and daughters of God come into the picture.

I would like you to take a few minutes sometime, the best time would be immediately after you read this article, to read the first letter of John and especially the Phillips version. Space will not permit us taking each verse and chapter and enlarge on them but a few particular verses, pertaining to what is said in relation to this Son I would like to dwell on. In the second chapter verse 29 it says: "You all know that God is really good, You may be just as sure that man who leads a really good life is a true child of God. Consider the man who leads a really good life is a true child of God. Consider the incredible love that the Father has shown us in ALLOWING US to be called "children of God" - and that is not just what we are called but what we are. Our heredity on the Godward side is no mere figure of speech - which explains why the world will no more recognize us than it recognized Christ." Notice and I quote again; "Consider the incredible love that the Father has shown us in allowing us to be call "CHILDREN OF GOD" We who were once foreigners and strangers and aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and the promises and covenants of God, with out hope and God in the world, through the death of His only begotten son HE allows us to be called His children and listen it goes on to say; "AND THAT IS NOT JUST WHAT WE ARE CALLED, BUT WHAT WE ARE." Our heredity, which means, the tendency of any living thing to reproduce the characteristics of its ancestors, on the Godward side is NO MERE FIGURE OF SPEECH." If being referred to or even called "a child of God" is just some religious figure of speech it avails absolutely NOTHING, but I want you to know and realize that the heredity on God's side is REAL just as real as your natural heritage. I am not speaking of what you are going to be YOU MUST REALIZE NOW WHAT AND WHO YOU ARE, for you are what you are and who you are ONLY by the grace of God, but you MUST begin to look on God not just as the Almighty One who has fashioned and created the earth and all that is there in but you must see Him as YOUR Father and realize that YOU are His child, hard to believe and understand but absolutely true. If you ever hope to fulfill your part and mission in the Kingdom of God you must see this and believe it with all your heart.

Notice John continues by saying “Oh dear children of mine (forgive the affection of an old man) have YOU realized it? HERE AND NOW WE ARE GOD’S CHILDREN. We don’t know what we shall become in the future, we only know that if reality were to break through (Oh glory to God) we should reflect HIS likeness, for we should see him as he really is”. All this is so because of our heredity on the Godward side. You have heard people say, my boy sure looks or acts or walks etc. like his father. That is only natural, he has inherited such characteristics from his father. If God then is our father and we are his children, then it should only be natural for the characteristics and the nature of God to be revealed in His children. Paul said in Ephesians 1:12, we should be devoted to the extolling of His glorious attributes - we who were the first to fix our hopes on Christ,” (Weymouth).

I John 5:14, “Everyone who really believes that Jesus is God’s Christ proves himself one of God’s family. The man who loves the Father cannot help loving the Father’s own Son. The test of the genuineness of our love for God’s family lies in this question do we love God himself and do we obey his commands? For loving God means obeying his commands, and these commands of his are not burdensome, for GOD’S HEREDITY WITHIN US WILL ALWAYS CONQUER THE WORLD OUTSIDE US.”

May I repeat the meaning of the word heredity; “The tendency of any living thing to reproduce the characteristics of its ancestors,” in other words, if by faith we can accept our relationship to God and our union with Him as something that actually exists, there is therefore a natural tendency born by the Spirit of God within men to reproduce the nature and characteristics of our Godly ancestry. It is for this reason the scriptures say that “Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God,” I John 3:9: Too often men try to overcome the obstacles in life by trying to figure them out for themselves, when born within them by the Spirit of God is that dynamic force and ability to conquer the evil forces that resist them, a characteristic of God I John 3:8 “for this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.” The Psalmist said in Psalm 103:13,14 “Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him. For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust.” God knows the weaknesses and trials of men but has made a way whereby he may rise above the weaknesses of this flesh by allowing HIS nature and characteristics, which are hidden and concealed in the lives of every man to gradually come to life within him and as man decreases and the life, nature, personality, characteristics of God increases then the completeness and fulfillment of His resurrection is being brought about in man, and in the earth. “He was wounded for our transgressions, HE was bruised for

our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon HIM and by HIS stripes we ARE healed,” praise His Name forever. Let the full powers of His redemption work in your life and bring about its full purpose, NOW are you the sons of God, NOW, NOW, NOW, what we shall be is also in His hands, but I want to emphasis your present status in God’s sight. God in not just an image, God is a living person, deity itself it is true but He is your Father, look on Him therefore as your Father, reverence and respect Him as the Almighty but always remembering that HE has chosen you not you him, He has ordained and allowed YOU to be called His child.

I would never want my son to fear me as his father nor would I want him to withhold anything from me that might be troubling him. It is true there are things in life that one must work out and apply good common sense and reasoning, but when one exhausts such resources he must turn to someone else for help and guidance. Our heavenly Father, I am sure, feels the same way towards us as His children, if we could only see and realize that He longs and desires such fellowship with us and earnestly desires to help assist us when ever we come to Him for help, remember He is your Father and YOU are His son, let that indwelling nature of His which you have inherited from Him conquer the world outside of you call upon Him and He will hear and answer. In I John 5:13,14 “I have written like this to you who already believe in the name of God’s Son so that you may be quite sure that, HERE AND NOW, YOU POSSESS ETERNAL LIFE. We have such confidence in him that we are CERTAIN that he hears every request that is made IN ACCORD WITH HIS OWN PLAN. And since we know that he invariably gives his attention to our prayers, whatever they are about, we can be quite sure our prayers will be answered.” Children oft times make requests that are not always granting it, however, although the request is not fulfilled you listen to what they ask and something is usually forthcoming in one way or another which brings either a satisfactory answer to why it was not granted or an outline of something that is much better that may be in store. I am sure that we have many times asked God for things that if He had answered it would have been a hindrance rather than a benefit to our lives. Israel asked God for flesh and because of her persistent asking He granted it but the scriptures say that while the flesh was yet in her teeth He judged her. We must let the understanding and foresight of God be the absolute solution for all our problems rather than keep asking and asking knowing right well in our hearts that it is contrary to His plan and will.

God has a plan for your life, one that He ordained before the foundation of the world therefore let Him guide and direct your footsteps in the way that He wants you to go and let us be submissive unto Him. He hears every request that is made in accordance with His will, the others He hears as we

often do our children, you hear them and yet your mind is on something else.

May I once again reassure your hearts that He is your Father YOU are His children, here and now you possess eternal life and He is willing to aid you and assist you every step of the way. Have ABSOLUTE confidence in your Father and give Him no reason not to have absolute confidence in you His son.

IN THESE DAYS

The following few lines I trust will be of help especially to those who are approaching that time in their lives when they have to begin looking for a job and taking on the responsibilities of a career, etc. Especially to the young men and women of the Church would I direct my thoughts, however, what I have to say will be beneficial to young and old, male and female.

Of all people living on the face of the earth we above all ought to be the most grateful as we have so much to be thankful for. This wonderful experience that God has been leading us into over the past few years touches and affects EVERY aspect of our lives. It affects our homes, families, business, our character and everything that concerns us as God's children.

We believe that the era of the Kingdom will be one of administration and may I assure your hearts that we are NOW being prepared to fill our place in that Kingdom. Do not think for one minute that just because you are a believer that this automatically make you a ruler in the Kingdom for the scriptures say "Not everyone that saith Lord, Lord will enter into the Kingdom but he that DOETH the will of my Father," Matthew 7:21. We often form the opinion that one day (that zero hour) a supernatural "something" will happen and after that we will be elevated to that "throne" prepared for us which will be unveiled and we will be conveniently there to sit in it. This is the farthest from the truth. The life you are NOW LIVING, your job and everything that surrounds you is playing an all important part in

preparing you for what you will be in the Kingdom and may I insert, that the God of Heaven and earth your Heavenly Father is vitally interested in your life right down to the minute detail. These are days of preparation for what God has in mind and in store in the days that lie ahead. If one make no preparation in the early days of their lives for what they hope to be able to accomplish in the later years they will never amount to very much. Much training, studying and making ready is required for anyone to succeed in their particular calling in life. It is true also in our Spiritual lives as Paul says: “Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery. Meditate upon these things; give thyself WHOLLY to them; that thy profiting may appear to all. Take heed unto THYSELF...” I Timothy 4:14,15. Notice it says to give thyself WHOLLY not half-heartedly in order that thy profiting may appear to ALL. I sometimes fear we fail in devoting ourselves to that which God has called us too whether it is our job or our ministry. To be a champion one must be willing to sacrifice, to strive for the prize. We sometimes have the idea that God is all of a sudden just going to hand us these things but this is not so. To everything that God gives us in His sovereignty we have our responsibility to that which He gives. It seems that those things which come easy go easy but those things that one strives and works hard to get and has to sacrifice a little for are those things that remain and endure.

As I pen these words I am listening to a woman singing who at the age of four years could hardly talk. She has never had a singing lesson in her life. What I am listening to is her first live concert and it is being held in the famous Carnegie Hall. This you can rest assured, she never got to Carnegie Hall by just sitting waiting for that “something” to happen; it took thirty two years of endurance and hard work. Listen to me young people, prepare yourselves that you can function in your particular field of life as a Champion. Certainly it takes hard work, it takes courage and it requires fortitude, it takes trust and confidence when your trust and confidence is in the God you serve. The average person today is looking for that soft cushy position in life that pays a lot for doing little, but this is not for you. Learn to appreciate the little things, do not shun small beginnings because every great man that is truthfully great had a small insignificant beginning somewhere down the line. Let God direct you into that which He has purposed and ordained for your lives because what you do has a definite bearing on your Spiritual life as well. Don’t allow yourself to become “drifters” going from one job to another, look to God and find yourself THEN give what ever it is, the very best and everything you’ve got. First that which is natural then that which is Spiritual. If you find yourself very unstable and shiftless, most likely your walk with God will follow the same pattern sort

of up and down, hot today and cold tomorrow. You will never develop this way, instability will ruin you, let God guide your footsteps and direct you into the proper course.

Where many people are side tracked today is by the dollar signs!! Don't let this influence you. You must be happy in what you are doing in order to get anywhere and you will be if you let God direct you. You can never give your best to anything if your heart isn't really in it. If all you are interested in is the pay check I can tell you right now you will never accomplish anything and before long you will quit and find something else, please don't be deceived by this, remember your job and everything you do and are is all a part of your Spiritual life and walk with God, that is why it is so important to discuss these matters with your Heavenly Father and let him be your guide and strength.

Another thing you must keep in mind, just because your father was a success is not a free ticket to your success. You in order to share and especially to appreciate his good fortunes must put as much into your climb up as what he did. Just because a young man's father was an accomplished musician is no assurance that he will be. He will find that even though he possesses the talent he too must spend relentless hours in practice and all those things that make one a musician. Though a young man's father is an outstanding athlete does not mean there is an easy way for his son to attain such skill. Oh, he may ride a certain distance on his fathers name but this will soon come to an end if he can not produce the goods that makes the name he bears great in that particular field. Remember this that "Life is a measure to be filled not a cup to be drained," the more we put into living the more we get out of life.

I remember one of the brethren saying to me one day, you know there is one word we seldom use anymore and that is "SIN". How true it is, we can become so immune to sin we almost feel we are past sinning or not subject to it. That great and wonderful passage of John 3: will no doubt be experienced in our lives but in attaining unto that goal or level in God I am afraid that sin is still very much alive and prevalent among us. I want you to know that God still looks on sin in 1966 the same way as He did when He sent His Son Jesus Christ to die for the sins of the whole human race. Just because we become somewhat Spiritually grown up and mature does not mean that God winks everlastingly at our misgivings. I am a grown up man and have left my father's house but just because I have a few years behind me and I have left home has not altered or changed my parents ideas about things I could have gotten into as a boy such as stealing, lying, being impolite, etc. As those who have grown up somewhat Spiritually let us not

think because God has sort of let us out on our own that we can get away with pulling shady deals, lying, drinking, etc. His punishment still remains and sin today must and will be punished as when we were Spiritual infants even more so because we should know better. It's too easy to "soft peddle" this sin business until we can pretty well do anything our little old hearts desire, as long as we minister in the Church that's about all that matters. Ministering in the Church is essential but living a respectable clean life before God and the world is EQUALLY ESSENTIAL. Our lives must begin as never before - to produce and convey the life and nature of our Heavenly Father. God help us as parents to teach our children of the perils of sinful living and ask God for wisdom and guidance to direct them in such an age as we are living in. Listen young man, young woman you are the mothers and fathers of tomorrow, you may think now that Mom and Dad are a little old fashioned and just don't seem to understand but I want you to know they are God's representatives on your behalf to guide, council and protect His investment in you. Young men, great responsibility rests upon you. The kind of man, husband and father you hope to be depends a great deal upon your attitude now. If you are a shiftless individual always running from one job to another because it pays a dollar or two more without ever giving any thought or consideration to what you are doing, you will automatically sow unrest, instability and insecurity in the lives of those of your household. A woman needs and especially today, a man that is steady, one who thinks before he moves and asks God for direction that he may do whatever is pleasing in His sight. Are you the type of individual that never grows up, always wanting to be like one of the boys in style, class and fad? There is nothing that will ruin your life and your home quicker than a little boy wearing or trying to fill a mans pair of pants. Take the lead in your home, show and produce qualities that stimulate confidence and trust, something that your wife and family can build and lean on, for these are the requisites of a true son of God, that one who will rule in the Kingdom of our God. Forget your big ideas and thinking more highly than you ought to think and begin to live, having a due sense of responsibility. Do not look at what others have, just be thankful for what God has given you. My father recently purchased a nice new car and my oldest son was sitting behind the wheel visiting with his grandma one evening and he made the remark that when he got big that was the kind of car he was going to have. Grandma said to him your daddy has a nice car, you know he has a much nicer car than what grandpa had when he was your daddy's age. Just because some one you know has a car half a block long, don't you feel you need one that's a block long, be thankful to God for what you have and work and strive and SAVE and look forward to the day when you will be able to afford to own

the “block long car”.

Young women, what are you looking for in life? Some knight clad in shining armor riding on a black horse, some long haired sheik whose got the beat, or maybe an executive who earns a big salary or are you looking for a man who can become the head of your home, one you can deeply love and respect and share the good grace of God with. The long hair, the beats or lots of money can NEVER suffice for a Godly home, regardless of how plain and humble it is, with well behaved well mannered children and a home that is filled with love, something all these other things can never bring. A woman oft times must be willing to give up a great deal in order to enjoy and reach this objective. She may be used to lots of nice clothes, a large metropolis to live in and all that goes with it and find her self stuck away off in some remote area with many of the frills and luxuries far removed, but let be assure you it is worth it all to enjoy the perfect will of God in your lives, praise His Name.

In conclusion may I assure your hearts that we are MORE THAN CONQUERORS through Him that loves us The greatest days of all human history lie before us, opportunities and experiences that far surpass that ever recorded, but we all must realize we can only become conquerors as we put our hand in His hand and allow Him to lead the way. To you young men and women who still have so many avenues of life yet unexplored, face the world and life with all its trails and unrest with a hope whelming up with you that through Him all things are possible. Many of you are possibly still looking for that partner in life that you can share all that life holds, together. Don’t become discouraged thinking all is in vain, let God search out your heart, maybe you have set your standards and qualifications so high that men and women are not made to fit your requirements. It often puzzles me how some of you young men can pass by some of the candidates I know are ready to fill the office of a good wife, remember what the Proverbs says, 18:22, “Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favor of the Lord.”

You will have to excuse me for wandering while writing this article. In reading it over I realize I have touched on many different topics but through it all I trust you will see the importance of letting God be your guide IN ALL things in these very important days of molding and preparing your lives as He is working in us all, to bring about that which is His good pleasure.

THE MINISTRY OF MUSIC

Recently the Spirit of God has been gradually unfolding little by little, here a little and there a little, a few fragments of truth on the place and importance of music in the Church, in our private lives and in His great and

wonderful plan and purpose.

It has often been said, “There is no one can sing like God’s people,” and how true it is. On many occasions we have witnessed the moving of the Spirit of God on His people and heard singing and playing that actually belongs to another age and yet when we have heard and witnessed is hardly to be compared to that which is in store as we endeavor to enter into the fullness of what God has in this particular phase of our worship and ministry before God.

Music is the art of being able to make harmony or melody. It is having the ability to blend together a number of different sounds to make a melody or harmonic sound. It is possessing the Divine ability to take a lot of separate, sometimes unrelated sounds and fitting them together in marvelous harmony. As we write these few lines the warmth of this thought literally glows within as we realize that this is God and is in harmony with God’s merciful purpose when the times are ripe for it to bring EVERYTHING that God has created and made into that Divine harmony of the Spirit. Music can cultivate and create that dynamic atmosphere that can move the hand of God and bring into existence that which He has ordained since before the foundation of the world, praise His Name.

The earth is filled today with so many different sounds (voices) and I

firmly believe this present out-pouring and move of God's Spirit is bringing together and tuning up and mending of many of the broken, out of tune strings so that one day the whole of His creation will blend together and offer a sacrifice that will rise into the nostrils of the Lord as a sweet smelling savor.

All that is wrong with the world and to a large extent the church as we know it today, is that it is out of tune and harmony with God. The purpose of God ever since that first prophecy given some nineteen years ago is that He restore to the Church the nine gifts of the Spirit by prophecy and the laying on of the hands of the presbytery so as to bring order out of chaos and harmony out of discord.

Music is a wonderful thing, you may find it everywhere in the world today. It can be used in so many varied purposes, that are not just for entertainment. We have many occasions portrayed to us in the scriptures where God used the minstrel and musician to bring about His mind and will. I would like to give you a few scriptures that should help us all to see how music was put to use by God to fulfill a Divine purpose.

I Samuel 16:14-23; this passage tells us the account of when David played his harp before Saul to free him of the evil spirit that troubled him. Verse 16: "Let our Lord now command thy servants which are before thee, to seek out a man, who is a cunning player on an harp; and it shall come to pass, when the evil spirit from God is upon thee, that he shall play with his hand and thou shalt be well." Verse 23: "And it came to pass, when the evil spirit from God was upon Saul, that David took an harp, and played with his hand; so Saul was refreshed, and was well, and the evil spirit departed from him." Notice David's playing had two affects on Saul, it first of all refreshed him and also drove away the evil spirit. Have you ever felt depressed and down hearted, then heard someone plucking the strings of an instrument and it seemed to literally chase your "Blues" away? Have you ever sat down at the end of a busy day, tired and weary and sometimes weighed down with the cares of life, put on a stack of records on your record player and just sat and relaxed and let the music flow over your whole being quelling all your distress and fears? Music can and will do this for you and ESPECIALLY when anointed from above.

Music is often used by the Spirit of God to create the right atmosphere and mood so that God may move upon His people in a particular way. II Kings 3:12-16: "And Jehoshaphat said The word of the Lord is with him. So the King of Israel and Edom went down to him. And Elisha said unto the king of Israel, What have I to do with thee? Get thee to the prophets of thy father, and to the prophets of thy mother. And the king of Israel said unto him, Nay; for the Lord hath called these kings together, to deliver them unto the hand of Moab. And Elisha said, as the Lord of hosts liveth, before

whom I stand, surely, were it not that I regard the presence of Jehoshaphat the King of Judah, I would not look toward thee, nor see thee but now bring me a minstrel. And it came to pass when the minstrel played, that the hand of the Lord came upon him.” Here when the minstrel played his playing created the right atmosphere for the prophet to prophesy. Have you ever stopped to think why they play soft music in eating places? It is so that it will create a good atmosphere for eating and believe it or not it has an effect on your appetite and you have a tendency to eat more if the music is right. Why do they play music in the grocery store? (Guess I shouldn’t tell you this secret). It is to create a pleasant restful atmosphere so you will feel like taking your time just to browse through the store. It has a definite effect on your buying. I have seen this happen on many occasions; you would pass a lady in the aisle and she would be humming away to the tune being played looking at this and that and when she finally got to the checkout counter with a cart well loaded with merchandise she would remark how that she had just come for a loaf of bread and some meat for supper. So take a little tip merchants if you have a cheery pleasant atmosphere in your store it will serve as the best volume-builder you can ever hope to have. Music sets the mood, one would never think of playing jazz or rock-n-roll music in a dining room because it doesn’t create the right feeling, it is too harsh to appeal to ones appetite. I find my personal mood depicts the kind of music I play. If I’m in a gay vigorous sort of mood I like a good band to add spring to my step, if a little tired or deep in thought about a matter I prefer something more of a soothing nature. As I write these few lines I have soft organ music setting the background. What I am saying may appear to be on a natural plain but I am sure when you give it some consideration you will find what I am saying is so true and just as the merchant can capitalize on it so can we in our private lives and in the Church because God has endowed men and women with talents that can reveal to the Church and all that He has created, His mind and His will.

Turn now to I Chronicles 25:1-3, “Moreover David and the captains of the host separated to the service of the sons of Asaph and of Heman, and of Jeduthun, WHO SHOULD PROPHECY WITH HARPS, WITH PSALTERIES AND WITH CYMBALS etc.” Verse 3 “WHO PROPHESED WITH A HARP, TO GIVE THANKS AND TO PRAISE THE LORD.” The Psalmist says to enter into His gates with thanksgiving and into His courts with praise, to be thankful unto Him and bless His name. Here were men whose ministry it was to prophesy and give thanks unto God with the use of instruments. I trust this truth will grip and enlighten your hearts to see and understand more clearly that when someone sings or plays an instrument in the Spirit they are actually revealing and bringing forth a message that

God has for His people. Yes even as one plays on an instrument when no words of interpretation come forth, you can enter into the Spirit of that Music and it will minister volumes of truth to your Spirit as you yield yourself to it. Pardon me for putting it this way but I hope it will help you to see what I am trying to say. As you yield yourself to the Spirit of the song being played it will have the same effect on you, only in a Spiritual way, as music upon the lady pushing the grocery cart and I can assure you that you will have your Spiritual life filled, heaped up, shaken down and running over not with food to satisfy the flesh, but food to satisfy the Spirit, this I know is true. Yield to the Spirit of God, enter into every song whether played or sung and I can assure you that you will go away satisfied. Further on in that 25th chapter of Chronicles it says: "All these (verse 4 gives all of their names) were the sons of Heman the king's seer in the word of God, to lift up the horn. And God gave to Heman fourteen sons and three daughters. ALL WERE UNDER THE HANDS OF THEIR FATHER FOR SONG IN THE HOUSE OF THE LORD with cymbals, psalteries, and harps, for the service of the house of God, according to the king's order to Asaph, Jeduthen and Heman. So the number of them, with their brethren THAT WERE INSTRUCTED IN THE SONGS OF THE LORD, EVEN ALL THAT WERE CUNNING, was two hundred four-score and eight." You will note here that instruction was given by these three brethren to these musicians that were skilled and cunning. For some reason or other we have got the idea that nothing can be in the Spirit that is pre-rehearsed but I hope to enlighten your hearts about a few things along this line before I am finished. Here for example it tells us that these three brethren that seemed to be appointed by God and given the skill and cunningness to play instruments that they gave instruction to those who played on the harp, etc. and sang and I and I can see how this could quite readily be even in the wonderful move of God's Spirit. Please do not confuse what I am saying here and say well it looks like we are going back to the old choir or orchestra because this is the farthest thing from my mind. As we read on in the remaining passages of scripture you will see a definite pattern and place for guidance and direction and instruction in this particular department of our worship unto God. They definitely had orchestras and choirs all throughout the scriptures but they functioned in perfect harmony with whatever God had in mind to do: not just played or sang at a particular time in every service some song that they had practiced for that service a few nights before. The trouble with mankind is that we permit ourselves to get into a set pattern and nothing can separate us from it and we have to follow it regardless of the outcome, but not so with God. You have heard congregations sing as though they were a mass choir under the direction of a choir leader, songs

new and songs old but anointed mightily by the Spirit of God. How much more tell me, could God take dedicated men and women whom He has chosen and ordained to the office of playing and singing and anointed them as a group to blend in glorious harmony and play their instruments and sing their songs and by so doing unveil the mind and will of God. I tell you I long to see that hour when the violins, guitars, organ, piano and trumpet and all other instruments can assemble and play to the glory of God, new songs that have never been played or heard before and also songs in which they have received instruction by those who are skillful in giving such direction. II Samuel 6:5 “And David and all the house of Israel played before the Lord on ALL manner of instruments.” I Chronicles 23:5 “Moreover four thousand were porter; and four thousand PRAISED THE LORD WITH THE INSTRUMENTS I MADE, SAID DAVID, TO PRAISE THEREWITH.” II Chronicles 5:11-14; “And it came to pass, when the priests were come out of the holy place; (for all the priests that were present were sanctified, and did not then wait by course), also the Levites which were the singers, all of the sons of Asaph, of Heman, of Jeduthun, with their sons and their brethren, being arrayed in white linen, having cymbals and psalteries and harps, stood at the east end of the altar, and with them an hundred and twenty priests sounding with trumpets; It came even to pass as the trumpeters and singers were as ONE to make ONE sound to be heard in praising and thanking the Lord; and when they lifted up their voice with the trumpets and cymbals and instruments of music, and praised the Lord saying, For he is good; for His mercy endureth forever; that THEN the house was filled with a cloud even the house of the Lord; so that the priests could not stand to minister by reason of the cloud; for the glory of the Lord had FILLED THE HOUSE OF GOD.” Here we have a combination of instruments and voices praising and thanking God and AS ALWAYS the results were tremendous. The presence of God came down in such a degree that the priests could not stand to minister because of the glory of God. The thought just comes to me that I often wonder if we don’t use the wrong approach to God at times. We can become so revelation-hungry that all we are interested in is hearing new things. We sort of take pride in how much we know rather than WHOM we serve, but you will find time after time whenever Israel came before God with thanksgiving and praise in their hearts and lips that God met them and blessed them and took them on further into the Promised Land. It is not enough to just hear you MUST receive the SPIRIT OF WHAT YOU HEAR in order for it to be of any use to you. II Chronicles 29:25-31, “An he set the Levites in he house of the Lord, with cymbals, with psalteries, and with harps, according to the commandments of David, and of Gad the kings seer, and Nathan the prophet; for so was the

commandment of the Lord by his prophets. And the Levites stood with the instruments of David, and the priests with the trumpets. And Hezekiah commanded to offer the burnt offering upon the altar. And when the burnt offering began, the song of the Lord began, the song of the Lord began also with the trumpets, and with the instruments ordained by David, king of Israel. And ALL (notice ALL) the congregation worshiped, and the singers sang, and the trumpeters sounded; and all this continued UNTIL the burnt offering was finished. And when they had made an end of offering, the king and all that were present with him bowed themselves, and worshiped. Moreover Hezekiah, the king and the princes commanded the Levites to sing praise unto the Lord with the words of David, and of Asaph the seer. And they bowed their hearts and worshiped. Then Hezekiah answered and said, NOW ye have consecrated yourselves unto the Lord etc.” Oh what a picture of the ministry of the body of Christ! Everyone standing ready to function according to the capacity that God had given. Can you just visualize this scene with priests, the singers, musicians and all standing ready to contribute in this great hour of praising and thanking God and ALL, ALL, ALL the congregation joining in this hour of preparation before the offering of the sacrifice? You will also note that Hezekiah commanded them to sing some of the songs that David and Asaph had written. After they had finished this great offering of verbal praise Hezekiah answered and said, NOW YE HAVE CONSECRATED YOURSELVES UNTO THE LORD, come near and bring sacrifices and thank offerings into the house of the Lord. How often have we made our sacrifices in order to sort of find favor with God and then entered in, but the Psalmist says and I repeat Psalm 100 “Enter into His gates WITH THANKSGIVING AND INTO HIS COURTS WITH PRAISE, Be THANKFUL unto Him and Bless His name.”

Ezra 3:9-13, “Then stood Jeshua with his sons and his brethren Kadmiel and his sons, the sons of Judah, together, to set forward the workmen in the house of God; the sons of Henadad, with their sons and their brethren the Levites. And when the builders laid the foundation of the temple of the Lord they set the priests in their apparel with trumpets, and the Levites the sons of Asaph with cymbals, to praise the Lord, after the ordinance of David king of Israel. And they sang together by course in praising and giving thanks unto the Lord; because he is good, for his mercy endureth for ever toward Israel. AND ALL the people shouted with a great shout, when they had praised the Lord, because the foundation of the house of the Lord was laid. But many of the Priests and Levites and chief of the fathers, who were ancient men that had see the first house, when the foundation of this house was laid before their eyes, wept with a loud voice; and many shouted aloud for joy so that the people could not discern the noise of the shout of

joy from the noise of the weeping of the people; for the people shouted with a loud shout, and the noise was heard afar off.” What rejoicing! Everyone was taking part in the laying of this Spiritual house of the Lord and as we begin to see the super-structure rise there ought to be great rejoicing and praising, and giving thanks to God for what He has done and is doing.

May I exhort you players of instruments to wait of God, yield to His Spirit and play to the honor and glory of God. I will possibly at another time dwell on the office of those who sing but I am sure you can see how beautifully the musicians and singers blend together in the scriptures we have read together here.

In closing may I admonish you in this, I am sure all of us who enjoy this wonderful way are aware that we stand before the dawning of a new horizon in our experience, and I firmly believe that we will see the breaking forth of that new day in the Lord as we once again rally together and give thanks to God and praise His Name. I just know that as we do God is going to once again open the Heavens and shower us with such blessing that we will not have room enough to contain it. Enter into His gates with THANKSGIVING and into His courts with PRAISE.

THE MINISTRY OF SONG

“O come, let us sing unto the Lord; let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation. Let us come before his presence with Thanksgiving and make a joyful noise unto him with psalms.” Psalm 95:1,2. O COME LET US SING UNTO THE LORD. James 5:13, “Is any among you afflicted? Let him pray. Is any merry? LET HIM SING PSALMS.”

There are many different ways in which God has used a song and the singer of songs in the scriptures. Let us first of all touch a little on the use of such a ministry in the plan of God. Ephesians 5:18-21, “And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess, but be filled with the Spirit; Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing, and making melody in your heart to the Lord; Giving thanks ALWAYS FOR ALL things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ; Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.” There seems to be a use for personal edification here as Paul said “speaking to yourself in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs”. One little realizes the tremendous gift God has imparted to mankind in the use of a song. Now it is true that not everyone has a ministry in singing but I do believe that ALL may sing and especially this medium can be used in your own private life and devotion to God. It is not the quality of voice that our heavenly Father is interested in, it is that we sing and make melody IN OUR HEARTS unto the Lord, that He is most concerned about. I really do not think that a person has to be happy and

living on the mountain top in order to sing and make melody in your heart to the Lord, in fact I am sure it is more deeply appreciated by our heavenly Father when we are somewhat discouraged and down-hearted that we can sing and make melody in our hearts to Him.

Proverbs 17:22, "A merry heart doeth good like a medicine; but a broken

spirit drieth the bones.” Please do not misunderstand here, one can not just be merry at will but only by the Spirit as we permit Him to move and flow in us and through us. How do you suppose Paul and Silas sang songs in prison at midnight as they were chained and fastened in their cells? They certainly had nothing to sing about. I am sure that in themselves they were at an all-time low and singing was the farthest thing from their minds but listen my dear friends, if we will permit the Spirit of God to have free course in our lives at ALL times regardless of the circumstances that may surround us, you too will be able to sing songs at midnight under any circumstance. God no doubt at times in His wise providence removes that song from our Hearts as He did from Israel when in captivity where because of our encumbrances we are not permitted to give voice and sing aloud the song that is rising within us. Nevertheless I say under any circumstance, that that song can lie there within the confines of your heart and soul longing and waiting to give expression to what lies within. I am sure that we can use this hidden talent to the edification of ourselves if we will just learn to yield to the Spirit of God. This will do for you in a different way as speaking in tongues will do, you can not get along without either, both are necessary, both will contribute to your life and building up of your Spiritual lives like nothing else can do, praise His name.

You will also note here in this passage that there is mentioned three different songs that you can sing. First of all it mentions the singing of a Psalm. Needless to say, as one reads the Psalms that one can find practically every type and kind of an experience anyone might find themselves in. Can you not picture David as he sat possibly on a huge stone watching his sheep grazing on the green pasture and taking his harp in his hand began to sing “The Lord is MY Shepherd I shall not want, He maketh me to lie down in green pastures; he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul; he leadeth me in the path of righteousness for his name’s sake. Yea though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil; for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of my enemies; thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.” Here he likened his own life like that of the sheep is his (David’s) pasture which he had charge and care over and just as he had made them to lie own beside the still waters and feed upon the green pastures and just as David’s rod had many times comforted and directed his sheep even so had the Great Shepherd in the same way done the same things for David. As one allows our minds to be channeled and directed into these Spiritual avenues we too, even though oft-times in adverse circumstances could hymn

our praise and would find great help and blessing and strength in singing one of the Psalms as the Spirit of God enables us to do so.

Then it mentions we should speak to ourselves in the singing of a Hymn. Over the years we have found certain hymns that at different times God has made that particular hymn come alive. It would be very foolish and wrong for us to think that this is not inspired of God, on the contrary. There is just as much room for the singing of hymns as there is the singing of psalms. There is no doubt that in years past we were somewhat bound to a hymn book and found it very difficult to have a service without one. In the diverting of our course, we have, I often feel, allowed ourselves to go to the opposite extreme where we are afraid to be seen singing out of a book for fear someone might think that the song we are singing could never be anointed of the Spirit of God if we read the words of the song from a hymn book. If such is the case the person who feels this way has certainly been misguided. Whether you sing with a book or without has no bearing on the Spirit of the song whatsoever. I would be a sad state of affairs if I had to try and memorize the whole of the Bible before I could read it in the Spirit, but one can read or sing being in the natural mind and receive little if anything from it. Please do not be bound by such traditions. If you don't know the words to a song that God seems to have laid upon your heart and you know where to find it in a book by all means get the book and by the same Spirit that laid the song upon your heart sing it word for word, and line for line with the book, under the anointing of God's Spirit. As one brother said to me just recently, many times as you sing the first verse and chorus of a hymn the Spirit rises and you wish you could sing the remaining verses because of the anointing that prevails but you have to stop short because of the lack of understanding and not having the words to continue. God help us Saints that we can be freed from such traditions that bring us into bondage and back into a captivity that God has already delivered us out from. When the Spirit of God seems to lay a certain song upon the hearts of the whole church such as he has of late in "His Name is Wonderful" please, please, whenever God lays this song or any other upon you as you are going about your daily work, sing it the honor and glory of God for in this way you are speaking and building up yourselves in the way of the Lord.

Now we come to the third song speaking to yourselves in spiritual songs, a song that has never been sung before nor shall ever be sung again. In this particular phase we have yet to enter into the fulness of. David sang of his many varied experiences of which we have record in the Psalms but no doubt there were many songs that burst from his inner most being that were never sung from human lips again.

We have many times stood in awe as different members of this great

body of Christ have sung their experiences or unveiled many of the hidden or secret things of God as they were inspired from above. We have heard large congregations many hundred strong, swell in praise that sounded like the pipes of a large organ as fingered by a skilled organist. We have known of people coming off the street to hear this glorious sound of praise as it crescendoed to heights that held one spell-bound then softly fell away almost to a whisper, then give way to the rising of a solo, duet or trio all blending together in an offering of thanksgiving and praise. Yes, you too can edify yourself in the singing of a spiritual song, singing and making melody in your hearts to the Lord. All this edifying of ones self is for one specific purpose not so that we become over inflated but that in turn we may use the talent God has given us to edify one another and the whole church. Colossians 3:16, "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord." Here we are admonished to use our singing of psalms and hymns and spiritual songs for the teaching and admonishing (instructing) of one another. This we have seen on numerous occasions when the Spirit of song rested upon the people that we were all taught many, many things. Are you beginning to see the importance of this song in our private lives and in the life of the church?

As we go on a little further you will see that God had appointed to the office of singers those whose whole lives were devoted to this ministry of song. I Chronicles 15 is that wonderful account of the bringing of the ark back to Jerusalem. This was a happy joyous day for the people of God. Everyone had his place to fill and his job to do. Verse 16: "And David spake to the chief of the Levites to appoint their brethren to be the singers with instruments of music, psalteries and harps and cymbals, sounding, by lifting up the voice with joy." This was to be a song of victory and all the musicians and singers who were appointed to that office were to be on hand to lift up the voices and blend together with the instruments of music WITH JOY. Verse 22 speaks of Chenaniah who it says was "chief of the Levites, his office was for song, he instructed, about the song, BECAUSE HE WAS SKILFUL." Verse 27 says; "And David was clothed with a robe of fine linen, and all the Levites that bare the ark, AND THE SINGERS; and Chenaniah THE MASTER of the SONG with the singers etc. This man Chenaniah seemed to be sort of an instructor or teacher who, as it says in verse 22, instructed ABOUT THE SONG. Asaph you will recall was skillful as a musician and instructed in that particular field as Chenaniah instructed in the singing. EVERYONE has his or her place in this great plan of God. II Chronicles 35:15; "And the singers the sons of Asaph were in their place, according to the commandment of David, and Asaph, and Heman, and

Jeduthum the kings's seer; and porters waited at every gate; they might not depart from their service; for their brethren the Levites prepared for them." The Levites seemed to get things set up and appointed different people for different jobs and everyone stood ready to function in the capacity that they had been appointed to.

In II Chronicles 20 we have a very vivid account of how each member standing ready brings about the perfect mind and will of God. You will recall the story of how the Moabites were about to invade Jehoshaphat and his people and the prayer Jehoshaphat made unto God and the instruments that God used in order to turn away and destroy the Moabites. Notice if you will the many-member body in operation in this particular instance. First Jehoshaphat the leader of the people prays to God and reminds God of many things that He had spoken unto them and the many promises He had made. You will please notice especially verse 11, "Behold, I say, how they reward us, to come to cast us out of **THY POSSESSION**, which **THOU HAST GIVEN US** to inherit." Jehoshaphat reminded God that He stopped them from invading these people at one other time and now, as so many times we find ourselves, they were in no position to fight and defend themselves against such a vast army but he said **OUR EYES ARE UPON THEE**. He said you have given us this possession to inherit therefore He must now stand with them in the defending if His inheritance unto them. You will also notice verse 13, "And all Judah stood before the Lord, with **THEIR LITTLE ONES, THEIR WIVES, AND THEIR CHILDREN**." **EVERYONE** had a part in this great victory that was about to happen. All Judah the fathers and mothers, their children and even babies were all standing there as their leader prayed this great prayer unto their God. After Jehoshaphat ended his prayer another member of the body swung into place Jahaziel the prophet. It says that the Spirit of the Lord came upon him as he stood in the midst of the congregation and he said: "Hearken ye all Judah, and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem, and king Jehoshaphat, thus saith the Lord unto you. Be not afraid nor dismayed by reason of this great multitude; for the battle is not your's but God's. Tomorrow go ye down against them; behold, they come up by the cliff of Ziz; and ye shall find them at the end of the brook, before the wilderness of Jeruel. **YE SHALL NOT NEED TO FIGHT IN THIS BATTLE**: Set yourselves, stand ye still, and **SEE** the salvation of the Lord with you, O Judah and Jerusalem; fear not, nor be dismayed; tomorrow go out against them; **FOR THE LORD IS WITH YOU**." This is a wonderful account how the prophet gave instruction as to where to find the enemy and what to do. He also assured their hearts that this battle was not their's but God's, that they would not have to fight but just set themselves, stand still and see the salvation of the Lord.

After this marvelous prophecy Jehoshaphat bowed his head in thanks unto God while the Levites and the children of the Korhites stood up to praise the Lord of Israel with a loud voice on high.

You can well imagine the atmosphere of suspense that must have lingered throughout the camp as they rose early in the morning and began to literally fulfill the prophecy given by Jahaziel the day before. Then Jehoshaphat stood to reassure their confidence and faith in God and said: "Believe in the Lord your God, so shall ye be established; believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper. And when he had consulted with the people, he appointed singers unto the Lord, and that should praise the beauty of holiness, as they went out BEFORE THE army and to say, PRAISE THE LORD FOR HIS MERCY ENDURETH FOR EVER." You will notice that Jehoshaphat consulted with the people, I suppose we might say that after he had admonished them to believe the prophets etc., that he was sort of feeling them out as to their faith and confidence in the God of Israel and the prophecy which had brought them face to face with their aggressors. He must have found faith riding on an all-time high because immediately he appointed singers and notice please he set them out in front, BEFORE the army and instructed them to praise the beauty of holiness as they went out and to sing this marvelous song of victory, "PRAISE THE LORD: FOR HIS MERCY ENDURETH FOR EVER." Can you just picture this scene? Can you imagine the tremendous volume of voices that rang through the early morning air as they walked toward this great army many times their number? How every singer let his voice ring out the strains of this song made alive and vibrant by the Spirit of God Himself and "When they began to sing and to praise, the Lord set ambushments against the children of Ammon, Moab, Mt. Seir, which were come against Judah; and they were smitten." Let me tell you right here my dear people, you too can enjoy such triumph and victory as you learn to yield unto God and do whatsoever He asks of you. Who would have ever thought that such an army could be conquered by a song, who ever would have thought that so few could rise to masters over so many? Who ever would have thought that out of nothing God would make some thing that would one day envelop the whole earth and this I can assure you will be for it is in harmony with God's merciful purpose when the times are ripe for it.

In Exodus 15:1 we have another song of victory, "Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the Lord, and spake, saying, I will sing unto the Lord for he hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea. The Lord is my strength and song; and he is become my salvation; he is my God, and I will exalt him." Here again a song was used to express the inner feelings of delivered people, I tell you Saints, this will do so much for you as you sing your triumphs and rise

above your problems on the wings of a song.

One more instance in Judges 5:1 the song that Deborah and Barak sang, "Praise ye the Lord for the avenging of Israel, when the people willingly offered themselves. Hear ye Kings; give ear, O ye princes; I, even, I will sing unto the Lord; I will sing praise to the Lord God of Israel, Lord, when thou wentest out of Seir, when thou marchedst out of the field of Edom, the earth trembled, and the heavens dropped, the clouds also dropped water. The mountains melted from before the Lord, even that Sinai from before the Lord God of Israel, etc." If they who lived under condemnation could sing such songs how much more you and I who have tasted of His grace, Yea we have a song that not even the angels of heaven can sing, a song of redemption in a song of deliverance, praise His Name for ever.

As I mentioned earlier there has been a time when no doubt we felt like those mentioned in the 137th Psalm; "By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion. We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof. For there they that carried us away captive required of us a song; and they that wasted us required of us mirth, saying Sing us one of the song of Zion. How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?" "Too long have we wandered like pilgrims in a strange and foreign land, aliens we were from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world; but NOW in Christ Jesus we who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ," Ephesians 2:12,13. No longer do we wander, no longer are we in doubt about the plan and purpose of God for He hath by His precious Holy Spirit unveiled to us the secret of His will and made known the desires of His heart. No longer need the children of the Lord hang their heads in shame standing helpless at the mercy of the world and all its powers for behold the Lord hath visited His people, the Lord hath laid bare His strong right arm, the Lord God Almighty, the God of Abraham, of Isaac and of Jacob hath come to make His habitation in the midst of His people to declare the righteousness of God, to bring good tidings unto the meek; to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified. My dear people take down your harps from off the windows and begin to sing the song of the Psalmist, Psalm 126; "When the Lord turned again the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dream. Then was our mouth filled with laughter and our tongue with singing; then said

they among the heathen, The Lord hath done great things for them. The Lord HATH done great things for US; whereof we are glad. Turn again our captivity, O Lord, as the streams in the south. They that sow in tears shall reap in joy. He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall DOUBTLESS come again with rejoicing bringing his sheaves with him.” We have so much to be thankful for, let us SING UNTO THE LORD, for He is good and His mercy does endure for ever.

In closing let me say this. ALL may sing, but not all have a ministry in song any many more than all have a ministry in prophecy even though I Corinthians 14:31 tells us that ALL may prophesy. To those of you who possess a ministry in song may I encourage you to look unto the Lord and allow His Spirit to pour into your bosom that as you freely receive you may freely give. At this particular stage in our walk with God I believe that much rests upon those who sing and play on instruments of music. As we mentioned in our article dealing with the playing of instruments, as The Spirit of God moves in a meeting music oft times creates the right atmosphere for whatever else God may have in mind for that particular service. We have experienced this on a few occasions when we knew that the Spirit of God desired that we sing and play, that we have asked or may I say it this way, appointed singers to come up and sing a psalm, hymn or spiritual song whatever God laid upon their hearts. After listening to a tape of such a meeting held just recently I was amazed at all that God had shared with us in that meeting. God help us all that we may be faithful to fulfill the roll ordained by Him for us that His will may be done on earth even as it is in heaven. Let us wait on our ministry as He has admonished us to do and I am sure that we have yet to experience the depth and the height that God has in store in this part of our worship before Him. Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be lifted up ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory SHALL come in.

THAT WE MIGHT KNOW

There are many things in life that the average person has very little knowledge or understanding about. We live in a very scientific and creative age. When you hear men speak of these terrific advances in science it make one feel somewhat small. There are still many things in the Spiritual realm that we stumble and fall over through our ignorance. It is, however, God’s mind and will that to as many as receive Him that He imparts to them of His wisdom and understanding in order that we no longer walk and live as ignorant men.

I was reading the other day what Paul wrote to the Church at Corinth and I quote: I Corinthians 2:6-16 “Howbeit we speak wisdom among them

that are perfect: yet not the wisdom of this world, nor of the princes of this world, that come to naught; But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory; Which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they know it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But as it is written, eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of a man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, NOT the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; That we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man receiveth NOT the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he

that is spiritual judgeth all things, yet he himself is judged of no man. For who hath know the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ.”

Notice he says to a believer, “eyes have not seen, nor have ears heard the things that God has prepared for those who love Him.” NOTHING is hid from the Spirit, but in order for man to understand these hidden mysteries he must receive the Spirit, for God’s Spirit understands all things. The reason God has given us His spirit is so that, and I quote: “That we might know the things that are freely given us of God.” God wants us to know those things that are ours through Jesus Christ.

So much emphasis today is placed on education and please do no misunderstand me, education is a wonderful, necessary thing and we believe in having a good education, but so little importance is placed on our Spiritual education. By this I do no mean just being able to quote chapter and verse for every little thing but that we give God’s Spirit the opportunity to school us and direct us in His ways, not by natural wisdom, for by his natural wisdom men knew not God but that wisdom that is in harmony with God’s merciful purpose. As it was for the Corinthian church so it is today that God’s purpose is that our faith rest NOT upon the wisdom of men nor in man’s cleverness, schemes and systems, or as the Phillip’s translation puts it: “nor by the powers-that-be, who soon will be only the powers that have been.” All of this man-made system must give way to the wisdom of God and His coming Kingdom, His glory, power and dominion. One can never hope to attain to the fulness of all that God has “willed” to us without the understanding of the Spirit and the illumination and enlightenment that He gives.

With the help of the Holy Spirit I would like to enlarge your understanding and help you begin to realize just a few of those things that have been freely given to us of God. We so often sell ourselves short because of lack of understanding and confidence to accept what He has said is ours NOW. We find ourselves constantly asking our Heavenly Father for things that He has assured our hearts many times are our through Jesus Christ our Lord, our elder brother. Paul said in writing to the Romans in the 8th Chapter, verse 24 and 25, “For we are saved by hope, for what a man seeth, Why doth he yet hope for it? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it?” Many things that we have already experienced and seen we are still hoping for and I know He has given them to us and we must begin to realize and use our possessions IN HIM. The scriptures are very clear in regards to our Godly possessions but may the Spirit of God help us to see and believe they are ours, here and now. We must stop spiritualizing everything away out of their proportion. There is actually

very little difference, if any, between the way a thing is in the Spirit to that of the natural. What I mean is this, although we say love is Spiritual it still is an existing tangible thing. Peace is something that is real not some mystical something. It is and must be something YOU possess, notice I said possess, not will possess, and because you have freely received peace from God you immediately become not only the recipient but the administrator of WHAT you possess. As you have freely received of this Godly attribute you can freely give of what you have received if those to whom you desire to share it with will accept it. Let me further explain by the use of an instance from the scriptures, Matthew 10:5-14, “ These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them saying, Go NOT into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not; But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand, Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give. Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses. Nor scrip for your journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves: for he workman is worthy of his meat. And into whatsoever city or town ye shall enter, enquire who in it is worthy; and there abide till ye go thence. And when ye come into a house, salute it. And if the house be worthy, let your peace come upon it: but if it be not worthy, let your peace return to you.” Note it says into whatsoever city or town you shall enter, enquire who in it is worthy, deserving, and there abide till ye go hence. And when you come into a house salute it or give it YOUR blessing (Phillip’s) and if the house be worthy or in other words they accept or receive you and your blessing, let YOUR peace come upon it, but if it be not worthy, let your peace return to you. Romans 5:1 (Phillip’s) reads : “Since then it is by faith we are justified let us GRASP the fact that we have peace with God.” “ Because of this new agreement we possess peace, we have freely received of it so we can freely give of that which we possess namely - PEACE. This wonderful Spiritual commodity is not something you can see with the natural eye, you see the results of it, but still in the Spirit it is just as tangible and real as sharing an apple with someone. You must believe that because you have received the gift of peace HIMSELF you become then an ambassador of that which He is IN YOU - PEACE.

We are living in very adverse days, one never knows from one day to the next what to expect. There are wars and rumors of wars, unrest and uncertainty on every hand. It is ever so easy for us as believers, (who are of that first fruit company, having already tasted of the peace of God that passeth all understanding, not as the world giveth but as he has given) to get so captivated with the conditions around us that we actually lose sight of what, (as His child), we have been given by Him, He who is our Father.

Though unrest is abounding on every hand the reason why God has shared His peace with us is that we in turn might be given to the extolling of His glorious attributes, (characteristics), one of which is peace. Do you see child of God we need never fear or be moved by the conditions that exist in the world, this is the reason why you are different than those in the world, you ARE a child of God and what makes you different is the fact you possess His nature, etc. and reveal His glorious characteristics. You actually bear His family likeness, you are His and He is ours, praise His Name.

Another attribute of His nature you possess is joy. Romans 5:1-4, “ Since then it is by faith that we are justified (or acquitted) let us grasp the fact we HAVE peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through him we have confidently entered into this new relationship (agreement) of grace and here we take our stand, in happy certainty of glorious things he has for us in the future. (Please note) this does not mean, of course that we have only a hope of future joys - we can be full of joy here and now, even in our trials and our troubles. Taken in the RIGHT SPIRIT these very things will give us patient endurance etc.” Oh the secret of possessing true happiness and joy to the measured and degree that we can literally share it with those who will accept it. This summer my wife and I were in a gift shop and we saw something rather amusing so we were laughing and enjoying ourselves and the clerk said to my wife after, that it was good to hear somebody laugh and enjoy a good joke, she said so many people now a days can not take something funny and laugh about it. I know that joy is not just seeing the funny side of things but if there has ever been a people on the face of the earth that should be happy and be enjoying life and the JOY of the Lord it should be God’s children. Paul says we should be Full of joy here and now even in our trials and trouble. If we by His grace, can accept our trials and troubles in the right spirit they will work out in us, according to His divine will, more of His attributes such as patience, endurance, a mature character and a steady hope that will not disappoint us. How many times have we brow-beaten ourselves, when trials and troubles come upon us and thought somewhere we had missed it and were out of God’s will or that He has surely forsaken us, when all the time He was inter-weaving into the fibre of our beings more of Himself, of His nature and all that He is, that our prayers might be answered, make me more like Thee Jesus.

Because you are His child you have inherited many things from Him. I John 3:1,2 (Phillip’s). “Consider the incredible love that the Father has shown us in ALLOWING us to be called ‘children of God’ and that is not just what we are called, but what we are. Our HEREDITY on the Godward side is no mere figure of speech, which explains why the world will no more recognize us than it recognized Christ.” He goes on to say, “Here

and now we ARE God's children. We do not know what we shall become in the future. We only KNOW that, if reality were to break through, we should reflect his likeness, for we should see Him as He really is." I John 5:4 (Phillip's) "For loving God means obeying His commands and these commands of his are NOT burdensome, for God's HEREDITY within us will always conquer the world outside us." Just as your off-spring reflect your likeness even so do we who are God's children. Our heredity on God's side is not mere figure of speech, it is real it must mean something to us. As Paul wrote to the Romans 8:14 (Phillip's) "All who follow the leading of God's Spirit are God's own sons. Nor are we meant to lapse into the old slavish attitude of fear, you have been adopted (set as a son) into the very family circle of God." This being so, we are heirs and joint heirs with our Elder brother Jesus. Now what does this mean? So often people make this drastic mistake of quoting the Bible to what they call the unbeliever, but the Bible is written for OUR admonition upon whom the end of the age has come. Turn and let us read from Hebrews 9:11-17, "But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament is a force after men are dead; otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth." As we all know, and as a point of law, before a will can become effective there must be the death of the one who made the will, otherwise while that person was alive they could give their wishes and desires, but the reason for a will or testament is to have carried out after death, the intentions of the testator. In the days of the Old testament we read how Moses sprinkled the blood of a sacrifice upon the book and the people, but Christ our Elder Brother, died once and for all to bring into effect the Testament or "Will", the desires and wishes of our Heavenly Father. Please refrain from pushing our inheritance further away from us and hoping for another day, because of the death of the Testator the Testament (WILL) has come into effect if we can believe. My dear people let us stop waiting for these things that we can have and enjoy

NOW. Please do not misunderstand me, I know there are things He has reserved until, if I may say, we become of age or more mature, but not everything. There are so many things we ought to be enjoying more now than we are. It is your Father's good pleasure to give unto you more abundant life, wisdom, knowledge and understanding far beyond our expectations but we must allow Him to make room for our gift, we must permit His Spirit to ever guide us in the ways of eternal age lasting, kingdom life, praise His Name. Remember, No good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly. Being that you now possess His Spirit and you are NOW His children, let us grow up into His fulness, and be given over to the extolling of His glorious attributes. Let us live responsibly before Him so that He can entrust us with our inheritance and thus convey His mind and will in the earth. Paul said in writing to the church at Ephesus (Weymouth), "To me who am less than the least of all the saints has this work been graciously entrusted, to proclaim to the Gentiles the gospel of the exhaustless wealth of Christ, and to show ALL MEN in a clear light what my stewardship is. It is the stewardship of the truth which from all the ages lay concealed in the mind of God, the Creator of all things, concealed (why) in order that THE CHURCH (the body of Christ of which you are a part) Might now be used to display to the powers and authorities in the heavenly realms the innumerable aspects of God's wisdom." The world will never know peace except by the spirit THROUGH His Church. They will never experience joy, love or the innumerable aspects of His wisdom except through that which He Himself has ordained and raised up for that specific purpose the Church the body of Christ.

There are so many present things we now possess that we need no longer day after day be asking God for. Matthew 6:25-34 says, "Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? Behold the fowls of the air; for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature? And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin; And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith? Therefore take no thought, saying what shall we eat? Or, What shall we drink? Or Wherewith all shall we be clothed? (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek;) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek

ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness; and ALL these things shall be added unto you Take therefore no thought for the morrow; for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.” Not again what He said, not to take thought of these things such as food, clothing etc. for these things do the Gentiles seek, for our heavenly Father knoweth that we have need of ALL these things. I trust that my children never go to bed at night worrying about whether they will have breakfast in the morning or if their shoes wear out where the next pair will come from, I sincerely hope they have enough confidence in their earthly father that he will provide these necessary things, yes and much more. The scriptures teach us if we who are evil know how to give good gifts unto our children how much more our Heavenly Father will give to us IF we ask Him. If someone reading these few lines finds themselves in dire straits and you need food and clothing and the necessities of life and you are a believer, a child of God, He has promised you such, just claim the promise and He will fulfill, He will no more withhold from you than a father or mother would withhold food from their starving children.

In closing may the Spirit of God make alive within our hearts and renew that blessed hope within us that we are NOW His children and we have access through faith in Him and His promises to the storehouse of His goodness and can claim because of our heritage those things that He has spoken to us and unveiled before us.

HAPPINESS

A commodity sought after by rich and poor alike, from the thrones of men to the common ordinary man and woman on the street, is the secret of happiness.

What is it? Where can one find it? How can one maintain and keep it? These are the questions that flood ones mind in their search of happiness.

The scriptures very clearly prescribe a way that a man can enjoy and experience genuine happiness and in so doing fulfill the perfect will of God the Father.

Happiness cannot be found in the transitory things of this world such as wealth, popularity, possessions or even health. True happiness is a state of the Spirit not engineered by the cleverness of the ways of men but brought about and instituted by the Spirit of God Himself.

One could scarcely believe that a person could be troubled on every hand, from within and without, and still possess the joy and peace of the Lord which creates and brings to birth a happy heart. It is so, and as I quote to you from the scriptures you will see it is very simple to possess and enjoy the happiness of God EVERY day that you live.

The problems that face us today as individuals, the difficulties of nations can be solved by adhering to this simple recipe outlined in the 5th Chapter of Matthew. I quote to you from the J. B. Phillip's translation, Matthew 5:1-16, "When Jesus saw the vast crowds he went to the hillside and after he had sat down his disciples came to him." Then he began his teaching by saying to them: "How HAPPY are the humble minded, for the kingdom of Heaven is theirs! How HAPPY are those who know what sorrow means for they will be given courage and comfort! HAPPY are those who claim nothing for the whole earth will belong to them! HAPPY are those who are hungry and thirsty for goodness, for they will be fully satisfied! HAPPY are the merciful, for they will have mercy shown to them! HAPPY are those

who make peace, for they will be know as sons of God! Happy are those who have suffered persecution for the cause of goodness, for the kingdom of Heaven is theirs! And what HAPPINESS will be yours when people blame you and ill-treat you and say all kinds of slanderous things against you for my sake! Be glad then, yes, be tremendously glad - for your reward in Heaven is magnificent. They persecuted the prophets before your time in exactly the same way. You are the earth's salt, But if the salt should become tasteless, what can make it salt again? It is completely useless and can only be thrown out of doors and stamped under foot. You are the world's light - it is impossible to hide a town built on the top of a hill. Men do not light a lamp and put it under a bucket. They put it on a lamp-stand and it gives light for everybody in the house. Let your light shine like that in the sight of men. Let them see the good things you do and the praise your Father in Heaven."

You will first of all notice the word "HAPPY" is used to give a clearer meaning rather than the word blessed as used in the King James. You will also note the complete turn about of ideas to that of the understanding of the world to try and produce happiness, it is almost an opposite approach to the way the world goes about it.

How happy are the HUMBLE MINDED, for the kingdom of Heaven is theirs. Paul has admonished us, not to think of ourselves more highly than we ought to think, not to allow ourselves to become puffed up, etc. Happy is the one who is willing to humbly walk before the Lord, yielding all his members unto Him that His perfect will may be revealed in and through his life; that kind of an individual will some day possess the kingdom.

How happy are those who know what sorrow means, for they will be given courage and comfort. Sorrow and heartache is an experience both believer and unbeliever would like to by-pass if possible. Here is where, if a person really knows and understands the God they serve, can find happiness even in a time of distress and sorrow, for at that particular time, as Jesus reassured Paul, in his time of weakness he would receive His strength, they would be happy because through this sorrow they would be given strength and courage. Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow as the song writer has phrased it! There is never an experience in life but what one may learn and receive to a greater measure and degree of the goodness of God.

Happy are those WHO CLAIM NOTHING, for the whole earth will belong to them. Do you see what I meant when I said the recipe for happiness is so directly opposite to the schemes and ideas of men? Today the ambition of men is to own and possess for themselves. The more they have the more they want, never satisfied with what they have. They have never learned as Paul once said to be content in whatever state we find ourselves.

Men will do all manner of things in order to accomplish their own selfish ideas. They strike, cheat, pull all kinds of shady deals in order to further and benefit their particular cause. **HAPPY ARE THOSE WHO CLAIM NOTHING.** As it has been said, as believers we should always hold the things we possess loosely in our hand so that if He should require them of us there would be no struggle in the surrendering to His will.

HAPPY are those **WHO ARE HUNGRY AND THIRSTY FOR GOODNESS,** for the will be **FULLY SATISFIED.** Whatsoever a man sows that shall he also reap. If we desire before God, and hunger and thirst for those things that are right in accord with His will, we shall be fully satisfied. Jesus said to seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these other things, (secondary as they are) He will add them unto us. Happy are those who really hunger for the good things from off our Heavenly Father's banquet table.

HAPPY ARE THE MERCIFUL for they will have mercy shown to them. Here again what we sow we reap, if we show mercy we will receive of His mercy. If this merciless spirit of this age continues where men would rather destroy than build, they can never hope to enjoy the measure of God's mercy which He desires to share with His own.

HAPPY ARE THE UTTERLY SINCERE, for they will see God! Here is a very important attribute to real happiness, being absolutely sincere in everything we do. There is so much make believe in the world today. Men are all talk and no action; they endeavor to paint such rosy pictures on the outside but it is only a veneer. There is nothing genuine about what they do because they are not sincere in the things they do. They put on as though what they are doing is to the betterment of mankind when actually the only reason they are involved is to further their own desires and wishes. If a person is utterly sincere they will not only be a recipient of the joy of the Lord but God has assured our hearts that they will see Him.

HAPPY ARE THOSE WHO MAKE PEACE, for they will be know as sons of God. We should endeavor never to allow ourselves to be involved in anything that creates strife and unrest and disorder. If we in our daily conversations were to speak and think as Paul wrote to the Philippians we would find the ideals and ways of men and nations would change. Paul wrote this Philippians 4:8, "Finally brethren, whatsoever things are true, honest, just, pure, lovely or of good report, virtuous, **THINK ON THESE THINGS.**" Competition is war, one nation striving to overcome another. One person trying to outdo another which brings about an atmosphere of hate and unrest. **HAPPY** is that person who sows and spreads peace for this is a true requisite of a son of God. Endeavor to live peaceably with all men.

HAPPY are those who suffer persecution for the cause of goodness, for

the kingdom of Heaven is theirs.

Practically everything that we have today, whether spiritual, physical or temporal, that is good, was born in adversity. When Henry Ford invented the first Ford car, society rejected it and said it was a dangerous menace. When the discovery of the first pain-killer was found it was frowned upon. Many of the revelations of the scriptures in ages past and even today are disregarded as heresy and many are persecuted because of their faith and confidence in whatever it is they believe in, but HAPPY are those who are persecuted for the cause of goodness.

HAPPY are those who are ill-treated and slanderous things said against them for His sake for their reward in Heaven is magnificent.

May I just add here that it does not mean that a person should be always sort of asking for trouble that this applies, but as the King James puts it, when these things are said about one falsely - without just cause- then we can be happy and rejoice. Let us not give men reason to say these things. Let us live lives that are respectable, as the word says blameless and harmless as the sons of God for as verse 13 reads: "We are the salt of the earth, but if the salt has lost its strength what effect can it have and of what use is it except to be destroyed."

God's recipe for true HAPPINESS is summed up in this: HAPPY ARE THOSE WHO ARE: Humble minded, who know what sorrow means; who claim nothing; who are hungry and thirsty for goodness; who are merciful and utterly sincere; peace-makers; who suffer persecution for the cause of goodness and who are ill-treated for His sake.

Not only will they experience true fulness of happiness but they will one day be the possessors of His kingdom and rule and reign with Him. Looking for happiness? It is found only in Him and the fulfilling of His Divine will.

LET THEM COME

For the last few days these words, LET THEM COME, which were emphasized by the Spirit a couple of years ago at Camp, have been ringing in my ears. You will recall at that time the Spirit indicated that He was going to begin to work from without and bring those who were yet outside of the understanding of His will and purpose, which He has so graciously revealed in these last few years. Of late it seems we have been brought in contact with those who have expressed such a desire and are not satisfied with things as they are.

As I have thought and meditated on this, I have wondered just how we as believers would react and receive those whom God would bring into this wonderful way. You might think that this is rather a strange thing to say,

but just stop and ask yourself the question, how would you receive those who have little or no understanding of the wonderful things God has shared with us? I cannot help but believe that there would be need of as much of the grace of God on the believers part as those who might come in to learn of a deeper walk with God. Sometimes I think we have a tenancy to sort of become self-complacent and fully satisfied with our own little circle and we might not care to have it disturbed by others coming in. I honestly believe dear people of God that the time, HAS COME when we must begin, as never before, to let the Spirit of God move in the way and manner that He chooses and allow our own ministries to reach out to those whom the Spirit stirs and meet them and minister to them on the level they are now on. You may not realize it, but it takes the grace of God in order to do this. Our meetings will no doubt take a change from their present form in order to accommodate and fulfill the desires of these hungry lambs.

It has been my privilege, as well as many of the other brethren, to be called to go into new fields where the people are relatively ignorant of this wonderful way of the Lord. We have found that many times one must go back and relapse almost into what we might call the old order, and lead and direct them into this present truth and order of God. This one can do

quite easily without in any way hindering or disturbing their own walk with God. It is such a natural life. Just because, as an adult, one picks up a ball and glove and plays catch with his son or even gets down on the floor and plays some imaginary game does not in any way lower his status in the adult world. It is possible for an adult to drop back to their level of understanding for a brief spell, but it is literally impossible for them to come up to your standards of knowledge without the proper guidance and tutoring. I impress upon you the necessity of us taking the time and effort it requires in order to lead men and women further on in the way of the Lord and be willing to share with them of the graces of God that He has so lavishly poured out upon us.

May I turn your attention now to Acts the tenth chapter, and I am quoting from the Phillip's translation. This is a very familiar story, but as I read it the other day it seemed to take on a new meaning and caused me to realize the tremendous act of God involved here, I will not take the time or space to write all the chapter out, but would suggest you take the time to read it through prayerfully.

Will you please note the preparation the Spirit of God made in the heart and life of Cornelius, this centurion in the Italian Regiment. Note the absolute detail given him by God's messenger. You will also notice the report given about Cornelius, that he was a deeply religious man who revered God, AS DID HIS HOUSEHOLD. He made many charitable gifts to the people and was a real man of prayer.

After this visitation of the angel of Cornelius, he called for two of his house-servants and a devout soldier to journey to where they could find Peter. The scripture says that, "while these men were still on their journey and approaching the city, Peter went up about the mid-day on to the flat roof of the house to pray," and while Peter was there waiting for the dinner to be prepared the Spirit of God started things moving, if I might say, on the other end in revealing to Peter the thing He had in mind by a vision. You will recall this sheet being lowered from heaven by the four corners and in it were all kinds of animals, reptiles, and birds. Then came the test; a voice to him, "Get up, Peter kill and eat!" But Peter said, "Never Lord! For not once in all my life have I ever eaten anything common or unclean." Then the voice spake to him a second time, "You must not call WHAT GOD HAS CLEANSSED common." Here I believe was a real test to Peter. The very things that he, by order of the Jewish law and God, had refrained all his life from doing, he was asked to do. Can you not see that there was as much, if not more, preparation to be made in Peter's heart and life to receive these Gentiles as there was in theirs to receive him and the message he bore.

It was no wonder that this vision really puzzled Peter but while he was

thinking about it, the SAME SPIRIT that spoke to Cornelius, spoke to Peter and told him to go down-stairs that there were three men waiting to see him and he was to go with them WITHOUT ANY MISGIVINGS, for He said, "I have sent them." May I quote once again the tremendous testimony that these three men gave of Cornelius; "Cornelius the centurion, a good-living and God-fearing man, whose character can be vouched for by the whole JEWISH people, was commanded by a holy angel to send for you to come to his house and to listen to your message."

May we all realize the importance of having a good testimony, not just from within, but also from without.

Cornelius was expecting them the next day so he invited all his relations and intimate friends to gather in his house. As Peter and the brethren that accompanied him arrived, Cornelius met them at the door and made them welcome, and it says that Peter went right into deep conversation with Cornelius and found that a large number of people had gathered so he began to speak to them. Please note his opening remarks; "You all know that it is forbidden for a man who is a Jew to associate with, or even visit a man of another nation. But God has shown me plainly that no man must be called 'common' or 'unclean'. That is why I came here when I was sent for without raising any objection. Now I want to know what made you send for me." Cornelius replied, "Three days ago, about this time, I was observing the afternoon hour of prayer in my house, when suddenly a man in shining clothes stood before me and said, 'Cornelius, your prayer has been heard and your charitable gifts have been remembered before God.'" It would seem that Cornelius sort of prayed according to a law or tradition here but that was all the man knew and in his ignorance God heard and answered his prayer. Possibly up to this point Cornelius had no idea how to pray just as the Spirit of God moved on him, for up to now he had never really had an experience with God and a real visitation of the Spirit of God in his life, not at any rate, like what he was about to experience. It is far better to pray by a law than not to pray at all, but as you lead people on into that blessed experience of letting the Spirit of God move at will in their lives, praying by a law could never begin to satisfy the heart like praying when the Spirit moves upon you to do so. Note again how God makes mention of his charitable gifts and his faithful prayers.

After Cornelius had told Peter what had taken place he said, "Now we are all here in the presence of God to listen to EVERYTHING that the Lord has commanded you to say." I think this is such a wonderful expression of their desires. They had come prepared for God to move and do something in their midst and, as He always does wherever He finds hungry souls, He fed them, praise His Name.

Peter began to speak, "In solemn truth I can see now that God is no respecter of persons, but that in EVERY nation the man who reverences him and does what is right is acceptable to him." God, I am sure, is once again creating in the hearts of all of mankind a desire to learn and understand more of Him, and it is by the office and functions of every joint in this Spiritual body, that He is going to make known to men the innumerable aspects of His wisdom and show them clearly the mystery of His will. Peter continues, "He has sent his message to the sons of Israel by giving us the good news of peace through Jesus Christ - he is the Lord of US ALL." This in itself was quite a confession on Peter's part. I am sure that all of his private reservations and many of the things he himself had taught concerning the Gentiles etc., were beginning to vanish before him as the Spirit of God began to unfold before him this new and wonderful way of the Lord. He went on to relate to them the story of Jesus of Nazareth, a story which they themselves had been eye witnesses of. As he, by the Spirit, unfolded to them the life and ministry and death of Christ, the Spirit of God, while he was still speaking, fell upon all who were listening to his message. This was the very hour that the Spirit of God had prepared them for and He did not disappoint them but filled them with the Holy Ghost. Think of all the steps leading up to this victorious moment, the setting of the stage, and the making ready of men's hearts to receive, and while Peter was still expounding this message that burned so within him, oh the faithfulness of God's Spirit to sweep in upon these hungry souls and open the door to a richer fuller life in God.

Now notice the reaction of the brethren that accompanied Peter. They were absolutely amazed that the gift of the Holy Spirit was being poured out on gentiles also; for they heard them speaking in foreign tongues and glorifying God, just in the same way and manner that they had received. It would seem as though they felt up to this point that they sort of had a little corner on the gifts of God, but glory be to God, this promise was unto them, and to their children and to ALL afar off, even to as many as the Lord our God shall call, which included these gentiles met in Cornelius' house and you and I today. I do believe that the hour is now upon us when we must not stand amazed at what God is doing, but come to a full realization that this gospel of the kingdom is to the whosoever will, and thank God with all of our hearts that He has permitted us to share in the spreading of it by the gifts of His Spirit that He has made to come alive within each one of our hearts.

Now fasten your seat-belts because Peter is about to shake one of the foundation stones in theology! You think that this did not take courage on Peter's part when he said, "Could anyone refuse water or object to these men being baptized - men who have received the Holy Spirit just as we did ourselves?" Here was the turning of the tides, a shattering of the traditions

of the elders, but as entering in to one of the greatest eras known to man. How we ought to thank God that Peter was faithful to God and He LET THEM (US) COME IN. God help us that in these perilous times to LET THEM COME from the North and South and East and West, so that all men may come into a knowledge of God such as they have never know before. As the hymn-writer has put it, "What the world needs is Jesus, just a glimpse of HIM," not the ideas, plans and schemes of men, they need to know Jesus, they need to become acquainted with His ways, with the order of God and the great witness and moving of His Spirit in their lives in a very definite, experimental way.

Over the past twenty years, God has been setting in order His own house, He has been bringing together the body of Christ for a very definite function and reason. As a believer you are part of that glorious body and have a very important role to play in the great plan of God. We MUST now begin to make ourselves available to God without any reservations of thoughts or doctrines, and let the Spirit of God unveil as He has in times past the next step to take in the bringing about of His will in the earth. When God spoke to us a few years back and said that He was going to begin to move upon those who were without and those who had wandered away from the foundation that He had laid, I believe He meant what He said, for we have not seen then, and just in recent weeks, the fulfillment of that promise. LET THEM COME people. Let us be standing ready to receive them into the fold, even if God has to break down many of the traditions of the past, may we let His Spirit give us hearts filled with love and compassion that they may find their way to Cornelius' house and seek God with an open heart so that the Holy Ghost may fulfill the desire of their hearts and ours.

I ask God that He will help us all to see the necessity of that preparation first being made in our hearts, which will automatically begin the wheels rolling on the other end.

FOR WHAT IT IS WORTH

No doubt many of you will wonder at such a title for an article, but I wish to write to you as Paul wrote to the Corinthians in I Corinthians 7:6, "I speak this by permission, and not of commandment." I would like to write these few lines, not in the capacity of one of the traveling ministries, but as a husband and the father of three children. It is in no way meant to point a finder or find fault, but as you read it, accept it FOR WHAT IT IS WORTH. I hope that these few lines will help the young people as well as parents. These few thoughts have been on my heart for a long time now but I have never felt the liberty to write this article until just recently, so please accept these few thoughts as from the heart and not as words of acquisition.

The problems that face the young people today are not just limited to young people but because they are the sons and daughters of parents, and in many cases members of the Body of Christ, they concern us all. We may not all have young people in the age group that is confronted by so many hazardous situations, but we are still, or ought to be, deeply concerned with their temptations.

It has often been said that we are not interested in making people just religious but personally I would rather have my children a little bit religious than worldly. I would rather have them begin their walk with God sort of on the level of the law, until that law can bring them into a place where the Spirit of God can guide and direct their lives than to see them live lives where an attitude of “anything goes” seems to over take them. It is not the purpose of this article to make a list of “do’s” and “don’ts”, but I do firmly believe the time has come for us as parents, elders, and ministries, to make ourselves very clear as to our stand on a few things that possibly young people are not too sure as to where we stand. No doubt as many of you young people read these few lines you will say in yourselves that this generation to which I belong my parents just don’t understand. I would like you all to know this, that although we live in a different generation, we as young people, had many such things confronting us for many of which we had to take a firm stand against. Many of us can testify now, we are so thankful we had Moms and Dads who were interested enough in us to pray and counsel with us and endeavor to give the guidance and direction they had gleaned from experience and just plain living. Even though we

lived, or should I say grew up, under somewhat different conditions, sin was as much sin then as it is now and the necessity of living a good clean wholesome life was just as important and beneficial as it is today.

As a boy I was greatly interested and active in sports. In summer time I enjoyed playing baseball and football. In the winter my favorite sport was hockey. This particular sport led me to play with teams that travelled around the various points competing with teams in our city and district.

As time went on, because of my desire to play the game, I was chosen to try out with a farm team which I suppose would have eventually led me to the pros if I had succeeded. I will never forget that experience as I endeavored to mingle with the boys as we went to the hotel after a busy day of practicing, etc., and heard each one of them give an account of their activities that evening and the way they had entertained their girl friends, and the things they had gone on just made me sick. Sex is not something that has just been invented in this generation and just because society, so-called, has sort of lowered the standards does not in any way mean that God, or the Word of God, has lowered its standards. Playing around with sex or telling dirty stories is just as sinful today as it was when I was a boy. It is a terrible thing that mere children in grade school have explored and unlocked many doors that should have remained closed until true love and devotion gripped their hearts, where they were willing to spend the rest of their lives together as man and wife. I want you to know that this Hollywood version of love is far far from the real, but I also want you to know that your generation is not the only one that was faced, or will be faced, with this tremendous natural drive of the human species. I can remember on one of my trips with a hockey team, when a couple of young boys entertained a girl in the hotel room after the game and it was just as shameful then as it is now. The basic rules and principles have never changed. It was not wholesome and right in Mom and Dad's day, and it is still not right in your day, regardless of what the general views of people are, it is still not right.

Another of the so-called standards of our day was, in order to be properly accepted into manhood or womanhood, one had to adopt the tobacco habit and take a social drink. This sort of paved the way for your acceptance into the world. Here again is where many of us had to say NO. Since I was a boy, science has proved without question that smoking is harmful and injurious to the body. I am often literally amazed at people. Recently, considerable attention has been given to cyclamate which is used as an artificial sweetener found in low calorie foods. In the store we had some salad dressing with cyclamate in it, which the company who manufactures it reduced to half price in order to get it off the market, but because of the fact that there is a possibility the cyclamate may cause cancer, it has taken

a long time to sell it even at half price. Yet many of those same people, while standing telling you of the harm caused to the body by the eating of these diet foods, will be sucking tar from a cigarette which is coating his lungs like nothing else can do. I had an undertaker once tell me something I never have forgotten. He said that when they make an autopsy on a person they can always tell those who have smoked and those who have not. He said the normal color of one's lungs are pink, something like the color of your ear but a smoker's lungs are jet black. A doctor once said it takes about three years for your lungs to return to their proper color after one has stopped smoking. So, if for no other reason but for their health's sake, as a parent. I do not want any of my children to smoke and also I fail to see where it really adds anything to one's Spiritual life. Just because possibly all your friends at school smoke is absolutely no reason why you should start. It is a harmful, expensive, habit that as a young person you could do quite nicely without. Now for that social drink! What does the church think about drinking? Well I know I am very safe in saying that the Church does not condone the use of alcohol. Having spent sometime in the Navy, I saw with my own eyes how young men and women can be ruined by alcohol. I remember so vividly the one young fellow who was a very nice, clean-cut young man. We were having our draft party before leaving for another post. He asked me during the day if I was going and I said no. He said that he was going to go because he didn't have to drink, there was coke there for those who did not drink. At midnight I saw three of the boys carrying him out the door stone drunk. He woke up the next morning and didn't know where he was or how he got there, and this is so often the case. May I just say this here young folks, that sort of an environment is really no place for a child of God to be found in. You should feel so out of place at a thing like that, just as uncomfortable as they would feel sitting along-side of you in church on Sunday morning. If you do not feel out of place then I would get down on my knees before God and really search my heart.

Just a week or so ago I was invited to a Christmas party of all the stores that belong to our particular organization. My uncle had the arranging of this party and naturally there is a lot of work and money goes into it, so for his sake I thought I would make an appearance. It was held in the same hall that we rent to hold our services in. I slipped in the back door into the kitchen where my uncle was and I must honestly confess I felt very much out of place. As I stood there and watched them for a few minutes ordering one drink on top of another, it made me sick and I just couldn't get out of there quick enough. I was back home within half-an-hour. May I point out here, it is not that one has or feels that "holier than thou" feeling, it's just that you do not belong to that crowd. It grieved my heart as I saw one

young lady who had once served the Lord order her drink with the rest and glide around the dance floor just like the rest of them. I must confess young people it grieves my heart and I know the hearts of your parents and elders and ministries when we see you being inveigled into this worldly way of living. It is hard for me to see how anyone, young or old, can indulge in all of the pleasures of this world and then try and enter into the service on Sunday morning. It is not enough that you are there in the service, or that you even try and take your part in it by singing or prophesying. We must have and live a life that is conducive to the cultivating of a good strong Spiritual walk with God. It is not so much the first drink, but it is what the first drink, etc., leads to that deeply concerns us because we have lived long enough to see and hear people testify of what damage it can do to a person's life and home. Just last Sunday a brother told us at our Christmas dinner, as he and his wife and family stood up to sing "Silent Night", what it meant to him to be a Christian. He told how, that while he was drinking, his family was nothing but a weight around his neck, and at Christmas time if he bought them any gifts, etc., that it was robbing him of another bottle of booze. What a change now to see the power of God at work in his life and in his home, that together they can enjoy the rich blessing of God in their home. What a difference to that of the world. There is absolutely no place in a Spiritual man or women's life for drinking today, any more than it was when I was a boy or young man.

I have many times been asked what is the difference to going to a theater or watching T.V. The difference we have found in our home is there is some control over our T.V. We can see what the children are watching and with the set we bought, there is a little round button that shuts it off when these undesirable pictures come on, which sorry to say is most of the time. People can say what they like, what we see and hear has an influence upon our lives. Practically every motion picture that is advertised on T.V. is a restricted picture. I am not saying that it is a sin to be seen in a movie theater, but I am sure young people and parents, you will agree that here again what you see and hear there is anything but conducive to a good clean moral life. If it isn't shooting and killing, it's a married man or woman having an affair with somebody else, etc., etc., etc., etc. I have often thought that if the morals of this nation get much lower than what they are they will be on the same level as Sodom and Gomorrah. I feel the time has come when we must stand to our feet and say, "I am on the Lord's side." Paul, in writing to the Corinthians said, "Know ye not that your bodies are the member of Christ". (I Corinthians 6:15) Also verses 17 to 20, "But he that is joined unto the Lord is ONE spirit. Flee fornication. Every sin that a man does is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own

body. What? Know ye not that YOUR BODY is the TEMPLE of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God IN YOUR BODY, and in your spirit which are God's." We must present our bodies as a living sacrifice unto God, and we are given the humble task of keeping this temple clean and fit for His use.

Recently, while traveling East on the train, I got off to stretch my legs at Winnipeg. While in the station I could not help noticing a group of young people congregated over in one corner. I suppose it is the latest fashion, long coats and hair to match, etc. One could certainly not pass by without noticing them because of their attire, etc. I honestly believe this is one of the main reasons why they dress oddly and grow beards and long hair, etc. May I make myself absolutely clear here before you form any conclusions. I am not that much concerned about what you wear, or how you wish to look, but the thing that bothers me and I am sure many others is this, the hair and the clothes automatically associates you, whether you want to be or not, with that particular crowd which in most cases has much to be desired. I endeavored once to explain this to a young man I had just employed who came to us with his hair quite long. I asked him on two or three occasions to get his hair cut. One day he came back from dinner a few minutes late and he explained why. He said he had been getting his hair cut, so he asked me what I thought of it and if it was cut short enough to meet my approval. So I was perfectly honest with him. I told him if he had not told me I would have never know he had been to the barbers, so I took him down into the office and explained to him why I wanted his hair cut. I really do not believe that this young man wanted in any way to be associated with the hippies or such movements, but when anyone walked into the store and saw him walking around with long hair, rightly or wrongly they classed him with that particular crowd. One thing, young people, we must ask ourselves is this; "for what reason am I doing this?" If we do these things just to attract and draw attention of people unto ourselves, we are preparing ourselves for a fall. If it is just to be like the crowd, to what will it profit you?

I remember being asked once by a young woman if I would get a recommendation for her from a certain college she attended and I knew the principal quite well so I went and asked him if he would give her a letter of recommendation. I will never forget what he said to me, "I will be only too happy to give her a letter of recommendation, but she really doesn't need one, it's in her face." This, I thought, was a wonderful testimony and why should we mar what we really are by putting on a lot of artificial gadgets which really take away from that which we really are? I am not telling you how you should dress or keep your hair but, as the scriptures teach,

let us be modest in all of these things. Again it is only a father speaking but I will still enjoy seeing a clean shaven, well-groomed man, and a pure, wholesome-looking young woman.

Well young people, I hope you will still love me after writing this way, because I love you deeply and long to be of help to any of you who may stand in need of help. I feel I have fulfilled my responsibility before God. I have got off my chest what has been lingering there for a long time and to all of you young people and parents, these lines are written to you in love. I hope you can receive them in the same spirit as they were written.

As I said at the very beginning I have not written these words as being apostles' doctrine, but they sort of express what my wife and I long for in our own children and will only see by God's love and grace, so please receive this FOR WHAT IT IS WORTH.

May 1970, as it opens its doors of challenge and responsibilities, bring with it varied experiences, the fulfillment of His Divine will and purpose in all of our lives. As young people pray for us parents and as parents let us pray and help our young people, that TOGETHER we may grow up into HIM, He who is the fulfillment of all our dreams and aspirations.

RESPONSIBILITY

There's nothing in all your Christian experience, or even in your natural life, that causes you to grow more than taking on responsibilities. I remember a young man who got married, as most young men do, and when he got married he just seemed like kind of an overgrown boy, if you know what I mean. He hadn't quite grown up yet. But I noticed that as time went on and God blessed their family with three lively boys, that man's life began to mature and blossom like it never had before, because of that responsibility that was placed upon him. As you and I take our responsibility before God in the ministry that God has given us all.... all the preaching in the world will never bring you into that stature that Christ has ordained for your life like you functioning as a member of the body of Christ. We could talk to you for six months and it would never do for you what ministering in the Spirit will do, as you meet together. Teaching has its place, don't misunderstand me, but it will never take the place of you or me taking our God given responsibility or office that God has given and by His Spirit, to function to the fullest capacity that we are able, and He enables us to do.

I would like to read the first six or seven verses from the fourth chapter of Galatians. Galatians 4:1, this is what Paul said, "that the heir as long as he is a child differeth nothing from a servant though he be lord of all, but he is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father, even so we when we were children were in bondage under the elements of

the world. But when the fulness of time was come, God sent forth His Son made of a woman, made under the law to redeem them that were under the law that we might receive the adoption or the setting or the placing of the son, and he says, because ye are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying “Abba, or Our Father”. Wherefore thou art no more a servant but a son and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ. Now notice he says, “ An heir as long as he is a child differeth nothing from a servant.” As long as we are in that place where we don’t assume that responsibility that God has given us, then even though we are heirs of all the fulness of God and of all that God has willed, we differ nothing from a servant. We’re under tutors and governors. But in that time appointed..... in that time that God has ordained that we will come, we will grow to assume the responsibility that God has given us, then that changes the picture altogether.

We have three children at home. I can never remember their ages . . .

I believe they are 13 - 10 - and six: they will be that within a few weeks. Now the way that I talk to the 13 year old is altogether different from the way I talk to the six year old. The 13 year old should know more because he has had more experience in life, and the way I talk to him now is altogether different from the way I will talk to him when he is 20. There are a lot of things that I could discuss with him now, but I know he wouldn't be concerned in the least. There are a lot of things that God could discuss with you and me, but we'd rather play a little bit longer. He said to the disciples one day, " Oh, there's so many things that I would like to show you. Howbeit, you just can't accept it yet. You haven't come to that place of growth where I can really share with you what's on my heart." I'm thankful to God that that time has come in your life where you can begin to take on more and more responsibilities before the Lord, and this is going to enable you to grow into the fulness of the stature of Christ. When you get to that place where you can begin to take on some responsibility and instead of having somebody tell you every move you make, because of your relationship with God, because of your growth, because of your communion with Him, He is able to share with you these things that are dear and precious to His heart. And as He does, then you continue to grow into the fulness of the stature of Christ.

Let us remember to ask God to help us that we don't stop here and sell ourselves short. God says that we should grow up into the fulness of the stature of Christ; that we should become unto a perfect man. I can hardly grasp that with this natural mind of mine, but that is exactly what He means. The way that we're going to grow into the fulness of the stature simply is as we begin to take on the responsibility that God has for us in that ministry that God has given us. We must not sit back and say, "Well, I'll let so and so prophesy. My prophecy doesn't matter much anyway. Whether I prophesy or not, whether I sing or not, doesn't matter." Oh, it matters a lot there are a lot of little intricate parts in my body that, if they didn't function, I'd be sick. You don't see them; you don't hear much of them, but I'm thankful to the Lord that He's working them. They've assumed their responsibility and because they have, look at the size I've grown. But notice what the scripture says, "And because ye are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts crying, Our Father." You know adoption is a wonderful thing. You stop and think that God loved us enough that He would take us into that inner family circle of His. Adoption means the placing or the setting of a son and you're not just somebody that lives under the roof, but you're actually set into that family of God. That's right in the inner family circle. Not just a visitor, but you're part of the family. We're very thankful for the graciousness of these dear folk for letting us meet in their home

like this, although we're brothers and sisters, it's good for them that we're only visitors. There are things that I wouldn't dare do in this home that I do at home. The only way we could become part of this family, I mean really part of this family, would be for this Brother and Sister to adopt us into their family. Whatever's Dad's is mine, see! I can't go to the Brother now and call him "Father", because he's not my father, but if he adopted me into the family, then I would have the God-given right to call him Dad, just like his boys do. And that's what the scripture says here, 'because ye are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts' and His Spirit within you cries, Our Father'. Because He is our Father and we are His children that should mean something to you. We're heirs of God. We're joint heirs with Jesus Christ, to all that He has willed us and there's the whole testimony. There's the whole will right there. And there are things in there, that I haven't experience yet, but I long to experience with all my heart. It's too good to be true sometimes, but it's real. He sends the Spirit of His dear Son into your heart and life and mine. He sets us, He places us in that inner family circle of His and then we can say to Him with a full heart without any reservations at all, My Father, or Our Father. I always think it so wonderful that when Jesus taught the disciples to pray He didn't say 'My Father', He said 'Our Father Who art in heaven, Hallowed be Thy Name.' What God wants to do is to share with us these things that He has had in mind. He said concerning Abraham of old, "Is there anything I'll withhold from a man like this who has his own children in order and home in order, is there anything I'll keep from a man like that?"

God has sent His Spirit into your heart and life and mine. Because of that indwelling of His presence, we can say with a whole heart, "Father, My Father." I'm thankful and I hope it always stays this way, that I can go to my dad, now a man over 70 years of age, I can go to him, I can counsel with him, I can talk with him, I can share my problems with him because he's my father and I'm his son. And the same exists between you and your heavenly Father because His Spirit dwells within you. Someone said the other day that actually God sent us to minister the Spirit. That's what He wants us to do. That's what God has in mind for us, not just to talk about things, but to minister the Spirit. His Spirit has come to make His habitation within us and because of the indwelling presence of His Spirit, you can say with a full heart, Father My Father and know that He's going to be listening because you're His son. I remember one day, I was with my dad having a cup of coffee, and some gentlemen came in that my dad knew so he introduced me to him and he said, "this is my son," and I could see those old buttons just about to burst and I thought to myself, "may Go help me that I might live in such a way to always make him feel that way." I was

proud that he was my dad and I hope I can always live in such a way that He will be proud of me. Because he bears the name of Whitter, that's why I bear the name of Whitter and what is his, I share because he has willed me such and has told me, that's how I know. God has done the same for you and me. Oh I think of the goodness of Jesus and what He's done for me, my soul cries out Hallelujah. To think that God has put you and me on the same level as His own Son who knew no sin. That He will give His Son a ransom for to cleanse you and me from our sins and that He elevates us by His Spirit and gives us the same right to call Him Father. It's almost more than one could begin to comprehend. Because we are His sons, God has sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts crying "Our Father," wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son and if a son, an heir of God. Then we are no longer servants, but sons and we have the right to call him, Our Father.

There's nothing that will develop your life more, if I may say it, in this crude fashion, is really to be in the harness and to do the thing that God has revealed. We don't want to stay as children and be heirs in all these wonderful things that we can inherit, but we want to be in that position where we can begin to enjoy to the fullest measure the things that God has for us.

Why sell ourselves short of the thing that God has ordained and we desperately need for part of this wonderful spiritual body and fulfil His will and in doing so, continue to grow and increase in the wisdom of God. Let us allow the Spirit of God to settle that responsibility upon our shoulders for this is the thing that is going to permit us to really blossom forth and grow up on the fulness of Christ. We were happy over in High Point that God has indicated three of the brethren that will fill the office of elders. And what a wonderful thing that is, and I know just as sure as I and standing here, that those people will begin to grow in God as they never have before. Someone said, "The elders help the people grow and the people help the elders grow." Isn't that quite a wonderful thing? People help the elders to grow and the elders help the people to grow. And you're growing up together. Nothing greater than that. The only thing different from our sister here is the office that she holds and the office I hold. That's the only thing. I'm no greater than she is and she is no greater than I am. We're equal in the eyes of God and the only thing that makes us any different is the office - the ministry that God's given us. You may have a ministry of intercession and someone else may have a ministry in song or prophesy or whatever it might be. Well, the ministry of intercession is a wonderful gift. I often marvel at how wonderful a gift it is. In the middle of the night sometimes the Spirit of God can move upon an intercessor's heart and they can pour out their heart before God for someone on the other side of the continent and God answers. Isn't it a wonderful thing! But you see an

intercessor is no greater than one who shows mercy. The only thing is they have a different office. This thumb isn't any greater than that little finger. The only difference is this has an office and they just work so smoothly and greatly together. My feet aren't any greater than my hands, nor my hands and greater than my feet. They depend one upon the other. It would be a sad thing for one arm to grow faster than the other one. But we grow as a body and we're growing up into the fulness of the stature of Christ as well. Oh, how wonderful it is, dear people, that He has made us heirs of God and joint heirs with Jesus Christ and sent His Son to dwell in our hearts so that with our whole being we can say, Father, Father. No longer a servant, but a son. Oh, Blessed be the name of the Lord!

THE LAYING ON OF HANDS

The scriptural practice of the laying on of hands has always been associated with this great outpouring of the Holy Spirit. In 1948 when the Holy Spirit unveiled God's plan for the Church a prophecy was given and I quote: "I will at this time restore the nine gifts of the Spirit to MY CHURCH and they shall be received by prophecy, with THE LAYING ON OF THE HANDS of the presbytery (a body of elders) and I will indicate from time to time certain ones who are prepared to receive the gift from the Spirit of God," unquote.

As one carefully reads this prophecy, much is contained in it. It begins by saying, "I WILL AT THIS TIME RESTORE," in other words according to God's calendar, the time had arrived in His great plan for the ages to restore, as was prophesied by the prophet Joel in Joel 2:25, "and I WILL RESTORE to you the years that the locust hath eaten, the cankerworm and the caterpillar, and the palmerworm, MY GREAT ARMY which I sent among you." Providentially this was the time when God would restore to the Church that which had providentially been taken from her. Not only does this prophecy tell us what God was about to do, but also He was going to do it and who would be involved in His great and wonderful plan. These gifts would be restored by prophecy and the laying on of hands and He would indicate those who were ready to be fitted into His plan. We have seen this happen, since this prophecy was given, hundreds of people have received that Divine guidance and direction by the scriptural pattern of the laying on of hands and prophecy. Paul in writing to Timothy established this truth. In II Timothy 1:1-6, "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." I Timothy 4:14, "Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, WITH THE LAYING ON OF THE HANDS OF THE PRESBYTERY." Also I Timothy 1:18, Paul gives Timothy a

charge (command-commission-authority to act for another) to war a good warfare, how? By hearkening to those prophecies that went before on him.

Out of such a subject we could develop many avenues of thought, but as the title of this article indicates, we will dwell on the one aspect of the subject namely the laying on of the hands under three headings: A. The purpose of laying on of hands. B. How it functions. C. The results.

Please bear in mind what God indicated, that this is the appointed time, and He sets out the methods and ground rules.

A. THE PURPOSE OF LAYING ON OF HANDS

Let us first of all define what is meant by the laying on of hands, what actually happens when one is prophesied over with the laying on of hands. It is an imparting of the Spirit. Imparting means to give a share of - to make known or reveal. It is the giving of the right or authority to act on behalf of another, in this case "God". It is the placing of God's seal or stamp upon one's life. Ephesians 1:13 (Phillip) "And after you gave your confidence to him you were, so to speak, stamped with the promised Holy Spirit as a guarantee of purchase."

In order for a document or certificate to be of any value it must bear the seal or stamp of the one who issued it, which then entitles the holder of that document the right or authority to act on behalf of the one who issued it.

The seal or stamp is the Holy Spirit, the laying on of hands gives to the individual power and prophecy places the tools in our hands in order that we may accomplish or do God's will. It is impossible to function as a member of the Body of Christ without the proper equipment. The gifts of the Spirit are those tools, Ephesians 4:12 (Phillips) "His gifts were made that Christians might be PROPERLY EQUIPPED FOR THEIR SERVICE, that the whole body might be built up until the time come when, in the unity of common faith and common knowledge of the Son of God, we arrive at real maturity - that measure of development which is meant by "the fulness of Christ." The Body of Christ, the Church of the living God, will never come to that maturity without each member of it functioning and using those instruments, tools, gifts that God gives them by prophecy and the laying on of hands.

Moses was instructed of God to DO ALL THINGS ACCORDING TO THE PATTERN when he built the tent church, the tabernacle in the wilderness, Exodus 25:1-9. There were certain requirements that God had of the people and one was that of "having a willing heart" verse 2. He put the responsibility for the erection of this sanctuary upon them, verse 8, "And let THEM make me a sanctuary; THAT I MAY DWELL AMONG THEM." It was then, and still is today, that God desires to dwell in the midst of His people, not somewhere away off in heaven but right in the very midst of them. Revelation 21:1-3 tells us this in verse 3 "And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold the TABERNACLE OF GOD IS WITH MEN, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God." A tabernacle is a sanctuary, a dwelling place where God chose to live. He insisted that Moses constructed this dwelling place exactly according to the pattern given to him in the mount. Exodus 25:9, "According to all that I shew thee, after the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of ALL instruments thereof, even so shall ye

make it.” Notice God put this responsibility on Moses, He said I will show you how I want it to be built but YOU BUILD IT.

He did the same to King David in the building of the Temple, God’s dwelling place. I Chronicles 28:11, “Then David gave to Solomon his son the PATTERN of the porch, and of the houses thereof, and of the treasures thereof, and of the upper chamber thereof, and of the inner parlors thereof, and of the place of the mercy seat, AND THE PATTERN OF ALL THAT HE(DAVID) HAD BY THE SPIRIT.”

Because David was a man of war, he was not permitted to build the temple even though God had given to him the blueprints, but in verse 10 David tells Solomon his son: “Take heed now, for the Lord hath chosen thee to build an house for the sanctuary; be strong AND DO IT.” Solomon had his responsibility to act in accordance with the promises of God - he had received the pattern and the assurance from his father David that God had chosen him for the job. Now it was up to him to get with it and DO IT. David repeats this promise in the same chapter, verses 19-21 and his admonition to Solomon was to DO IT, do it according to the pattern that God had revealed to David by the Holy Spirit.

As Moses and Solomon and all the patriarchs of old had their commission from the Lord, so have we today and it is equally as important for us to take heed and build this Spiritual house, not made with hands, this dwelling place for God’s presence here on earth, according to His Divine plan and instructions.

Proverbs 16:25, “There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.” There is no place for man’s way, schemes or ideas in the plan of God for the church, we must be willing to submit ourselves unto Him and do what He asks us to do, strange and all as that way may seem to us mortals, but we must always remember that His ways are much higher than our ways and far past finding out.

The plan and pattern for the New Testament Church is very simple. After we have made that total commitment of our lives to God, then we must let the Holy Spirit make us ONE. Jesus prayed for that in John 17:21, “THAT THEY ALL MAY BE ONE,” we must be together as the vision of Ezekiel 37:7, “and the bones came together, BONE TO HIS BONE.” Every bone was in its proper place supporting the rest of the bones. His vision of the two sticks in the same chapter and the 17th verse, speaks of this joining together: “And join them ONE TO ANOTHER INTO ONE STICK, and they shall become ONE in thine hand.”

“Christ came not only to save us from our sins but to break down the middle wall of partition between us, having abolished in His flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make

in Himself of twain ONE NEW MAN,” Ephesians 2:14,15. By doing this for us He has reconciled us, bringing us(man) back into harmony with God’s merciful purpose and through Christ we now have access by ONE SPIRIT unto the Father. He has taken us who were outsiders, strangers and foreigners to the covenants of promise and made us fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God.

II Corinthians 5:14-20, “For the love of Christ constraineth us: because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: And that He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them, and rose again.” Much is said in these two verses. Because Christ died on our behalf or in our place and by so doing it is as though we had all died. Phillip’s translation put it this way: “We look at it like this: if one died, and His purpose in dying for them is that their lives should now be no longer lived for themselves BUT FOR HIM WHO DIED AND ROSE AGAIN FOR THEM.” We have an obligation to God in this binding promise, God gave His Son to die for the sins of all mankind, otherwise we would have had to die for our sins and now those for whom Christ died should no longer live for themselves but for Him who died and rose again, praise His Name. Verse 16 and 17, “wherefore henceforth know we no man after flesh: yes, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we Him no more. Therefore, if ANY MAN BE IN CHRIST, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.”

When anyone enters INTO CHRIST he becomes a new person. It is one thing for you to be in Christ, it is altogether different for Christ to be in you. When a person makes a total dedication of themselves unto God, his whole life changes, his outlook on life changes, the past is finished and gone, everything has become fresh and new. (Phillips) “This kind of relationship makes a new person out of the individual, for what Christ died for on our behalf, becomes a reality, we no longer desire to live for ourselves and those things that just interest us, but we desire to live our lives unto Him, His ways become our ways, His thoughts become our thoughts, etc.”

Verse 18 says, “ALL THIS IS GOD’S DOING, for He has reconciled (changed or brought harmony with God) us TO HIMSELF through Jesus Christ; and has made us AGENTS OF THE RECONCILIATION.” (Phillips). Oh Hallelujah, this great plan of God for the restoration of His plan and purpose, which includes us, is all His doing. The King James version used the word “of” God , but practically all other translators use either the word “from” God or “All this is God’s doing.” We may say, all of what is God’s doing? Bringing about this transformation in men’s lives through the death and resurrection of His Son Jesus and making Him a “NEW CREATION”,

bringing fallen man and all of God's creation back into harmony with Himself(reconciled it). Think of it! And to know that God has entrusted such mortals as us with this ministry of reconciliation, He has made us HIS AGENTS, He has given us the right, the authority to act on His behalf.

There is positively no way that man could fulfill or accomplish such a commission on his own or in his own strength. This is where the laying on of hands comes into the picture, that is the reason, the purpose why, God instituted the ministry of laying on of hands in order that we might receive this Divine charge and commission, by it, He imparts or shares with us of His authority, He puts His stamp or seal of the Holy Spirit upon our lives, which are our credentials so to speak, and gives us of His gifts(tools) in order that we might do His bidding and obey His commands. We could never, never do this of ourselves by the use of earthly means or talents. We have become His Ambassadors (highest ranking diplomatic representative) with a Divine purpose and charge to fulfill.

B. HOW IT FUNCTIONS

We have already stated, that the laying on of hands means an imparting, sharing of the Spirit. By the laying on of hands we receive a charge, an order or commission, I Timothy 1:18, "This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophesies which went before on thee, that thou BY THEM mightest war a good warfare."

Numbers 27:1-23 gives us the account of how Moses went about appointing Joshua as his successor. There are some very remarkable things stated in these few verses. Moses was a man who knew God, he understood God's ways and endeavored to walk in them, though in verses 12-14 of this same chapter we read of how God prohibited Moses from leading His people into the promised land because of his rebellion. It is a very serious thing to rebel against God as we learn from these few verses.

Moses spoke to God and told Him the kind of man that He should set over the congregation. He needed to be a man with leadership qualities, that could go before them and lead them as a good shepherd. These are the qualifications of a good shepherd, one that leads, not drives the sheep. As I heard once said, "the butcher drives the sheep, a shepherd leads them."

There is not much recorded here as to what kind of man Joshua was, whether he was courageous, strong or eloquent but he possessed the all important attribute and that was, "A MAN IN WHOM IS THE SPIRIT". God's seal was upon him, His stamp, praise the Lord. Having the right Spirit within him was far more important than anything else. He possessed what God required to make him courageous, strong and eloquent. The clay had the right texture for molding into the proper instrument that God had in mind.

God then instructed Moses, verse 19, to take Joshua and set him before Eleazar the priest and before all the congregation and then give him a charge, or give Joshua his commission, his orders, so that all the people would hear and know that Joshua was given the authority of God to take over in Moses' place, after he was gone. Then in verse 20 God said something wonderful to Moses His servant, "And thou shalt put some of THINE HONOR UPON HIM". Now it was one thing for Moses to lay his hands on Joshua and impart of the Holy Spirit to him but to think God would ask him to share with Joshua of his honor. Several translators use the word "authority" in place of honor. There was no question in Israel's minds that Moses possessed authority from God. On one occasion when Israel had sinned against God while Moses was up in the mountain receiving the ten commandments from God he returned to find them worshipping a golden calf, he commanded them (two and a half million people) to grind up the idol and put it upon the water and get down and drink it. Yes, they had long recognized Moses' authority and the reason God asked Moses to put some of his honor, authority upon Joshua is answered in the latter part of that 20th verse; "THAT ALL THE CONGREGATION OF THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL MAY BE OBEDIENT".

It is very important that we in this age, recognize that very same authority that God has invested in those to whom He has given the responsibility to lead His people.

Hebrews 13:17, "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that if unprofitable for you." Phillip translates it this way: "Obey your rulers and recognize their authority. They are like men standing guard over your spiritual good and they have great responsibility."

Elders to the universal or local church possess this same Divine authority, and ought to be respected.

By the laying on of hands then, Joshua received his Divine charge or commission to lead and give direction to God's people, it is the same today, God, not man, has appointed elders over this church that He said He would restore unto her of the nine gifts of the Spirit, He would by the same ministry that ordained such men as Joshua and Solomon, Timothy would receive at the hands of the apostle Paul by prophecy and the laying on of his hands the tools by which he might minister before the Lord and fulfill his Divine charge or commission.

Let us now turn back to Numbers 11:1-11, "And it came to pass on the twentieth day of the second month, in the second year, that the cloud was taken up from off the tabernacle of the testimony." What was this a sign of?

God had told Israel that He would give them a pillar of fire by night and a cloud by day and when it stopped they stopped. Exodus 13:21. God was saying it was time to move on. Deuteronomy 2:3, “Ye have compassed this mountain long enough: turn you northward.” The time had come to move on. They were only three days on their journey when the people began to complain, Numbers 11:1 and this displeased God then and still does today.

Verse four tells us that there was a mixed multitude among them, those who were not acquainted with what God was doing and they began to sow contention among God’s people and it wasn’t long until they were all complaining. Those people reminded Israel of the wonderful vegetables and fruit they enjoyed back in Egypt and the fish, etc., those things which only catered to the natural man, nothing at all for the spiritual man. This is what God was most interested in for His people, not the natural but the spiritual. He had provided spiritual food for them, manna, they loathed what God had given them and because of this contentious spirit that had been sown among them, desired that which satisfied the natural man and not the spiritual man.

These same conditions can exist in the Body of Christ, the Church, today, **IF WE WILL LET IT**, but it need not be. Paul had the same problem in his day and his instructions to the Romans were, Romans 16:17,18, “Now I beseech you, brethren, **MARK THEM WHICH CAUSE DIVISIONS AND OFFENCES CONTRARY TO THE DOCTRINE WHICH YE HAVE LEARNED; AND AVOID THEM.** For they that are such serve **NOT** our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.”

As the cloud moves us on, I believe it is bringing us into a closer relationship, not only with God but to one another as members of His spiritual body.

The enemy of souls, who is deceitful and the father of all lies will do everything within his power to keep the church divided, for in so doing, he weakens it, but I repeat, this need not be unless we allow it to happen. If or when we encounter those who may in any way stimulate divisions or a contentious spirit, we should immediately mark that person and do as the Scriptures say, avoiding them. “Now I beseech you brethren, **MARK THEM** which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and **AVOID THEM.**”

The principle of division always weakens, never strengthens. Jesus, the Son of God, realized this all important factor and while the prayer of intercession was upon him, prayed for us “that we all may be one,” John 17:21.

The greatest masterpiece of the enemy of our souls, the Devil, was to divide the church and keep it divided. The Word of God speaks plainly and distinctly against any source of division. I Corinthians 12:25, “That there

should be no schism(a split, division) in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another.”

One of the main reasons the denominational church are divided is because of doctrine, which ought not to be. The Scriptures teach us that the church should be, “built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ HIMSELF being the chief corner stone, In whom ALL the building fitly framed TOGETHER groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord; In whom ye also are builded TOGETHER for an habitation of God THROUGH THE SPIRIT.” Ephesians 2:20-22.

The foundation upon which the church is built IS NOT DOCTRINE, but it is far more important and scriptural, that we learn to do the will of God than being letter perfect in our doctrine. Listen to what Jesus said in John 7:17,18 “If any man WILL DO HIS WILL, HE SHALL KNOW OF THE DOCTRINE, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself. He that speaketh of himself seeketh his own glory: but he that seeketh His glory that sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him.” If we become more acquainted with the author of the doctrine we will be able to interpret and understand what He is saying.

All through the Scriptures we have instances where there was controversy over what had been spoken, between the circumcision and uncircumcision (Ephesians 2:11) between the Scribes and the Pharisees, etc., all endeavoring to hold up their particular interpretation and doctrine, when all the time, Jesus said to the Samaritan women by the well, when she said to Him in John 4:20-24, “Our fathers worshiped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship.” Now notice what Jesus says here, which proved both their doctrines were wrong; “Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall NEITHER IN THIS MOUNTAIN, NOR YET AT JERUSALEM, WORSHIP THE FATHER.” See how easy it is when men endeavor to build upon doctrine how they can miss the way. What Jesus actually said to this woman, neither the Samaritan or the Jew’s doctrine is right, but the hour cometh, AND NOW IS, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father IN SPIRIT AND IN TRUTH; FOR THE FATHER SEEKETH SUCH TO WORSHIP HIM. GOD IS SPIRIT: and they that worship him MUST worship him in Spirit and truth.

We can see from this one account how the Samaritans and the Jews were so sure and dogmatic in what they believed and yet they were both wrong. They had the Scriptures to prove their point, but were still far from the truth. Jesus, who the Scriptures declare is THE TRUTH, could have right then and there healed their differences, but no, they clung tenaciously to the old traditions of yesteryear, when He who was truth stood in the very midst of them to lead them on to higher ground.

Division in the Body of Christ, the Church, literally defeats the true purpose of Christ's coming. He came to completely abolish death in His appearing in His Body, the Church. II Timothy 1:9,10, "Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to HIS OWN PURPOSE and grace, which was given us in Christ before the world began, BUT IS NOW MADE MANIFEST BY THE APPEARING of our Savior Jesus Christ, WHO HATH ABOLISHED DEATH, AND HATH BROUGHT LIFE AND IMMORTALITY TO LIGHT THROUGH THE GOSPEL."

John 3:8, "For this purpose the Son of God was manifested (revealed), THAT HE MIGHT DESTROY THE WORKS OF THE DEVIL."

I Corinthians 11:29,30, "For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, NOT DISCERNING THE LORD'S BODY. For THIS CAUSE MANY ARE WEAK AND SICKLY AMONG YOU AND MANY SLEEP (DIE)."

We must discern Christ coming into His Body the Church and there is absolutely no way that He can possess a many membered divided body, but it must, as Jesus prayed, be one, "as thou Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they may believe that thou hast sent me," John 17:21.

If we walk with Him in the same Spirit and allow His Spirit to bring us together into ONE BODY, then our doctrine cannot help but be right. Paul taught the same doctrine in all the churches, read Acts 16:4,5 and I Corinthians 14:31-33, also read in the Phillip's translation.

The purpose then of the laying on of hands and prophecy is, that by the function of this God given ministry, the various members of the Body of Christ, can receive the authority, right and power to operate their particular gifts and ministry.

It is not everyone that has this ministry of laying on of hands, to impart of the Spirit and give Divine guidance and direction to the members of the body. Ephesians 4:11 indicates the five fold ministry, which are universal elders. It is through this five fold ministry that unity is kept throughout the Body. Of these five ministries, three are commonly accepted by the religious community of our day, they are the evangelist, pastor and teacher, but very little is ever said of the apostle or prophet. We must note here the reasons for God setting these ministries in the Church, the Body of Christ, verse 13:

1. For the perfecting of the saints 2. For the work of the ministry (serving) 3. For the edifying (building up) of the Body of Christ.

UNTIL A. We ALL come into unity of the faith. B. To the knowledge of the Son of God. C. Unto a perfect man. D. Unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ (maturity).

These are the responsibilities of the apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors

and teachers, to bring the Church, the Body of Christ, into that perfection and maturity that God has ordained she be in, not being tossed to and fro with every new doctrine, by the cunning craftiness and eloquent sermons of men with “silver tongues”, but by speaking the truth in love, the Church, to Christ who is the Head, that we permit Him as the Head to lead and direct us and do with us, that which is His Divine pleasure, praise His Name. We should see here the importance of us yielding and submitting ourselves unto Him, it requires a total commitment of our lives unto Christ the Head.

As long as there are saints to be perfected, a need of serving and building up the Body of Christ, the Church, this apostolic ministry will be required, not just the evangelist, pastor and teacher, but also the apostle and prophet.

It would appear as though God has entrusted to the apostolic ministry the authority and right to exercise this gift of laying on of hands and prophecy. The elders of the local churches can certainly exercise this gift in praying for people for the baptism of the Holy Spirit and for healing, etc., and are included in the presbytery of elders when the Holy Spirit indicates people to be prayed over, and will no doubt, as time goes on and the borders of the church broadens, will come more and more into this ministry, but at the time of writing, we have felt led of the Holy Ghost to leave the responsibility of this ministry, but at the time of writing, we have felt led of the Holy Ghost to leave the responsibility of this ministry with the five fold, universal elders. It is definitely a disorder for just anyone to assume this responsibility and start laying hands on just any one. I know of nothing that will bring more disorder and problems in a local church than for this gift to be misused. God said when He spoke by prophecy in 1948, “from time to time I will indicate who is ready to be prayed over;” and that still stands today. It is most important that people have prepared themselves by waiting on God and fasting and also that we adhere to what God has spoken.

When one is prophesied over it will often do two things:

1. It will confirm what the person has felt God had already given them, which will give them a greater measure of faith and confidence to go ahead and use the gift.
2. It will reveal things that the individual will not have been aware of.

Always keep in mind the reason why God is restoring these gifts and ministries to the Church, Ephesians 4:12, Phillips translation:

“His gifts were made that Christians MIGHT BE PROPERLY EQUIPPED FOR THEIR SERVICE, that the WHOLE BODY might be built up until the time comes when, in the unity of common faith and common knowledge of the Son of God, we arrive at real maturity - that measure of development which is meant by (or the meaning of) “THE FULNESS OF CHRIST”. The Church can never come to that measure of perfection outside of each

member, receiving and working together, according to God's plan and purpose. Ephesians 4:16(Phillips) "For it is from the head(Christ) that the **WHOLE BODY, AS A HARMONIOUS STRUCTURE KNIT TOGETHER,** by the joints with which it is provided, grows by the proper functioning of **INDIVIDUAL PARTS** to its full maturity in love," praise God. That same precious life that is in Christ, which the Word of God says that He is, is in each individual member of His Body, the Church (John 14:6).

Paul writes to the Ephesians and says: "You hath He quickened who were dead." He also writes in the 5th chapter concerning the relationship between husband and wife that, "For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be **ONE FLESH**" verse 31. Paul also writes in the 30th verse, "For we are members of **HIS BODY, OF HIS FLESH AND OF HIS BONES.**" The Body of Christ is **NOT** mystical, it is a living organism, which possesses the life God gave to it by the Son of God, praise the Lord.

Calvary was not the end of Christ's ministry but the beginning. The prophecy concerning the office and ministry of Christ given by Isaiah 42:1-8 and also in Isaiah 60:1-3 should still be in operation today in the Church, the Body of Christ, for did He not pray in John 17:18, "As thou has sent me into the world, even so have I also **SENT THEM INTO THE WORLD.**"

A physical body can never attain life if its members are all separated, neither can the Body of Christ, the Church, it must be one and what makes it one is that life of the Son of God and His glory. In Isaiah 42:8, "I am the Lord; that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images." Here we have the use of the word glory, which, of late, I have found it in so many references to that intimate relationship between God and man. The Youngs concordance translates it as "honor". God, by the prophet Isaiah, speaking of His Son Jesus, gives Him a Divine promise by saying, He, (God) would not give His glory or honor to another, yet Jesus as He prayed in John 17:22, "And the glory, the Doxa, meaning honor, which thou gavest me I **HAVE GIVEN THEM;** that they may be **ONE,** even as we are **ONE.**"

It is by this glory, honor, authority that is in God which is in Christ and is now in His people that will bring together this Body, the Church, The life that is in the Son must of necessity be in the sons, the members of His Body, for Paul writes in Ephesians 5:30, "For we **ARE** members of His body, His flesh, His bones." I repeat, the life that is in God's Son is that same Divine life that must possess this Body the Church. Let the Scriptures bear out this truth.

Acts 3:1-8 gives the account of the healing of the lame man who sat at the gate of the temple called Beautiful. How many times Peter and John

passed by this man on their way to the temple we have no idea, but on this particular occasion, Peter fastened his eyes upon him and said to the man, "LOOK ON US". Now it is very important that we see this man and notice what he said, "Look on us", that is on Peter and John. Peter did not say look on God, but look on us.

The man immediately thought that they were going to give him what he was asking for, alms, that which the natural man by natural means can supply, but Peter said, verse 6, "Silver and gold have I none, but such AS I HAVE, GIVE I THEE: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk." Peter said to the man, what are you asking for we have not but what you really need I HAVE, I POSSESS, rise up and walk. Peter knew of that which he possessed, because he reached out and took him by the hand, glory to God. Now after all the excitement was over and people realized what had happened, the lame man held Peter and John and all the people, naturally, came running to see these two miracle workers, but please notice what Peter said, verse 12 and 13, "Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this? Or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk? The God of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob, the God of our fathers, HATH GLORIFIED HIS SON JESUS," Oh hallelujah. May the Spirit of God enable us to see what took place here. Peter said to the lame man, "look on us", but after the miracle took place he said to the crowd gathered, "why look ye on us," What was the difference? Before the man was healed, as the man looked on Peter and John, what he was two human beings who possessed or shared in the "glory", "honor", "authority" of God, that glory which brought Christ so intimately into the lives of Peter and John that they became a member of His Body, of His flesh and of His bones, in other words they were, by the Holy Spirit, united into ONE BODY and God the Father, who had on many previous occasions manifested Himself through His son Jesus, in whom He had reserved as a tabernacle for His glory, and healed the sick, raised the dead etc. now through the same glory, which Jesus had shared with His disciples, they in turn, just as though He Himself stood there, manifested that same glory, authority, honor, power by making the lame man to walk. Oh man God help us to see it.

There is an association of life here, that I pray the Holy Spirit will illuminate our minds and understandings that we may see.

Calvary was a must in the great plan and purpose of an all knowing, all wise, Almighty God, for it was through the death and resurrection of Christ that we became partakers of that life. Jesus said in John 14:19, "Because I LIVE, YE SHALL LIVE ALSO". He also said in John 10:10, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it MORE

ABUNDANTLY”.

Jesus again said in John 15:5, “I am the vine, ye are the branches. He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.” Notice verse 8: “Herein is my Father glorified, THAT YE BEAR MUCH FRUIT: so shall ye be my disciples.”

John 10:30, “I and my Father are ONE,” then He prayed in John 17:22,23 that by them possessing this glory that He had given to Him that they may be made PERFECT IN ONE. This resurrection life which brought forth Christ from the dead is NOW dwelling in the saints of the Most High. Christ is once again appearing in these temples of flesh.

Paul wrote to the Corinthians and said, “What? Know ye not that YOUR BODY IS THE TEMPLE OF THE HOLY GHOST;” (6:19). Then in II Corinthians 6:16, “And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? FOR YE ARE THE TEMPLE OF THE LIVING GOD; as God hath said, I WILL DWELL IN THEM, AND WALK IN THEM; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.” The glory of God has come to fill, to possess the temple, the Body of Christ, the Church, of which we are a vital, living part. Just think of it, that same living glory, honor has been tabernacled in men, Revelations 21:3, “And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, BEHOLD THE TABERNACLE OF GOD IS WITH MEN, and He will dwell with them and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God.” That glory can be compared to the life that is now in your body, you possess it, without it you would be dead, but God has ordained that we be members of His body, of His flesh, of His bones. Paul goes on in that fifth chapter of Ephesians in the 31st verse and says, “For this cause shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they TWO SHALL BE ONE FLESH. This is a great mystery: BUT I SPEAK CONCERNING CHRIST AND THE CHURCH”.

Life is something that still remains a mystery to science. Though recently they have developed a test-tube baby, still the sperm needs the female to activate and bring out life, so we still ask the question what is life? In the joining of a man to his wife there is that divine act that unites the two and makes them ONE. That same spiritual process takes place as we are joined to Christ and as He shares with us of the glory of the Father we are bound together and made ONE. That life that is in the vine must of necessity be in the branches, oh glory be to God and it is the branches that bear the fruit of the vine.

C. THE RESULTS

Because of the Divine relationship of God the Father, Son and Holy Ghost to the Body of Christ, the Church, we are partakers of the same spirit. Paul

writes to the Romans 8:11, “But if the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead DWELL IN YOU, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also QUICKEN YOUR MORTAL (dying) BODIES BY HIS SPIRIT THAT DWELLETH IN YOU.” It would be well for us to notice here what Paul is saying, that it is the same Spirit, power, that raised Christ from the dead that dwells in us, and that same life giving Spirit will also quicken, or make alive our mortal, dying bodies. What a relationship, can you not see now what Paul meant in Ephesians 5:30, “members of His body, His flesh and His bones.” The life of THE VINE flowing through the branches. The joining together of husband and wife, twain becoming ONE; “This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning CHRIST AND THE CHURCH”.

It is only by the anointing or enlightenment of our minds by the Holy Spirit that we can see and properly understand this wonderful union of Christ to His body, the Church.

Let us look at this relationship through the eyes of the Scriptures. John 15:1-8, “I AM the true vine, and My Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit He taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, He purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the vine, ye are the branches. He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned. If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.”

Note the sequence here starting at verse one. Christ is pictured as the Vine, God the Father as the husbandman, the one who cares for and dresses the vine and the branches. We as members of His Body, or members of this Vine are the branches. Verse two tells us, that “every branch that beareth fruit, he (the husbandman) purgeth it, that it may bring forth much fruit.”

Verse three speaks of a cleansing, as does Ephesians 5:26, “that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present it to himself a glorious church (body, branch), not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.”

The secret to all this is wrapped up in one word, which is emphasized in these few verses, it is used seven times and that is the word ABIDE. The word simply means to last or remain. One of the most important attributes of a good relationship with God is consistency in our walk. If we walk in a sporadic way with God, on the mountain top today and away down in the

valley tomorrow, this could cause us a great deal of difficulty. Our lows should be offset by our heights, in other words our graph should read in a little wiggle line not great heights and depths. Our attention at the meetings along with the giving of our tithes is very, very important. All these things are not just suggested in the Scriptures, but come in the form of a command such as, pray without ceasing. I Thessalonians 5:17, “Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth,” II Timothy 2:15.

Ephesians 4:16, “From whom the whole body fitly framed together and compacted by that which EVERY JOINT supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of EVERY PART, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.”. Hebrews 10:25, “not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, AS THE MANNER OF SOME IS; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.”. Malachi 3:10, “Bring ye all the tithes IN TO THE STOREHOUSE, that there may be meat in mine house, and PROVE ME NOW herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.” God would have us either hot or cold but NOT LUKEWARM. “So then because thou are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I WILL SPUE THEE OUT OF MY MOUTH,” Revelations 3:16.

John 15:4 tells us that as branches of the Vine, we are unable to bear fruit of ourselves, we must abide, remain in the Vine which is our source of life, as Jesus said, “WITHOUT ME YE CAN DO NOTHING.” Verse seven tells us that if we abide in Christ the Head, the Vine, and His words abide in us, “WE SHALL ASK WHAT YE WILL, AND IT SHALL BE DONE UNTO YOU.” Hallelujah. It is therefore, very essential that as branches of the True Vine, as members of His Body, the Church, that we must remain attached to the source of life, WHICH HE IS.

Please note verse eight, “Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so SHALL YE BE MY DISCIPLES (followers).” Remember the fruit is picked from off the branches, the life of the vine or trunk of the tree supplies life to the branches and it is from the branches the fruit is gathered, so it is with the Church, Christ is the source of Divine Life that enables the members of His Body, the Vine, to produce fruits unto righteousness.

So much more could be emphasized on this point, but we must go on, where does all this bring us? I Corinthians 12:6, “And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all.” This brings us to a very important truth, which serves sort of as a climax to our subject on the laying on of hands that is:

THE MANIFESTATION OF THE SONS OF GOD

In I Corinthians 12:3-6 we have outlined the manner in which the gifts of the Spirit are given and how they operate, verse 4, “Now there are diversities (different) gifts but the same Spirit.” The Holy Spirit brings to us gifts of the Spirit. There could be several gifts mentioned by prophecy. Verse 5, “And there are differences of a administrations (ministries) but is the same Lord.” The Lord takes these several gifts given by the Holy Spirit and out of those gifts forms a ministry. Verse 6, “And there are diversities (different) of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all.” God then takes these gifts that were given by the Holy Spirit and the ministry made up of these many gifts by the Lord and gives the operation of these ministries not only to the church but to the world. Note verse 8, “But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.” This “profit withal” has absolutely nothing to do with personal gain whether for an individual or a group of individuals. If anyone endeavors to use a Spiritual gift for temporal profit, the person does not possess a gift from God and if there seems to be visible results, one should question the Spirit from whence it came.

The manifestation of the Sons of God is actually a very simple thing and can be clearly understood. The word manifestation means a public declaration or to reveal or make known. If we will reconsider what we have covered in this article up to now, we should begin to see how this wonderful revelation can come into being.

The term ‘manifestation of the Sons of God’ seems very complicated and deep, but actually it is neither. All it is, is the Son of God, who is the Head of the Body of Christ, the Church, revealed in the sons of God or members of the Body. This could never come to pass by anything that man may endeavor to do. All the ideas, plans or schemes or talents of men could never reveal the deity, glory or power of the Son of God. The Body of Christ, the Church, is a many membered body, and that glorious life of the Vine is what produces the fruit on the branches. The account we referred to earlier from Acts the third chapter, shows us how this glory, authority is revealed through the sons, Acts 3:12,13. This many membered body possesses many gifts, many ministries and is controlled and given direction by the Head which is Christ. The great commission found in Mark 16:15-18 speaks of the power of God being manifested through the sons.

When Jesus sent forth the seventy elders in Luke 10:1-20 note verse 19, “Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over ALL THE POWER OF THE ENEMY: and nothing shall by any means hurt you.” Again we have human vessels possessing Divine power and authority from which one day shall spring forth resurrection life. God

who was manifest in the flesh in the person of His Son is now once again being manifested in His sons, praise His name, in this many membered body, I Timothy 3:15,16, “But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth. 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.”

In summing up, I quote again from Ephesians 4:16 using the Phillips translation, “For it is from the head that the whole body, AS A HARMONIOUS STRUCTURE knit together by the joints with which it is provided, grows BY THE PROPER FUNCTIONING OF INDIVIDUAL PARTS TO ITS FULL MATURITY IN LOVE.” Please note it is from the HEAD (Christ) that the whole body receives its strength, its power, its all in all. NO FLESH can ever glory in His presence. We are utterly dependant upon God moving through Christ the Head, who in turn motivates each individual part of the body. It is by the operation of this Spiritual Body that will cause the world to believe and call Him Lord of all.

In Philippians 2:1-11 we have exhortation to love, unity and humility. It also speaks of the mind of Christ and Christ exalted. Verse 10 and 11, “That at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE shall bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth and that EVERY TONGUE SHALL CONFESS that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” What a plan of reconciliation and to think that God the Father has entrusted to the Church the Body of Christ this tremendous ministry. II Corinthians 5:18,19, “And all things are of (from) God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath GIVEN UNTO US THE MINISTRY OF RECONCILIATION. To wit, (that is to say) that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed UNTO US THE WORD OF RECONCILIATION.”

Reconcile means to bring back into harmony. God has given unto the Church, the Body of Christ, the ministry of bringing back into harmony with God, this old world that is so out of harmony with God’s ways. Phillips translates these verses in this way, “All this is God’s doing, for he has reconciled us to himself through Jesus Christ; and he has made US AGENTS OF THE RECONCILIATION.” Verse 19 goes on to say, “God was in Christ personally reconciling the world to himself - not counting their sins against them - and has COMMISSIONED US WITH THE MESSAGE OF RECONCILIATION.” What a wonderful plan, Divinely designed to bring restoration to the whole of creation.

Ephesians 1:9,10 speaks of this harmony, “ And this is in harmony with

God's merciful purpose for the government of the world WHEN THE TIMES ARE RIPE FOR IT - the purpose which He has cherished in His own mind of RESTORING THE WHOLE CREATION TO FIND ITS ONE HEAD IN CHRIST: yes, things in heaven and things on earth, to find their one Head in Him," Weymouth translation. There is so much contained in these few verses, things that may shatter much of our old theology, and though one may find it difficult to grasp or understand, we should never deny what it teaches but leave it and allow the Holy Spirit to unveil it when in our lives, the time is ripe for it, praise God.

The laying on of hands is present truth, it is ordained of God for the Church, the Body of Christ. It is impossible to have the church without the ministry of Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors and Teachers. You can never have the church the body of Christ, without local elders and deacons nor can the Church, the Body of Christ function without that which every joint supplies by the ministry that God has entrusted to each individual member of the Body of Christ. The imparting of the Holy Spirit by the laying on of hands is a necessity to the establishing and the Spiritual growth of the Church. It is as every joint supplies that that makes increase of the body unto the edifying or building up of itself in love.

May the Spirit of God enlighten our minds and quicken our understanding that we may begin to see and understand what the true purpose of God is in the ministry of the laying on of hands, how the Church, the Body of Christ ought to function and may we never relinquish our birth-right until we see the full results of God's wonderful plan and purpose for the Church and the world in our lifetime.

A CHRISTIAN

What does it mean to be a Christian?

Recently I was asked to minister at my aunt's funeral, and while looking to the Lord as to what to speak on, this question kept going over and over in my heart and mind and since giving considerable thought to this, I feel to pass along what the Spirit of God has laid on my heart.

The term Christian - Believer - Disciple, are all ways of saying the same thing, but let us take a close look at their meanings.

CHRISTIAN - means to profess the religion of Christ having traits exemplified by Christ.

RELIGIOUS - means to be devoted to the principles or ideals of Christ

TRAIT - is a characteristic or quality.

EXEMPLIFY - is to show by example.

To further define what a Christian is we would say, "It is one who professes and is devoted to the principles of Christ; one who shows forth His charac-

teristics by being living examples in Him.” Paul in writing to the Ephesians said that, “We ought to give our lives over to the extolling (showing forth) of His glorious attributes (characteristics, Ephesians 1, Weymouth). To be a true Christian we **MUST** be devoted. We must set ourselves apart and give ourselves **WHOLLY** to Christ and to the things He is and stands for.

BELIEVER - is one who accepts as true the life and ministry of Christ.

DISCIPLE - is a follower of Christ - one who accepts the doctrine and teachings of Christ.

Whatever term we may wish to use in expressing our relationship to Christ, we have a God given definite responsibility to live our lives in such a way that we merit the right to be called a Christian - Believer or Disciple of Christ.

There is absolutely **NO WAY** that we can call ourselves Christians and go on living our lives in our own wilful, sinful, ways having little or no respect for the principles and characteristics of Christ. How can anyone say they are Christians if they fail to exemplify the nature and attributes of the One who they follow and supposedly believe in? The scripture says, Matthew 12:30, “He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad.” It also says in Matthew 6:24; “**NO MAN** can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. **YE CANNOT** serve God and mammon.”

In order to serve God and be a true Christian or Believer, we must serve Him with more than good intentions; our service must be real and not imaginative. It must be sincere and from the heart.

Every believer’s method of serving God may differ in its operation and function. In no way can we all pattern our lives from one another; our only true example and pattern is Christ. Proverbs 18:16, “A man’s gift maketh room for him, and bringeth him before great men.” Not the man **DOES NOT** make room for the gift, but the gift makes room for the man. It is impossible for anyone to be something other than what God has ordained for their lives, so to strive to live and act and be like somebody else is in vain. Be only what God wants you to be and strive to do only that which God wants you to do and accomplish. We are what we are only by the grace of God. Being a Christian means more than going to Church on Sunday or every night of the week. Being a Christian means more than reading the Bible

and being able to expound it. Being a Christian believer means more than spending long hours in prayer. These things are VERY IMPORTANT and should not be neglected by any Christian, but true Christians are those who put what they are taught and hear at church, what they read from the Bible, and what the Holy Spirit reveals to them while at prayer, into ACTION.

James 1:27 tells us what religion is all about, "PURE RELIGION and undefiled before God is : 1. To visit the fatherless and the widows in the time of their affliction 2. To keep OURSELVES UNSPOTTED FROM THE WORLD."

ACTION - ACTION does not mean that we just pay the orphan and widow a friendly visit and bid them the time of day, but do something to ease their burden. The Scripture tells us to literally lift and undo the heavy burdens and to let the oppressed go free. (Isaiah 58:6) PURE RELIGION is, secondly, to keep ourselves unspotted from the world. We have a Divine responsibility before God as to the way we live and our behavior. There is absolutely no way that a man or woman, young or old, can live according to the dictates of the flesh and ever hope to please God. "They that are in the flesh CANNOT please God," Romans 8:8. How can we be saved from the ways of the world if we continue to live in the ways of the worldly? Pure religion then requires some action on our part and we must begin to fulfil the Divine purpose that God has for our lives.

James 4:17, "To him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin." You see, good and all as our intentions might be, that is not good enough. Acts 26:28, "Then Agrippa said unto Paul, ALMOST thou persuadedst me to be a Christian." Being almost persuaded was not sufficient, it required some ACTION on Agrippas' part. In order for him to be a Christian he had to profess the principles and ideals of Christ. Romans 10:9, "That it thou shalt CONFESS WITH THY MOUTH the Lord Jesus, and shalt BELIEVE IN THINE HEART that God hath raised him from the dead, THOU SHALT BE SAVED." The Philippian jailor said to Paul and Silas, "Sirs, what must I DO to be saved (to become a Christian - Believer) and they answered; Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." Acts 16:30,31. He had to ACT; he had a responsibility toward God.

James 1:22, "Be ye DOERS of the word and NOT hearers only DECEIVING YOUR OWN SELVES." We can endeavor to act and talk like Christians, but by their fruits ye shall KNOW THEM, Matthew 1:16, 20. Verse 16 says, "Ye shall know them BY THEIR FRUITS. Do men gather grapes of thorns or figs of thistles?" Well I ask, do they? NO, what we sow we shall reap and harvest.

Galatians 6:7, "Be not deceived; God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." Let us ask ourselves this question;

“What kind of seed am I sowing?” Do you know how you can find out the answers? Just stop for a moment and take a good look at the crop or yield. The scripture says Galatians 6:8, “For he that soweth to his flesh shall OF THE FLESH reap corruption; but he that soweth of the Spirit shall OF THE SPIRIT reap everlasting life.” When spring comes and you plant your garden, at the end of each row you usually put a little marker, quite often the little envelope the seeds come in, showing what you have sown in that particular row. If you were to put the carrot envelope on the row where you have planted radish, when the seed germinates and comes up you will have radishes, not carrots. Why? Simply because what you sowed in the row is what you will reap. You planted radish, not carrots, so radish it will undoubtedly be. If there is any doubt, THE FRUIT WILL PROVE beyond any shadow of doubt. It is exactly the same in our lives; if we sow to the flesh all we can ever hope to harvest is what the flesh can produce, but if we sow by the Spirit, love, joy, peace, etc., then we can expect to see the fruits of what we have sown. Such fruits as mentioned above and kindness, gentleness, purity, meekness, those things which exemplify (show by example FRUIT) the life and ministry of Christ, these fruits manifest and prove that we are truly Christians - Believers -Disciples of Christ. It would be good that all of us, from time to time, would stop and examine ourselves and see just what kind of fruit we as believers are producing.

There are three things that we must do in order to be a true Christian believer of Christ and we will deal with them one at a time. We must first of all accept Christ as our own and PERSONAL Savior and then take these three important steps:

1. CONSECRATE - One must consecrate themselves to God. This simply means to set ourselves apart for a Holy purpose. When something, such as a building is consecrated, it is set apart for a specific purpose and is regarded as being sacred. Romans 12:1, “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that YE PRESENT, your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.” WE do the presenting. We set ourselves apart from the world for a Holy purpose. Paul said in I Corinthians 6:15-20, “Know ye not that YOUR BODIES are the members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of the harlot? God forbid. What? Know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? For two, saith he, shall be ONE flesh. But he that is joined unto the Lord is ONE spirit. Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body, but he that commiteth fornication sinneth against his own body. What? Know ye not that YOUR BODY is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and

ye ARE NOT your own? For ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God.” Note, both your body and your spirit are Gods.

2. DEDICATE - This means to set apart by a solemn act. When a man or woman, boy or girl asks Christ to come into their lives, what we actually do in dedicating ourselves to Him is we tell Him that from here on, as He comes into our hearts and lives, within us we are going to devote ourselves unto Him and unto the things that He upholds and stands for, just as in Ezra 6:17 they offered at the dedication of the house of God offerings of bullocks, etc. This was a solemn act such as it is in our lives when we make our lives available unto God in order that His presence, His Spirit, may come and indwell us, live in us.

3. DEVOTION - To give ourselves WHOLLY to the cause of Christ and to His Spirit, such as one being devoted to the study of music or being a devoted athlete, etc. This requires sacrifice on our part. We may find ourselves just as a runner conditioning himself before the race. The Scripture records many devout men and women such as Simeon (Luke 2:25), Ananias (Acts 22:12), just to name two. These men had given themselves over wholly to the service of God. This in no way means that we must all become ministers and give all of our time to the work of the ministry. God has no doubt called some to do this but there are more that have not this call than those who do. It simply means there is no room for a sort of halfhearted attitude towards our walk before God and to continually make ourselves available to Him and to the working and moving of His Spirit to do that which is His good pleasure. So we can see that professing to be Christian, Believer, or Disciple, possibly means more than we realized. We can see by the very few scriptures we have used that it's not enough to make the claim of being a Christian just in name only, it is not sufficient for us to say we are a Christian nation or live in a Christian nation, that will be and is judged by the fruits that we are producing.

For some reason in the day and age we are living, people have the mistaken idea that as long as they go to church once a week and read the Bible once in a while and pray and endeavor to make a good impression, that this is all that is required to make the claim of being a Christian. I speak to myself and all who read these words; it take more than that; our fruits tell the story.

As you have taken the time to read these few lines, whether you are a young boy or girl, young person or adult, may we allow God's Spirit to unfold to us our true position in Him and give us the grace, strength, and spiritual understanding to rededicate and consecrate our lives afresh unto

Him that in so doing we may become vessels fit for the Master's use.

HE SAW THE WIND

The Apostle Paul in writing to Timothy in II Timothy 3:1 says, "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come." He goes on to give a very detailed list of those things that we can expect to experience in the last days, and if you would take the time to read through them you will find that almost without exception, we are seeing very vividly those things fulfilled in 1990. In the seventh verse it reads, "Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth." There must come that time in all of our experiences that we, with the help of the Holy Spirit, not just hear or listen to the truth, as it unfolds, but must be able to really grasp and take hold of it in order that we may be able to apply it to every situation that arises.

Before the dawning of this glorious kingdom age, the Bible repeatedly warns of these perilous times that must come. Matthew chapter twenty-four also give a very clear picture of how things will be on this earth before the Kingdom of God is established. It would be worth your while to read carefully this chapter. Verse six says, "And ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet." We should not be surprised when we see these things recorded in Holy Writ, come to pass, they are the fulfillment of prophecy, and the Bible teaches us that every jot and tittle will come to pass, so we ought not to be troubled nor dismayed at what we see around and about us, and yes, even what we are confronted with in our own daily lives, after all, we do have the assurance that the Lord has said that He would never leave us nor forsake us, however, I must confess I find myself saying to the Lord over and over again, "How long oh Lord, how long?"

I am beginning to realize more and more what a tremendous contribution each member of the Body of Christ, the Church, makes. As we listen to both young and old expound the scriptures, which literally feed our souls upon the bread of life, I never cease to thank God for the Body of Christ and how it functions. As a young deacon in one of the local churches recently ministered from Matthew 14, concerning the feeding of the five thousand and Jesus walking on the sea, it not only thrilled me to partake of the Spiritual food that was being served us, but as I followed along in my Bible, the words seemed to take on a new meaning and some of them are still ringing in my ears and heart as I endeavor to share with you some of the things the Holy Spirit brought to light.

Many times, I think we read these familiar passages without really grasping what they are saying. Note verses 15 and 16, “And when it was evening, his disciples came to him saying, This is a desert place, and the time is now past; send the multitude away, that they may go into the villages, and buy themselves victuals. But Jesus said unto them, They need not depart; Give ye to them to eat.” Here is an impossible situation for the natural man to cope with, it was a desert place, no stores available, it was already past supper time, so the disciples suggested to Jesus that they disperse and let the multitude go into the villages and get something to eat, but Jesus said to them that would not be necessary, they should give them to eat. I am sure that the eyebrows of those disciples must have raised at such a command. They said to Jesus, “All we have is a little boy’s lunch of five loaves and two fishes which is hardly enough to feed a multitude,” then Jesus said something so wonderful, “Bring them hither to me.” How often do we struggle with what seem to us impossible situations, when Jesus is standing by saying, “Come unto me ye who are weary and heavy laden and I will give you rest, My yoke is easy and my burden light.” He

has assured us time and time again that nothing is impossible with Him. Oh Holy Spirit come and teach us all how to trust and how to commit our way and our problems unto Jesus.

There is something else that I feel is very significant in these few words found in the sixteenth verse, "They need not depart; give ye them to eat." I believe these words are written for us all, you and I, elders, deacons, mother and fathers, etc. Just the other day, I heard of two situations that it would have been so easy to send them to the village for help as the disciples suggested, but Jesus says to us even today, "give ye them to eat." How often we stand feeling empty handed as the disciples did, but please note that after Jesus blessed the five loaves and two fishes, verse 19, "And he commanded the multitude to sit down on the grass, and took the five loaves, and the two fishes, and looking up to heaven, he blessed and brake and gave the loaves to his disciples, and the disciples to the multitude." As members of the Body of Christ, He wants to use you and I in reaching out and serving the hungry multitudes, it is never His intention to sort of by-pass us, but we are workers together with Him, praise His Wonderful Name.

Luke 6:38 reads, "Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again." So it was in this case, after Jesus had blessed the disciples' small offering, they fed over five thousand men plus women and children and had twelve baskets left over, all from five loaves and two fishes, Wonderful Jesus. Supplier of all our needs. Healer of all our diseases, the Answer to all our problems.

After having just experienced such a miracle, you would have thought that the disciples were ready for anything. Jesus told the disciples to get into a ship and go over to the other side, while He sent the multitudes away, having done so, Jesus must have felt the need to be alone. He went up into the mountain to pray. Late that evening, He went to join His disciples and walked on the water toward the ship that the disciples were in. When they saw this figure coming walking towards them on the water, they were naturally afraid. Verse 27, "But straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying, Be of good cheer; it is I, be not afraid. And Peter answered him and said, Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water, and he said, come." How many times have we ventured out over the side of the boat in obedience to His command only to let fear grip our hearts before we actually reached Him? The title of this article "He Saw The Wind" has lingered in my heart and memory ever since I followed the young man as he read these in service. Wind is something you cannot see, you can feel it, you can see the results of it, but you cannot actually see wind. The dictionary says that it is air in

motion; a noticeable natural movement of air parallel to the earth's surface. John 3:8 speaks of this wind, "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 born of the Spirit." Peter saw that this wind was boisterous, he saw what it was doing to the water, creating waves which rocked the ship that he had just left on his voyage to meet the Master of the seas. As he disembarked from the ship, I am sure that Peter never took his eyes off of the Lord, as long as he kept his eyes riveted on the Lord he was able to walk without any problem, but the moment he took his eyes off the Lord and became engaged in the boisterous wind that was around and about him, he began to sink.

You will please excuse me for using the personal pronoun "I" throughout this article, but I want you to know that none of us, myself, the brethren, are excluded. We are all tried and tested in the same way, we are all but clay in the Master Potter's hands. How often I find myself turning a matter over to the Lord, who is our all in all, only to find after I have carefully, prayerfully, taken a few steps in faith, start to, whether in thought or in deed, stray from focusing my mind and heart upon the Lord, I see the wind.

Doubt and fear grips the heart of the believer, and Satan fills our minds with "ifs", what if this should happen or does not happen and so on. Remember the Bible states clearly, verse 29, "He walked on the water". He had exercised his faith that that was really Jesus and started on his way only to be detracted by the sound of the wind, the problem of the fear of sinking suddenly took hold of him, but he was walking on the water, he was on his way, his request had been answered. This wind speaks to us of many things. Unsolved problems have a way of wearing us down, of getting our eye on the problem rather than the one who can solve our problem. Even as you read this article, you may be confined to your bed, medically speaking there is no cure or solution for your physical needs, and if you will excuse me for saying this, I do not mean to be unthoughtful nor unkind, much less lacking understanding of your need, but you can day after day bemoan your plight and totally lose sight of Him, Jesus. Who is your only hope, the only solution to your physical, material or spiritual needs.

May the Lord, by revelation help us all to see this next verse, verse 31, "And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?" Let us go back and read verse 30 again, "But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me." There were two times that Peter was afraid here, the first time when he saw Jesus walking on the water and the second time when he took his eyes off of Jesus and began to sink in the water. It was not recorded just how far Jesus was

from Peter when he began to sink, but regardless of how far it was, when Peter cried out and said, “Lord, save me,” Jesus was immediately beside him and stretched out His hand and lifted him from the angry waves. Could there be a lesson here for each one of us to learn? As we come before the Lord in prayer and make our supplications known unto Him, and many times, I am sure, receive an inward assurance that He has heard our prayer, we hear the wind or suddenly we feel the symptoms of pain or fear. You cannot see pain, or fear, but like the boisterous wind that distracted the attention of Peter off of the Lord, our pains and fears do likewise. Please note verse 32, “And when they (Jesus and Peter) were come into the ship, the wind ceased.” With Christ in the vessel we can smile at the storm. Jesus is all that any of us need, He is able to meet and supply all our needs according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus. Jesus asked Peter, “Wherefore didst thou doubt?” What was the reason for you doubting me Peter? He saw the wind, something came between Peter and his Lord, I would assume here it was fear. Fear can be torment, it can enslave us and imprison us in unbelief, but if by God’s grace we can acknowledge this, and do as Peter did when he cried out, “Lord save me,” immediately Jesus will stretch forth His hand and save us from our fears, our sickness, Praise His Name.

I wish that there were some simple steps like one, two, three, that I could give you as to how to attain this simplicity of trust, but I don’t think there are, however, I do believe a consistent walk with the Lord, not having our highs and lows but just walking daily before Him, communing with Him daily, never turning to the right hand or to the left, but doing as Hebrews 10:35, 36 tells us, “Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward. For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry.”

Take hope, my believing brother and sister, for many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Bible declares that they will be delivered out of them all. The impossible is the possible, that through Christ we have not yet experienced, but faith, the Bible tells us, is the substance of those things that we hope for, faith is the evidence of those things we have not yet seen. George Muller once wrote, “The beginning of anxiety is the end of faith, true faith is the end of anxiety.” Faith is not believing that God can, but that God will.

SONS OF GOD

John 1:12&13, “But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man,

but of God.”

1. We must first of all accept Him into our lives; must believe in the existence of God. Hebrews 11:6, “But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.”

2. He gives us the power, the right TO BECOME HIS SONS by believing on his name.

3. It is a spiritual birth; not of blood, nor by the will or desire of man, BUT OF GOD.

Romans 8:14, “For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.”

As many as accept Christ into their lives and believe on His name, - believe in their hearts, not their heads, that He really does exist, - are given the divine right to become His son or daughter. Now, the apostle Paul writes and says, “As many as are led by the Spirit of God, THEY ARE (not will be, but are) THE SONS OF GOD.” The main requisite here is for us to be willing and committed enough to the Lord, to be led or guided by His Holy Spirit in order to be identified by Him and His sons and daughters. This can only take place through adoption; “For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father (or my Father)”, and the only way that we can know that we have been accepted of the Father, is by the Spirit, “The Spirit Himself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.” The Phillips’ translation says, verse 15, “Nor are you meant to relapse into the old slavish attitude of fear - you HAVE BEEN ADOPTED INTO THE VERY FAMILY CIRCLE OF GOD and you can say with a full heart, ‘Father, my Father.’” Note here; we have received “THE SPIRIT OF ADOPTION”.

Adoption means, “To take as one’s own as the setting or placing of a son or daughter”. When a child is adopted into a home, They become an integral part of that home. They are not treated like a guest or visitor; they are literally accepted as a member of the family and household, and receive all the privileges of the members of the family; and they are also governed by the same rules of the home. There cannot be a difference in any way; they become one with all the rest of the children; they are set or placed into the very inner family circle and are recognized as a member of that family. So it is with the family of God, the Church. One must partake of the same Spirit, and they must accept and recognize the headship and order that is set by God for both, the home and the Church. It would not be right, and would cause nothing but confusion in the whole household, if there were to be two sets of rules of standards; one set for the immediate family, and another for those adopted into the already established household.

II Corinthians 6:14-18. The 14th verse of this passage of Scripture forbids us being unequally yoked together. Four different translations use different words for “unequally yoked”; they are: “unsuitable connections”, “bound together”, “link up”, and “teamed with unbelievers”. The reference here would seem to indicate that a believer should avoid being a partner with an unbeliever in anything; whether in a business, sharing property, and much less a marriage - and for this reason, and I quote: verse 14, “... for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness?” Note here; Paul asks us a question: what connection or link has light with darkness? And I ask the same question: what has light and darkness in common?

In verse 15 he goes on to say, “And what concord(harmony) hath Christ with Belial? Or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? (Unbeliever).” Other translations use the word “devil” in place of “Belial”. How can a believer have anything in common with the devil, or how can the temple of God - which we are, have any agreement with idol worship? The two combinations do not mix, much less work together. This is a very important matter, and one we must give a great deal of consideration to, when making decisions such as partnerships and marriage etc. The 16th verse goes on to say, “And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? For ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.” Can we not see how impossible it would be for God to dwell, walk, and be our God with Satan or division dwelling in the same vessel or temple? I wonder sometimes if we realize the seriousness of such a thing. We must stop and think, and also realize that one of the reasons God the Father allowed His Son to die on Calvary, and shed His precious life blood, was to abolish in His flesh all the enmity (hostility, hatred), and to break down all the middle walls of partition men had built - which divided God’s people, and make of twain ONE NEW MAN. (Ephesians 2:15,16). We might treat lightly and fail to see how devastating division among us is, but the cure and God’s remedy for division of any kind was included in the lists of sins, that God required the life of His Son to pay the supreme price for. As believers, we may find it relatively easy to acknowledge that Christ died for our sins, but we must remember that God treats enmity, malice, hatred, pride, etc., as sins; they too must be cleansed from our lives. Ephesians 4:31 & 32, “Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamor (loud insulting language), and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you.”

Colossians 3:8-11, “But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; And have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him.” Here, Paul tells us what we must put off, and what we must put on in its place. Anger, wrath, malice, filthy communications etc., all belong to the old man (creation), not the new. The old and the new cannot abide together in the same vessel. Verse eleven tells us there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ, hallelujah, **BUT CHRIST IS ALL, AND IN ALL**. The reason Christ is all and in all is because He shed His life blood, to remove from among us these things that hinder us. You may

have been procrastinating in solving your problems, the one with the other, but be it known to us all, we can never, never, enter the Kingdom carrying hatred, malice, anger, wrath, etc. in our hearts. Oh dear people of God, hear what the Holy Spirit is saying unto the Church and arise, and go to the altar of repentance and forgiveness, and ask God for His cleansing. The message of the Gospel of the Kingdom is REPENTANCE, and we may find that all of us may have to bow in repentance before God and forgive; forgive one another in order that He may “RAIN DOWN HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS UPON US.” (Hosea 10:12, “Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy; break up your fallow ground: for it is time to seek the LORD, till he come and rain righteousness upon you.” Come oh Lord, and overflow us with your love, Your righteousness, Your goodness. We do well to note here what it says, and where God puts the responsibility. We are to sow TO OURSELVES righteousness, and by so doing, we shall reap God’s mercy. We are to break up the fallow ground, because whatever we sow, we shall reap. (Galatians 6:7& 8). If we sow malice, hatred, evil communications; that is all we can expect to harvest. We must realize, oh praise God, NOW, for it is time in our history to seek the Lord, IT IS NOW. If we submit ourselves to His will, to His conditions, THEN - praise God, HE WILL COME AND LITERALLY RAIN RIGHTEOUSNESS UPON US. We must seek the LORD TILL HE does this.

Righteousness means “justice”, “salvation”; as some translators record it, or just plain “goodness”. We become responsible for what we sow in the seed plot of our hearts, and whatever we do sow, it is inevitable what we shall produce. Greater care must be given to what we allow to be sown in our hearts.

Verse 17 of II Corinthians 6 reads, “Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you.”

As in many cases, the terms of this contract with the Lord are conditional; there are certain things that He asks of, and expects of us. They are:

1. Come out from among them. 2. Be separate. 3. Touch not the unclean thing.

Come out from among who? In the previous verse, Paul speaks of the unbelievers, unrighteous, those who dwell in darkness, Belial (devil), and idols. We may not realize how closely associated, and how easy it is to be connected with the above. Our association with the unbeliever, etc., should be such, that they in no way influence our live or life style. I am reminded of the account recorded in Numbers 25:1-9. I would like to quote from the Living Bible paraphrase 1-3, “WHILE ISRAEL was camped at Acacia, some of the young men began going to wild parties with the local Moabite

girls. These girls also invited them to attend the sacrifices to their gods, and soon the men were not only attending the feasts, but also bowing down and worshipping the idols. Before long all Israel was joining freely in the worship of Baal, the god of Moab; and the anger of the Lord was hot against his people.” What started off to be sort of innocent thing ended up being a disaster; sin had entered the camp, and like a bad apple in the bag of good ones soon corrupted the whole bag.

Influence is quite a thing, and God warns us about such a thing. The Scripture teaches us not to be unequally yoked because of the influence, or affect, these evil communications can have on us; we must be prepared to come out from amongst these worldly connections - which brings us to our second point of separation. SEPARATION

“Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord.” God requires that as His children, we live a separated life from the world, and not involve ourselves with worldly connections any more than what is absolutely necessary, the reason being, we eventually become a partaker of their ways, or may I say: of their “spirit”. This spirit does not necessarily mean, that it is in any way an evil spirit, but just the spirit or attitude of the world - which in many cases is directly opposite, as opposed to that of the Lord. We have see this happen; when people will let themselves read or listen to those things that differ from the Apostles’ doctrine, and before long they are weighing or considering the one against the other - which usually ends up in total confusion.

In Numbers chapter 33:51-56, God speaks to Israel concerning the destroying, and the doing away with the Canaanites. They were to drive out of the land the inhabitants that then possessed their inheritance. They were to remove any traces of them being there; any pictures, molten images, or anything that would even remind them of them; then they were to divide the inheritance among their tribes according to the sign of each tribe. If they failed to do this, verse 56 says: “Moreover it shall come to pass, that I shall do unto you, as I thought to do unto them.” The paraphrase says: “And I will destroy you as I had planned for you to destroy them.” We must realize here, that if we are not willing to submit ourselves to the Lord, and abide by what He asks of us, we are no different than the world itself. What makes a Christian or believer different, is the effect God’s Word and His Will have had on us. If we never change our ways after we accept Him into our lives, and leave and forsake our sinful, wicked ways, and change our life-style in order to comply with God’s requirements, then we are the same as the world; and sin must be punished.

Isaiah 52:11; “Depart ye, depart ye, go ye out from thence, touch no unclean thing; go ye out of the midst of her; be ye clean, that bear the vessels

of the LORD.” Again, the Living Bible paraphrase records it this way: “Go now, leave your bonds and slavery. Put Babylon and all it represents far behind you - it is unclean to you. You are the holy people of the Lord; purify yourselves, all you who carry home the vessels of the Lord.” God demands a complete denial of those things that belong to the old, carnal ways - those things that once influenced our lives; He wants nothing left behind in our lives, that would even remind us of the old ways, praise the Lord.

John 15:19, “If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you.” Jesus prayed in His great prayer of intercession in John 17:16; “They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.” We are not to be a part of this world, anymore than Christ was a part of it. Granted, we cannot help but be involved to some extent with what goes on around about us in this world, but we must guard against becoming too involved.

Acts 2:40, “And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.” Untoward simply means “perverted”. If ever there was a perverted generation, it is the one in which we live: our whole nation is becoming perverted or twisted in its thinking. Religion itself has become so twisted and destroyed in its beliefs, that one would often wonder from whence it came. God told Israel of old to leave, destroy all the gold images and their heathen ways, and be separated unto Him. For example: how any religious organization can feel justified in permitting homosexuals to be ordained to the office of a minister who is supposed to be representing God before the people, I would think ranks high as being perverted. The word “minister” means “A church official”, or one who is authorized to perform religious duties. The Bible teaches against homosexuality. Leviticus 18:22, “Thou shalt not lie with mankind, as with womankind: it is abomination.” Abomination means “detestable”. The paraphrase puts it very clear and straight, “Homosexuality is absolutely forbidden, for it is an enormous sin.” We must always remember: God never changes to accommodate our thinking and our ways; we must submit to His ways, what He tells us as right. Our ideas, our personal rights have nothing to do with it, we are required by God to hearken unto what He says.

The apostle Paul, in writing to the Ephesians, says this in chapter 5, verse 11, “And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.” We are to refrain from having anything to do with the pleasures of this evil age, but instead we should rebuke and expose them. The Phillips’ translates it this way, “Steer clear of the activities of darkness; let your lives show by contrast how dreary and futile these things are.” In other words: we should let our lives be an example to the world,

and let good influence bad, rather than bad influence good.

II Thessalonians 3:6, “Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which ye received of us.” Repeatedly, God told Israel not to allow their sons or their daughters to intermarry with those from heathen nations, because they would influence them, and soon they, too, would be walking in their heathen ways. We, too, must separate ourselves from the world and all its sinful pleasures, and be separated unto God and touch not the unclean thing.

TOUCH NOT THE UNCLEAN THING

In our present world and society, it is not easy to totally withdraw ourselves from its sinful activities, but by God’s grace, we must endeavor to not allow ourselves to be drawn into its evil system. We must guard against being squeezed into its mold. Paul, in writing to the Romans, says this: (Romans 12:1 & 2) “I beseech (seriously request) you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.” The Phillips’ translation of verse two reads: “Don’t let the world around you squeeze you into its own mold, but let God re-mold your minds from within, so that you may prove in practice that: 1. The plan of God for you is good, 2. Meet all His demands 3. And moves towards the goal of true maturity.”

There is a proper sequence that we must follow here, which is: (a) present our bodies as a living sacrifice to God. (b) not allow ourselves to be squeezed or pressed into this world’s mold or system. (c) let God remold our minds from WITHIN. (d) prove IN PRACTICE that all this is good for us, etc.

The things of God, and those things that He requires of us as His children, as Christians, are very down to earth and practical. God never does anything that has not a meaningful purpose, and therefore, would never ask us to do it either. He desires that we, as individuals, see the value of His plan for us. This glorious plan, that He has ordained for us, MEETS ALL HIS DEMANDS. I often think that we demand of ourselves more than what God does in our struggle to become religious. God does not really want us to become religious but spiritual, and there is a tremendous difference. We can become very religious by endeavoring to walk with God by imposing a lot of “do’s” and “don’ts”, but God would much rather we learn to walk in the Spirit, and allow our lives daily to be guided and directed by His Holy Presence which dwells WITHIN our hearts. We can be very religious, go to

church every Sunday, read the Bible and pray every day, and still not really know God. He requires that we PRESENT OUR BODIES; in other words, it's a complete sellout to God, He requires our all, and He deserves our all when we realize what He has done for us. This plan of His not only meets all His demands for us, but also moves us on to TRUE MATURITY, not a make belief of organized religion, but really growing up into the fulness of the stature of Christ. (Ephesians 4:13).

It is difficult not to be squeezed into this world's mold, but as we permit God to remold us FROM WITHIN, it can happen! The transformation must be done by the Holy Spirit from within, the results will be seen from without, but must come from within our hearts. The Bible teaches us; Proverbs 23:7, "For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he." What we really are, the true person, is always expressed from the heart, and is revealed through our actions, not what we say. God wants us to mature or grow up, to come to that place where we can assume responsibility, and not remain as "... children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ." Ephesians 4:13-15.

This spiritual growth, this growing up into Christ, is what sonship is all about. Romans 8:14, "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." This plan of God, which God Himself desires that we prove to ourselves, is good for us in every way; is what moves us on unto true maturity, and into the fulness of the stature of Christ. This spiritual growth is what eventually fulfills all the expectations of God the Father for us, as His children, as what we are all waiting patiently for, and that is to be manifested as sons of God. Romans 8:19, "For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God." Don't be overwhelmed by that statement, "manifestation of the sons of God." To be a manifested son of God is really a very simple thing. Phillips' translates it this way, "The whole creation is on tiptoe to see the wonderful sight of the sons of God coming into their own", or may I say: taking their rightful place; the place that God has both prepared and ordained for them, for His children. The word "manifest" means to reveal, make known, or to uncover. A manifested son is simply the son, Christ, being uncovered, revealed in you and I as His sons, praise His Name.

In closing, may I encourage everyone who may read this article, to press in for the fulness in our inheritance in God through Christ Jesus our Lord. Don't be content to just sort of go to Heaven when you die, that's wonderful - no doubt, but God the Father, through His plan for each one of us, has so much in store; He has ordained that He would reveal, or manifest, the

person and likeness of His own Son through us, as His children. Paul, in writing to the Ephesians, chapter 1:11,12, and I quote from the Weymouth translation, “In Him, too, we have been made heirs, having been chosen beforehand in accordance with the intention of Him whose might carries out in everything the design of His own will, so that we should be devoted to the extolling of his glorious attributes - we who were the first to fix our hopes on Christ.” We should give our whole life and attention to the showing forth of His attributes, or characteristics, such as His love, mercy, goodness, kindness, etc., etc. Oh, may the Son of God be revealed and manifested through each one of us as His sons and daughters.

THE WILL OF GOD

One thing that is always the concern of most believers, is that we do the will of God. The life and ministry of Jesus was devoted to doing the will of His Father; that was the purpose that God had in sending His only begotten Son to this old, sin cursed earth: first of all to shed His life blood for the sins of all of mankind, and to reveal and demonstrate the mind and will of God. In other words, Jesus was the person and image of God here on earth, He was God manifested in the flesh. In John 17:18 it reads, “As thou has sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world”, so, if therefore it was the desire to do the will of Him who has sent us.

Matthew 7:21-23 reads, “Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. May will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.”

For many years, I have wondered about this Scripture; they professed to have prophesied, cast out devils and done many wonderful works in His Name and yet, He said to them “.... depart from me, I never knew you, ye that work iniquity.”

It would certainly appear that these folks were very active and busy for the Lord, yet, He said, “.... I never knew you...”, And if that were not bad enough, He went further and said, “... ye that work iniquity...” There is an old cliché that says, “It is much better to wear out than rust out”, but apparently this would not apply here because they were busy; they were praying and working miracles by using His name. What were they doing wrong? There must have been something missing in their efforts for the Lord. As I said, I have wondered and prayed about this particular Scripture many times, and just recently it came to me where Jesus put the emphasis. Let us read the verse again: “Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord,

shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.” The key word here would seem to be “DOETH”, doing the will of the Father. It is not difficult for any of us to keep ourselves “busy for the Lord” as we often say, but in all of our doing, are we on our way to Ninevah or Tarshish? Are we actually doing the will of God or just keeping ourselves occupied until He comes? The Bible teaches us that it is by our fruits that we shall be known; it is by our fruits that Christ will recognize us; you gather pears off pear trees, and apples off apple trees; they are devoted to producing what the Creator intended them to produce, and it would see the same rule applies to you and I, as far as us doing God’s will is concerned.

You could ask your daughter to help some Saturday morning with the housework, and give her a list of what you would like for her to do, like washing the dishes and vacuuming the floors; so she gets up bright and early and makes her bed, dusts all the furniture, even goes outside and mows the lawn and washes the car, but with all her doing, she has still not done what she was asked to do - which was wash the dishes and vacuum the floors, - so being busy is not the answer in order for this young lady to acquire the praise of her mother and hear her say: “Well done, thou good and faithful servant”, she must do what she was asked to do.

Probably the reason she did everything but what she was asked could have been for two reasons, the one being she resented being told what to do, and secondly, she would rather do anything else but what she was assigned to do. Jesus went on to say in that same chapter and the 24th verse, “Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them,” or as some other translators have put, “... and acts upon them, or put them into practice, or follows them...”. It is definitely not sufficient for anyone just to read God’s Holy Word, or listen to it being read, we must, I believe as never before, begin to practice it, especially if we desire to do God’s will and to walk in the fulness of all of His wonderful ways.

James 1:22, “But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving

your own selves.” When we do not walk according to what God’s Word teaches us, we are deceiving nobody but ourselves.

Matthew 12:46-50 tells us of the account where Jesus gave the teaching concerning the Sabbath Day. While He was ministering, his mother and brothers came into the crowd and desire to speak to Him, and someone drew this to His attention that His mother and brethren were wanting to speak to Him, and Jesus said to those that asked, “Who is my mother, and who are my brethren?” And then He stretched out His hand to His disciples and said, “Behold my mother and my brethren!” Now please notice verse 50, “For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.” What Jesus seems to imply here is, that spiritual relationships are often closer than human relationships, anyone who does the will of the Father is joined unto Him by the same Spirit that unites the Heavenly Father to His own Son Jesus.

John 13:13-17 tells us of the account of Jesus washing the disciples’ feet, and He tells us that if He could wash the disciples, so ought we to be able to wash one another’s feet. Verse 15, “For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.” How important it is a Christians, that we set a good example to those that we work with; our neighbors and friends etc. then verse 17 says, “If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.” The Psalmist says in Psalm 40:8, “I delight (rejoice) to do thy will.” We ought to find the greatest pleasure and joy in doing the will of God; it should never be burdensome to us regardless of what He might ask us to do.

Psalm 143:10, “Teach me to do thy will; for thou are my God: thy spirit is good; lead me into the land of uprightness.” May this be the prayer of all of our hearts, that God would teach us to do His will. As the words of the song says, “My stubborn will at last hath yielded, I would be Thine, and Thine alone; And this the prayer my lips are bringing, Lord, let in me Thy will be done.” To do the will of God requires a surrender of our wills, our ambition, our plans and programs to God. We must become the clay in the Potter’s hands, willing to do what His will commands. When we all think back to our childhood, how it took time for us to learn to do as we were told of our parents, but with much love and a great deal of patience, through their parental guidance we learned to yield and to submit to their wishes. Hebrews 12:9, “Furthermore we have had Fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live?” We will never learn how to do the Father’s will be reading books or going to school, only the Holy Spirit can teach us how to do the Father’s will.

Romans 2:13, “For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified.” Phillips says, “it is not familiarity

with the law that justifies a man in the sight of God, but obedience to it.” In other words: it is not enough that we just familiarize ourselves with what the Bible teaches us with regards to Salvation and the forgiving of our sins, we must come under its law; we must yield ourselves to what it requires of us - which after all is said and done - it is not difficult, much less impossible. The Bible does not speak so much about us endeavoring to live a good life and be an upright citizen, honest and going to church every Sunday, but it does tell us that except a man or woman be born again, they cannot enter the Kingdom of Heaven. We can argue and try to explain away by human reasoning the truth of God’s Word, but it never changes, God never changes, it is we who have to do the changing and the repenting of our sins.

I John 2:17, “And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever.” This is the way the living Bible paraphrase put it, “And this world is fading away, and these evil, forbidden things will go with it, but whoever keeps doing the will of God will live forever.” Verse 16 tells us of those worldly things that would fade away; let us read it, “for all these worldly things, these evil desires - the craze for sex, the ambition to buy everything that appeals to you, and the pride that comes from wealth and importance - these are not from God.” These are the things that will pass away, they are transitory, they are subject to change and decay, time itself will eventually eliminate them, but those things that belong to the Spirit, belong to the eternal and will never, never pass away; they are beyond the reach of change and decay, these are the things that should interest us and not the temporal.

Revelation 22:14, “Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.” Who has the rights to the tree of life and to enter in through the gates into the city? **THEY THAT DO HIS COMMANDMENTS.** My oh my, how simple are the ways of the Lord, how down to earth they are.

John 7:17 & 18, “If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself. He that speaketh of himself seeketh his own glory: but he that seeketh his glory that sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him.” Doing the will of God and knowing the doctrine go hand in hand. It is not difficult to know the doctrine when we are obeying His will, nor is it difficult to know His will if we know the doctrine because the one is part of the other. God’s Word fits perfectly into His will for our lives and therefore, what we do and are should fit perfectly into His Word. It is really a beautiful arrangement when one stops to think about it. Jesus admonishes us in Matthew 6 to be careful not to give our alms or say our prayers that we can be heard and receive the glory of men; if we do, then that is all the glory that we are going

to receive because there must never come any credit or glory to the flesh. When men speak of themselves they seek their own glory; they are looking for the approval of men and not of God, but Jesus taught that he that seeketh His glory that sent Him, the same is true and no unrighteousness is in him, praise the Lord. We will understand and know the doctrine better as we walk with the Lord and do and perfect His will in our lives and hearts. We should find great joy and pleasure in following God's commandments and doing His will. It should never be burdensome - a law brings that, forcing ourselves to comply, but when we delight in doing God's divine will, it brings much joy and happiness.

Ephesians 6:6, "Not with eyeservice, as men pleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart." Phillips translates it this way, "Not with the idea of currying favor with men, but as the servants of Christ conscientiously doing what you believe to be the will of God for you." It is very important that each one of us knows what the will of God is for us, never mind the other person, because what God may have in mind for you is totally different than what God has in mind for someone else. Doing God's will, sometimes, may cause us to not find too much favor with men or this world's system, but it is vital that we do His will in preference to the will of man.

Hebrews 13:21, "Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever." In this apostolic benediction we are admonished to do His will, to let His work in us which is well pleasing in God's sight. As earthly parents, it always makes us feel good and makes us happy to see our children doing those things that are pleasing in our sight, and our Heavenly Father is no different.

James 4:14 & 15, "Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapor, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that." I am personally beginning to realize more and more, that God rules this universe of ours, which includes your life and mine with UNLIMITED POWER AND AUTHORITY. We can all make our plans, and there is certainly nothing wrong with that, but we must realize that the final outcome of all our well organized plans rests in the hands of an Almighty God. The Proverbs speak of this, and I would like to refer you to the 16th chapter, and I am quoting from the Living Bible paraphrase, "WE CAN make our plans, but the final outcome is in God's hands. We should make plans - counting on God to direct us." All too often, instead of asking God through the Holy Spirit to guide and direct us, we go ahead and make our plans, get everything in place, then expect when we ask God

to bless our plans that He will do it, when possibly He is not pleased with what we are doing at all.

We may find sometimes that God's will may interfere with what we think is right, and with our own personal plans and ambitions. We must be willing to be yielded to Christ in such a way that His will may overrule and override our wills. As the Hymn writer has expressed it in the song: "Committed to His will that I may know Him, surrendered to His Spirit every hour, if by any means I might attain His likeness, that I may know Him and His resurrection power."

Matthew 26:38-45. In this passage of Scripture we have the account of when Jesus prayed in the garden of Gethsemane, and in verse 39 we read, "...O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt." Real consecration, real sincerity, real grace will say and believe it this way: "Thy will be done, when Thy will is not mine." It will take this measure of consecration and yielding on our part, in order that we may fully enjoy and walk in God's Divine will and purpose for each of our lives. When we think of what it cost Jesus, on our behalf, the shedding of His Life blood on Calvary's cross in order that He might do the will of the Father, whatever He might ask us to do would seem nothing.

The will of God does not just control our movements so to speak, but it often controls the things that we do, etc. I Thessalonians 4:3-5, "For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication: That everyone of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honor; Not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God."

God's will, if followed, will save us and keep us out of a lot of trouble and problems. Israel, as a nation, as long as she walked according to the commandments and statutes of God, enjoyed the blessing of God upon them, but as soon as they erred from the way and walked contrary to the will of God, she was in trouble. This is certainly true concerning us today: there is a rest and solace in walking in the way of the Lord that we can not find in the world, and what it has to offer us regardless of whether we are young or old. The will of God for our lives is designed by God the Father to keep us from the evil one, and to direct us in the paths as the 23rd Psalm says: in the paths of righteousness, He will lead us into green pastures, beside the still waters, and He will restore our souls. Oh that we would only harken and listen to His loving voice and follow in His ways, how much more pleasant and wonderful life would be, praise His Name.

I Thessalonians 5:18, "In every thing give thanks, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you." It is God's will for us that we learn to give thanks for EVERYTHING. Without God's help this is literally impossible to do. I find it difficult to be thankful for such things as pain,

misunderstandings, disappointments, etc. but we should realize, when such things happen in life - and they do, God must have something better in mind for us - if we will be willing to accept His will and walk in it - that He will never leave us nor forsake us, and will never allow us to be tempted or tried above that which we are able to bear through His grace. Only God can close doors that no man can open, and open doors that no man can close, and the sooner we understand that fact, I believe the better off we will all be. Going back to Proverbs 16 verses 1-3 and I quote from the Living Bible, "We can make our plans, but the final outcome is in God's hands. We can always 'prove' that we are right, but is the Lord convinced? Commit your work to the Lord. THEN it will succeed." When we are young and endeavoring to make our way, and get ourselves established in the world in some line of work, we often come to the point of frustration, wondering where we fit in its system. If the truth were known, we really do not fit in its system, but in the meantime, we must earn a living in order to live and pay our bills etc. It is good and profitable for us all, at a very early age, to learn to trust God and put our confidence in Him, and allow Him to direct our paths. God knows everything about us from before we were born until the day we die, and everything in-between. It is hard for us to fathom, but He has foreordained our walk with Him long before we were aware or conscious of anything. And if that be so, and it is, then we should acknowledge the fact and endeavor to allow Him to lead and guide us in every aspect of our daily lives, our choice of a job, a husband or wife, etc. I find it very difficult to believe that a God who is capable of creating the heavens and the earth by the Word of His mouth and also you and I, would not have some pattern and course for each one of us to fulfill and take in it. We are not here by chance; and I can assure you that God has a purpose and reason for us being here, or I am sure we would not be left on this earth. Because of this; knowing the will of God for our lives becomes very essential and vital in our existence, and you will find such delight and joy in both knowing and doing His divine will here on this earth. What we do here is just preparatory for that which is to come.

Paul, in writing to the Ephesians in chapter 5, verses 15 & 16 says, "See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, Redeeming the time, because the days are evil." Let me quote the Phillips' translation of those verses, "Live life, then, with a due sense of responsibility, not as men who do not know the meaning and purpose of life but as those who do. Make the best use of your time, despite all the difficulties of these days." As never before, we must begin to address life in a very responsible way, not taking it for granted, but really endeavoring to make the very best of the remaining days that God in His wisdom and foreknowledge has granted to

us. Life should, each and every day have a meaning and purpose, - again a reason for us being left here on this earth. If there was no reason for us being here, there is not much left for any of us to enjoy at the rate that our society, etc. is going downhill. The value of life has dropped to an all time low; men will kill without even thinking about it. I have often thought that one of the things that the devil is robbing us all of, is our time. We become so involved in this and that, and striving to make that almighty dollar, that we are missing the wonderful things that God has created for our enjoyment and pleasure. Time is priceless; there is no way that you can put a dollar value on time, -referring of course to our time on earth, the length of our days, not our working hours for which we are paid for. Paul says: make the best use of your time despite the difficulties of these days. He must have known what was coming, and what we are confronted with in the day in which we are living; when it seems we have so little time for such things as going to church, spending time with our families, being in a place where we can minister and exercise the divine gifts and ministries that God has given and entrusted us with. As C. C. Williams wrote in the hymn: Have you any room for Jesus. "Room for pleasure, room for business, But for Christ the Crucified, Not a place that He can enter, In the heart for which He died? Room for Jesus, King of glory! Hasten now His word obey; Swing the heart's door widely open, Bid Him enter while you may." At such an hour as ye think not the Son of Man will come. He may call us at any time, we have no say or control on our life span; that it completely in His hands. I have personally, many times, stood back and examined my own life, and have found numerous occasions where I can improve in the use of this divine commodity called "time".

Colossians 2:6, "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him." It is essential that every man, woman, young person or child accept Christ into their hearts and lives, but as we do, then; we must strive to WALK IN HIM in such a way that His will and desires might be manifested in us and through us.

To walk in the will of God, we must take more seriously the ministry that God has entrusted to us. It is actually only through our ministries that we can please God and fulfill His divine will.

In closing, may I encourage you to seek and desire to do God's will. What joy, what satisfaction and sense of accomplishment comes into one's heart when we know we have done the will of God.

"Teach me Thy way, teach me today. Lord , I want to please You In all I do, in All I say. Spirit of God, fill me with love. Make me , mold me, teach me your way."

May this be the sincere prayer of our hearts.

THE PRINCIPLES OF THE DOCTRINE OF CHRIST

Hebrews 6:1-3, “Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God. Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. And this will we do, if God permit.” We are admonished here to leave these teachings, go on to perfection, and this will we do, if God permit. However, at this particular time in the affairs of men, it would be good for us all to refresh our minds and once again take a good look at these elementary teachings of our Lord. There is a great need for every believer to press on to higher heights, on into that perfection, which has been promised IN CHRIST. So in dealing with this topic we do so, not solely with the believers position in Christ in mind, but thinking of “The other sheep I have, which are not of this fold”, (Matthew 10:16) in mind also.

These basic principles which we have heard and accepted through Christ, will stand all who believe them in good stead. There should be no need of constantly going over them again and again, except in stirring up our pure minds to remembrance (II Peter 3:1) which never really hurts anyone, but ought to make them more appreciative of what God, through Christ, has accomplished in us.

WE are living in a world that is more and more becoming full of religion, but being religious does in no way mean a person is spiritual or that they understand what repentance is or any of these basic truths, which is very necessary if a person is to really know God and understand and function as a member of His Body, the Church.

John the Baptist came preaching, “REPENT YE; for the KINGDOM OF HEAVEN is at hand, For this IS HE that was spoken of by the prophet Isaiah, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, PREPARE YE THE WAY OF THE LORD MAKE HIS PATHS STRAIGHT.” (Matthew 3:2,3).

John heralded the coming of Jesus and in the beginning of Christ’s public ministry; Matthew 4:17, “From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, REPENT: FOR THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS AT HAND.”

We are now living in the time, when once again this message of the Kingdom is being spread throughout the earth , that the scriptures might once again be fulfilled; Matthew 24:14, “And this GOSPEL OF THE KINGDOM, shall be preached IN ALL THE WORLD for a witness unto ALL NATIONS; and THEN shall the end come.”

Repentance plays a vital part in the setting up, or the establishing of this

kingdom (realm, domain) and thus the reason for dealing with this subject, that EVERY TRUE BELIEVER may sort of reacquaint themselves with what repentance is and means, that in turn we may speak often of, and make people aware of their obligations before God.

REPENT means: “to feel sorry for (a sin, error etc.) to feel such regret over (an action, intention) as to change one’s mind.” It could further mean making an about face, a leaving of those things which are behind and a pressing on to those things which are before” Philippians 3:13,14.

Going back to our text, before any one can leave the principles they must first of all be made aware of such things as repentance and have accepted it; they must arrive before they can leave and that is what the great kingdom age is all about, making people to realize the provisions God has made for them through Christ, in order that they too may escape the judgments of God that are to come.

In the kingdom you will either judge or be judged, so let us do our part as members of His Body, the Church, through the talents and ministry that God has given us, to prepare the way of the Lord; bring the nations of the earth to repentance ready to receive the KING of THE KINGDOM, for this kingdom is not an earthly kingdom, it is not a natural kingdom, but a spiritual one. Luke 17:20, 21, “And when he was demanded of the Pharisees when the Kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, The Kingdom of God COMETH NOT WITH OBSERVATION; Neither shall they say, lo here! Or lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of

God IS WITHIN YOU.”

It is strange when one thinks of it, but laws and governments of men can never change things like the lives and influences of men's lives upon another. All the laws and commandments of Moses could never do for mankind, what the sacrifice and testimony of the life and ministry of Jesus has done and is still doing. It is “Not by might, nor by power, but BY MY SPIRIT, saith the Lord of hosts,” Zechariah 4:6. It is by the development and moving of the Holy Spirit working in us and through us that speaks louder than our words. Our lives, as members of the Body of Christ, the Church, must begin to have a greater influence upon the world around and about us. It is time to let our lights shine, that the world may see our good works and glorify our Father which is in heaven, Matthew 5:16.

It must never be forgotten, that the whole plan and purpose of God is centered in and around the cross and the life and ministry of God's Son. The very purpose of Christ's birth was to save all of mankind from the results of the fall through the disobedience of man, SIN, and to bring him back into harmony (reconcile) with Himself. The very Divine purpose of God in bringing together the Body of Christ, the Church, is to give to them this ministry of reconciliation. It is not sufficient then to just emphasize one aspect of our development in God, but assume our full responsibility as ministers of this great reconciliation and minister to the direct needs of mankind. To some it may be spiritual, to others material, and again to other physical. The Church must make men aware of their greatest need and this is to KNOW HIM, WHOM TO KNOW IS LIFE ETERNAL. They must be brought to repentance, to the starting place, where from there they may become the Sons of God and the possessors of this life from above.

Nicodemus, though a very scholarly man, came to Jesus by night in order that he may understand more fully the plan of salvation. You will note here that Jesus started right off from the beginning, and took time to explain the simplicity of this Divine provision. Verse 3, “Except a man be born again(or born from above) he cannot see the Kingdom of God.” The Nicodemus, having a very analytical mind asked a very sensible, reasonable question, verse 4, “How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?” These are the kind of questions the natural mind asks, but no one can ever understand the things of God with the natural mind: I Corinthians 2:14, “ But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto them; NEITHER CAN HE KNOW THEM, BECAUSE THEY ARE SPIRITUALLY DISCERNED.” The natural mind of man is incapable of grasping or understanding spiritual things, they can only be understood by the Spirit. Jesus pointed out to Nicodemus that there were two births,

the natural and the spiritual. Phillip's translates verse six like this, "Flesh gives birth to flesh and spirit gives birth to spirit". To enable this Jewish teacher to understand and not endeavor to figure things out with his natural mind, Jesus gave him a natural thing, which was unexplainable by natural reasoning, verse 8, "The wind blows where it likes, you can hear the sound of it but you have no idea where it comes from and where it goes. Nor can you tell how a man is born by the wind of the Spirit." (Phillips)

Jesus in His Witness to this Jewish teacher was endeavoring to reconcile him to God, he was trying to bring Nicodemus into harmony with the plan and purpose of God, which must begin at repentance. Please note again here Jesus dwelt with this well-educated man on the level that He met him. He went back to the time of Moses and drew a parallel to Moses when he lifted up the serpent in the wilderness in order that those who had been bitten by serpents could be healed by looking up at the brazen serpent, even so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but HAVE eternal life; verse 15.

Jesus told Nicodemus, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that WHOSOEVER believeth IN HIM, should not perish but have everlasting life," verse 16.

The 17th verse is very important and it will do us well to stop and consider carefully what Jesus said here, "For God sent Not his Son into the world to Condemn the world; but that the world THROUGH HIM MIGHT BE SAVED." Phillip's puts it this way, "You must understand that God has NOT sent his Son in to the world TO PASS SENTENCE UPON IT, but to save it, through him." How quick we are to condemn, to judge, to pass sentence. There is a vast difference between condemnation and conviction.

CONDEMNATION - means: "to disapprove of strongly - to disapprove - to inflict a penalty upon - to doom - to declare unfit for use."

CONVICT - means: "to prove or find guilty."

If we condemn the world we disapprove strongly or declare it unfit, but when a person is as we say, under conviction, the Holy Spirit proves him to be guilty of sin and this is where repentance come into play, when a person is by the Spirit made aware of his sins and confesses or turns about face on his past life of sin and reaches out for that life eternal, life from above. In other words, if Nicodemus heard and acted upon what Jesus said to him, he would be brought into harmony (reconciled) with God's plan and purpose for his life.

What Jesus was saying here, verses 18, 19 is that He was not sent to bring or inflict a penalty or doom upon the world, but give them a way out in order that they would not be brought into condemnation. The condemnation is there automatically when one disbelieves, but they need not live

in darkness if they will just accept the light.

Nicodemus, though highly schooled and a ruler of the Jews, did not actually realize that he was living in darkness and so it is in the world today, many do not realize how sinful their lives are and never will, if the Church just brings nothing but condemnation upon them. Only as they are introduced to the LIGHT, then the LIGHT will reveal what they really are and the Holy Spirit will convict them of their sin.

Jesus said in John 12:32, “And I, IF I BE LIFTED UP FROM THE EARTH, will draw ALL MEN unto me.” Jesus realized and so must we, that we were all born in sin and shapened in iniquity, we have all come short of the glory of God, but through Christ we can all be reconciled and brought into perfect harmony with the eternal plan and purpose of God.

It is virtually impossible to bring men into sonship BEFORE THEY ARE BORN OF THE SPIRIT. Nicodemus did not stand a ghost of a chance of ever enjoying sonship until he believed in his heart that God had raised Christ from the dead and that it was through Christ that he would be able to become part of the great family of God.

It is time, as members of the Body of Christ, the Church, to reassess and realize that before many more sons can be brought unto glory, they must be born of the Spirit and therefore we must give opportunity in our services and our conversation to allow the Holy Spirit to bring men to acknowledge their sins. Paul taught the Ephesians that His body should make INCREASE OF ITSELF IN LOVE, Ephesians 4:16, and it is true, that this growth will only come as EACH AND EVERY JOINT SUPPLIES, but the time has come when we must prepare ourselves for this ministry of reconciliation. The Church of the living God is the instrument through which God will reconcile the world unto Himself. He has been setting His house in order, now that great day of visitation is at hand. All of mankind shall share in this great restoration. We are incapable of understanding all that is involved, but this we do know, that this gospel of the Kingdom is such as will bring men to repentance and as the Spirit of repentance is poured out upon the peoples of the earth, the Church, the Body of Christ, must be ready to accept them, nurture them and bring them up into the fulness of Christ.

II Chronicles 7:14, “if my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; THEN will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land.” It is important here that we notice that God is speaking first of all to His own people. God had appeared unto Solomon by night and had assured him that the temple he had just built and dedicated, that He had chosen it for Himself; in other words God had put His seal or sanction upon it. God told Solomon that if He should ever shut up the heavens that there be no rain, or if He (God) should send the locusts to devour the land

or pestilence among the people, if they would do these four things: humble themselves, pray, seek His face and turn from their wicked ways, He would hear their prayers. These four things are all part of repentance. If anyone repents, or feels sorry about his wrong doings before God, he must humble himself before God and make confessions of his sins. It is always humiliating to admit we have done wrong, no one enjoys doing this, but it is necessary.

In order to ask repentance, one must pray or commune with God and express to Him their regrets and ask His forgiveness, which He is standing willing to do for ALL WHO ASK HIM.

One must seek His face. There is a definite difference between praying and seeking God's face.

PRAYER means: "to implore or beseech."

SEEK means: "to track down, trace, search for."

When one prays they ask earnestly, which we all must do before God, we ask Him to forgive us of our trespasses and sins. When one seeks His face, they search Him, they do everything within their power to track Him down. This we all must do in order to find repentance. As we humble ourselves before Him and pray to Him, then we really begin to search for Him as we find Him, the light of God within Him radiates forth from Him to reveal our wicked ways and as we humbly confess our faults unto Him, we must then turn our backs on the old ways of living, on our wickedness and sin, THEN, He said, I will hear your prayers and will answer. The glorious light of God's Holy presence reveals those things within us that are sinful. Jesus does not condemn us but will gladly forgive us and cleanse us from all of our sin and all of our unrighteousness, and will fill our lives with the glory of His Divine presence, in order that we may let that light that HE is shine through us, that men may see and glorify our Father which is in Heaven, praise His Name.

Isaiah 55:5 & 7, "Seek ye the Lord while He may be found, call upon Him while he is near. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and HE will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon." Again, we have the use of this word 'seek'. Isaiah says to track down, search for the Lord while He may be found, call upon Him while He is near. Call means to say in a LOUD VOICE - SHOUT. This seems to express the need of us to really mean business with God; not to approach Him in the attitude - well He doesn't hear me, it must be God's will that the condition we are asking for must be meant to be that way. Oh, no, far from it! Isaiah admonishes us to sincerely search out God until we find Him and then in an audible voice tell Him what our problem is. There are times when we will find this

very easy to do and that is when we are conscious of the nearness of His presence. Other times we must search Him out and then make our request or presentation.

Now to insure our prayers being answered, Isaiah calls us to repentance, the turning of our backs on our sins. As II Chronicles 7:14 tells us we must forsake, (a) our wicked ways. (b) our unrighteous thoughts. The act of repentance will banish and clear both our wicked ways and unrighteous thoughts. If we permit our minds to be filled with evil thoughts, etc., they will eventually, if harbored long enough, become what we are and revealed by what we do and say.

Paul in writing to the Philippians said in Chapter 4:8, "Finally brethren, whatsoever things are TRUE, whatsoever things are HONEST, whatsoever things are JUST, whatsoever things are PURE, whatsoever things are LOVELY, whatsoever things are of GOOD REPORT, if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, THINK ON THESE THINGS."

It has been said that the gateway to the mind is through the eye and there is no question that what we see, whether it be on the T.V. screen, or in books or in real life, has an often lasting effect upon our thoughts and our ways. You cannot tell me that all this killing and shooting and immoral acts displayed on T.V. screens is not affecting our nation morally. If you were to take a marking pencil and go through your evening newspaper and mark every article that spoke of violence and immoral acts, it would surprise you. No longer can you read the sports page but what you do not find it. Our television screens reveal immorality and violence constantly. Young undeveloped minds can sit in their own living rooms and watch all bars down, the sex relationship between men and women, usually with someone else's companion or out of wedlock and we seem to think nothing of it. Is it any wonder that in the United States last year, 1975, I recently read the following headline, "Figures Show Divorces in the U.S. Reached the One Million Mark in 1975". 10 percent of American divorces come in the second year of marriage and about 8.6 percent in the third year. These are things we must repent and turn once again to the Lord and He has promised to have mercy upon us and abundantly pardon us.

Repentance then is, though a basic principle of the doctrines of Christ, the stepping stone in our walk with God. Somewhere at sometime or another EVERYONE must acknowledge his or her need of God's forgiveness and ask Him to come into their hearts and change their lives.

II. FAITH TOWARD GOD

FAITH: means having complete trust and confidence in God. Hebrew 11:1, Phillips translation says, "Now faith means putting our FULL confi-

dence in the things we hope for, it means BEING CERTAIN of things we cannot see". Verse 6 of the same chapter says: "But without faith (or having that full confidence in God) it is impossible to please Him, for he that cometh to God, MUST BELIEVE THAT HE IS, and that he is a rewarder of them that DILIGENTLY (persevere -work hard at) seek (search) Him."

Our first step, then, in our pursuit of God is to repent, our second step is to have faith in Him, and believe that He is.

There is a vast difference in believing about God and believing that He really is and does exist. There are literally scores of people who believe about God, but are not too sure of His existence. It is impossible to have faith or confidence in anything if you question its existence, now isn't it?

There are many scriptures that speak of believing in Christ. We will mention but a few. John 3:16, "That WHOSOEVER believeth in Him should not perish, but HAVE ETERNAL LIFE." Verse 36, "He that believeth on the Son HATH EVERLASTING LIFE, and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him."

What does it really mean when the scriptures say that a person must believe in Christ? Let us stop and take a close look at the word BELIEVE. We often read and use these everyday words but never stop to actually think what they mean. BELIEVE means to take as true, real - to trust a statement or promise of (a person) - to have faith. When we read, then, such verses as we have just read, in light of what the word 'believe' means, we would read such as this: whosoever takes as true the statements or promises of Christ, should not perish but HAVE eternal (age-lasting) life. It is not difficult to believe in God and have faith or confidence in Him. What makes it seem difficult to some people is that they try to understand thoroughly everything He says in the Bible before they are willing to put their trust in Him. I am sitting writing directly beneath a lamp, which is shedding light upon the paper that I am writing on. Now if I had to understand completely all the intricacies and ramifications of the theory of electricity before I would trust the use of it, I'm afraid many of us would still be using the candle, but we accept electricity because we are willing to believe in it or take it as real or true and thoroughly enjoy what it has to offer us. We have everywhere in abundance things we touch, see and feel everyday of our lives which express and ought to convince us of the existence of God. The human body in itself is proof of God's existence and we read from Hebrews 11:6, "all we have to do is have faith or confidence in the One, the creative power that breathed into us of the breath of life, and believe (trust) that He really is and that He will reward us if we diligently (work hard) as we seek or search Him."

Diligence is something that is fast becoming a lost cause. We find it in all walks of life and every phase of life. People are becoming less and less

diligent. We are developing a “don’t care” attitude and each generation is looking for the way of least resistance. We are becoming spiritually lazy, willing to take second best or the easiest way out. How sad this is when we are heirs of God and joint heirs with Jesus Christ. But in order to attain to full sonship and possess the fullness of our inheritance, we must be willing to seek Him out, seek diligently until we find Him.

Let us look at another one of these wonderful promises and while we are doing it, let us simply ask God to enable us to have complete trust in what he has promised us.

John 5:24; “Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word and BELIEVETH ON HIM that sent me, HATH EVERLASTING LIFE, and shall NOT COME INTO CONDEMNATION; but IS passed from death unto Life” Listen to the Phillips translation, “I solemnly assure you that the man who hears what I have to say and BELIEVES in the ONE who has sent me, HAS eternal life. HE DOES NOT HAVE TO FACE JUDGMENT HE HAS ALREADY passed from death unto life.” What indisputable promises we have here and throughout the word of God. If whosoever will, will just put their trust in Him, they HAVE eternal life and do not have to face judgment, and if we can believe it, we have passed from death unto life already. John 11:25, 26, “Jesus said unto her, I AM the resurrection and the life. He that BELIEVETH in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live. And whosoever liveth and BELIEVETH in me SHALL NEVER DIE. Believest thou this?” May the Holy Spirit open our eyes and enlighten our minds and hearts so that we can grasp the truth of these living words spoken by our Lord. There are those who believe in a resurrection that was, that is when Christ rose triumphant over death, hell and the grave. Others can project their faith to believe in the resurrection that is to come, but few believe in the resurrection that IS. Jesus did not say; I was the resurrection or I will be; Jesus said, I AM THE RESURRECTION, not past or future tense, but present. I ask of all of you the same question Jesus asked Martha, BELIEVEST THOU THIS? Remember, to believe simply means to trust a statement or promise of a person, in this instance, Christ the Son of God.

John 12:44-48, “Jesus cried and said, He that believeth on me, believeth not in me, but on him that sent me. And he that seeth me seeth Him that sent me. I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness. And if ANY MAN hear my words, and believe not, I JUDGE HIM NOT. FOR I CAME NOT TO JUDGE THE WORLD BUT TO SAVE THE WORLD. HE that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the world that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day”. See how important it is that we all trust and believe the statements and promises that God has given us.

Acts 16:30,31, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, ‘BELIEVE on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou SHALT be saved and thy house’.” Simple is it not, just trust, have confidence (faith) in Jesus. The basic principles of Christ’s doctrine was to repent and then have faith toward God be believing.

III DOCTRINE OF BAPTISMS

Baptism is a wonderful experience. Those who have entered into such an experience will always cherish and revere their particular milestone in their walk with God. Baptism, whether in water or in Spirit, seems to make one feel so much more a part of the person and personality of Christ. It has a way of making one feel a part of, you sort of lose your identity in the life and ministry of Christ. We become hid with Christ in God. It brings a relationship that is so intimately real and we begin to share in a very realistic way the life and ministry of Christ as members of His body, His flesh, His bones. Ephesians 5:30.

Romans 6:3,4, “Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized INTO Jesus Christ were baptized INTO his death? Therefore, we are buried with Him BY baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, EVEN SO ALSO WE should walk in NEWNESS OF LIFE.” Baptism is a medium through which we can share with Christ such things as death and life. When one is immersed in the water of baptism, we are doing more than just being obedient and following the Lord in the waters of baptism. Paul says here that we are entering into death by baptism. It is a laying aside and burying the old “you”, the flesh, and rising as Christ to a new level of experience in God, for we are raised from the dead BY THAT SPLENDID REVELATION OF THE FATHER’S POWER, so we, too, might rise to LIFE ON A NEW PLAIN ALTOGETHER”. There is such a glorious joining together here, we become shareholders, a living, vital part of the predestined will of an everlasting eternal God, the great I AM. I Corinthians 12:13,14, “For by ONE SPIRIT are we all baptized into ONE BODY, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all MADE to drink into ONE SPIRIT. For the body is not one member but many.” May the Holy Spirit of God open our minds and our understanding that we may all see this glorious joining together. Weymouth translation records it this way, Verse 13, “In fact, IN ONE SPIRIT ALL OF US whether Jews or Greeks, slaves or free men - were baptized to form ONE BODY; and were all imbued (permeated) WITH ONE SPIRIT.” God help us to realize that which is defeating us and weakening us; you cannot read such passages of scripture and in any way condone denominationalism or division in any form. It is nothing but the trick of the enemy of our souls to keep the Church of the living God divided into camps. We

can offer all the excuses we like, nowhere does the word of God substantiate division, in fact, it speaks very clearly against such things. I Corinthians 12:25, “there ought not to be any schism or division in the Body of Christ, the Church.” I would like to quote from the Living Bible translation here, I Corinthians 12:12 & 13, “Our bodies have many parts but many parts make up only one body WHEN they are all put together. So it is with the “body” of Christ. Each of us is a part of the ONE BODY of Christ. Some of us are Jews, some are Gentiles, some are slaves and some are free. But the HOLY SPIRIT HAS FITTED US ALTOGETHER INTO ONE BODY. We have been baptized INTO CHRIST’S BODY BY THE ONE SPIRIT, and have ALL been given that same Holy Spirit”. The elementary teachings of Christ emphasize the necessity of our all being baptized or sharing in His death, His life, His body, members of His body, flesh and bones.

Galatians 3:26-28, “For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have PUT ON CHRIST. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male or female, FOR WE ARE ALL ONE IN CHRIST JESUS.” Oh, blessed thought, being joined TOGETHER IN ONE BODY. How can we go on deceiving ourselves, how can we permit the enemy to keep us divided when by the act of baptism, made available to us by the cross, He has baptized us into one spirit, into one body, having left the old life of sin and put on Christ who is THE LIFE, THE RESURRECTION. The word of God specifically declares we are one. Racism, cults or creeds have been abolished. Ephesians 2:13-17, “But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are nigh by the blood of Christ. For He is our peace, who hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; having abolished in His flesh the enmity (hostility) even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in Himself of twain ONE NEW MAN, so making peace; and that He might reconcile (bring into harmony) BOTH unto God IN ONE BODY BY THE CROSS, having slain the enmity thereby. And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh. For through Him we both have access by ONE spirit unto the Father.” If it is the mind and will of God to destroy and tear down all walls of partition that now exists, why do we strive so hard to maintain them? As Paul wrote, that was one reason God permitted His son to die on the cross was to make of two peoples, Jews and Gentiles, ONE. I declare to you that the day must and will come when these differences of opinions and doctrines be done away with and all of God’s people will work and talk in the same way, manifesting and abiding unity and peace of the Holy Spirit.

Colossians 2:9-12, “For in Him DWELLETH ALL THE FULLNESS OF THE GODHEAD BODILY. And ye are COMPLETE IN HIM, which

is the head of all principality and power;" The living Bible translation relates the same verses this way, "For in Christ there is all of God in a human body, so you have everything when you have Christ and **YOU ARE FILLED WITH GOD** through your union with Christ. He is the highest Ruler with authority over every other power." Think of what that means, and through baptism we are drawn together in sharing the life and ministry of the Head of this wonderful body, the Church. Paul writing to the Ephesians, Verses 22-23 (Phillips) says this, "God has placed **EVERYTHING** under the power of Christ and has set Him up as head of **EVERYTHING** for the Church. For the Church **IS HIS BODY**, and in **THAT BODY** (the **CHURCH**) lives **FULLY** the One who fills the whole wide universe".

We are buried then with Christ in baptism. We share in His death through baptism, and we are also raised with Him **THROUGH FAITH OF THE OPERATION OF GOD**, who hath raised Christ from the dead. Is it little wonder such glorious experiences were part of the elementary teachings of Christ? Then there is that wonderful experience of being baptized by the Holy Spirit.

Matthew 3:11 - John the Baptist said, "I indeed baptize you with the water unto repentance, but He that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear. He shall baptized **YOU WITH THE HOLY GHOST AND FIRE.**"

Water baptism plays a very significant part in our walk and relationship with God, but so does this experience of being filled or baptized with the Holy Spirit. You may ask, how do I go about receiving this experience of being baptized with the Holy Spirit? The scriptures are very clear in answering such a question. Luke 11:13, "If ye then being evil know how to give good gifts unto your children; how much more shall **YOUR HEAVENLY FATHER** give the Holy Spirit **TO THEM THAT ASK HIM?**" It is just that simple; there is really no need to tarry for days and days, though waiting on God in such a manner hurts no one, but just **ASK HIM**. Please note here, **DO NOT** seek the gift, **ASK THE GIVER**. He will not disappoint you. If you are unable to receive for some reason, go to the Elders and ask them to lay hands on you as Peter and John did at Jerusalem, Acts 8:17, "Then laid they their hands on them, and **THEY RECEIVED THE HOLY SPIRIT**".

There are those who seem to feel this experience was only for the 120 in the Upper Room on the Day of Pentecost. It was for them, there is no question about that, but it is also for them that believe today. Acts 2:39, "For the promise is **UNTO** you (those on the Day of Pentecost) and your children (that is the children of those present on the Day of Pentecost) and to **ALL THAT ARE AFAR OFF** (those who were not there at that particular time), **EVEN AS MANY AS THE LORD OUR GOD SHALL CALL.**"

That covers the entire human race, praise God!

While in Korea, we saw literally hundreds of people baptized in the Holy Spirit and speak with other tongues.

Now this speaking with other tongues seems to be the hang-up for many. We are often asked if you can be baptized in the Holy Spirit without speaking in other tongues. This is no doubt possible; there have been many Spirit-filled people in the earth that never spoke in tongues but the Bible says, Acts 2:4, "And THEY were are filled with the Holy Ghost and BEGAN to speak WITH OTHER TONGUES, as the SPIRIT GAVE THEM UTTERANCE." Some may say, well the speaking in tongues part is just a sign or an outward manifestation of the presence of the Holy Spirit. Whatever we want to call it does not remove the absolute fact that THEY and WE can enjoy and should enjoy the same experience. Why sell yourself short when all over the world in this hour the Spirit is moving upon people and they are being filled by the Spirit and at the same time receive the evidence of speaking in other tongues?

Did not Joel, the prophet, prophesy and Peter quoted the same prophecy on the Day of Pentecost. Acts 2:17 & 18, "And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon ALL FLESH. And your sons and your daughters shall prophesy and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams. And on my servants and on my handmaidens I WILL pour out in those days of my Spirit and they shall prophesy." Here again we have confirmation of verse 4, only here God includes ALL FLESH. Like a mighty tidal wave shall the Holy Spirit move upon the earth, literally immersing them in His Spirit, in His Presence. God said, the way you will recognize this happening is your sons and daughters will begin to prophesy, and surely we have witnessed this manifestation of His Spirit upon the youth and upon the aged as God's Spirit moved and it blesses one's soul to hear them prophesy. In Acts 19:6 Paul went to Ephesus, and verse 6 tells us, "And when Paul had laid his hand upon them, the Holy Ghost came upon them. And they SPAKE WITH TONGUES AND PROPHESED". May I repeat once again, speaking in tongues is nothing to fear; there was a time it was thought of by many religious cults as being fanaticism, but in the last few years as we human mortals of the dust have seen the fulfillment of Joel's prophecy, there have been people in practically every denomination on the earth receive this experience. Remember He said He would give it to THOSE THAT ASKED HIM. If you may be of the timid nature, you can in the privacy of your own bedroom bow before the God of all the ages and from a sincere heart ask Him to fulfill His word in your life. I can assure you he will not disappoint you because He not only honors His own word, but the Psalmist said in Psalms 35:18, "The

Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit”.

IV: LAYING ON OF HANDS

Laying on of hands was used in various ways throughout the scriptures and should be practiced today. In the old testament the priests, or elders, often laid their hands upon the sacrifice to consecrate it. Leviticus 4:15. It was also used to impart a blessing as Jesus blessed the little children. Matthew 19:13-15. It was also practiced at ordination services, such as at the ordination of Joshua; Numbers 27:15-23 (Please read). The laying on of hands means more than just recognition; you actually impart to that individual of the Spirit. Notice I said OF THE SPIRIT. We know it is by the Spirit that we do all things - but here you literally IMPART A PORTION OF THE SPIRIT to the individual. Note especially verses 18, 19, & 20, “And the Lord said unto Moses, Take thee Joshua, the son of nun, a man in whom is the spirit, and LAY THINE HAND UPON HIM, that all the congregation of the children of Israel may be obedient.” Verse 23, “And he LAID HIS HANDS UPON HIM, and gave him a charge, as the Lord commanded by the hands of Moses.” The laying on of hands is NOT a form or ritual; it is a responsible act of God and He has given certain ministries, such as Elders and ministries, the authority to function on His behalf in this way. Joshua, before God and all the congregation of the people, was given this charge, or he was made responsible by God and the laying on of Moses’ hands.

Deuteronomy 34:9, “And Joshua, the son of Nun, was full of the Spirit of Wisdom for Moses had LAID HIS HANDS UPON HIM. And the children of Israel hearkened unto him and did as the Lord commanded Moses.” It would appear by the context of this verse, that as Moses laid his hands upon Joshua, he received the Spirit of Wisdom; it is an IMPARTATION. Acts 6:6, “Whom they set before the apostles. And when they had prayed, THEY LAID THEIR HANDS ON THEM.” This passage WAS at the ordination of seven deacons and once again they laid their hands on them. I Timothy 4:14, “Neglect not the gift that is in thee which was given thee BY PROPHECY, WITH THE LAYING ON OF THE HANDS OF THE PRESBYTERY.” II Timothy 1:6, “”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.” There is absolutely no question after reading these verses that the laying on of hands is an imparting of a gift of the Spirit.

Hands were laid on people to receive the Holy Spirit. Acts 8:17, “Then laid they their hands on them and they received the Holy Ghost.” Acts 19:6, “And when Paul had LAID HIS HANDS UPON THEM, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues and prophesied.” Jesus

laid His hands upon the sick and healed them and in the great commission He told us to do the same. Mark 16:18, "They SHALL LAY HANDS ON THE SICK AND THEY SHALL RECOVER." Acts 28:8, "And it came to pass that the father of Publius lay sick of a fever and of a bloody flux; to whom Paul entered in, and prayed, AND LAID HIS HANDS ON HIM AND HEALED HIM." Jesus in His earthly ministry used the laying on of hands in healing the sick also. Luke 4:40, "Now when the sun was setting, all they that had any sick with divers diseases brought them unto Him. And He LAID HIS HANDS ON EVERY ONE OF THEM, and healed them." SO we see there are many uses of the Divine Act of laying on of hands.

V: RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD

This glorious event is one of the basic fundamentals of all doctrine. It speaks of a revival from the state of death back into life. The word itself means, "rising from the dead" or "coming back into use". From the time of Adam until now, this fore-ordained plan of God reveals the purpose of God in lifting and restoring the fallen state of God's creation to its original created state. Through this process of elevation the whole of creation by it is learning of the tremendous authority and power in the One who brought it into being. We at this moment are living in a phase of that resurrection, of that revival or that coming back into usefulness. Though death and gross darkness encompasses the whole of creation, it does dwell in such a state without hope. Romans 8:19-27 (Please take your Bible and read before reading on). I would like to give you the Phillips translation of a portion of these verses, beginning at Verse 19, "The whole creation is on tiptoe (why) to see the wonderful sight of the sons of God coming into their own. The world of creation CANNOT AS YET see reality, NOT BECAUSE IT CHOOSES to be blind, but because in God's purpose it has been so limited. Yet IT HAS BEEN given hope. The hope is that in the end the WHOLE OF CREATED LIFE will be rescued from the tyranny (authority) of change and decay, and have its share in the magnificent liberty which can ONLY belong to the children of God." Verse 26, "The Spirit of God not only maintains this hope within us, but helps us in our present limitations."

The whole of creation then, has been subjected, not willingly, to the fall, but from the day and hour that in the wisdom of God it fell, it has always had and still has today, that seed of hope spring up from within. The resurrection of Jesus made available to such mortals as we and the whole of created life, that dynamic power that can lift it from its fallen state, now subject to change and decay, to that level of understanding in God where the beggarly elements of this transitory age can no longer touch it or interfere with its progressive growth into the fulness of Christ. Oh, let the trees

of the field clap their hands, let the fowl of the air and the fish of the sea rejoice, let everything that hath breath praise the Lord for great is our God and worthy is He to be praised.

Space will not permit us to record all that was accomplished on the Cross. So often, we with our little finite minds, can only see the one aspect of the cross and that of the shed blood bringing to us cleansing and forgiveness of our sins. Wonderful, wonderful and necessary this is, for by such an atonement are we introduced and become a part of He who is our Savior and Redeemer. But the cross and that first resurrection opened to all of mankind and the whole of creation, a door that gave it access to that dominion and power that could lift its thralldom of change and decay into the bliss and reality of that heavenly realm ordained of God for its existence since before the foundations of the world were laid.

I would appreciate if you would take your Bible and turn to Colossians chapter 1, then I would like to focus our attention on verses 15 - 20, quoting from the Phillips translation. As we do, pay particular attention to repetitive use of the words, 'through Him' and 'for Him'. "Now Christ is the visible expression of the invisible God. He existed BEFORE creation began, for it was THROUGH HIM that everything was made, whether spiritual or material, seen or unseen. THROUGH HIM and FOR HIM, also were created power and dominion, ownership and authority. In fact, every single thing was created THROUGH and FOR HIM. He is both the first principle (fundamental truth, law) and the upholding principle of the whole scheme of creation. And NOW, He is the head of the body which is the Church. Life from nothing began THROUGH HIM, and life from the dead began THROUGH HIM, and He is, therefore, justly called the Lord of all. It was IN HIM that the full nature of God chose to live, and THROUGH HIM God planned to reconcile (change-bring into harmony) in His own person, as it were, everything on earth and everything in Heaven BY VIRTUE OF THE SACRIFICE OF THE CROSS."

Is it any wonder that Jesus had to go the way of the Cross? Can we see now why Jesus told the disciples in John 16:7, "Nevertheless I tell you the truth: It is expedient (necessary) for you that I go away. For if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you. But if I depart, I will send Him unto you." The only way the fallen creation could ever hope to share in the restoration of God was by the Cross. EVERYTHING was had THROUGH AND FOR HIM and in order for we fallen mortals of the dust to share in our Heavenly inheritance, our elder brother Jesus, had to go by the way of the cross in order to redeem Adam's fallen race. Through the resurrection then and by Christ's sending unto us the Comforter, the Holy Ghost to share with us of His resurrection life, we then are joined together

into one body, Jesus Christ being the HEAD, this BODY the Church now becomes THROUGH CHRIST and THE RESURRECTION, the visible expression of the invisible God.

LOVE THY NEIGHBOR AS THYSELF

In an “every man for himself” world such as we are living in today, the teachings of Jesus brings to light the deterioration and weakness of our present-day systems. The basic theory to today’s methods is get to the top and advance yourself, regardless who it hurts or crushes.

Turn please to a familiar story found in the Gospel of Luke 10:25-37. “And, behold a certain lawyer stood up, and tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? He said unto him, What is written in the law? how readest thou? And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy mind; **AND THY NEIGHBOR AS THYSELF.** And he said unto him, Thou has answered right: this do, and thou shalt live. But he, willing to justify himself, said unto Jesus, And who is my neighbor? And Jesus answering said, A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. And by chance there came down a certain priest that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked at him, and passed by on the other side. But a certain Samaritan as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him. And went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee. Which now of these three thinkest thou, was neighbor unto him that fell among the thieves? And he said, He that showed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise.”

The first twenty-four verses of this chapter states the account of Jesus sending out the seventy elders and upon their return they were telling Jesus what had taken place. Verse 17, “And the seventy returned again with joy, saying Lord, even the devils are subject unto us **THROUGH THY NAME?**” Please note what is said here, the devils were subject to who? The seventy elders. How? Through the name of Jesus. Matthew 9:8, “But when the multitudes saw it, they marveled, and glorified God **WHICH HAD GIVEN SUCH POWER UNTO MEN.**” Men have and will always marvel at the tremendous investment God has made in such mortal men. However, regardless of how glorious these events had been, Jesus sort of brought their

feet back down to earth when He said in verse 20 of the 10th chapter of Luke, “Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject (note) UNTO YOU, but rather rejoice, because YOUR NAMES ARE WRITTEN I HEAVEN.” I wonder sometimes, after reading an account such as this, if we may not sometimes focus our endeavors on the wrong things as well as over emphasize the wrong things. Let us make no mistake, Jesus Himself was thrilled at what these elders had done through His Name, but He could see they were more taken up with the miracles than the reality of knowing Him and that their names were written down in heaven. Luke 10, verse 21 bears out this truth, “In that hour JESUS REJOICED IN SPIRIT.” That is a glorious statement. It ought to thrill every reader’s heart to know that God has hid these precious truths from the wise and prudent and revealed them unto babes. Praise His Name!

As Jesus expounded these tremendous truths, there was a very highly-educated gentleman in the crowd, whose profession was studying law and he tempted Jesus by saying unto Him, in verse 25, “What shall I do to inherit eternal life?” Now we must note here how Jesus answered him. Once again, as always, He met the man on the level and ground he was most familiar with and in this case it was the law, so He said to him, verse 26, “What is written in the law? how readest thou?” May we all learn a lesson here, never try to show men how spiritually intelligent you are by speaking to them in terms they are unacquainted and unfamiliar with, but get right down on their level of understanding, that is where we must begin. Jesus said to this lawyer, you read to us what the law books says and this is what he read, verse 27, “Thou shalt love the Lord with all thy HEART, and with all thy SOUL, and with all thy STRENGTH, and with all thy MIND; AND THY NEIGHBOR AS THYSELF.” God does not leave a man much to serve the world with, He asks for ALL of our heart, soul, strength and mind and then to love our neighbors.

Jesus then answered the man by saying, verse 28, “Thou has answered right; THIS DO, AND THOU SHALT LIVE.” With such wisdom, Jesus had him answer his own question, right out of the law book. He suddenly realized what he had done and in order to justify himself he said to Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?” This was a good question and may the Holy Spirit enable us all to see and accept the answer by using a parable, which is an earthly story, with a heavenly meaning.

This parable brings out the difference between one being religious and

spiritual.

The priest and the Levite were religious men, as they saw this fellow human being in the ditch. They passed him by because they were all wrapped up in their theology, without understanding or being able to apply what they read and taught. As we would say today, we wouldn't want to become involved: they felt he was not their responsibility; he was not one of their parishioners or followers; after all they were so busy as it was, they had no time to apply in reality, in every day living, what they thought they believed and taught. The good Samaritan was not that way. It seemed to matter not who the man was or what he believed, etc. He was in dire need, therefore he was obligated to assist him in whatever way HE COULD. The reason he felt it was his responsibility was, regardless of his color or creed, he was his neighbor, or in other words a fellow human being, who was in need. The mercy of God is to the whosoever, we must all remember that.

The scriptures bear out that a neighbor is not just that person over the back fence, but a fellow human being. We will deal a little more with that later. Now I am sure the Samaritan was just as busy and in as big a hurry as the others. He no doubt could ill afford the time or expense in attending and caring for this fellow, who was a total stranger. After all, he probably got what was coming to him any way, as I have heard so many say in our day. But regardless of all the excuses his own mind could have brought before him, he ministered to him. The good Samaritan gave three things in administering his ministry to this fellow human being:

1. He gave of HIMSELF. HE understood what the lawyer had read, in giving to God of his love, his heart, soul, strength and mind. No one can be effectively used of God until he or she is willing to give unreserved of themselves to their ministry. Paul said in writing to the Romans, 12:1, "I BESEECH (earnestly entreat) you brethren, by the mercies of God, that YOU PRESENT your bodies as a living sacrifice." Paul in writing to Timothy says, I Timothy 4:14-16, "Neglect not (ignore, disregard, leave undone) the gift that is IN THEE (not on thee but IN thee, it is a possession, imparted by the laying on of the hands) which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hand of the presbytery. Meditate (to think deeply) upon these things; GIVE THYSELF WHOLLY TO THEM that thy profiting may appear to all. Take heed unto THYSELF and unto the doctrine; continue in them; for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee." It requires consecration beyond word, we must act upon what we believe.

2. He gave of his TIME, a very precious commodity in this day and age. Time is something the scriptures tell us that we must redeem (buy back) the time for the days are evil, Ephesians 5:16. We are all so busy, doing what? The Bible teaches us first things first, Matthew 6:33, "But seek ye FIRST

the kingdom of God and His righteousness; and all these things (food, clothing, etc., yes the necessities of life) SHALL be added unto you.” God help us all to get our eyes off making that almighty dollar and get things back into true focus and begin to see and take time to act upon what we see as the Samaritan did. As Paul wrote to the Ephesians we must redeem, or buy back, the time: We have allowed ourselves to become so involved in making a living etc., etc., etc., that now we are in a place where we must buy back what we have given away.

Never has man lived in such a push-button, time-saving day as we are living in, and yet with all of our modern conveniences, time-savers, we have less time to do what really should be done. May God help us with the generations to come.

3. He gave of his MONEY (possessions). Here again the teaching of Jesus encourages us all to give and it shall be given, Matthew 13:12. It is far more blessed to give than to receive. Acts 20:35, etc. How often we are willing to assist as long as it does not cost us anything. There will be times when we must give not only of ourselves and our time, but also share those temporal things that in this country of ours, God had so lavished upon us. May He teach us and help us to be good administrators of that which He has entrusted us with. We should always remember we can never out-give God.

Let us carefully listen to the answers Jesus gave this man who enquired as to who was his neighbor, verses 36:37, “Which now of these three (the priest, Levite, or Samaritan) thinkest thou, was neighbor unto him that fell among the thieves? And he said, HE THAT SHOWED MERCY ON HIM. Then said Jesus unto him, Go and do thou likewise.” The Phillips translation puts it this way, “THE MAN WHO GAVE PRACTICAL SYMPATHY.”

It is so easy to say, and it sound so spiritual, “I will be praying for you”, when we should be doing something practical about the situation at hand. If you want a good lesson on being practical, read carefully the book of James. He taught us, James 1:22, “But be ye DOERS of the word and not hearers only, DECEIVING (who?) OUR OWN SELVES.” He also tells us: If a man asks us for bread or clothing and we say depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; WHAT DOTHTH IT PROFIT?” James 2:16. Chapter 4:17, “Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.” Plain and to the point, but how true. God help us all to be more practical and put legs on our prayers and get out and do, rather than just listen. First, we listen, then we do.

The establishing of the Kingdom on the earth is this worlds ONLY hope.

Little wonder Jesus taught us to pray; “Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, in earth (these temples of earth) even as it is in Heaven.” This is His

will, this was, and is, His prayer and it SHALL come to pass.

Isaiah 2:4, “And he shall judge among nations, and shall rebuke many people; and they shall beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks, nation shall not lift up sword against nation, NEITHER SHALL THEY LEARN WAR ANYMORE. O house of Jacob, come ye, and let us walk in the light of the Lord.” How and when shall this be, when we as subjects of every nation on the face of the earth become good neighbors and love one another and every nation of the earth becomes neighborly, which means friendly, kindly, toward each other? If all of mankind could see the value and blessing derived from being a good neighbor, what a different world it would be to live in. You say this will never be. Oh yes it will. Listen! Jesus taught that, “And this gospel of the kingdom SHALL be preached IN ALL THE WORLD for a witness unto ALL NATIONS: and then shall the end come.”

Matthew 24:14, Nothing is impossible with God and I have been amazed at how often the words “all” and “every nation” are used in the scriptures. If at the tower of Babel God could by confusing their tongues divide and separate men. He is also able in the end time to bring them all together again, praise His Name.

Leviticus 19:18, “Thou shalt not avenge (to inflict punishment in return for or in behalf of) nor bear any grudge against the children of my people, but THOU SHALT LOVE THY NEIGHBOR AS THYSELF, I am the Lord.” It is so easy to hold a grudge against another person. God says we are not to do that but rather love that person, just like you do yourself. We are definitely commanded (not just asked) of the Lord to love our neighbor or fellow human being. The scriptures also tell us there were two commandments given, Mark 12:30 & 31. The first one was verse 30, “And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with ALL thine heart, and with ALL thy soul, and with ALL the mind and ALL thy strength; this is the first commandment.” The second one is, verse 31, “And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. THERE IS NONE OTHER COMMANDMENT GREATER THAN THIS.”

Two very simple statements, very basic, very ordinary, but oh so important. I am sure that is why John wrote in his epistle, I John 4:20, “If any man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar; for he that loveth not his brother whom he can see, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?” The teachings of the Bible are very clear, simple to understand, providing we are willing to accept them. How could the priest and the Levite truthfully say I love God and yet turn their backs on their brother, lying wounded in a ditch? Jesus also taught in Matthew 25:40, “Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto the LEAST of these my

brethren, YE HAVE DONE IT UNTO ME.”

The mercy and the love of God are extended to every man and woman, regardless of color, race or creed, so let us all endeavor to be administrators of such a love and mercy by sharing His bountiful goodness, that He has so lavished upon us, with those who stand in need of it.

We are further taught by the apostle Paul, that love is the fulfilling of the law, Romans 13:9 & 10. Paul teaches us here what we ought not to do, such as commit adultery (yes, and that is still in effect in 1977, regardless of what our present level of society has accepted as its standards), thou shalt not kill, or steal, or bear false witness, or covet, and he goes on to say, “and if there be any other such commandment, it is briefly this saying, namely, **THOU SHALT LOVE THY NEIGHBOR AS THYSELF**. Love worketh no ill to his NEIGHBOR; therefore **LOVE IS THE FULFILLING OF THE LAW.**” My what clear cut, unquestionable principles to live by!

Romans 15:1 & 2, “We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and **NOT TO PLEASE OURSELVES**. Let every one of us please his neighbor for his good to edification.” The Phillips translation puts it this way, “We who have strong faith ought to shoulder the burden of the doubts and qualms of others and not just go our own sweet way. Our actions should mean the good of others, should help them to build up their characters.” In other words we should be an example to those around and about us, which includes our neighbors.

Galations 5:13-16, “For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, **BUT BY LOVE SERVE ONE ANOTHER**. For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another. This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.” We are to serve one another by love. The whole of the law is fulfilled in one word **LOVE**, and we ought to love our neighbors as we love ourselves. Why? Because he is a fellow human being and it is the commandment of God. If we walk in the Spirit we will not find ourselves yielding to the lusts of the flesh, our lower nature.

James 2:8 & 9, “If ye fulfill the royal law (the Lord’s law) according to the scripture, **THOU SHALT LOVE THY NEIGHBOR AS THYSELF**, ye do well. But if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors.” It seems so easy in this age to show respect of persons one above another and this ought not to be. The color of a man’s skin, his social standing, his degree of education or his wealth, should never be used to discriminate. I do fear sometimes, that this word discrimination is overplayed and taken away off course. The word discriminate means; to distinguish, to make distinctions in treatment, to show partiality or prejudice. Today, just because we don’t get our own way or things just don’t go the

way we think they should, we hear the cry of discrimination. The royal law states that we should love our fellow man, we should respect him for what he is, not classify him. God has a way of making all men equal, and when we all stand before the Judge of all the ages it won't matter how much money we left behind, or how much education we had or what social level we were on, in the sight of God ALL MEN AND WOMEN ARE EQUAL.

Here is another word that is misused today. We hear the cry on every hand, we want equal rights, equal pay, etc., etc. Equal means: of the same quantity, size, value, having same rights, ability, rank. Women want equal rights, equal pay, etc., to that of a man. God never intended that a man or woman be equal in this respect. Where are the days of chivalry, when men were men and women were women? It is a disgrace contrary to the Word of God for a man to be womanly or a woman to be manly. They both have their separate roll in life, a man can never take the place of a woman nor can a woman take and fill the roll of a man. God never intended this to be, so why should we try to change it? I realize this is contrary to the present day thinking, but the time has come when the Church of the Living God must stand up for what the Word of God teaches regardless of what the present system advocates. If we are genuinely honest with ourselves we will have to admit that the present system has much to be desired in it and two wrongs have never made a right. Let the man take his full responsibility as a man, as a husband, and let the woman fulfill the office of a mother and homemaker as God has ordained. This wonderful order of God is in no way belittling the place of a woman in the affairs of life but placing her in the office that God ordained that she hold and where, might I add, she will find the most pleasure, enjoyment and fulfillment. God bless you dear women who have the courage of your convictions to be old fashioned enough to do what you know to be the mind and will of God for your lives regardless of what various organizations are endeavoring to promote. There is nothing on earth more lovely, more beautiful, than to see a woman feminine in every way, acting like a lady and taking her proper place in the home and in the world. If you want the scriptural description of a virtuous woman, read Proverbs 31:10-31. The 23rd verse says, "Her husband is known in the gates, when he sitteth among the elders of the land," because of her, he has found his rightful place. Verse 28, "Her children shall rise up and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praiseth her." What for? Because she is a career woman, holding down a high office in some corporation? No, no, a thousand times no! Just because she is a virtuous woman, fulfilling the roll in life that God has ordained for her. Please take the time to read these verses from Proverbs and let the Holy Spirit make them come alive unto you.

Listen further to what the Proverbs teaches us, chapter 30:21-23, "For

three things the earth is disquieted (disturbed, quake, restless), and for four which it cannot bear: 1. For a servant when he reigneth. 2. A fool when his is filled with meat. 3. For a odious (unpopular) woman when she is married. 4. An handmaiden that is heir to her mistress.

We often wonder why there is such unrest and turmoil in the earth, here the scriptures tell us the reason. There is nothing that will bring more unrest than someone, man or woman, who is trying to fulfill a roll that God never intended them to fill. There is a place for every one. God has so ordained that as members of His body, we have a definite place to fill. It is the same in the secular world, there are those who are cut out to be nurses or doctors or whatever, and as long as we are willing to acknowledge in one another those gifts and talents that God has given us and allow them to operate through those that He has granted them to, harmony will reign, but when, because of that almighty dollar we strive for that which is not our lot, is where we find such disorders as we have in the earth today.

Isaiah 3:12, "As for my people, children are their oppressors, and women rule over them. O my people, they which lead thee cause thee to err, and destroy the way of thy paths." You often hear the argument raised that women are just as clever and intelligent as men and there is absolutely no question about that. In fact, in many ways they may supersede men, but this is not what we are talking about. God has created man to fill a certain ministry (roll) in life and He has created and prepared women to fill a specific place in the great plan and purpose that He has ordained, therefore, each have their special call in life. We are ALL equal in the sight of God and may the Lord help us all to begin to treat one another, whether male or female, whether black or white, rich or poor, educated or illiterate, as neighbors, fellow human beings, respecting the office that each holds in the sight of God who has created us and breathed into us of the breath of life.

Who then is our neighbor? In the case of the man who fell among thieves it was the one who gave PRACTICAL SYMPATHY or in other words ministered to his need, the one who regardless of his religion or political beliefs, his racial origin, etc., treated him as a fellow human being.

Who is your neighbor?

Look around, I'm sure you will find him.

THAT I MAY KNOW HIM

My limited vocabulary will hinder me from portraying what the dynamic phrase, quoted by the apostle Paul, really means in Philippians chapter 3:10, "That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death."

To really know someone, is not just sort of a passing acquaintance, but

when we know somebody, we have a CLEAR PERCEPTION OR UNDERSTANDING OF THAT PERSON. The difference between knowing a person and an acquaintance is, you know a person, but not INTIMATELY. The apostle Paul did not want to just know about Christ, not to have just an acquaintance with Him, but TO KNOW HIM INTIMATELY. If you and I were to really know Him, life would be so much different than what it is today.

Recently, I have had a personal desire to really know Him and to experience the power of His resurrection. Though many of us have endeavored to walk with the Lord for many, many years, DO WE REALLY KNOW HIM, have we really experienced the POWER OF HIS RESURRECTION? These words were penned by a man who had a tremendous personal experience with God. II Corinthians 12:2-4, "I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such an one caught up to the third heaven. And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter." He of course was speaking of himself, and though the apostle Paul had such an experience, in writing to the Philippians he said: "That I may know Him." If Paul felt this way after having such a wonderful experience, how much more you and I.

Philippians 3:7-21, (Please take a few minutes and read these verses.)

There are four things Paul speaks of here in these verses: 1. His ambition 2. Righteousness of faith 3. His desire to be like Christ 4. Warning against carnality

Verse 7, "But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ." Living Bible says, "But all these things that I once thought very worthwhile - now I've thrown them all away so that I CAN PUT MY TRUST AND HOPE IN CHRIST ALONE." Many of the things in this life we count so dear, seem as nothing in our search for that intimate walk and relationship with Jesus, besides, being they are so temporal and transitory, they can be swept away at a moment's notice. We can save and save our money, and one stroke of a pen can reduce it to nothing, or our health limits our activities that we cannot enjoy what we have spent a life-time to achieve and accumulate. Paul must have realized the futility of these natural carnal things, and was willing to let go of them in order to gain Christ and a better understanding and relationship with Christ.

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

There was absolutely nothing that Paul had, that was worth anything compared to knowing Christ. He suffered loss, which means it was not easy for him, or will it be for us, to let go of the transitory, in order to gain the eternal. He put aside everything else in order that he could have Christ. Really when we stop to think of it, when we are faced with the impossible, what value have these temporal possessions of ours? I remember a few years ago, visiting a man in the hospital who had had a stroke. He and his wife, as far as the necessities of life were concerned, were very comfortable. As I looked on him that day, being unable to express himself and paralyzed on one side, I thought, he would give everything he had if he could only get out of that bed, and walk and talk again. What good is a million dollars, houses or earthly possessions of any sort at a time like that; the earthly is reduced to nothing, and holds little or no value. **THE NATURAL IS SO FUTILE WHEN STANDING ALONG SIDE OF THE ETERNAL.** As Paul realized this, he was willing to submit to God **EVERYTHING** in order that he might press into making his understanding and relationship with Christ more real and intimate, from his heart he cried; **“OH THAT I MAY KNOW HIM”**. He said, **“I have put aside all else, counting it worth less than nothing, in order to have Christ and KNOW HIM.”** As he hymn writer wrote, **“Is our ALL on the altar of sacrifice laid? Our hearts does the Spirit control? We can only be blessed and have peace and sweet rest, as we yield Him our body and soul.”** This was Paul’s ambition, regardless of the cost: **THAT HE MIGHT KNOW HIM.**

Verse 9: Paul’s sincere desire was to be found in HIM. It is one thing for Christ to be in us, it is another thing for us to be in Christ, to be hid with Christ **IN GOD** (Colossians 3:3), not based on righteousness or the law, **BUT BY THE FAITH OF CHRIST.** We receive that righteousness which is from God. He goes on to say, **“THAT I MAY KNOW HIM, THAT IF BY ANY MEANS I MIGHT ATTAIN UNTO THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD.”** Paul never considered himself as having attained, and I am sure we all realize we have not yet arrived either. **BUT** what he did do, and we too must do, he said: **“FORGETTING those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, WE PRESS TOWARD THE MARK.”**

1. HIS AMBITIONS:

Verse 10 (Phillips), "How changed are my ambitions! Now I long to know Christ and the power shown by His Resurrection: now I long to share His sufferings, even to die as he died, so that I may perhaps attain, as He did, the resurrection from the dead." In order for us to attain such unity, and such a close relationship with Christ as the apostle said, our ambition, our attitude to a lot of things must change, no longer I BUT CHRIST; we must decrease in order that He may increase within us. If our ambitions and desires are centered only on those things that pertain to this life, to the transitory we shall never arrive or attain, but if God may give us sufficient grace to let go of those things that now hinder our progress to attain, and let them fall by the wayside, we shall overcome, praise His name.

We can never get away from the fact that we are just human beings, endeavoring to fulfill God's will and purpose while here on earth, He remembers as the Psalmist has said: "For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust," Psalms 103:14, but living in such a materialistic age as we are, it is very easy to let our man-made ambitions or desires get the best of us, and become the most important thing in our lives. Paul said what things were considered gain in the world's standards; he counted them as loss for Christ. He counted all things loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, for whom, he said, "I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as refuse or rubbish compared to being able to win Christ."

2. RIGHTEOUSNESS BY FAITH

Paul had no desire to just have his own sort of righteousness that came by employing his own laws, rules or regulations, but **THAT WHICH IS THROUGH THE FAITH OF CHRIST, THE RIGHTEOUSNESS WHICH IS OF GOD (NOT MAN MADE) BY FAITH.** Phillips put it this way, "For now my place is in Him, and I am not dependent upon any of the self-achieved righteousness of the Law. God has given me that genuine righteousness which comes from faith in Christ." Our self-righteous acts or laws fail to reach the genuine righteousness given to us from God by having simple faith in Christ Jesus. We must always keep in mind the purpose of the law, as Paul wrote to the Galatians in Chapter 3:23 & 24, "But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith." Phillips, "Before the coming of faith we were all imprisoned under the power of the Law, with our only hope of deliverance the faith that was to be shown to us. Or, to change the metaphor (comparison), the Law was like a strict governess in charge of us until we went to the school of Christ and learned to be justified by faith in Him. Once we had that faith we were completely free from the governess's authority." Let us see here the reason for having A LAW. It is not God's intention that we remain under the do's and don'ts of our

self-righteous laws, only until we are able to receive the righteousness of God by faith in Christ. The reason for the many restrictions placed upon us while growing up, is through such discipline we might be brought to the place where our faith in Christ takes over and thus we have no further need of the law, in other words, it has served its rightful purpose. If we really KNEW HIM, there would be no need to even give people guidelines as to how to live, we would be led with Christ in God. There would be no need of even the ten commandments or any other laws such as speed laws, rules governing our duties, etc., if we lived properly, drove our cars sensibly, etc. The “thou shalt not’s” bring us to that state of maturity where we have learned how to live properly without them.

In reading Romans 7:14-25 it may seem to almost contradict itself, however, that is not true. It bears out the fact that we all possess two natures, the natural and the spiritual, and as verse 14 says that, “... the Law itself is really concerned with the spiritual...” (Phillips). He goes on to say that even his own behavior baffles him. He found himself actually doing things that he really did not want to do, and the things he really did not want to do he found himself doing them. Does this sound familiar, have you ever had the experience? What was his answer for all this? Note verses 17 and 18 (Phillips), “..... it cannot be said ‘I’ am doing them at all - it must be sin that has made its home in my nature. (And indeed, I know from experience that the carnal side of my being can scarcely be called the home of good!) I often find that I have the will to do good, but not the power.” This transformation of mind and heart must come from the Lord. The law is not sufficient to give anyone the strength and the power to overcome sin, there is only one way, and that is through Jesus Christ our Lord.

3. HIS DESIRE TO BE LIKE CHRIST

Paul said, “That I might know Him.” His sincere desire was to be found in Him, verse 9, “And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith.” This righteousness, this faith, is of God, not of man. Paul never considered himself to have attained, and I am sure we all realize that we have not arrived either, but what did he do about it? Note verse 13 & 14, “Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” The Phillips’ Translation says, “I keep going on, grasping ever more firmly that purpose for which Christ grasped me. My brothers, I do not consider myself to have fully grasped it even now. But I do concentrate on this: I leave the past behind and with hands outstretched to whatever lies ahead I go straight for the goal

- my reward the honor of being called by God in Christ (Jesus).” Note, Paul says with hands outstretched to WHATEVER lies ahead, whether good, bad or indifferent, we accept it as from the Lord; this may not be easy but His grace is sufficient. Note a further word of encouragement in verse 15: “Let us therefore, as many be perfect (FULL GROWN) be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you.” Though we have not yet attained, we have every hope of doing so.

4. WARNING AGAINST CARNALITY:

What do we mean be carnality? Carnality belongs to the fleshly, earthly side of us. May I include sexuality. It is the natural part of us that the apostle Paul speaks of in Galatians 5:17, “For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things ye would.” Paul’s solution to this warfare or problem is found in the next verse, “But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law.” The Phillips’ Translation expresses the few verses well, “Here is my advice. LIVE YOUR WHOLE LIFE IN THE SPIRIT AND YOU WILL NOT SATISFY THE DESIRES OF YOUR LOWER NATURE. For the whole energy of the lower nature is set against the Spirit, while the whole power of the Spirit is contrary to the lower nature. Here is the conflict, and that is why you are NOT FREE to do what you want to do. But if you follow the leading of the Spirit, you stand clear of the Law.” The next few verses list the works of the flesh and the fruits of the Spirit. The law in itself could never, never meet either the demands of God, or bring satisfaction to the human heart, but walking in the Spirit will. John 3:30 says, “He must increase, but I must decrease.” In other words, “He must grow greater, but I must grow less.” (Weymouth). Paul also said in verses 13 & 14, “... forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” We must forget and put behind us the failures of the past, and reach out to those things that are before us. There are no doubt many things that we have learned from the past, which will stand us in good stead now and in the future, but we must not dwell in the past but press on into the future for the prize. The word “press” would indicate that it may not come easy, it will likely require effort on our part, but we can be assured we will receive the prize. Verse 15, “Let us therefore, as many as be perfect (FULL GROWN), be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you.” If there be those things that cause us to stumble or doubt, we should never allow them to deprive our understanding and progress of what we are able to accept as the truth, but set them aside until God reveals them unto us, praise His Name.

OH THAT WE MIGHT KNOW HIM, OH THAT WE MIGHT EXPE-

RIENCE THE POWER OF HIS RESURRECTION. Because we are not intimately acquainted with our Lord, because we really do not know Him as we should, it affects our lives in so many different ways; for example we:

1. FEAR: I John 4:17 & 18 tells us, “Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world.” (If only we could believe that.) “There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.” We would have no need to fear anything or anyone if we really knew Him.

2. QUESTION: because we lack understanding of our Lord we ask why this and why that rather than just trust Him and rest in knowing He is leading the way and understands everything concerning us.

3. DOUBT: Oh how we doubt His promises, wondering if He can and will do it.

4. LACK OF TRUST: we try and put our confidence in everything but Christ, when He has promised that He would supply all our needs (Philippians 4:19); and that He would never leave us, nor forsake us (Hebrews 13:5).

5. LACK OF FAITH: without faith the Bible says that it is impossible to please God (Hebrews 11:6). The reason we lack in faith is because we really do not know Him as He really is.

6. LACK OF WISDOM: James 1:5 says, “If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.” If my understanding and relationship to my Lord was close as it should be, if I really knew Him, how could I possibly doubt such a statement?

7. LACK OF POWER: Isaiah 40:29, “He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength.”

8. LACK OF COURAGE OR BOLDNESS: The apostle Paul in writing to the Ephesians, chapter 6 verses 18 & 19 said, “Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints; And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel ..., as I ought to speak.”

How often we are moved upon by the Holy Spirit to do something; pray for someone, to prophesy or sing in the local Church, but we fail through lack of courage or boldness. I believe even these fears would be removed from us if we really knew Him. Oh that we may know Him, that we might experience Him in this intimate way, not from afar off, away somewhere up in heaven, but knowing HE IS OUR GOD, He is the Creator of all things, including us, He it is that has breathed into us of the breath of life, WE CAN KNOW HIM HERE AND NOW.

Phillipians 2:13, "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." The Weymouth translation reads this way: "For it is God Himself whose power **CREATES WITHIN YOU** both the desire and the power to execute His gracious will." It is God who must give us: 1. **THE DESIRE** 2. **THE POWER** to do His gracious will. We often have the desire to do that which is right, but lack the power to do it. It is God at **WORK WITHIN US** that causes these things to happen. The Living Bible says, "For God is at **WORK WITHIN YOU**, helping you want to obey him, and then **HELPING YOU DO WHAT HE WANTS.**" We must ever be mindful that we are nothing of ourselves, we are what we are by **HIS GRACE**. We must, of necessity decrease, in order that **HE** may increase within our lives.

In closing this article I would ask you to please take your Bible and read Phillipians 2:13-18, I will quote it from the Phillips' Translation for the benefit of those who do not have one, "For it is God Who is at work within you, giving you the will and the power **TO ACHIEVE HIS PURPOSE**. Do all you have to do without grumbling or arguing, so that you may be God's children, blameless, sincere and wholesome, living in a warped and diseased world, and shining there like lights in a dark place. For **YOU HOLD IN YOUR HANDS THE VERY WORD OF LIFE.**" Notice please, the emphasis on the word "you". We must desire first of all to do God's will, regardless of what it costs. Paul suffered the loss of all things in order that he might **KNOW HIM**, then it is essential that He gives us of His resurrection power in order for us **TO ACHIEVE HIS PURPOSE**, to do **HIS WILL**.

OH THAT WE ALL MAY KNOW HIM, AND THE POWER OF HIS RESURRECTION, AND THE FELLOWSHIP OF HIS SUFFERINGS; THAT IF BY ANY MEANS WE MIGHT ATTAIN UNTO THE RESURRECTION.

GOD IS ETERNALLY PROGRESSIVE

It is important for us to know and to realize that God is eternally progressive. It is so easy for us to get hung up on points of doctrine. A point of doctrine can hinder us from seeing and understanding the full picture. We must never promote just one part of the full revelation of God. It is impossible to build a doctrine or revelation by the use of only one or two Scripture verses from the Bible. Revelation embodies and fits into the whole plan and purpose of God. Christendom today emphasizes basically the truth of Salvation, not that it is not the key point of our Spiritual walk, it is, but it fails to enhance that wonderful truth with those things that will deepen and establish the Saints in the Way of the Lord and bring them to Sonship and the Kingdom. It is dangerous to our Spiritual growth to dwell in the past

and refuse to enter in to the open door. Philippians 3:10-17 reads, “That I may know him and the power of his resurrection and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Let us therefore, as many as be perfect (or full grown), be thus minded, God shall reveal even this unto you. Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing. Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an example.” The experience of Salvation Paul suggests here often brings many changes in our lives. He said in the Phillips’ Translation that even his ambitions change. He’d long to know Christ and the power shown by his resurrection to the point that he was prepared to share His suffering and even die if necessary, so that he too might attain, as Christ did, the resurrection from the dead. Paul neither felt that he had a right nor did he consider himself to be perfect, but he said, “I keep going on endeavoring to grasp that depth of experience.” that he had not yet attained unto. This ought to be the ambition of every Christian, not to be satisfied with our present level of experience but concentrate on leaving the path behind with our hands wide open and outstretched to whatever new level of experience God has in mind for us, we go straight for the goal. Our Spiritual life is a growth, and each experience in life should bring us just that much closer to the goal of perfection which the Bible teaches us of.

Philippians 3:15 & 16, The Phillips’ Translation records it this way, “All of us who are spiritually adult should set ourselves this sort of ambition, and if a present you cannot see this, yet you will find that this is the attitude which God is leading you to adopt. It is important that we go forward in the light of such truth as we have ourselves attained to.” To stand still is to stagnate. We must press towards the mark. And that word “press” would indicate that we must put some effort into attaining his Spiritual goal in Christ Jesus. Hebrews 6:1-3 speaks to us of this “going on” . “THEREFORE LEAVING the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment. And this will we do, if God permit.” Phillips’ Translation says, “Let us leave behind the elementary teaching about Christ and go forward to adult understanding.”

In no way does this mean that we stop teaching repentance from dead works or faith toward God etc., but to those who are adult in their understanding we need more than just hearing the message of Salvation. To those that have never accepted Christ as their personal Savior, who have little or no experience in Christ, by all means continue to lead them to repentance, to teach them concerning the baptism, to teach them concerning the laying of hands, the resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment. This is what they need, just as we did. But for those who are of adult understanding: we must go forward and not keep encircling the mountain of repentance, and of judgements and baptisms, and if God allows, let us go on. But we must be willing to go on and not remain where we have been spiritually for the last number of years. It is always a joy to my heart as we visit such places as West Indies and Africa, to see the sincere desire and hunger in the hearts of those dear people who long to go on.

The Bible is a wonderful book. There is nothing written that can begin to compare with the Bible. But as we read it; we must never read it as we would a novel. It is more like a textbook from which we can learn as we read from it. It is divided into two parts. The Old Testament and the New Testament. Generally speaking, the Old Testament is filled with types and shadows. The New Testament records the fulfillment of many of those types and shadows mentioned in the old. Hebrews 9:16 & 17, tells us, "For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth." In other words, in the case of a will, the agreement is only valid after death, not before. The Bible is God's last will and testimony to mankind. In order for the Bible to become valid Christ had to die, which He did, which makes the Bible valid, and we have every God given right to claim what it teaches, for the whole content of Christianity would be meaningless. But we know that the Bible does mean what it says, if we only can believe it and practice it. Through the course of life we are many times brought face to face with realities. Just a while ago we learned of a very good friend of ours who suddenly found that he had cancer which was beyond medical help. He is a believer, and we as his

friends have every right to claim divine healing on his behalf, and may the Lord help our unbelief. But what I am trying to say is this: may the Lord help us to begin as never before, to take to heart what the Scriptures say concerning us, and believe the covenants of promise that He has left us. This dear brother's need is not repentance from dead works, it's not the doctrine of judgments, etc. what he needs is, to experience by faith, divine healing for his incurable disease. But what I would like for us to read, and see, and realize is; just as the blood of Christ is sufficient to wash away our sins, and he has forgiven and healed us of those sins, it is by His stripes that we are healed, and we have every spiritual right to claim that promise as well. I Peter 2:24, "Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed." May I point out here that Peter says, "... by whose stripes ye were healed." It's in the past tense. Healing's in the body and the soul were purchased and a supreme price was paid for our sin; for your sin, and for mine. Being dead to our sins should make us alive unto righteousness.

Romans 8:11 tells us, "But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you." The 13th verse goes on to say, "For if we live after the flesh, we shall die: but if we through the Spirit do mortify (or put to death) the deeds of the body, we shall live." My what challenges the Word of God presents to us as believers, and how sad it is when we do not take up that challenge, and learn to believe and accept that which He has prepared for those that would dare to believe Him. There is no doubt, many who have those impossible things looming up before them, which to the natural man are literally impossible to change or to overcome, but I trust that some of the few Scriptures we have read will begin to stir up that faith in our hearts to believe. The Bible tells us in Luke 1:37, "For with God nothing shall be impossible." And again in Luke 18:27, "And he said, The things which are impossible with men are possible with God." Through man's intelligence and his ability to develop and invent things, he has conquered many things that years ago seemed unconquerable, and though he has succeeded in many of his achievements, there are still those things that are beyond his reach. Where I sit writing this article I see the buds beginning to develop on the trees. It will not be long until the flowers bloom, and every time that you hear a newborn baby cry, as the songwriter put it, one must stop and realize God can do those things that are impossible to men. As a little chorus goes that we have been singing so much of late: "I have come to believe in someone greater than me Who guides and protects me, and will at last set me free. He's restoring my soul, and my destiny And all because I have come to believe."

Really, though difficult it may seem to be; it is as simple as the songwriter has put it. All this can happen because we have come to believe. Jesus was asked one day, "What shall we do that we might work the works of God?" Jesus answered and said unto them, "This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom He has sent." Here I believe lies one of the keys to us gaining entrance into those things which eye has not seen nor ear heard, and learning just to believe in the One that God has sent unto us, and who has brought unto us the great and exceeding, and most precious promises. We can do absolutely nothing of ourselves. Without Him we can do nothing, without Him we will surely fail. All we need to do is believe the One whom God has said can do these things that are impossible for men.

The time has come when we must realize that God is eternally progressive, that there is so much more ahead for us, for us to go on to. It would appear since God by prophecies spoke to the Church, two or three years ago now, about this open door, and also since we have passed our 40th year, another spiritual milestone, and have entered into the 41st year, that God has begun to purge the church in order to purify it, and make it to be a glorious church without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing. John 15:1-3 it says, "I AM the true vine and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch that beareth not fruit he taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you." Now, I would like to read those 3 verses, and possible down to the 5th from the Phillips' Translation. "I am the real vine, my Father is the vinedresser. He remove any of my branches which are not bearing fruit, and he prunes every branch that does bear fruit, to increase its yield. Now you have already been pruned by my words. You must go on growing in me, and I will grow in you. Just as the branch cannot bear any fruit unless it shares the life of the vine, so you can produce nothing unless you go on growing in me. I am the vine itself, and you are the branches. It is the man who shares my life, and whose life I share, who proves faithful. For the plain fact is, that apart from me you can do nothing at all."

This is the time of cleansing and we should be aware of this and be ready and willing to allow the Holy Spirit to so move in our lives to remove from us those things that would in any way hinder our growth, and our progress. Each new step requires a greater measure of consecration and dedication. For this church, the body of Christ, must be spotless, without wrinkle or any such thing. Surely this is not too big a price to pay to be considered by God the Father to be His son. Surely this is not too much to ask of us in order that sick bodies can be healed and the power of God manifested in the earth through the members of His body, the church. Surely it is not too much to consider in order that His Kingdom may be established in the

earth, to continue in order that His Kingdom may be established in the earth, to continue on as we have been, time itself will eventually eliminate us, which I am sure is not God's will. Why for 40 years would He speak in such positive tones and lead us in such marvelous ways. Oh, I am sure it must be the breaking of the day. The night is almost gone. The day, that new day, is coming on. Oh, it must be the breaking of the day.

If there were ever a day when the church, you and I as members of the body of Christ, His disciples, as Christians, need to spend time in prayer, in asking God and preparing our lives for the day which is just before us, it is now. It is time for the Saints to take the Kingdom. It is time to break down the strongholds and set the captives free. This is God's plan. This is God's will for the church, and this great manifestation of His power is what as the Bible terms "the manifested sons of God." A manifested son is just a son, a believer, one who has dedicated himself unto God, that his life can be an instrument and a vessel through which God can manifest or reveal, make known, uncover His power. He has so designed to use the church as this tool, an instrument in the last days, and it behooves each and every one of us, that we make those necessary preparations in order that the Spirit of God might move in us. May each one of us take seriously at this particular time to be willing to spend time in prayer, in seeking His face, and allowing His Holy Spirit to not only reveal but to remove from us those things that would in any way prohibit us from becoming mature, manifested sons of the Living God. I John 3:2, "... now we are the sons of God. It does not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him." One of the main prerequisites of a son is to be led by the Spirit. This has often been said: that God is not interested in us being religious, but He is interested, very interested, that we are spiritual, that we are in such a place that the Spirit of God can live, and move, and have His being within us, yielded in such a way that this progress, that is ordained of God for the church, may happen in you and I. May God help us. May God create in us a desire, and may it be the prayer of each one of our hearts.

HOW LONG, O LORD, HOW LONG?

Most believers, in their experience, encounter those physical, material and spiritual battles that seem to be never ending; and as the Psalmist prayed, he said that the Heavens were as brass and his prayers returned unto him. In Lamentations 3:1-20, the prophet bewails his own calamities and afflictions and in verse eight: "also when I cry and shout, he shutteth out my prayer." No doubt everyone has had a similar experience, (read those verses), but as the prophet went on to write, verse 21, "This I recall to my mind, THEREFORE HAVE I HOPE," Praise the Lord. Notice how the tenor

changes, “It is of the Lord’s mercies that we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning: GREAT IS THY FAITHFULNESS. The Lord is my portion, saith my soul; therefore will I HOPE IN HIM. The Lord is good unto them THAT WAIT FOR HIM, to the soul that seeketh Him. It is good that a man should both HOPE and QUIETLY WAIT for the salvation of the Lord.” How wonderful to know that His compassion for His children is renewed daily, GREAT IS THY FAITHFULNESS.

Many times, as we struggle beneath the burden of sickness, we close our eyes to rest, in hope that the morning will bring significant changes; only to find, that the pain or discomforts of our ailing body are still with us and being still encumbered with the stress and strain of sickness we are vulnerable to the fiery darts of depression and discouragement fired at us by the enemy; that is when we must use our shield of faith to ward off the fiery darts of the accuser of all men, then we must remember, regardless of how we feel, changes or no changes, His compassions are renewed every morning. He gives strength for each day, GREAT IS HIS FAITHFULNESS.

What tremendous hope and assurance we find in God’s Word. Listen to what the Psalmist wrote, Psalm 6:3-9, “My soul is also sore vexed: but Thou, O Lord, HOW LONG? Return, O Lord, deliver my soul: oh save me for Thy mercies’ sake. For in death there is no remembrance of Thee: in the grave who shall give Thee thanks? I AM WEARY WITH MY GROANING; all the night make I my bed to swim; I water my couch with my tears. Mine eye is consumed because of grief; it waxeth old because of all mine enemies. Depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity; FOR THE LORD HATH HEARD THE VOICE OF MY WEEPING. The Lord hath heard my supplication; THE LORD WILL RECEIVE MY PRAYER.”

I am sure that the Psalmist here describes your experience very accurately. How often have we said to the Lord, “HOW LONG?” Have you ever become weary in your fight against your conflict and watered your pillow with your tears? Have you ever felt that the Lord had forsaken you and no one seemed to understand much less care?

We have instances related in the Scriptures which are very similar. Jesus, while He hung on the cross in the ninth hour cried with a loud voice, “My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?” Matthew 27:46.

I Kings 19

This chapter demonstrates how man can sink into despondency and wish he were dead. Elijah had returned to Mount Horeb where Moses, 500 years before, had founded the nation, now the hour had come when Elijah returns to this holy mount, where God appeared to Moses face to face; in the hour

of bitter defeat. Verse 4, “But he himself went a day’s journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a juniper tree: and he requested for himself that he might die; and said, IT IS ENOUGH; now, O Lord, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers.”

Have you ever had that experience, when you felt you would like to end it all, when you have said, “enough is enough”? It seemed like you had tried everything, you prayed and prayed until your prayers were just a repetition. Elijah had come to the end of himself, self pity had set in. Isn’t it wonderful that the Lord knows better than we ourselves, just how much we can take, and as the apostle Paul wrote in I Corinthians 10:13, “There hath no temptation taken you but such as is COMMON TO MAN: BUT GOD IS FAITHFUL, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way of escape, that ye may be able to bear it.” GOD IS FAITHFUL, He has promised to never leave us nor forsake us regardless of what our trial or temptation is.

Elijah in his despondency had a heavenly visitation, the angel of the Lord touched him and told him to arise and eat. He went forth into a cave and lodged there and “behold the WORD OF THE LORD came to him, and he said unto him, WHAT DOEST THOU HERE, ELIJAH?” (Verse 9)

Now let us listen to Elijah’s story, verse 10, “And he said, I have been very jealous for the Lord God of hosts: for the children of Israel have forsaken Thy covenant, thrown down Thine altars, and slain Thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I ONLY, am left; for they seek my life, to take it away.”

Have you ever had that lonely feeling, when you felt all alone? Elijah did. The way he felt was really not right, though he had every reason to feel that way, he was not by any means alone and neither are we.

Verse 11. “And He said, Go forth, and stand upon the mount before the Lord. And, behold, the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains and brake in pieces the rocks before the Lord; but THE LORD WAS NOT IN THE WIND: and after the wind an earthquake; BUT THE LORD WAS NOT IN THE EARTHQUAKE: and after the earthquake a fire; But GOD WAS NOT IN THE FIRE: and after the fire A STILL SMALL VOICE.” Hallelujah. How often we expect to find God where the apparent ‘action is’, in the wind, the earthquake or fire, only to find that He is not there, but in the still small voice, as the translators put it, “in a light whisper or a gentle whisper.” As the prophet Zechariah has said, chapter 4:6, “Not by might, nor by power, BUT BY MY SPIRIT, saith the Lord of Hosts.”

John 12:37, “But though He had done so many miracles before them, YET THEY BELIEVED NOT ON HIM.” Outward signs or manifestations of great power may not cause anyone to believe.

Hebrews 3:9,10 , “When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years. Wherefore I was grieved with the generation, and said, They do always err in their heart; **AND THEY HAVE NOT KNOWN MY WAYS.**”

Jesus said in John 6:26, “Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, **BUT** because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled.”

No doubt we often think, if God would just answer my prayer, relieve my pain, supply my need, perform a miracle, I would be ever grateful and believe, but it is not by might nor by power but by His Spirit. He is not in the wind, the earthquake, or the fire, but in the **STILL SMALL VOICE**, that is where we find our stability and strength.

After this encounter with the Lord of Hosts, Elijah wrapped his mantle around himself, then stood in the entrance to the cave and God asked him again, “**WHAT DOEST THOU HERE, ELIJAH?**” His answer was the same, even after this heavenly visitation he was still crying ‘the blues’, that Israel had forsaken God’s covenants, thrown down their altars, slain the prophets and they were looking for him. Paul said in II Corinthians 12:8-10, “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.**” Paul asked three times concerning this thorn in his flesh, how many times have we brought our petition before the Lord and still no answer, but it is very important that we pay particular attention to the manner in which Paul replies to what God has just revealed to him, notice he said, “**MOST GLADLY THEREFORE I WILL RATHER GLORY IN MY INFIRMITIES, THAT THE POWER OF CHRIST MAY REST UPON ME.**” Once the Apostle realized that God had something to do with this situation he was ready to bear the infirmity and retain the power of Christ than to be free of his troubles, and possibly lose that intimate relationship to God through Christ. Now notice what he says in verse 10, “Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses **FOR CHRIST’S SAKE: for when I AM WEAK, THEN AM I STRONG.**” There comes a Divine Strength in just knowing that God stands with us in all of our infirmities, reproaches, necessities (privations), distresses, if we are doing it for Christ’s sake and not just being harassed by the enemy, we realize that when we are weak **HE IS STRONG.**

Elijah was told what to do in the next few verses, then God assures him that he is **NOT ALONE.** Verse 18, “Yet I have left me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which **HAVE NOT** bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him.” Paul referred to this Scripture in Romans eleven speaking concerning the remnant of Israel. Romans 11:3, “Lord,

they have killed Thy prophets, and digged down thine altars; and I am left alone, and they seek my life. But what saith the answer of God unto him? I have reserved to myself seven thousand men, who have not bowed the knee to the image of Baal. Even so then at **THIS PRESENT TIME** also there is a remnant **ACCORDING TO THE ELECTION OF GRACE.**” Verse 7. “What then? Israel hath not obtained that which He seeketh for; **BUT THE ELECTION HATH OBTAINED IT**, and the rest were blinded.

We can see by all this that our prayers are not always answered the way we want or the time we want.

Hebrews 10:35-37, “Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward. **FOR YE HAVE NEED OF PATIENCE**, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise. For yet a little while and He that shall come **WILL COME**, and will not tarry.” James 1:4 “But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.” Through all the varied experiences of this life, whether good or bad, God is working something out for our good. Romans 8:28, “For we know that **ALL THINGS WORK TOGETHER FOR GOOD TO THEM THAT LOVE God**, to them **WHO ARE THE CALLED ACCORDING TO His purpose.**” It is only through the grace of God that we can believe this and accept it as fact.

One’s attitude plays a very important role here. Paul was deeply concerned about this thorn in his flesh until he realized that God was working in it all, then God’s grace did not lift him out of his problem, but gave him grace to bear it. I am sure Paul came out a better man through it all as we will if we ask God for that sufficient grace to bear it.

Have you ever noticed that when you are seeking God concerning something, whether spiritual, physical or material, how your prayer life and your relationship to God is enriched? We may live in that attitude of prayer for days or weeks. It affects the way we live, a lot of heart searching goes on and we make an honest effort to walk according to His will for our lives and not after the dictates of the fleshly mind, so we see that these times of tribulation and testing are not all as unfruitful as we may think.

Though Elijah’s ministry had been a ministry of miracles, fire and sword, shutting up the heavens so it rained not, being fed by the ravens, raised the dead, called down fire from heaven, slayed the prophets of Baal with the sword and brought rain again to the land. Though he had a very active, prosperous ministry, God was trying to tell him something, that it was not by force or any manifestation of great power, not the wind, earthquake or fire, but by **THE STILL SMALL VOICE** that He speaks and gives direction to the human heart, not by power nor by might **BUT BY MY SPIRIT** saith the Lord of Hosts.

HOW LONG, O LORD?

Psalm 6:4-9 “Return, O Lord, deliver my soul: oh save me for Thy mercies’ sake. For in death there is no remembrance of Thee: in the grave who shall give Thee thanks? I am weary with my groaning; all the night make I my bed to swim; I water my couch with my tears. Mine eye is consumed because of grief; it waxeth old because of all mine enemies. Depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity; for the Lord hath heard the voice of my weeping. The Lord hath heard my supplication; the Lord will receive my prayer.

Psalm 13:1-6 Psalm 73:1-28 NOTE verse 17, scene changes.

I do not want to leave the impression that the only way we can have a close intimate relationship with our Heavenly Father is when we are in trouble and need of His help, God forbid. Whatever situation we may find ourselves, God can and will be standing there with us, but as in the case of Elijah, we need not always be looking for Him in the wind, earthquake, fir but IN THE STILL SMALL VOICE. The Psalmist says it well in Psalm 139:7-14, “Whither shall I go from Thy Spirit? Or whither shall I flee from Thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, Thou are there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, Thou are there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall Thy hand lead me, and Thy right hand shall hold me. Yea, darkness hideth not from Thee. For Thou hast possessed my reins: Thou hast covered me in my mother’s womb. I will praise Thee: for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: Marvelous are Thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well.”

Regardless of where we may go He is always there, whether in joy or sorrow, victory or defeat, in light or in darkness, in liberty or bondage. HE IS ALWAYS THERE.

I would like to make reference once again to our attitude. I read once that our attitude is more important than facts. We can have all the facts stacked against us, but as long as our attitude is right we will come out a winner. If we allow our problems to influence our opinions or feelings on the matter it will reveal our disposition, which in turn will display our likes or dislikes. If we think negative the results cannot help but be of a negative nature, we must maintain a strong position in the matter and think and act in a positive way. The Scriptures tell us that whatsoever a man thinketh in his heart, that is what he really is.

O LORD HOW LONG? Psalm 13 begins with the same words, “How long wilt Thou forget me, O Lord? For ever? How long wilt Thou hide Thy face from me? How long shall I take counsel in my soul, having sorrow in my heart daily? How long shall mine enemies be exalted over me?” These are the kinds of questions often asked when we find ourselves in a difficult situation. Verse 3, “Consider and hear me, O Lord my God: lighten mine

eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death; Lest mine enemy say, I have prevailed against him; and those that trouble me rejoice when I am moved BUT I HAVE TRUSTED IN THY MERCY; MY HEART SHALL REJOICE IN THY SALVATION. I WILL SING UNTO THE LORD, BECAUSE HE HATH DEALT BOUNTIFULLY WITH ME.”

There is a very important secret here, that we must all learn. When these trials and tribulations come, it is only natural that they will have a definite affect upon us in many ways, rob us of our sleep, our appetite, etc., but God only expects us to carry this burden so long, then we must approach God in a positive tone, as the Psalmist did when he said, “BUT I have trusted in Thy mercy; my heart shall rejoice in Thy salvation. I WILL SING UNTO THE LORD.” There is no scriptural indication that the circumstances had changed, but through it all, David TRUSTED IN HIS MERCY. He presented his case to God, as we all have the right to do, but once our facts are laid out before God, we should never carry this burden day and night, for months on end, but TRUST IN HIS MERCY and SING UNTO THE LORD.

The apostle Paul in writing to the Romans, chapter fourteen, verse seventeen, tells us what the kingdom is not and what it is. “For the kingdom of God IS NOT meat and drink; BUT righteousness, peace and joy IN THE HOLY GHOST.” I always like to think of these three commodities as the fruits of the kingdom. Righteousness, as believers and Christ’s disciples we must think and do those things that are right. In order for anyone to qualify or be a candidate for the kingdom, our lives must be in order and we must walk right before God, there is no place for the unrighteous in the kingdom. The second fruit of the kingdom is peace and as Jesus said, “Peace, I leave with you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.” John 14:27 The Philip’s translates it this way. “I leave behind with you - peace: I give you my own peace and my gift is nothing like the peace of this world.” Verse 28, “You must not be distressed and you must not be daunted.” (frightened or discouraged) The peace this world offers is confused peace, it never satisfies the inner longings of one’s heart and usually ends in conflict of one sort or another. Jesus is the author and the very essence of peace. The third fruit of the kingdom is joy. Nehemiah 8:10, “For THE JOY OF THE LORD IS YOUR STRENGTH” and Psalm 16:11 “Thou wilt show me the path of life; IN THY PRESENCE IS FULNESS OF JOY; at Thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.” Righteousness, peace and joy are gifts from God, none of these can be purchased or attained except by the Holy Ghost, so again, we see how we must depend upon God for EVERYTHING.

For those who may, at the time of reading this article, be going through some sort of trial, may the Lord give you strength and enable you to follow

closely the simple rules of trusting God. All too often we let symptoms overrule our trust. David could have quite easily done this but he said, "I HAVE TRUSTED IN THY MERCY; MY HEART SHALL REJOICE IN THY SALVATION."

In Psalm 37 David gives six steps to follow. Verses 1-8 "Fret not thyself because of evildoers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity. For they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb. Trust in the Lord, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed. Delight thyself also in the Lord; and He shall give thee the desires of thine heart. Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in Him; and He shall bring it to pass. And He shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noonday. Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him: fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, because of him who bringeth wicked devices to pass. Cease from anger, and forsake wrath: fret not thyself in any wise to do evil. TRUST, DELIGHT, COMMIT, REST, CEASE FROM ANGER. These steps are progressive and can certainly be applied to practically any or all circumstances.

If your problem is physical, though medical science uses the word terminal, which means the end, there is no such thing with God. In God there are many beginnings but no endings. Though your sickness may be of a long duration it does not mean that it is God's will that you die. God is not just concerned with some sickness or problems, He has assured us through Paul in Philippians 4:19, "But my God SHALL supply ALL your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus." Whether physical, material or spiritual, there is no need that He will not supply.

In closing let us read two verses from Psalm 3:5,6 which are very applicable. "TRUST IN THE LORD WITH ALL THINE HEART: AND LEAN NOT UNTO THINE OWN UNDERSTANDING. IN ALL THY WAYS ACKNOWLEDGE HIM, AND HE SHALL DIRECT THY PATHS." In reality, the world that we live in leaves us nothing that we can put our trust in, but as believers we have the unspeakable privilege of putting our trust in God. One of the worst things we can do is to lean upon our own understanding, what we think and understand with the natural mind can never unravel the mysteries of the age in which we live, can never solve our problems, but as we learn to acknowledge Him in ALL OUR WAYS. He SHALL direct our paths, Praise His Name.

CHOSEN TO BE A SON

CHOSEN - means select or prefer. We are chosen or selected as sons to accomplish God's purposes.

Matthew 20:16, "So the last shall be first, and the first shall be last: FOR

MANY ARE CALLED BUT FEW ARE CHOSEN.” Matthew 22:14 gives the same message. Call means to summon, these references infer that God calls or summons many, but out of all He calls there are only a few that He actually selects.

I do not want to leave the impression here that God is a respecter of persons because we know that the scriptures teach us different. It does not mean that those whom He calls are not Christians and will one day go to be with Him in heaven. However, out of all that are called He selects but a few to fulfill the roll of a son.

Haggai 2:23, “In that day, saith the Lord of hosts, will I take thee, O Zerubbabel, my servant, the son of Shealtiel, saith the Lord, and will make thee a signet: FOR I HAVE CHOSEN THEE, saith the Lord of hosts.” Another translation puts it this way: “and make you like a signet ring.” In the days when signet rings were used to sign documents, it was not everyone who could usurp such authority on behalf of the king, but the prophet here tells Zerubbabel that because he was selected his life would be used as a signet, or stamp.

Deuteronomy 7:6,7, “For thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God; the Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth. The Lord did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people: BUT BECAUSE THE LORD LOVED YOU.”

In these verses God assures Israel that they are not only a holy people in the sight of the Lord but a chosen or select people, a special people above all people on the face of the earth. His reasons for choosing them was not because they were large in number but BECAUSE HE LOVED THEM. God so loved the world that He gave, Love, what is it? The word means strong affection, not just a passing fancy, or that which our TV screens display, that really has no connection with true love. Jesus wrote and said: “Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.” The Phillips translation records it this way: “There is not greater love than this - that a man should lay down his life for his friends.” You are my friends if you do what I tell you to do. I shall not call you servants any longer, for a servant does not share his master’s confidence. No, I call you friends, now, because I have told you EVERYTHING THAT I HAVE HEARD FROM THE FATHER. “It is not that you have chosen me; BUT IT IS I WHO HAVE CHOSEN (SELECTED) YOU. I have appointed (chose) you to go and bear fruit that will be lasting; so that WHATEVER YOU ASK THE FATHER IN MY NAME, HE WILL GIVE IT YOU.” John 15:13-16. The Psalmist says in Psalm 4:3, “But know that the Lord hath set apart him

that is godly for himself; the Lord will hear when I call unto him.”

Many receive the call of God, but we as individuals have a responsibility to what we do with that call after we have received it. If we endeavor to walk Godly and fulfill the will of God in our daily lives, then we put ourselves in the position before God to be chosen or selected as sons to receive responsibility and bear fruit that will last.

In passing may I say, that we have definitely come to that time when God is requiring of us a much deeper consecration. We have heard the message, we have received the call, it is time for us all to NOW qualify ourselves to be chosen or selected as sons.

Romans 8:28-30 (Phillips) “Moreover we know that to those who love God, who are called according to His plan, everything that happens fits into a pattern for good. God, in his foreknowledge, 1. Chose them to bear the family likeness of His Son, that he might be the eldest of a family of many brothers; 2. He chose (selected) them long ago; 3. when the time came He called them; 4. He made them righteous in His sight; 5. and then lifted them to the splendor of life AS HIS OWN SONS.”

Acts 9:15,16, tells us the account of Paul’s call; “But the Lord said unto him, go thy way; for his is a CHOSEN VESSEL unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel. For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name’s sake.”

When we look back of Paul’s life, Galatians 1:13-17 and see how, though he persecuted the church and did everything to oppose it, yet he says in verse 15: “But when it pleased God, WHO SEPARATED ME FROM MY MOTHER’S WOMB: and called me by His grace, to reveal His son IN ME, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood,” we see that he later writes (as I have quoted from Romans 8:28-30), what he actually means. Paul was willing to suffer and comply with whatever God required of him and so must we.

I Corinthians 1:26-29, God always takes the most impossible situations and capitalizes on them in order to show His greatness. “For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are; That no flesh should glory in his presence.” It is the work of God that He has planned to take the weakest of His creatures to bring about His mightiest acts. Man in his fallen state is far below the original glorious being whom we call Adam. Of all God’s creatures this human creature is the only one that is capable

of dying, yet Almighty God has decreed that this creature should be used of God to destroy death itself till that last and most fearful of all enemies should be placed beneath the feet of man and beneath the feet of God. By man came death; by man comes the resurrection of the dead, he becomes the instrument through which reconciliation comes.

Ephesians 1:4-14 (Weymouth translation) "He chose us as His own in Christ before the creation of the world, that we might be holy and without blemish in His presence. For He predestined us to be adopted by Himself as sons through Jesus Christ - such being His gracious will and pleasure - to praise of the splendor of His grace with which He has enriched us in

the beloved One. It is in Him, and through the shedding of His blood, that we have our deliverance - the forgiveness of our offences - so abundant was God's grace, the grace which He, the possessor of all wisdom and understanding, LAVISHED upon us, when He made known to us the secret of His will. And this is in harmony with God's merciful purpose for the government of the world when the times are ripe for it - the purpose which He has cherished in His own mind of restoring the whole creation to find its one Head in Christ; yes, things in heaven and things on earth, to find their one Head in Him. In Him, too, we have been made heirs, having been chosen beforehand in accordance with the intention of Him whose might carries out in everything the design of His own will, so that we should be devoted to the extolling of His glorious attributes - we who were the first to fix our hopes on Christ. And in Him you also, after listening to the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation - having believed in Him - were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit; that Spirit being a pledge and foretaste of our inheritance, in anticipation of its full redemption - the inheritance which He has purchased to be specially His for the extolling of His glory." There is much in these verses that one may stumble over, but we should never let that happen. If we ask Him, the Holy Spirit will enlighten our minds and understandings on those things that we find difficult to receive. The choosing of God is like a carpenter making his selection of material for a certain job, it's like the farmer grading his apples, selecting the choice quality, etc. They are all two by fours or apples, but only the 'select' are used where they will bear witness or testimony of the tradesman's skills.

Having been selected of God, we should be devoted to the extolling of His glorious attributes, we who were the first to fix our hopes on Christ. An attribute is a characteristic and Paul says here that we should extol or reveal the characteristics of our elder brother Jesus. The way we do this is by using the gifts and talents imparted to us from God by the laying on of hands and prophecy. Read carefully and prayerfully again the passage quoted above from the Weymouth translation and let the Holy Spirit bring life to its meaning.

James 2:5, "Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them THAT LOVE HIM?" There is so much said here in so few words. A requisite of sonship has nothing to do with this world's goods or its systems, however, we must possess faith which makes us heirs (one who is entitled to inherit another's property), of the Kingdom which he has promised to them that love him. Love gradually builds a close relationship one with another and that is what God desires and requires of us.

I Peter 2:9-10 (Phillips), "But you are God's 'chosen generation'. His

‘royal priesthood’, His ‘holy nation’, His ‘peculiar people’ - all the old titles of God’s people now belong to you. It is for you NOW to demonstrate the goodness of Him who has called you out of darkness into His amazing light. In the past you were not ‘a people’ at all: NOW you are the people of God. In the past you had no experience of His mercy, but NOW it is INTIMATELY YOURS.”

What is the Divine reason for this selecting and choosing by God? To produce SONS. John 1:12, “But as many as received Him, to them gave He POWER TO BECOME the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name.” Jesus in coming to His own gave unto them the power or authority or right to BECOME the sons of God. Here again we see this divine pattern showing up. Phillip quotes it this way: “Wherever men did accept him he gave them the power to become sons of God. These were the men who truly believed in Him (or had faith in Him) and their birth depended not on the course of nature nor on any impulse or plan of man, BUT ON GOD.” Here once again, man was called and given the opportunity to do something with that call in order that he might be chosen of God.

Romans 8:14 tells us that the main characteristic of a son is one who will be led or guided, directed, by the Spirit of God. We may think at times that to be led by the Holy Spirit is a difficult thing, but it actually is not. It does require dedication and a willingness to submit to His will but as one walks with God, this becomes more and more natural and we as the Psalmist says: ‘delight to do His will’. Psalm 40:8.

Galatians 4:1-7 Being an heir to something sort of puts us in line for what is to come, we do not have possession or authority as long as we remain just an heir, but when the fulness of time has come, God began to set the stage for us and through the birth of Christ and through His death and resurrection He was able to adopt us as His very own sons, praise God, and because of this He has sent the Spirit of His own Son into our hearts. We now become possessive and by this act or being joined TOGETHER by ONE spirit, we can NOW say with a full heart, without any reservations, FATHER, MY FATHER. We are no longer looked upon by the Father as a servant but a SON and an heir of God through Christ. My what a relationship, taken from outside, from the family circle of the world and set in the inner family circle of God, Romans 8:15 (Phillips).

We now must begin to radiate the nature and characteristics of our Father such as our elder brother Jesus does. We must decrease and HE must increase, John 3:30. Philippians 2:15, “That ye may be blameless and harmless the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom YE shine as lights.” We must begin as never before to let our light so shine before men, that they may see our

good works, and glorify our Father which is in heaven.” Matthew 5:16. **WE MUST DO THIS** - we have a responsibility here, not to just sit back and wait for things to happen supernaturally, but we are responsible to see that our lamps are full of oil and well trimmed and the lamp glass is bright and clean so that we reveal a clear light, we should never mar it with our doubts and fears, etc.

I John 3:1,2, “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 see him as he is.” I like the Phillips translation here; “Consider the incredible love that the Father has shown us in allowing us to be called “children of God” -and that is not just what we are called, **BUT WHAT WE ARE**. Our heredity on the Godward side is no mere figure of speech - which explains why the world will no more recognize us than it recognized Christ.” Let us just stop and think for a moment. I am sure we would not want to share our name with just anybody, but consider the incredible love our Heavenly Father has towards mankind in allowing us, sinful and all as we may have been, with not the best reputations, to allow us to bear His name and be called “children of God”, and as the scriptures says, this is not just what we are called but **WHAT WE ARE**, hallelujah.

Now are heredity (means passing from parents to offspring) on the Godward side is no mere figure of speech, it is as real, if not more so, than the natural tie. We begin, as God’s children, to take on His nature, His mind etc. and act and live, not according to the dictates of the carnal man, but the Spiritual man which has come to live and abide within us. Oh what a tremendous truth, what a glorious reality that **NOW WE ARE THE SONS OF GOD**. Oh yes, there is much that we do not know and understand about it, but as John writes in the second verse, and I am still quoting from the Phillips, “We don’t know what we shall become in the future. We only **KNOW** that, if reality were to break through, **WE SHOULD REFLECT HIS LIKENESS**, for we shall see him as he really is”! Paul wrote in Galatians 2:20, no longer I but Christ dwelling in me.

Adoption means, the setting or placing of a son. Romans 8:15 reads, “For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father.” Phillips says, “Nor are we meant to relapse into the old slavish attitude of fear - **YOU HAVE BEEN ADOPTED (set) INTO THE VERY FAMILY CIRCLE OF GOD** and can say with a full heart; “Father my Father”. When a child is adopted they are taken from the one family and set as a member of the family, **NOT A GUEST**, in the family circle of the other.

Galatians 3:26, "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus". Through having faith in Christ, we not only become His Sons, but we lose total identity in Him, for the next verse goes on to say that when we were baptized into Christ we have put on Christ and by so doing there is neither Jew nor Greek, bond or free, male or female, for we are ALL ONE IN HIM. What a glorious union restored, man and deity. What a wonderful fusing together of nations and joining together of male and female. No more need of such organizations as the league of nations or united nations or women's lib, every man and woman, boy and girl, will have found their rightful place in God's wonderful family, each having been given their equal rights and responsible positions. Ephesians 1:5, "Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will." The Living Bible puts it in an easy to understand way; "His UNCHANGING PLAN has always been to adopt us into his own family by sending Jesus Christ to die for us." We should never fear nor put up our defensive guard when we hear the word predestination. I must confess there is a great deal that I personally do not understand about it, but I do know for certain that it has absolutely nothing to do with fatalism. Many of the immutable acts of God are hard to understand but I can assure you, in His good time He will draw back the curtain and remove the scales from off our eyes in order that we may behold in greater light the fulness of His glorious will. It has always been God's desire and plan to adopt or set in place each new born child in His wonderful family. God predestinates according to His foreknowledge. The farmer grades his apples and selects them after they are grown, but God selects according to His foreknowledge.

MANIFESTED SONS - manifest means to reveal or make known. This is a big subject and I do not feel to go into it at this time other than to say, this is the ultimate goal God has for His children, Romans 8:19, "For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the Sons of God." I like the way Phillips puts it: "The whole creation is on tiptoe to see the wonderful sight of the sons of God coming into their own." The Revised Standard says: "For the creation waits with eager longing FOR THE REVEALING OF THE SONS OF GOD."

A manifested son is simply a son that is revealed taking his rightful place in God's plan. The reason God gave gifts unto men is to equip them to do His service. When the Holy Spirit reveals a son, He will not put on a display of the works of the flesh, but only the working of the Holy Spirit.

In closing I am reminded of the song we have been singing a great deal lately, which conveys and seems to sum up our thoughts: He said, I've chosen you for the Kingdom of God Chosen to serve in the Kingdom of God, Chosen to live in the Kingdom of God, In the Kingdom, the Kingdom of God.

HATH GOD SAID

Genesis 3:1, “Yea, hath God said, ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?” These words spoken by the serpent in the beautiful garden of Eden, were spoken to Eve (The Life-giving one). The serpent, by the power of suggestion, challenged Eve’s reasoning by asking her if she thought that that is really what God said; did He really mean what He said; why just that particular tree, etc? Please note the positive answer she gave him, verse 3, “But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, GOD HATH SAID, ye shall NOT EAT of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.” Now the serpent questions what GOD HATH SAID by saying, verse 4, “And the serpent said unto the woman, ye shall not surely die.” It is very important here, that we fully recognize what is transpiring. I am sure we must all agree, that what God had said was very clear and to the point, if we accept it at face value. If I might paraphrase His words in this way, ‘You may eat of all the trees in the whole garden, but of this tree, which is in the middle of the garden, you must not eat.’ What could be clearer than that? Eve also knew what God had said, but the serpent presented his challenge in a very subtle way: ‘Oh come on Eve, you don’t really believe that, do you? God knows that if you were to eat of that tree of the knowledge of good and evil that you would become as wise as He Himself and He certainly would never want any competition in that regard’.

It would be well to emphasize here that, though the serpent tempted the woman and not the man, the fall was equally upon the man, in that, when she brought the fruit to Adam, the Bible says, “AND HE DID EAT.” There was no more excuse for the man to eat the forbidden fruit offered to him by the woman, as it was for the woman to yield to that offered to her by the serpent. Note verse 7, “And the eyes of them BOTH were opened, and THEY knew THEY were naked.”

The cliché often used today, “everybody is doing it” would not stand here. Adam knew, as well as Eve, what God had said, and just because his wife sinned by partaking of the forbidden fruit, did not give him license to do likewise.

Let us get the true setting here. God had ordained that man and woman play a very vital role in His plan and purpose for mankind and the whole of His creation. His creative word was designed to include man. After, by Divine decree He had said, “Let the firmament and the waters be divided the one from the other, let the earth bring forth seed, let there be light”, etc. God also said in Genesis 1:26 “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every

creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. SO GOD CREATED MAN ...” This was all God’s doing, all this was according to His foreknowledge and He, God, was the creator and organizer of the whole master plan. We as a part of this Divine plan were meant to be workers TOGETHER with God the Creator. There was no need of that which was created by God the Master Builder, to become as wise as God; he, man was already ordained to assume tremendous responsibility and would exercise unlimited power and authority UNDER GOD, as a worker together with Him. Satan himself, fell from power through pride and desiring to be equal with God rather than submitting to His Divine will and exercise the authority imparted to him by God. People still struggle with the same problem today, but through this wonderful plan of redemption, God is restoring all that which has fallen, to find its one head in Him. Only God would and could use the same instrument (man) to bring about this reconciliation, the same instrument that brought about its downfall (man).

It is not my intention to dwell upon how it fell, but how it will be restored and reconciled back to God once again.

The lesson to be learned through the fall is very simple and still applies to us all today. It is a lesson in obedience. We must all learn to recognize WHAT GOD HATH SAID and endeavor, by His grace to do and live by what His Word teaches us. Let us now look at a few of the things that God has said we should do or not do. Before we get into that, let us all realize that the Word of the Lord, left us in the Holy Bible, never changes. Hebrews 13:8, “Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and forever.” Psalm 15 describes those who are citizens of Zion and in verse 5 says, “HE THAT DOETH THESE THINGS shall never be moved;” or shall never, never be changed. God and His Word never changes, it means exactly the same today as it did the day it was inspired; it is man and his world that changes and we find it very difficult, if not impossible, to fit God’s unchangeable word into our ever changing world and society.

May I ask us, as the serpent asked Eve, a few questions and respond by WHAT GOD HAD SAID, beginning with the ten commandments, and we can only mention a few of them.

1. Honor thy father and thy mother. Honor means to respect. How is such a command accepted in today’s world? The attitude is: they have their rights, parents do not understand, this after all is the 1990’s.

2. Thou shalt not kill - only if it’s self defense or if there is no other way that you can achieve your goal.

3. Thou shalt not bear false witness - only if it helps me to get ahead.

4. Thou shalt not steal - now we call it shop lifting.

5. Thou shalt not commit adultery - only if my partner doesn’t understand.

There are just so many things that we try to find legitimate excuses for, rather than simply accept **WHAT GOD HAS SAID** concerning such things as:

a. **DIVORCE** - Divorce has become an acceptable, common thing, not only in society, but I am afraid in religious circles as well. We are beginning to hear more and more about it even in the Body of Christ, the Church. All through scriptures God used the prophets of old and His apostles to declare **WHAT GOD HAS SAID**. Matthew 19:7-9, “they say unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away? He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: **BUT FROM THE BEGINNING IT WAS NOT SO. AND I SAY UNTO YOU, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, comitteth adultery.**” **HATH GOD SAID THIS?** Think seriously about it.

b. **ADULTERY AND FORNICATION** - Another acceptable, common practice in the world we live in. **WHAT HAS GOD SAID?** Acts 15:29, “That ye abstain from meats offered to idols and from fornication: from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well.” I Corinthians 10:8, “Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day

three and twenty thousand.” GOD HAS SAID, “Do not have sex before marriage.”

ADULTERY - Matthew 5:27,28, “Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, **THOU SHALT NOT COMMIT ADULTERY**: But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.” God has said this.

INCEST - Which means having sexual intercourse between persons related within the degree wherein marriage is **FORBIDDEN BY LAW**. A growing problem, and the Bible gives a straight forward **NO** as it does to homosexuality and lesbianism, please read Leviticus chapter 20 to see **WHAT GOD HATH SAID**.

SALVATION - John 3:16, “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” The plan of salvation is so simple, nevertheless, **GOD HATH SAID** all we must do is believe in His Son, confess with our mouths, the Lord Jesus Christ, and our sins are forgiven.

WISDOM - James 1:5,6, “If any of you lack wisdom, **LET HIM ASK OF GOD, THAT GIVETH TO ALL MEN LIBERALLY**, and upbraideth not; and it **SHALL** be given him. But let him ask in faith **NOTHING** wavering.” God has told us that He has made available His wisdom unto us if we will just ask Him for it, **HE** has said this. The paraphrase puts it this way: “If you want to know what God wants us to do **ASK HIM**, and **HE WILL GLADLY** tell you, for he is always ready to give a bountiful supply of wisdom to all who ask Him; he will not resent it. But when we ask him, be sure that you **REALLY EXPECT HIM TO TELL YOU**, for a doubtful mind will be as unsettled as a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind; and every decision you then make will be uncertain, as you turn first this way, and then that. If you don’t ask in **FAITH** with confident assurance, don’t expect the Lord to give you any solid answer.”

How this old world of ours, and we who live in it, need God’s wisdom! Nothing can ever befall mankind that God has not an answer for **IF** we will sincerely turn to Him. Our nation is being literally torn apart by the uncertainties of its subjects, everybody wanting their particular rights, etc. If only those who sit in office of leadership would listen to what the wisest man, who ever walked this earth said in the opening verses of his book of Proverbs (wise sayings), I quote from the paraphrase; “He wrote them to teach his people how to live - how to act in every circumstance, for he wanted them to be understanding, just and fair **IN EVERYTHING** they did.” What tremendous wisdom and such is available to us all if we will only ask Him for it.

Something that is very important in this process, is that BEFORE we ask, we know and are comfortable before God in what we want and not approach God, hoping that He will put His seal of approval upon what we have already decided. The Bible teaches us, and it is one of Solomon's wise sayings, Proverbs 14:12, "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man (woman), but the end thereof are the ways of death," or destruction. The main reason any of us go to God asking for His wisdom is because we are not certain for our own way, so in order for us to receive God's wisdom, we do not necessarily set aside everything but be willing to listen and either adjust or set aside our ideas and adopt His, in other words do WHAT GOD HATH SAID.

DELIVERANCE - What hath God said concerning deliverance? Psalm 91:3, "Surely He shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence." The paraphrase says: "for he rescues you from every trap, and protects you from the fatal plague." Isaiah 46:4, "even to your old age I am He; and even to hoar hairs WILL I CARRY YOU: I made, and I will bear; even I WILL CARRY, AND WILL DELIVER YOU." What a tremendous promise that GOD HATH SAID. Even when we become old and grey-headed, possibly not able to do what we once did, GOD HATH SAID, "I WILL CARRY YOU, I WILL DELIVER YOU." You may ask from what will He deliver us? The answer is from anything or circumstance we may find ourselves in where our only hope is in Him. I Corinthians 10:13, "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it." GOD HATH SAID, "I know your frame, I know that you are made of the dust." He knows our down sittings and uprisings. He knows more about us than we do ourselves when it comes right down to it. Notice in this promise that God hath said that He would not necessarily take away that from which we are troubled with, but show us HIS WAY of escape and in the meantime would impart to us sufficient grace to bear it. Paul also said in II Corinthians 1:10, "Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us."

We could go on and on, the list of things that GOD HATH SAID are too numerous for us to cover in an article such as this. It is very important in these days, for us to familiarize ourselves in knowing what God has said and promised to them that believe; we so often sell ourselves short because of our ignorance, not really knowing WHAT GOD HATH SAID. There are many things that God has forbidden as He did with Adam and Eve in the garden, and it is extremely necessary that we know what God has told us not to do, and not do it, but it is equally as important that we know what God has said we can do and do it.

As we look into the scriptures with regards to WHAT GOD HATH SAID on the subject of reconciliation, the positives far outweigh the negatives. Acts 3:19-21 opens the door of revelation into this wonderful era: “Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: Whom the heaven must receive UNTIL times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.” It would appear from these verses, that the introduction to this time of restoration began at Christ’s appearing. Before we can ever hope to see this glorious day of restoration, God requires that repentance comes upon the earth, when mankind will acknowledge his sin and his desperate need of God. Though we are no doubt living in the days leading up to the fulfillment of what God hath said, we need to do as prophesied in II Chronicles 7:14, “If MY PEOPLE, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; THEN will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, AND WILL HEAL THEIR LAND.”

I suppose the average Christian today would say, “How have I sinned against God? I go to church regularly, pay my tithes, do not swear, drink, or steal, etc.” And most of us could say of ourselves amen to all those things, but what about our disunity, our hatred, malice, pride, as I Peter 2:1,2 says: “Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speaking. As newborn babes, DESIRE the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby.” These things are very subtle and do not appear necessarily where other people can see or read them, but nevertheless, if they are hidden in our hearts they become equally as sinful as those things we see with our eyes that people do. Let us all remember this, whether young or old, Satan will pay any price for your souls and your life. There is absolutely nothing that he will not do or engineer in order to win you over. It is difficult for me to understand how dense men and women can become. After all the teaching from the scriptures and after all the conclusive proofs unveiled to us by modern day science, they will continue to practice their sinful acts. There should be no doubt in our minds that nicotine consumed from smoking tobacco causes cancer and yet millions of cigarettes are smoked every day. Alcohol is still listed as the number one killer, along with drugs, yet people continue to consume them in unbelievable quantities. Aids is still listed as an incurable disease; science has spelled out in no uncertain terms how it is transmitted and yet people will continue to practice their sinful habits, always running the risk of getting this deadly disease. Some months ago they had about a three hour T.V. program on the subject of aids and they had a panel of men

and women from various professions such as doctors, nurses, entertainers, a senator, etc. A person stood up during the question period and directed a question to the senator as to what the government planned to do in the fight against aids, etc. and he said first of all, Americans (Canadians) were going to have to change their life style in order to overcome and conquer this dreaded disease. If I had not seen and heard it with my own ears, I could not have believe it, but some of the people actually heckled and booed the senator, in other words, rather than us change, it was up to the government to spend millions of dollars to find a cure so that they could go on living in their licentious ways. How ridiculous can we get? We legalize drugs, then have to build institutions to care for those who make themselves vegetables and unfit to take care of themselves. It is as if I set two glasses of water before you and warned you that the one on the right had poison in it and if you drank if you would probably die, but you drink it anyway, then expect me to cure you of your incurable condition, after drinking what you knew to be poison. Forget for a moment that religious aspect and face up to reality, nicotine, drugs, alcohol, illicit sex, etc. is physically harmful and could very easily take your life, the choice is OURS, do we want to listen TO WHAT HAS BEEN PROVEN to be harmful and die, or do we want to take heed to what both God and science have said and live, THE CHOICE IS OURS. So it is in the Spiritual realm, are we going to listen to and adhere to WHAT GOD HATH SAID and live or ignore it and suffer the consequences, for all sin must be punished whether in this life or the life to come think on these things.

Time or space will not permit me to go into this subject at any great length, at least not at this time, but the Bible, God's Word is very, very clear, on many of these things and I would encourage us all, young and old, to seek out what God says about many of these things that are troubling us today. The Bible is neither old fashioned or outdated; it describes in much detail many of the things and conditions going on around and about us in 1991, may we have ears to hear what the Spirit is saying unto us TODAY. Let none of us harden our hearts as in the provocation, (anger) in the day of temptation in the wilderness, (Hebrews 3:8). We are in another wilderness today. The word wilderness means: uncultivated region, confused place. When in the history of mankind has this old world been less productive and more confused than it is today? Granted, we are living in a time of great scientific development, but with all our discoveries where has it put us in man's achievement to better his way of life? Yes, we have a lot of modern conveniences that possibly make life a little easier in that way, but with all of our so-called progress, where are we going? Never in my life span have we seen such confusion in governments, the market place and even

in religious circles, as what we have today. We are truly living in a wilderness, that we ourselves are creating. Morally, Sodom and Gomorrah would compare to a picnic to what we have in our world today. Society is working hard to establish legalized prostitution, drugs, etc. in order that they may sort of clear their conscience and go on guiltless (they think) committing their sins and evil deeds, but in the sight of God, sin is still sin, regardless of how we may water it down or legalize it, and must be punished. The instability of the market place clearly indicates the weakness of our present system. This year in our province of Saskatchewan the farmers have grain piled up out in the fields, granaries full to the top, while thousands go to bed hungry, starving for what we have so much of we hardly know what to do with it. As a nation, if we were to give it away, as one did a few years ago, it upsets world markets, etc. Believe me when I say, the world's only hope, socially, economically and in every way, is in God and the ushering in of His Kingdom here on this earth.

I read something recently that Benjamin Franklin said when he addressed the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia in 1787 and I quote: "I have lived, sir, a long time, and the longer I live the more convincing proofs I see of this truth: that God governs in the affairs of men. And if a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without His notice, it is probable that an empire cannot rise WITHOUT HIS AID," unquote.

Abraham Lincoln is recorded as saying: "I have been driven many times to my knees by the overwhelming conviction that I had nowhere else to go. My own wisdom, and that of all about me seemed insufficient for the day." Would that our leadership were as humble today.

The great King Solomon, begins his book of Proverbs with these wise sayings, I quote from the Living Bible, Proverbs 1:1-9, "These are the proverbs of King Solomon of Israel, David's son: He wrote them to: 1. Teach is people how to live. 2. How to act in every circumstance. 3. He wanted them to be understanding, just and fair in everything they did. 4. I want to make the simple minded wise. 5. I want to warn young men about some problems they will face. 6. I want those already wise to become wiser and become leaders by exploring the depths of meaning in these nuggets of truth."

In the next verse he asks this question: "How does a man become wise?" The answer is simple: "THE FIRST STEP IS TO TRUST AND REVERENCE THE LORD." May those in offices of authority hear, may we all hear, WHAT GOD HATH SAID.

UNITY AND PROPHECY

II Peter 3:1, "I now write unto you; in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance." Back, possibly three or four years ago,

the Holy Spirit reminded us about two very important, and most vital things that were instrumental in introducing and establishing the revelation of God to the Church, the Body of Christ, those being: unity and prophecy. The outpouring of the Holy Spirit in 1948 was born on the wings of prophecy and declaring the dispensational truth of the coming together of the Body of Christ, the Church, strongly emphasized the necessity of us being ONE in answer to the prayer of Jesus in John 17:21, "That they ALL MAY BE ONE; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that THEY ALSO MAY BE ONE IN US: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." In other words; it was time according to God's dispensational timepiece, to break down the middle walls of partitions (Ephesians 2:14) that have divided God's people for so long, in order that they may begin to think, act, and speak the same things and not permit the Devil to weaken us by dividing us on doctrinal issues, that many times hold very little importance. Not only doctrinally is the church divided, but we, as a people, often allow such minor trivial things to separate us from each other. Paul in writing to the Corinthian church told them, I Corinthians 12:25 "THAT THERE SHOULD BE NO SCHISM(division) in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another." This is indisputable, and we can never hope to see the church, the Body of Christ (not an organization or denomination) come into its own, UNTIL THAT UNITY or oneness is restored in its full force, NOTHING, I say, absolutely nothing can separate or divide member from member. Away with all foolish pettiness and hurts, misunderstandings and false judgements; the Church must become ONE VOICE in the earth and proclaim ONE MESSAGE.

The main message revealed by the Holy Ghost in 1948 was not the gifts of the Spirit, though they were a vital part of the revelation, the main truth was the coming together of the Body of Christ. How crafty and subtle has Satan deceived us by dividing God's people into different, so-called religious camps, over such minor differences. The Bible is a tremendous book; I understand it took about 5000 years to write. It had forty writers by Holy inspiration recording the revelation of God as it was unfolded unto them, and those writers' works are bound into ONE BOOK, composed of sixty-six books, thirty nine in the Old Testament and twenty-seven in the New. In order for anyone to properly understand its message, we must first of all acquaint ourselves with the Author, who is God, knowing this, "That no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as THEY WERE MOVED BY THE HOLY GHOST." (II Peter 1:20,21) We must be able to read the Bible and accept it, in the same Spirit by which it was written. Both Old and New Testaments teach us the importance and

absolute necessity of UNITY being in the midst of the Church, the Body of Christ. Isaiah 52:8, “Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice; with the voice TOGETHER shall they sing; FOR THEY SHALL SEE EYE TO EYE, when the Lord shall bring again Zion.” Jeremiah 3:18, “In those days the house of Judah SHALL WALK WITH THE HOUSE OF ISRAEL, AND THEY SHALL COME TOGETHER out of the land of the north to the land that I have given for an inheritance unto your fathers.” Hosea 1:11, “Then shall the children of Judah and the children of Israel be GATHERED TOGETHER, and appoint themselves ONE HEAD, and they shall come up out of the land; for great shall be the day of Jezreel.” John 10:16, “And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; AND THERE SHALL BE ONE FOLD AND ONE SHEPHERD.” John 17:21, “THAT THEY ALL MAY BE ONE; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, THAT THEY ALSO MAY BE ONE IN US: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.”

The greatest blow the Church will ever make on Satan’s forces, and the greatest revival ever brought about will come as the body of believers, the Church, become ONE in Spirit, where we all believe, think and do the same things, NO DIVISION. Ephesians 2:14,15, “For he is our peace, who hath made both ONE, and hath BROKEN DOWN THE MIDDLE WALL OF PARTITION BETWEEN US; Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain ONE NEW MAN, so making peace; “Christ’s death on the cross was meant to not only forgive us of our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness, but it also was meant to literally abolish the enmity or hatred and hostility between Jew and Greek, Barbarian, Scythian, bond or free, that Christ be all in all. (Colossians 3:11) I would like to quote from the Living Bible, Ephesians 2:14,16, “For Christ himself is our way of peace. He has made peace between us Jews and you Gentiles by making us all ONE FAMILY, breaking down the wall of contempt that used to separate us. By his death he ended the angry resentment between us, caused by the Jewish laws which favored the Jews and excluded the Gentiles, for he died to annul that whole system of Jewish laws. Then he took the two groups that had been opposed to each other and made them parts of himself; thus he FUSED US TOGETHER to become one new person, and at last there was peace.” It has been God’s intention, ever since the fall of man in the garden of Eden, that there should be no division between any of His children, regardless of color of skin, race or creed. This passage we have just read tells us that He would of twain make ONE NEW MAN and by so doing, make peace... A divided church is a defeated church, it is weakened and powerless when divided. Anything that is in any way

divisive is unscriptural, whether it be doctrine, organization, envy, malice, pride, etc. Everything that borders on division **MUST GO**, at any cost, to bring the church, into the unity of the Spirit and in total harmony with God the Father. As the Church, God's vehicle and instrument of authority and power returns to God, and humbles itself and prays and seeks His face, He has promised to forgive us of our sin and waywardness and will also heal our land. (II Corinthians 7:14) It stands to reason, as Jesus said in Matthew 12:25 "Every city or house divided against itself **SHALL NOT STAND.**" One could quite easily add to city and house, every nation that is divided against itself shall not stand. May those in positions of authority in our own country hearken to what Jesus has taught us, may every denomination and religious organization hear what the Bible and the Holy Spirit is saying unto us today, yes in 1991.

One of those little 'rabbits' in the field of corn that is going to destroy the church, if we do not get busy and do something about it, is animosity, disagreement, quarreling and even hatred in the hearts of one believer towards another, **THIS CAN NOT BE**, and should never be named amongst us. All signs, biblically and historically tell us, as Hosea 10:12 says; "**IT IS TIME**

TO SEEK THE LORD.” To procrastinate now, could be very devastating to the growth of the church and to the establishing of the Kingdom on the earth. I pray sincerely, while I pen these few lines, that the Holy Spirit will cause us all to realize what holding bitterness or whatever in our hearts, is doing to the Church, the Body of Christ. Numbers the twelfth chapter relates the account where Aaron and Miriam, Moses’ sister, sinned against God by harboring an evil thought towards Moses. Verse 2 says: “And they said (Aaron and Miriam), Hath the Lord indeed spoken only by Moses? hath he not spoken also by us? **AND THE LORD HEARD IT.**” The answer to her question was actually, “Yes, God had spoken to Moses....” Verse 8, “With him (Moses) will I speak mouth to mouth,” but when you read the first verse, their concern had very little to do with the authority God had given Moses and not to Miriam and Aaron, they did not like the wife that he had chosen because she was an Ethiopian. They cast judgement and challenged Moses’ authority, which in the sight of God, is a very serious thing to do. They had no right to question God’s appointment and because of their actions, Miriam was judged by God and she became leprous.

As I have read this account many times, what proved Moses was ordained by God, is in the way he responded to God’s judgment on his sister. He could have taken the attitude, it serves you right, or I told you so, etc., but no, he pleaded with God to heal her and forgive her of what she had done. To show the devastating affect these ill-feelings and bitterness of heart that we can often have toward each other can have, God instructed Moses to put her outside the camp for seven days, that, along with her leprosy, was Miriam’s judgment, but notice verse 15, all Israel was affected by her actions; “**AND THE PEOPLE JOURNEYED NOT TILL MIRIAM WAS BROUGHT IN AGAIN.**” If any of us should hold aught against each other, it affects the whole church.

Jesus tells us what to do when such things happen, we are to go to our brother or sister and make things right. Is it not strange, that children can have a disagreement and within a few minutes the problem is all over and solved and they continue to play as good friends should and do, but not us mature adults; we hold a grudge sometimes for years and years, for so long sometimes we can hardly recall what the problem was all about, shame I say, may God help us to grow up both naturally and spiritually and ask God for His grace to forgive and forget.

Much more could be said about the importance of unity, but may what has been recorded here, with God’s help, be sufficient for us to cleanse our hearts and lives of any bitterness, grudges or whatever, and get on with our walk with the Lord and experience the power of His might, praise His Name.

Prophecy

This wonderful move of the Spirit, as I mentioned earlier, was born on the wings of prophecy. By the gift of prophecy, the Church, the Body of Christ is: edified, exhorted and comforted, and needless to say, the church needs all three of these things. Before going into the functions of this wonderful gift, let me clarify the difference between the gift of prophecy, listed among the nine gifts of the Spirit (I Corinthians 12:10) and the ministry of a prophet.

Paul in writing to the Corinthian Church, and to us, makes very clear what is embodied in the gift of prophecy, and all prophecy in the local church meetings should edify, exhort and comfort. The gift of prophecy is NOT for foretelling the future, etc., but to edify or build up the church, to exhort or to proclaim God's Word, and to bring messages of comfort to sustain the members of the Body of Christ. Prophecy is ordained to function when the church is assembled; NOT FOR PRIVATE USE. It is a disorder to use the gift of prophecy to speak to each other. I Corinthians 14:31, "For ye may all prophesy one by one, that ALL MAY LEARN AND ALL MAY BE COMFORTED." Prophetic utterance in the church when exercised through the gift of prophecy is directed to the whole body that is assembled.

Prophecy is a Spiritual utterance; I Corinthians 1:4-8, "I thank my God always on your behalf, for the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ; That in everything ye are enriched by him, in all utterance, and in all knowledge; Even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you: So that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ." Revelations 19:10 tells us, "the testimony of Jesus is the SPIRIT OF PROPHECY." The Weymouth translation says, "For truth revealed by Jesus is the INSPIRATION OF ALL PROPHECY." Phillips puts it this way, "THIS WITNESS OF JESUS INSPIRES ALL PROPHECY." As we bear witness of Christ and what He has written, it inspires in us the Spirit of prophecy and it is very necessary that we carry that same anointing and inspiration as we are moved upon by the Holy Spirit to use the gift of prophecy. How important this gift is, as the Apostle Paul wrote, prophecy edifies, builds up the church, it exhorts the church and it consoles or comforts the Body of Christ. Verse 39 says, "Covet to prophesy", the church needs this prophetic utterance operating in the midst of it today. Prophecy is more than preaching, proclaiming the good news of the gospel and teaching and admonishing the church, this too is necessary, but teaching, etc., can never take the place of the saints prophesying according to the proportion of their faith. Verse 5 says, "GREATER IS HE THAT PROPHESETH than he that speaketh in tongues." Do not take from this that speaking in tongues belongs only to the day of the early Apostles back

on the day of Pentecost, by no means; speaking in an unknown tongue edifies you as an individual; it builds you up so that in turn you may prophesy and build up the church; both are necessary and are of equal importance. Note verse 31, “For ye may ALL PROPHECY one by one, that all may learn, and all may be comforted.” I cannot overemphasize or encourage everyone enough to wait upon God to prophesy; the church needs it to grow and to become more firmly established in all His wonderful ways.

So much more could be said on this subject of the gift of prophecy, but I would like to touch on the ministry of a prophet.

The prophecy of Amos gives us insight into the ministry of a prophet when he wrote, “Surely the Lord God will do nothing, but He revealeth His secret unto His servants the prophets.” (Amos 3:7) As the church, the Body of Christ, becomes ready to receive NEW revelation from the Word of God, they are brought to light by and through the ministry of the prophets, who have that special ministry of unveiling or revealing the PRESENT TRUTH and establishing the Church in it.

The word prophet also means a “PUBLIC EXPOUNDER.” This word defines the prophet as one who exposes the Divine secrets of God’s Word and presents them to the Church, the Body of Christ. This is how the ministry of a prophet differs from the gift of prophecy. The prophet’s ministry is used to bring the Body of Christ together, as recorded in the account of Ezekiel’s dry bones, Ezekiel chapter 37. The vision of the dry bones was a picture of the whole house of Israel, verse 11, “Then he said unto me, Son of man, these bones are THE WHOLE HOUSE OF ISRAEL: behold, they say, Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost: we are cut off from our parts.” As you read this chapter, you will find the instrument that God chose to use to bring life back into the dry bones of Israel was prophecy. Note verse 7, “So I prophesied as I was commanded: and as I prophesied, there was a noise, and behold a shaking, and the bones came together, BONE TO HIS BONE.” The coming together of the Body of Christ in this end time will be no different, the time has come to restore life back into the church which has become very dry and plagued with formalities and rituals. Though not be far in its completeness or fulness, we have bore witness to the Body of Christ coming together, an Exodus from the old and a migrating to the New. Over the last forty years these dry bones have begun to come together and what a wonderful sight to behold, sons and daughters from every tribe and nation under heaven, being joined together in ONE SPIRIT AND ONE BODY.

God asked Ezekiel this question, (verse 3) “Son of man, can these bones live?” Please note his answer, “O Lord God, thou knowest.” As the prophet did as God commanded him (it is very important that we all learn to do what God tells us) there was a great noise and a shaking and this vast

valley of very dry bones started to come together, please note, 'BONE TO HIS BONE'. As God said it would happen, sinews and flesh came up upon them, but they were still dead, having no breath in them. Now I want you to pay particular attention to verse 9, "Then said he unto me, PROPHECY UNTO THE WIND, prophesy, son of man, and say to the wind, Thus saith the Lord God; come from the four winds, O breath, and breathe upon these slain, THAT THEY MAY LIVE." The wind here is typical of the Holy Spirit. We can have everything in place, have the church well disciplined and set according to God's pattern, but it shall be motionless and lifeless without the breath of God, the quickening of the Holy Spirit being breathed upon it. As Ezekiel prophesied, notice what happened and may I add, will happen again, verse 10, "So I prophesied as he commanded me, and the breath came into them, AND THEY LIVED, AND STOOD UP UPON THEIR FEET, AN EXCEEDING GREAT ARMY," oh Hallelujah.

There are two things I feel to emphasize here: 1. Ezekiel prophesied as he was commanded by God to do. 2. He exercised the ministry that God had given to him to perform the mind and will of God.

Hosea prophesied and said,"Sow to yourselves in righteousness, reap in mercy; break up YOUR fallow ground: FOR IT IS TIME TO SEEK THE LORD, till he come and rain righteousness upon you." (Hosea 10:12) It would seem as though we have sown the seeds of righteousness, it is up to us to break up the fallow ground, FOR NOW IS THE TIME TO SEEK THE LORD. I well remember as a boy, the old steam locomotive, the "iron horse" as it was sometimes referred to, how as it sat at the station platform, just before it was ready to leave, the engineer would blow out steam on the tracks; it still remained motionless until he directed the same steam (energy) into the flues and those huge cylinders which motivated the big wheels, then it slowly pulled away pulling cargo behind it. I do believe we have made, with the help of the Holy Spirit, the proper preparations for this coming Kingdom, the church lies in the valley, having had the dry bones clothed with sinews and flesh, may our prayer now be; come, oh Holy Spirit and breathe upon us of the breath of life that we may live and rise up an exceeding great army.

Never, I am sure, in our lifetime, has the church been so tested and tried as what we are experiencing right now. God has graciously entrusted to us His Divine pattern for the New Testament church, which is so far removed from organized religion, but we long to see, what we have been taught really come into its own. This is what the world that we live in is waiting for, as the Bible expresses it, the manifestation of the Sons of God, Romans 8:19, "For the earnest expectation of the creature WAITETH for the manifestation of the sons on God." Phillips translates in this way, "The whole creation

is on tiptoe to see the wonderful sight of the sons of God COMING INTO THEIR OWN." The world knows not what it longs for, never before has this world been rocked in such utter confusion as it is right now. Every nation is looking for something better, that utopia, that something, that will end all wars, bring an equity in the earth and solve all our problems, which will never come under our present regimes; it will and can only come with God's rule and Kingdom being set up and established on this earth. A manifested son is really simple, THE SON revealed in God's sons and daughters, which we are.

To qualify as His son and daughter is simply believing in Him, asking forgiveness for our sins, and then be willing to be led by His Holy Spirit, Romans 8:14, "For as many as are led by the Holy Spirit, THEY ARE THE SONS OF GOD." Phillips says, "All who follow are leading of God's Spirit ARE GOD'S OWN SONS." As the prophet said, "Prophecy unto the wind, PROPHECY, SON OF MAN." I urge the members of the Body of Christ to stir up that gift of prophecy, "Prophecy" I say, "Prophecy."

For sometime now, I have personally been asking the Lord to visit us again with another Pentecost. What we need to witness right now, is a baptism of fire. Why a baptism of fire? Fire is a symbol of God's Presence. On the day of Pentecost Acts 2:3 tells us, "There appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them." Pentecost endued them with the Holy Ghost and they began to speak with other tongues, AS THE SPIRIT GAVE THEM UTTERANCE." Fire is also a symbol of God's judgement. I have often sat and watched a fire and been fascinated by it. Fire can warm you, you use it to cook with, but it can also be very destructive if not handled properly. Spiritually speaking, God's Presence, as revealed by fire, will burn out and destroy the dross, the wood, the hay and the stubble, to make room for His Presence, please notice, that comes along with the fire, praise His Name. Luke 3:16, "John answered, saying unto them all, I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose; he SHALL BAPTIZE YOU WITH THE HOLY GHOST AND WITH FIRE." Verse 17 (Phillips), "He will come all ready to separate the wheat from the chaff, and to clear the rubbish from his threshing floor. The wheat he will gather into his barn and the chaff he will burn with a fire that cannot be put out." I am sure we would all agree, the chaff, though used in producing the wheat, must be separated from the wheat in order for it to be clean and ready to be used, so the malice, strife, bitterness, etc. must, as the chaff of our lives, be eventually removed from us in order that we might be used as God intended and ordained for us. May the Father hear our cry and baptized us again with His Holy Spirit AND WITH FIRE.

THE STEPS OF CHURCH DISCIPLINE

II Peter 3:1, “This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in both which I STIR UP YOUR PURE MINDS BY WAY OF REMEMBRANCE.” This article is meant to bring to our attention a few of the basic scriptures on this subject of church discipline. There have been other articles written and many messages given on the matter, but I feel it necessary to review the steps of church discipline. It is very important that when administering discipline, we follow the pattern laid out very clearly in the scriptures, taught by Jesus Himself in Matthew 18:15-17, “Moreover if thy brother (sister) trespass against thee; go and tell him his fault between thee and him ALONE: if he shall hear thee, thou has gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, THEN take with thee one or two more, than in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church; but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.”

This pattern is very clear, simple, and straight-forward, but it is essential that the steps be taken in the proper order:

(1) verse 15, “Moreover if thy brother trespass, or (acts wrongly) against you, go and tell him (her) ALONE.” This fault involves just two people, unless of course, the news has been spread through the gossip channel. This we must all endeavor NOT to let happen. It becomes a very serious disorder and we must all strive to avoid this happening, I repeat, at this point the matter belongs in the hands of only two people. “If he shall hear thee, thou has gained thy brother.” No one else needs to know anything about your differences. That belongs only to the two people involved.

(2) verse 16, “But if he will not hear thee, THEN take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.” The only reason the other one or two are brought into the dispute is to act as witnesses; they must keep what they hear confidential, and should be unbiased and not be opinionated in any way. They are there only to act as witnesses. Often when two people disagree on something, their tempers can get the best of them, they become angry, and believe me, when this happens none of us are really accountable for what we do or say. That is why the two unbiased witnesses are present, to remind both parties what they said or did not say. These one or two witnesses could (and possibly should) be the local elders, but as far as the church body is concerned, they should still be ignorant as to what is happening. (If I may be bold enough to put in print my feelings here, and I do it with kindness,) but it is really nobody else’s business AT THIS POINT. There should still be only three or four people involved ; the one who trespassed against the other brother

and the one or two witnesses. The more people that get involved make it that much harder to exercise the proper steps of church discipline, and for the discipline to do what the LORD designed it to accomplish.

It is very important that steps one and two be taken in the proper sequence. There could be times, when these confidential matters leak out and then questions are asked about the problem. All that needs to be said is that the matter is being looked after by the elders, without going into any detail as to what the problem is all about. When church discipline is practiced according to the biblical pattern, it is a beautiful order that has been ordained by God Himself, and as brethren, we can testify that it definitely works to the benefit of all those involved.

(3) verse 17, “And if he shall neglect to hear THEM, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and publican.” Here is where the church, for the first time, becomes involved, as listeners not advisors. It must be established here, that the elders, as the fathers of the local church, bear the responsibility of dealing with the problems that may arise in the midst of the family of God. As the father in the home often administers the disciplinary actions needed to keep peace in the home, so it is in the church, the Body of Christ, and if that method is followed, we will find that discipline within the church will be handled efficiently and with least problems. It is when everybody start to give their suggestions; (many times unfounded through lack of proper knowledge), that things become confused and almost impossible to handle in a scriptural, upright manner. Because the church body has now been informed of the problem existing between the two parties, it is important and necessary that the church eventually be informed by the elders, as to what steps of discipline had to be taken. Then each member of the body must cooperate and stand with the elders in the decision they deemed to be necessary. (We must remember that discipline is not to be used as some sort of tool, but is ordained by God to assist and help all of us to walk right before God. We are doing the person involved a disfavor and injustice by either siding in with their feelings or softening the discipline imposed. The bottom line is RESTORATION.

EXCOMMUNICATION

“But if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican.” This is the final step of church discipline and is only exercised when absolutely necessary, when the one at fault stubbornly refuses to accept the first two steps; one on one; three on one, then refuses the whole church.

It is also important to allow a period of time between each step for re-

pentance. If after the first visit of the one who feels he has been trespassed against, the brother at fault is convicted by the Holy Spirit, he should go to the one he has trespassed against, **NOT THE WHOLE CHURCH**, and ask for his forgiveness. If he should not act on step one, but after being approached by the other brother and the one or two witnesses, **THEN** he should call all three together and ask the other brother's forgiveness. To this point, the church body is still relatively ignorant of what has been going on. There is no need to involve them until he refuses to act upon the second step and it is then brought before the whole church body. If after the matter has been exposed to the church body, and after serious consideration and prayer the accused feels it has gone far enough and wants to repent of his wrong doings, **THEN HE MUST STAND BEFORE THE WHOLE CHURCH BODY** and ask their forgiveness. When he asks forgiveness, on whatever level; one, two, or three, and proves himself by producing fruits meet for repentance (Matthew 8:8), then he must be forgiven, **AND THE MATTER IS NOT TO BE SPOKEN OF AGAIN BY ANYONE**. When someone, from the honesty of their hearts asks God and man's forgiveness and anyone should dig up the matter again, what they are actually doing is questioning God's power to forgive. God forgives **AND FORGETS AND SO MUST WE**.

If there should be no signs of repentance, then the last step of church discipline must be taken. He must be put out or excommunicated from the church and treated as the scripture says, "as a heathen man and publican." (Please note: we did not say this - this is from the scripture).

When excommunication is necessary, the members of the Body of Christ are to have as little to do with him as possible. We are not to socialize or eat with such a person, but not be unkind or snub such them in any way. Just do as the scriptures teach us; admonish them. The reason for such

drastic measures being taken is to endeavor to enforce upon the individual, that in the minds of the person he trespassed against, and the witnesses and the whole church body, he has done wrong, which requires some action on his part, if he intends to remain as a member of the Body of Christ, the church. God requires this, not just man. He is not only trespassing against the individual but God, and through his stubbornness, the whole church. In most cases, there would be no need of excommunication if the trespasser would just stop to realize what he is doing.

A WORD OF CAUTION

Anyone who has been excommunicated from the church, CAN NOT be refused admission into a service that is open to the public unless they are causing a disturbance. They should be asked to refrain from causing the disturbance or leave the service. They can still attend the meetings, (and we would hope they would) but they cannot minister in the services, or partake of the communion, or take active part in the local church. It is not possible, naturally, to receive them warmly as they ought be if not under discipline. It has been known that some religious organizations have been taken to court over forbidding a person to attend a meeting that is supposed to be open to the public, and lost their case on the ground of discrimination. It is very important that we all understand the reason the church discipline and work and pray for the time of restoration. When a person is put out of fellowship, we should never give up on that person, or take the attitude that he go what was coming to him, but should pray daily for them until we see them restored back into full fellowship again. The church is not in the business of putting people out of the church, but we should be vitally interested in seeing the church grow in numbers as well as Spiritually.

What actually happens when a person is excommunicated from the church? We take that person, prayerfully, and place them directly into the hands of God for Him to work with them and do what the church seemed unable to do, in order that they may be restored. If through the various steps of discipline within the church, he refuses to be helped, only God, and God alone, can spare him. We must however, believe God for reconciliation, and we have seen many who have been spared by this tremendous act of God's mercy through church discipline. When repentance and reconciliation occur, and he repents and expresses his desire to be restored to the church, he is first reconciled to God, then to the church, then to the witnesses and the individual offended by his actions; in other words, he comes back into the church the same way he left, except the steps are reversed.

This is the proper way to exercise church discipline, and as mentioned before, it is very important that each step is taken in the proper order.

When a matter is brought before the whole church body, in whatever local church it might be, we should endeavor to leave the matter in the hands of the local elders in that particular church and not write letters or talk to those of another local church about our problem. Leave it within the local family, and the elders to handle.

SHAKING HANDS

There is no question about it, when a person is disciplined or excommunicated, it causes a great deal of embarrassment for the whole church. I have been asked the question many times: “Do you shake hands with a person who has been disciplined or put out of the church?” Before answering the question, let us just briefly consider what is meant or involved in a simple handshake. The dictionary explains it in this way: it means to clasp each other’s hand as a token of agreement or friendship, or parting or greeting. The interlocking of our hands can actually express a form of greeting (you may have never met before) or indicate a oneness, a joining together in a bond of unity, possibly not in total perfection, but at least in principle. If two people met and refused to shake each other’s hand, it would indicate that something was not right between them. It is easy to see two applications of a hand shake, firstly, it is simply a greeting when introduced to someone or when saying good-bye or just an acknowledgment of their presence, secondly it is an expression of oneness, unity and warmth.

The Apostle Paul wrote in Galatians 2:9, “And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave me and Barnabas **THE RIGHT HANDS OF FELLOWSHIP.**” The Living Bible says, “**THEY SHOOK HANDS,**” which would signify they were in agreement. You often hear it expressed, “Will you shake on that?” in other words it becomes a “gentlemen’s agreement”, sealed by a hand shake.

A person who is under discipline for whatever reasons, it is permissible to shake their hand and also embrace them as you normally would. They no doubt need all the support and help they can receive during this difficult time. They need to be shown love and concern. However, when a person is excommunicated from the church, that is a more serious matter. If the reason for them being put out of the church is because of some private offense involving two people **AND NOT DOCTRINE**, and when it is not causing division in the church body, again it would be permissible, to shake their hands as a gesture of acknowledgment, but not permissible to embrace them. People have to know that sin is not condoned and that the object of discipline is restoration. They must realize the seriousness of their actions.

If however, someone is sowing division or discord among the brethren

and the members of the Body of Christ, such people would be treated all-together differently. Paul tells us in Romans 16:17, “Now I beseech you, brethren, **MARK THEM WHICH CAUSE DIVISIONS AND OFFENSES CONTRARY TO THE DOCTRINE WHICH YE HAVE LEARNED: AND AVOID THEM.**” This is a very serious offense. When anyone leaves the church, and rails and sows disharmony and contention among the brethren, this requires stricter measures of discipline. I Corinthians 5:11 lists among many other misdemeanors, a **RAILER** (to heap abuse upon or to speak with abusive language or in other words a reviler), Paul says, “**WITH SUCH A ONE DO NOT EAT.**” Paul further instructs us, and I quote from I Corinthians 5:12,13 (Phillips) “My instruction is: ‘Don’t even eat with such a man.’ Those outside the church, it is not my business to judge. But surely it is your business to judge those who are inside the church - God alone can judge those who are outside. It is your plain duty to expel from your church this wicked man!” There is a definite line of distinction drawn here between the world and the church, the Body of Christ. We have no control over what goes on in the world, but the church is another matter, it does come under our jurisdiction. It is a very serious offense when people leave the church and rail against what the church stands for and teaches, so serious that the Bible declares that that person should be removed from the group.

Proverbs 6:16-19 tells us that there are seven things that the Lord hates namely: “A proud look, a lying tongue, hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, a false witness that speaketh lies, **AND HE (SHE) THAT SOWETH DISCORD AMONG BRETHREN.**”

Through all of these steps of discipline, nothing is actually said about whether you should or should not shake hands with the person. After much consideration and looking to the Lord on this matter, it would seem that if we realize what we are doing when we shake the hand of another person would dictate how we should handle such situations. Let us keep in mind the two definitions of a hand shake and I am sure it will help the two definitions of a hand shake and I am sure it will help us to determine how to relate to the person who is excommunicated.

(A) We have all shaken hands with thousands of people and when we did, it really meant nothing more than to acknowledge their presence. We should never be rude to anyone, not even one who has been put out of the church, therefore, we should acknowledge their presence with a hand shake.

(B) When you meet someone, possible for the first time, a member of the family you have never met before, or an old acquaintance who you have not seen for years, the shaking of each other’s hand expresses a warmth and a sort of a bond. Quite often in our particular circle we embrace each other,

which further exemplifies a closeness or oneness. This would be difficult to do, and should not be done, when you know that person has been excommunicated, but as far as shaking their hand, there seems to be no scripture to validate the refusing to shake their hand as a matter of courtesy.

In closing may we add this, let us not bring ourselves under any condemnation, or anyone else, who may feel to or refrain from shaking a person's hand when excommunicated.

We must all learn to be led by the Holy Spirit in EVERYTHING, even to who we shake hands with, etc. The most serious infraction of God's law, plan or order, is when people allow themselves to become railers and sow discord among brethren, this God hates and will not tolerate, and NEITHER SHOULD THE CHURCH.

SIX STEPS TO THE KINGDOM

Matthew 18 The sequence of thoughts related in this chapter are very significant and worthy of our deepest consideration. The lessons taught here by Jesus are very practical and necessary and should be applied to our daily lives.

It would appear as though we are approaching a very serious hour in the affairs of men. The day of the 'making way' for the kingdom is not too far off, if not already upon us. God has begun to make us realize that in order for anyone to enter into the kingdom, there are certain things He requires of us all, may the Lord help us that we may be eager to hear and do what He asks of us so that the Kingdom may not reject us.

Every step and level of understanding requires just a little more dedication and consecration on our part, in preparation to the fulfilling of our role in the great and most wonderful plan of God. We will find the Holy Spirit gently putting His finger on those things in our lives that still belong to the fleshly, carnal man, which must in all sincerity be removed from us in order that He may abide in a greater measure within us. John said, "He must increase, but I must decrease." John 3:30. There are so many things that pertain to the carnal that must be surrendered to Him in a greater measure, such things as our attitudes, our thoughts, the things we say and do. Far too often we find our minds being filled with thoughts relative to the natural when Paul wrote to the Philippians and said this, "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue and if there be any praise, THINK ON THESE THINGS." Philippians 4:8. The Phillips translation puts it this way, "Here is a last piece of advice. If you believe in goodness and if you value the approval of God, fix your minds on whatever is true and honorable and just

and pure and lovely and praiseworthy.”

In reading the long list in Galatians 5:19-21, called the works of the flesh, we find there are things that are of a very serious nature such as adultery, fornication, etc., and also included are things we may think of as less serious, but in the eyes of God are of equal importance, such as variance which means disorderly or quarreling, envying and such like, or in other words, the list could go on “as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things SHALL NOT INHERIT THE KINGDOM OF GOD.” Possibly by this we can understand a little better what Paul wrote in Philippians 2:12,13, “Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure.” We have a definite responsibility in this spiritual growth, it is not just a sovereign act of God, He certainly helps us in every way, but we have our responsibility, we must desire before God to be changed, we must be willing to submit to His will.

Turning now to Matthew 18, we will see how God in His pursuit of man has devised ways and means, when followed, will bring him unto that place whereunto God has called him and prepared for him to dwell.

There are six lessons taught here in this chapter that are very vital to our spiritual growth.

HUMILITY - verses one to six gives us a lesson in humility. It seems to be a common desire for mankind to excel to be number one or the greatest. “Who is the greatest in the Kingdom of heaven?” as though this should make any difference in one’s life, but all down through the ages, even until now, it seems to mean a great deal to us to hold some prestigious position. Jesus taking a small child and standing him in the midst spoke these remarkable words: “Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven, Whosoever shall humble themselves as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.” We are further admonished to, ‘Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.’ James 4:10 and I Peter 5:6, “Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time.” You will note here, in all these references, that the responsibility is placed on us to, HUMBLE OURSELVES, we must exercise self-discipline, we must take things in hand and allow the Holy Spirit to bring us under and to a place that we are willing to submit to His will, etc.

Some weeks ago I had the privilege of being in a local church when two babies were dedicated to the Lord. As I watched and listened with eagerness to the words spoken and prayed on behalf of these two little immature babes, those words of Jesus came back to me vividly, “Except ye be converted and

become as little children, ye shall not enter into the Kingdom of heaven.” Are we willing to be totally emptied of self and all of our ambitions, ideas, and become as a child, immature, knowing nothing, helpless and dependent upon others in order that we may be candidates for the Kingdom? All pride must go, all worldly ambitions and desires of being somebody and having attention focused on us as earthly mortals must be laid at the Master’s feet. Paul in writing to the Corinthian church said this, “For ye see your calling brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called; But God hath CHOSEN the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath CHOSEN the weak things of the world to confound the things that are mighty; and base things of the world, and the things which are despised, hath God CHOSEN, yea, and things which are not, to bring to naught the things that are: THAT NO FLESH SHOULD GLORY IN HIS PRESENCE.” Phillips translates it this way, “That no man may boast in His presence.” In the following verse he goes on to say this, “Yet from this same God you have received your standing in Jesus Christ.” We are what we are by God’s grace, we are nothing of ourselves, therefore, we have nothing really to boast of. I Corinthians 3:13 states, “Every man’s work shall be made manifest; for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man’s work of what sort it is.” If we have built upon the foundation with wood, hay and stubble, it will not stand the test, but if we have built with gold, silver, and precious stones, according to God’s pattern, it shall remain.

STUMBLING BLOCKS - Going from the lesson in humility Jesus then teaches in verses seven to nine not to allow our lives to become a stumbling block to others. He said offences will come, but woe to the person through whom they come.

There is a great deal said these days about ‘our rights’, everybody is looking out for number one and making sure that no one whether it be husband or wife, employer, government and yes even God Himself infringes on their rights. We have God given spiritual rights that are clearly outlined in the Scriptures which serve as guidelines and measurers of directives to lead us in the way everlasting, but what we desire today are those rights that please and satisfy our fleshly ambitions and desires. We shall never enter the Kingdom following this course. What does Jesus teach us concerning such things? Matthew 5:3-12, “Blessed (happy) are the poor in spirit; for their’s is the Kingdom of Heaven. Blessed (happy) are they that mourn; for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek; for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are they which hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled. Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed (happy) are the pure in heart: for they shall see God. Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God: Blessed

(happy) are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for their's is the Kingdom. Blessed (happy) are ye, when me shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you." Nowhere do we find retaliation in these verses. When men say all manner of evil against you falsely, it is possibly the hardest thing not to respond and defend our rights, but Jesus says blessed or happy are those who will take such slander for His sake and say nothing. The application of these beatitudes is the greatest weapon against the flesh. (A beatitude is the highest form of heavenly happiness, supreme blessedness) and to think we can partake of it right down here on earth in our everyday lives.

The trend today is to think that we are free-will moral agents and have the right to do , say, go and be whatever we desire, it's our life we will live it the way we like. This really is the farthest from the truth. Unconsciously, often, we have no idea just how many people, relatives, friends and associates, are affected by our lives. Whether we like to admit it or not, our lives have been bought with a price, not of silver or gold, but by the blood of Jesus Christ God's Son. We may think that what we do is our own business and nobody else's, but this is not true, and many times the way one lives, the things we say and do, become stumbling blocks for others to fall over. The definition of stumbling block is : anything that causes a person to trip or fall. Figuratively it means a cause of material or spiritual ruin. Israel's iniquity and idolatry were a stumbling block to her (Jeremiah 18:15, Ezekiel 14:3,4). Paul taught regarding being a stumbling block; "Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling block or an occasion to fall in his brother's way." Romans 14:13. I Corinthians 8:9, "But take heed lest by any means this liberty of your s become a stumbling block to them that are weak."

Jesus taught in these verses in Matthew 18, that offenses (pitfalls, temptations) will come, the world is acquainted with many pitfalls and temptations, but Jesus said not to let them come through us. Whatever offends must be discarded and done away with, it is a very serious matter, unless that offense is to bring one to their senses and a better understanding of God, which would be exercised in love.

THE ONE LOST SHEEP - After His admonitions regarding humility and refraining from letting our lives become stumbling blocks, He now teaches us the need of caring for each other and the value of every single member of the Body of Christ, the church, (fold). The concern for people, other than ourselves or just those closest to us is important in the sight of God. Again the philosophy of the age is every man for him or herself. Am

I my brother's keeper?

After returning from Africa on our last visit, and once again seeing and witnessing the poverty, etc., that many of our brothers and sisters in the Lord are confronted with practically every day, it make one stop and think. We are blessed beyond measure (and yet we complain) with food, shelter and raiment, while many of them endeavor to eke out a bare existence. Do we care and if we do how much? The Good Shepherd was grateful and rejoiced over the ninety and nine sheep that were safe in the fold, but still His heart went out to the ONE that was lost on the hillside. He had not become complacent, His interest and concerns were for the one or ones who were still missing. As parent, as spiritual parents (elders and deacons) whether of local churches or the universal church, we must never become satisfied and content with just those sheep that are safely in the fold, we need to be aware of those who are still wandering around having neither shepherd nor fold, they too we must bring. It is not God's will that ANY SHOULD PERISH, it becomes our Divine responsibility to do everything within our God given ability to rescue the perishing and care for the dying. If we are to adopt the belief of the world, then they deserve what they are getting and thus becomes no concern of ours, but that is not true of a believer. You may ask how can we minister to the needs and necessities of others whether material or spiritual? It seems to be an impossible task, where does one begin? It begins at home, yes, even in our daily lives, that we become more interested and concerned about helping each other and then if needs be our neighbors, etc., etc., but we must begin.

CHURCH DISCIPLINE - It may seem strange to us that Jesus would insert this particular exhortation here. After speaking concerning our humility and then the admonishment on stumbling blocks and the deep concern of the lost sheep, to speak on the matter of church discipline. It does however, express His deep love for us all, that if perchance we fail to hear or respond to His gentle admonition He provides another measure of love and grace in administering church discipline.

What is church discipline? In reality it is an expression of one of the highest forms of God's mercy, love and grace to man. It is a provision made and imposed by God, as sort of a final attempt to reveal to man the error of his ways and God's desire for his or her return to the fold.

The procedure or steps of church discipline are clearly laid out in verses 15 to 20 and although not too often administered in the denominational system, nevertheless, is applicable and out to be used today. It would be relatively difficult to apply church discipline to much success in the organized church of today, simply because if it were applied to an individual they could, and likely would, take the attitude if I am not wanted here I will go down the

street to another church where I will be accepted and in all probability would, regardless of the fact that church discipline had been exercised. By doing this, which in many cases would be done through lack of understanding concerning church discipline, they are paying the individual the greatest detriment they could ever do, they are erasing God's deep desire to bring that individual back into the fold, the Church. All the more reason why Jesus taught in John 17:21, "That THEY ALL MAY BE ONE; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they may be ONE IN US: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me." As long as we allow the devil to keep the church divided he weakens God's order of justice and repentance.

We have no jurisdiction over the neighbor's children simply because they are not a part of our family circle, we are not a father unto them and until, by adoption, they were to become a member of our family, we have no legal right to correct them or admonish them, it is the same in the Church, the Body of Christ. Paul in writing to the Romans in chapter eight and verses 14 to 18 teaches us this: "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear: but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs: heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ: if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together." Regardless how men and theologians try to dispute the ONE BODY teaching of the Scriptures, it is irrevocable, the word of God nowhere substantiates the denominational system, it declares over and over again, ONE BODY, and that there be no schisms (divisions) in the body. I Corinthians 12:25.

What are the steps of church discipline?

1. Verse 15, the first step is on a one to one basis, "Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou has gained thy brother." All too often when such a thing happens, the one offended will talk about it to everybody else and not to the one who is involved, thus we begin sowing the seeds of contention, which we are admonished not to do. When one has sinned against another, the scriptural pattern is that we go to that one and endeavor to make things right, by doing this no harm befalls the innocent and no controversy arises among the rest of the body, who actually are not involved to this point in the matter at all, it is between two individuals.

2. Verse 16, "But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established."

How much easier and less complicated it is if the matter can be solved

on a one to one basis, however, if this cannot be achieved then the next step is for the one to take two or three others with him and go again to the individual and see if the difficulty cannot be solved. If they are received, that is as far as it needs to go, there is no reason to involve anyone else, much less the whole church, if however they are not received the problem still exists, then the third step must be enacted.

3. Verse 17a, “And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglects to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.” This is a very serious matter, excommunication is enforced at this point. After refusing to hear from the individual and then by two or three more and when brought before the church, there is only one thing left to do and that is to put them out and treat them as heathen.

It might be well for us to realize something very important here. As long as an individual who refuses all admonition is left under the canopy of the church, God will not likely deal with them, but once they are put outside, the church at this point has done everything within its power with no results, then God takes over and they are now directly responsible to God and He will deal with them as He pleases.

I Timothy 1:18-20, “This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before thee, that thou by them mightest war a good warfare; Holding faith, and a good conscience; which some having put away concerning faith have made shipwreck: of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme.”

Much could be said about this subject, which we will not go into at this time other than to say it is a very serious matter to be put out of the church, but if one refuses to walk right before God and will not submit to the order of God in the church, it is the best place for them, God in His infinite love and mercy will deal with the matter in order to bring one to repentance.

All lines of communication and fellowship are cut off, the only reason for anyone conversing or fellowshiping with one put out is to admonish them, II Thessalonians 3:14-15, “And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and **HAVE NO COMPANY WITH HIM**, that he may be ashamed. Yet count him not as an enemy, **BUT ADMONISH HIM AS A BROTHER.**” We should never interfere or try to soften the judgment of God, for Isaiah wrote, “For when thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness.” Isaiah 26:9b.

CHURCH AUTHORITY - Verses 18 - 20, “Verily I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven, Again I say unto you, that if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it

shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.” This kind of authority the church should possess and will, but in order for it to take place there must of necessity be unity and there is where the church system of today is defeated, it is divided and not speaking the same things, each seeing and viewing the situation from their own points of view which in many cases are diversely opposite and not scriptural.

Whether it be church discipline or church authority that is being exercised, let us always bear in mind its reason and purpose and that is to restore and reconcile, never condemn.

When the one disciplined or excommunicated shows signs and a desire to be reconciled, it is very important that as much care is taken in the reinstatement and reconciling as there was in the removing the individual from fellowship.

The order of reconciliation is the reverse from excommunication. When the individual desires to return they would first contact the elders of the church and express to them their wish. If the elders are satisfied that the person is sincere, then the matter would be brought before the whole church, at which time, forgiveness would be asked by the individual. It is important to note here, that it is not sufficient for someone to just stand up and say they are sorry, time should be given for them to prove themselves that they really are sorry for what they have done before they are permitted to take the communion and once again function in their ministry in prophecy or whatever. If there have been hard feelings, etc. between them and someone else, they should go to that individual and ask their forgiveness, for it is an absolute requirement that we ALL BE ONE with no division separating us any way.

What a wonderful order, and order it is. It is not bondage as some may think, it is the scriptural pattern that God has set and ordained for the Church which shall one day bring the church into the unity of the Spirit and into that ONENESS. May I say again, such an order will never work in the sectarian denominational system, but does work effectively in the New Testament church, the Body of Christ.

FORGIVENESS - Verse 21, 22, “Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me and I forgive him? till seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, until seven times: but, until seventy times seven.”

It is not difficult to see what our next lesson taught by Jesus would be, it is on the subject of forgiveness. It is relevant to emphasize how important it is as individuals and collectively, that the church shows forgiveness to the fullest measure on behalf of the person who has asked for such. Once the matter has been aired and forgiveness has been genuinely asked and

accepted, that must be the end of the matter and not spoken of or brought up again, when God forgives He forgets and so must we, Peter asked this question in the verses quoted above and the way Jesus answered certainly shows us the abundance of the love and kindness God the Father manifests unto us as His children. I wonder how many times we have said to God, “If you will help me just this once, I will never do it again,” and God has helped us knowing right well we would probably do it again. The Psalmist wrote these words, “Like as a Father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear (reverence) him. For he knoweth our frame: he remembereth that we are dust,” Psalm 103:13,14. God will go to no end to assist mankind if they will just do one thing and that is revere Him. God understands our limitations and our frailties, He knows everything about us, because He made us, He knows and sees our downittings and our upittings, we are so totally helpless without Him and His matchless love and grace.

In many ways, it is as difficult for the one receiving the forgiveness as the one asking for it, they both need God’s grace.

The rest of this chapter speaks of God’s mercy and there is so much that we can learn from it. It’s strange how some may think it is so wonderful how God forgives us of our sins, etc., but it is not necessary for them to forgive their brother or sister. This is brought out here, how the Lord forgave the man that owed Him so much, yet he was not willing to forgive his brother who owed him so little. Jesus said, that is what the Kingdom is all about, these simple little everyday matters, things we may think are not too significant, but God requires them of us if we ever hope to enter into the Kingdom. As the little chorus goes: “Little by little He’s changing me, line upon line He’s teaching me, precept on precept until I am free, Jesus is changing me. Day by Day He’s changing me, IN EVERY WAY He changing me; When I am yielded He’ll set me free, Jesus is changing me.”

This wonderful transformation and reconciliation will only come as we allow Him to teach us His ways and reveal to us, from the Scriptures, by the Holy Spirit, His plan and will. May the Lord help us to separate ourselves unto Him and disengage us from that which pertains to the flesh and the carnal ways of men.

PRESERVATION OF THE HOLY SEED

There are many terms used in the Scriptures describing God’s people. If we were to go back to the beginning and follow through the Scriptures we would find that though many times that Holy Seed was almost stamped out, God preserved it by preparing an ark of safety in one way or another and still holds true even unto the day we find ourselves living in. Whether that Seed was encompassed by a frail little basket, water proofed with pitch and

pushed out into the Nile, or housed in the ark of the covenant, or whether it was encircled by human flesh, it has been protected and preserved in order that it may one day, as it was in the life of Christ, be wrapped about in deity.

The instruments of destruction and preservation have walked, often, side by side, but God's hand has always moved to keep this Holy Seed from being stamped out, according to His foreknowledge and His will.

There has been the rise and fall of kings, empires that have ridden the crest of the waves, only one day to find waters of tribulation have swept them away, and yet, concealed in earthen vessels, oft times unknown or recognized by men, has this incorruptible seed been preserved.

The prophecies spoken to Abraham concerning, the saving and keeping power of the Creator when He declared; "Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and He said unto him, **SO SHALL THY SEED BE.**" Genesis 15:5. Isaiah 10:22, "'Though thy people Israel **BE AS THE SAND OF THE SEA**, yet a remnant of them shall return: the consumption (annihilation) decreed shall overflow with righteousness.'" Again we see how that Holy Seed was tucked away in just a remnant which was taken from the multitudes.

THE HOLY SEED

Perhaps we should endeavor to define what this Holy Seed actually is. Genesis 1:1 says, "In the beginning God." It is really impossible for our finite (having limits) minds to, in any way, comprehend the magnitude of this statement. Reams have been written endeavoring to explain the existence of God, where He came from etc, etc. and if we were ever to succeed in explaining, to the satisfaction of the natural mind, His Divine existence, it would bring us back to the simply, yet dynamic statement, "**IN THE BEGINNING GOD,**" so it is much easier and less complicated just to believe what the Bible says and leave it there.

Hebrews 11:6 says, "But without faith it is impossible to please Him: for he that cometh to God **MUST Believe** that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him." There would not be much use in going to God if we did not believe in His existence.

In the plan of creation, "God said, let us make man in our own image, after our own likeness", Genesis 1:26, "so **GOD CREATED MAN IN HIS OWN IMAGE**" verse 27. Possibly the simplest way to explain it is to say, it appears as though God desired from the beginning to dwell in the midst of all that He had created, including man. In the creation He took as it were, the seed of life, which He was and is, and formed a tabernacle in which He might live and move and have His being. Revelation 21:3, "And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, **BEHOLD THE TABERNACLE OF**

GOD IS WITH MEN, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God HIMSELF SHALL BE WITH THEM, and be their God.” From day one, the preservation of this Holy Seed was ordained by God the Creator and Deviser of all things.

We might well say then, that this Holy Seed is that life of God, housed in the vessel He created, man. (I am sure much more could be said about this point, but would only tend to complicate our understanding).

God having predestinated to dwell with men, began the long process of events that would eventually, after many decades, bring about the fullness of the mind and intent of God. He thought it good that the man He had created and breathed into of the breath of life, should not live alone, so He caused a deep sleep to come over him and the Bible declares that He took from Adam one of his ribs and from the rib God made a woman and brought her unto Adam. (The skeptics say impossible, but IN THE BEGINNING GOD, always remember everything had its beginning IN GOD and the end will also be IN GOD.)

Here we have the very beginning of that wonderful Holy life line. God’s instructions to Adam and Eve were “to be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth and subdue it,” Genesis 1:28.

Now, how the fall of man, through sin, could in any way contribute to the furtherance of God’s plan is very difficult to rationalize, however, remember, IN THE BEGINNING GOD.

Adam and Eve were able to produce their own kind through the miracle of birth. As God the Creator produced in human flesh His own image and likeness, He now enables, by a Divine act, man to begin to be fruitful and replenish the earth, Cain and Abel were born. Many providential events took place, Isaac was born to Abraham and Sarah, the child of promise. Genesis 21:12b, “in all that Sarah hath said unto thee, hearken unto her voice; for in Isaac shall thy seed be called.” Paul said in Galatians 4:23 that Isaac was born by promise. This Holy Seed could not be housed in Abraham’s son Ishmael (flesh) which was conceived by a bondmaid, but only by the freewoman, to the one God had promised, Sarah. (Again the skeptics cry impossible, but IN THE BEGINNING, GOD).

Many chains of events brings us to the time when God desired a habitation in which He could dwell in the midst of His people. Man had sinned and the Divine presence of God cannot dwell where sin abounds, so in Exodus 25:8, He unveils the next step of His great eternal plan, “And let THEM MAKE A SANCTUARY; THAT I MAY DWELL AMONG THEM.” Time and space does not permit the detailed account of the construction of this Tent Church or Tabernacle in the wilderness. Again the supernatural is employed, Moses by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit receives in minute detail

the blueprints for this tabernacle in which God's presence will be housed.

The ark of the covenant was made of shittim wood and overlaid with pure gold (deity). The mercy seat was also made of pure gold and two cherubims were placed facing each other and there between two cherubims was the SHEKINA GLORY OF GOD . . . Shekinah Glory means - "THERE WILL I MEET WITH YOU." God's presence was over the Mercy Seat. It was here God said He would meet with His people but no entrance could be made except by the blood. There can be no approach, no mercy, no rest, no peace of mind, no forgiveness of sins, without the recognizing of Christ's blood and the acceptance of Christ by faith. All this was placed in the Holy of Holies, beyond the veil unto which only the High Priest could enter, once a year on the day of atonement, to ask forgiveness for his own sins and for the sins of all Israel.

Following this came the temples of Solomon, Zerubbabel and Herod, which were eventually destroyed, they were by stepping stones, so to speak, to what God really had in mind.

Between the conclusion of the Old Testament and the opening of the New Testament were four hundred silent years. These two eras were brought together by the life and ministry of Christ. It was prophesied of Christ that He would save His people from their sins and that His name would be called Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, GOD WITH US, Matthew 1:21,22. Here are the first visible signs of this Divine Seed coming into its proper abiding place. The life and body of Jesus was to become the receptacle that would house and preserve this Holy Seed. Instead of tabernacles made by hands it was placed in Christ, where it would remain until His death and resurrection. This seed of life, the very personage of God Himself, had come from the portals of glory and was removed from earthen vessels and placed in Christ, God's Son, "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. In John 2:18-21, “Then answered the Jews and said unto Him, What sign shewest thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things? Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days? **BUT HE SPAKE OF THE TEMPLE OF HIS BODY.**” One might conclude that at last this Holy Seed has found its abode and resting place, but not so. John 16:7, “Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.” The death and resurrection of Christ was to usher in and make way for the Divine relationship between God and man, the Creator and that which He had created. Jesus said, “That they all may be one; as thou, Father art in me and I IN THEE, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou has sent me.” How far removed now are the realms of the earthy to the realms of the heavenly. God embodied in the Son, who now takes up residence in the sons of His people. Paul wrote in the Corinthians and brought this eternal revelation, I Corinthians 6:15, “Know ye not that **YOUR BODIES** are the members of Christ?” and again in verse 19: “What? know ye not that **YOUR BODY IS THE TEMPLE OF THE HOLY GHOST** which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?” I Corinthians 12:27, “Now are ye the body of Christ and members in particular.”

In writing to the Ephesians Church his prayer was that their eyes may be enlightened so that they could see what was the exceeding greatness of His power to them that believed and he goes on to say this in verses 22,23; “And hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, **WHICH IS HIS BODY**, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all.” Note in Phillips translation of verse 23, “For the Church in His body, **AND IN THAT BODY** (the church) **LIVES FULLY** the one who fills the whole wide universe.”

God in His wisdom and foreknowledge ordained that the Church, the Body of Christ, be the dwelling place for this precious Holy Seed. Paul said that this was a mystery which had been hid from ages and generations, but was now being manifest to the saints, “To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is **CHRIST IN YOU, THE HOPE OF GLORY,**” Colossians 1:24-27. “Behold the tabernacle of God is with men,” Revelations 21:3, Oh blessed thought, no longer is this royal seed embodied in temples made by human hands, but through the miracle of grace and love, it is found implanted in the hearts of men. No longer is God’s presence a million light years away in far off

heaven, but there enthroned in spiritual vessels, saved and cleansed by the blood of God's own Son lies the fertile seed, being nurtured and fed by the Holy Spirit, ready to produce many sons unto His honor and glory.

Let us now look at some of the Scriptures with regards to this Holy Seed. Isaiah Chapter 6 relates Isaiah's vision of the Lord's glory, and the remnant that would be saved. As Isaiah was caught away or captivated by the Holiness of God, it revealed to him his uncleanness, etc. As the seraphims administered this cleansing and he accepted the challenge to go with the message that God had to deliver, he say the falling away, "the Lord removing me far away and the forsaken places became many in the midst of the land, Yet there will be a tenth portion in it, And it will be subject to burning like a teil tree or an oak, **WHOSE STUMP REMAINS WHEN IT IS FELLED. THE HOLY SEED IS ITS STUMP.**" New American revised version.

Through fire and judgment that Holy Seed was preserved in the remnant, hallelujah.

Ezra 9:1,2 - chapters 9 and 10 speaks of 'mixed marriages'. These marriages had not only taken place among the people but with priests, Levites, princes and rulers, those in authority. They had intermarried with their heathen neighbors the Canaanites, Hittites, Perizzites, etc., something that God had warned them again and again **NOT TO DO**. Such transgression had brought about the Captivity which almost wiped out their existence, there was however, a remnant, in which rested the Holy Seed, praise the Lord.

Leviticus 19:19 - In order to preserve this Holy Seed, Israel was instructed not to breed two different kinds of cattle, not to sow two different kinds of seed in the same field or wear two different materials in a garment. This seems to emphasize the truth of being separated unto God, it signifies purity, which was a requirement of God and still is. This separation is very difficult to understand much less explain, but it appears to be very vital and essential as far as God is concerned. Note Deuteronomy 22:9, "Thou shalt not sow thy vineyard with divers (different) seeds; lest the fruit of thy seed which thou has sown and the fruit of thy vineyard, be defiled."

This Holy Seed is an incorruptible seed, a seed which is beyond the reach of change and decay. The incorruptible Holy Seed is Christ, who has come to dwell within our hearts. He has been despised and rejected, He has been acquainted with sorrow and grief, He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrow, "but he was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we **ARE HEALED,**" Isaiah 53:5, all this and more has been purchased on our behalf in and through our Lord, who has been planted in the seed plot of our hearts, praise His Name.

A seed is a strange thing, the dictionary says it is the propagating part

of a plant, propagate means to reproduce. When a seed is subjected to the proper conditions it begins to grow or to reproduce itself. I looked up in the encyclopedia about seed germination and I quote, "Germination does not take place unless the seed has been transported to a favorable environment by one of the agencies of seed disposal. The primary conditions of a favorable environment are adequate water and oxygen and suitable temperature," unquote.

You may wonder why we would make such a quote, but as we study this spiritual seed, we will find similar conditions are necessary for its growth. It is strange that the millions of seeds that are transported by the wind, only a percentage of them ever reproduce.

The development and growth of this Holy Seed depends upon the conditions just as it does with the natural seed. Going back for a moment to Ezra 9:1,2 we read, "Now when these things were done, the princes came to me saying, The people of Israel, and the priests and the Levites, **HAVE NOT SEPARATED THEMSELVES FROM THE PEOPLE OF THE LANDS**, doing according to their abominations, etc.", verse 2, "For they have taken of their daughters for themselves, and for their sons: so that **THE HOLY SEED** have mingled themselves with the people of those lands: yea, the hand of the princes and rulers hath been chief in this trespass." This intermarrying etc., was not conducive to bringing that Holy Seed to fruition, germination can only take place when the seed is transported to a favorable environment.

This Holy Seed must become the incorruptible seed, which means it must come to the place where it is beyond the reach of change and decay.

In the beginning God, through the miracle of Creation, breathed into Adam and he became a living soul. This was the beginning of life, through Adam and Eve came the continuance of life, which was a gift from God and the universe was born.

Man could only reproduce after the flesh, never after the spirit. Because of the Fall, the aeonian (age lasting) life was lost and death and corruption took its place, man could hence, only produce corruptible seed.

Through God's mercy and grace, through the great redemptive plan of God, we were to receive the forgiveness of our sins, and through the shed blood of Jesus Christ God's Son; we were once again to become the recipients of the Life from above, the **NEW CREATION - NEW BIRTH**, that **SEED OF RIGHTEOUSNESS** was to be planted in the hearts of mankind and thus "since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive," I Corinthians 15:21,22. This incorruptible seed is Jesus Christ.

In the 15th chapter of I Corinthians Paul speaks of God giving every seed a body as it pleased Him. He speaks of all flesh not being the same etc., then

in verse 40 we read, “There are also celestial (heavenly) bodies, and bodies terrestrial (earthly): but the glory of the celestial is one and the glory of the terrestrial is another. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; for one star differeth from another star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown (planted) in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body and there is a spiritual body. And so it is written, the first man Adam was made a living soul; and last Adam was made a quickening spirit. Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth, earth: the second man IS THE LORD FROM HEAVEN. As is the earth, such are they also that are earth; and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, WE SHALL ALSO BEAR THE IMAGE OF THE HEAVENLY. Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption,” Phillips says, “THE TRANSITORY COULD NEVER POSSESS THE EVERLASTING.” I Corinthians 15:40-50.

Oh hallelujah, what a tremendous plan, what a glorious discovery, a body is sown in corruption but raised in incorruption (beyond the reach of change and decay) sown in weakness, raised in power, sown a natural body, raised a spiritual body. Listen to what is written to the Romans concerning water baptism, we may think that wonderful truth only applies to life after death, but hearken ye to the word of the Lord; Romans 6:4, “Therefore we are buried with him BY baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, EVEN SO WE SHOULD WALK IN NEWNESS OF LIFE.” It is BY BAPTISM we are buried with Him, and because Christ was raised up, conquered death, BY THE GLORY OF THE FATHER, Christ has succeeded, He has risen, He has become that incorruptible Holy Seed and as He has attained, Paul says, “EVEN SO WE ALSO SHOULD WALK IN NEWNESS OF LIFE,” oh hallelujah.

Christ was born of the Spirit through Mary (flesh). Mary became the Bethlehem of the Divine Seed. She was the human receptacle that God used to germinate that Holy Seed. If Christ had not died, He would have been a perfect Son of God, but would have been incapable of reproducing another unto Himself. When He died and that Holy incorruptible seed was sown in the ground (buried) it now has the glory of the Father to reproduce SONS LIKE UNTO HIMSELF, our lives, through redemption become the seed plot, the receptacle into which that incorruptible seed is sown, hallelujah.

Brother Charles Price wrote words to this effect, “to live a Christian life

is impossible to attain to in THIS LIFE. Going to church every Sunday, and endeavoring to follow all that the Bible teaches, will never enable us to reach that goal, we must take our experience of salvation one of the “DO” and put it into the “BE”. We could never be in Christ unless Christ was first formed in us. Because of this SPIRITUAL UNION - LIKE PRODUCES LIKE. Parents reproduce themselves - Christ reproduces Himself IN US.”

May I make a quotation from one of Brother Price’s books, that so inspired me personally to write on this subject, he wrote and I quote, “A Christian life is the CHRIST - LIFE: NOT a life like the life of Christ; but the ACTUAL LIFE OF CHRIST GERMINATED WITHIN US,” Unquote, amen.

In conclusion would you please take the time and read Galatians 4:22-31. We have the account here concerning Abraham and the promised seed. In verse 28 we read, “NOW WE, brethren, as Isaac was, ARE THE CHILDREN OF PROMISE,” and verse 31, “so then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwomen, BUT OF THE FREE.”

So much more could, no doubt, be written on this Holy, incorruptible, righteous seed, but may we see and realize that in order for this seed to germinate, it has to be transported to a favorable spiritual environment. We have our responsibility in the bringing of this seed to full maturity by keeping the right growing condition favorable to the growth and the germination of the seed. This seed could fall upon stony ground, or among thorns, or upon good ground where it could spring forth in all of its fullness.

Never underestimate the power of that resurrection to work in you NOW, that which possibly your heart has been set on receiving when you get to heaven. Jesus said I AM THE RESURRECTION. Many believe in the resurrection that was, when Christ was raised from the dead, some believe in the resurrection that will be, when the dead in Christ shall rise, but let us believe in A RESURRECTION THAT IS, RIGHT NOW, that Holy, incorruptible seed that has been planted in our lives by the Holy Spirit, in our acceptance of Jesus Christ, oh may that seed blossom forth and bear the fruits of righteousness and life, praise His Name forever.

BUT ABRAHAM STOOD YET BEFORE THE LORD

“But 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; and they shall walk, and not faint.” Isaiah 40:31.

We are living in a world of speed and haste. In the commercial world they advertise such things as “One hour photo service”, “If we fail to serve your lunch in so many minutes, you get it free”. There are “Fast food”

restaurants, and the gas stations tell us they have the “fastest pumps in town”, and on and on it goes. I would like to ask a simple question; “Where are we going in all our hurry?” Not many of us may realize just how much this “speed-trap” affects us mentally, physically, materially and spiritually, but there is no question in my mind that it does have definite affects upon us in many ways. Our homes are affected and often the relationship between husband and wife and children are influenced by this perpetual hurry, hurry, hurry way of life. Even Sunday, which God ordained to be a day of rest has become just another day; we have little or no time for ourselves or the Lord and it is high time that we all examine closely what is happening and purpose in our hearts to do something about it.

I read the title of this article, “BUT ABRAHAM STOOD YET BEFORE THE LORD”, from Genesis 18:22 some weeks ago, and these words seemed to make an indelible impression upon me. One must read the whole eighteenth chapter to appreciate what this verse means, Abraham had just been visited by three angels who reminded Abraham of the promise God had made to him and Sarah, his wife, that Sarah would bear a son. Many years had passed by since the promise was given. Both Abraham and Sarah were past the time of life for child-bearing, nevertheless, God had made the promise and the angel said to Abraham, “Sarah thy wife SHALL BEAR THEE A SON INDEED; and thou shalt call his name Isaac: and I WILL ESTABLISH MY COVENANT WITH HIM FOR AN EVERLASTING COVENANT, AND WITH HIS SEED AFTER HIM.” Genesis 17:19.

IMPATIENCE

Many times God makes a promise in His Holy Word but we so often become impatient and foul-up God’s plans, as Sarah and Abraham did in this case. Genesis 16:2, “And Sarai said unto Abram, Behold now, the Lord hath restrained me from bearing: I pray thee, go in unto my maid; it may be that I may obtain children by her. And Abraham hearkened to the voice of Sarai.”

God’s promises are yea and amen, they change not, and though we do not see the fulfillment of His promise just when we think, does not alter the fact that His promises to us remain sure and steadfast. Time has nothing to do with God’s promises. No thought, nor consideration was given to Abraham and Sarah’s age; God had made the promise to them and only He could and would bring it to pass. Often the Lord purposely delays the answer in order that no credit will go to the flesh. Jesus purposely waited until Lazarus died before He went to Judea where he was; John 11:6,7, “When he heard therefore that he was sick, he abode two days still in the same place where he was . Then after that saith he to his disciples, Let us

go into Judea again.” Verse 20 Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus had come said, “Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.” As so often happens to us, it seemed as though Jesus’ timing was out, but He is never late. Jesus knew what God the Father had in mind and He said to Martha, “Thy brother shall rise again.”

Martha knew that Lazarus would rise again in the resurrection at the last day but she did not recognize Jesus AS THE RESURRECTION. Jesus said to her in verse 25 and 26, “I AM THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE; he that believeth in me, **THOUGH HE WERE DEAD, YET SHALL HE LIVE**: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. **BELIEVETH THOU THIS?**” Can we believe that same promise today or are we impatient and believe as Martha did that we will rise in the last day? May the Lord help us not to sell ourselves short and be willing to settle for Ishmael rather than wait for the child of promise, Isaac. “And Abraham said unto God, O that Ishmael might live before thee!” - Genesis 17:18. The covenant was not made to Ishmael but to Isaac, verse 21, “But my covenant will I establish **WITH ISAAC**, which **SARAH SHALL BEAR** unto thee at this set time in the next year.” Oh blessed Lord, how wonderful are thy covenants.

THE APPOINTED TIME

The angels said to Abraham, Genesis 18:10, “I will certainly return unto thee **ACCORDING TO THE TIME OF LIFE**; and, lo, Sarah thy wife **SHALL HAVE A SON**.” Just think for a moment how wonderful, that God would just push time back so that Sarah could have the strength of her youth at ninety years old to give birth to a child. As I read this, I wondered if her youthful appearance returned also; I am sure if God could restore all her productive organs, there is no limit to what He can do. Sarah laughed when she heard all this. Verse 11 says, “Now Abraham and Sarah were old and stricken in age; and it ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women,” but the angel replied in verse 14, “**IS ANYTHING TOO HARD FOR THE LORD? AT THE TIME APPOINTED I WILL RETURN UNTO THEE ACCORDING TO THE TIME OF LIFE, AND SARAH SHALL HAVE A SON**.”

It is God, not man that makes these divine appointments. Acts 2:1 tells us that, “When the day of Pentecost **WAS FULLY COME**, they were all with one accord in one place.” In God’s great plan and foreknowledge he brings about His mind, will and purpose, in accordance with His great “timepiece”. During this time which has been set by God Himself, we must remain faithful and stand ready to fit into that which He has ordained for the day we are living in. We do not pray amiss as we patiently wait for

OUR DAY OF VISITATION, but we are responsible to make the necessary preparations in our own hearts for His Divine appearing in whatever way He has ordained unto our generation. The witness of His Spirit with our Spirit, plus the signs of the times certainly indicate we are further along in God's great foreknowledge than what we realize.

Matthew 24 records world conditions as we see them unfolding before our very eyes. Joel 2:28, "And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out of my spirit UPON ALL FLESH; and your sons and daughters SHALL PROPHECY..." We have witnessed this very thing "our sons and daughters prophesying..." We are NOW LIVING in the time when Bible prophecy is being fulfilled, praise the Lord.

Galatians 4:1, 2, "Now I say, That an heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all; But is under tutors and governors UNTIL THE TIME APPOINTED OF THE FATHER." The responsibility of the kingdom could never be left to immature people. How soon we shall be entrusted with God's authority depends upon how quickly we respond to His will and His word; therefore it behooves us to hearken to what the Spirit is saying in these days that we are living in as Jesus said, "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit is saying unto the Churches."

Ecclesiastes 3:1 says, "To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under heaven." The New Standard Revised puts it this way: "THERE IS AN APPOINTED TIME FOR EVERYTHING. And there is a time for every event under the heaven". May we receive great comfort and assurance by this, that God has everything in control and as His children we have nothing to fear.

ABRAHAM'S DAY OF VISITATION

The visit of these three Heavenly beings must have been a highlight in Abraham's life. As the old patriarch sat in the door of his tent, "And he lifted up his eyes and looked, and, lo, three men stood by him: and when he saw them, he ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed himself toward the ground," Genesis 18:2. God's messengers were sent to deliver a very important message concerning the promise which God had made to

Abraham and Sarah many years before.

During those years, no doubt, Abraham often wondered if he had heard wrong or had he interpreted what God said, wrong. This was now the appointed time; God was about to visit Abraham and Sarah and make good His covenant to them. Throughout the Bible God makes many references to “the time of visitation” and I am sure this was Abraham’s day. Jesus, in speaking of the destruction of Jerusalem said in Luke 19:44, “because though knowest not the time of thy visitation.” If we are expecting visitors, we would be prepared for their arrival, if we knew the time were coming, but at such an hour as ye think not, the Son of man cometh; we must live our lives in such a way that it would matter not when He chose to call.

After the angels delivered the message (verses 16-19), “The men rose up from thence, and looked toward Sodom: and Abraham went with them to bring them on the way. And the Lord said, Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do; Seeing that Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him? For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him.”

Because of Abraham’s faithfulness, God need not hide anything from this Godly man. God said, “I know him,” - what a tremendous statement. God knew that he had commanded his household, that his children and his home were in order; he had stood steadfast on the promises God had made to him. The Lord knew that He could bring upon Abraham all that which He had spoken of him. Oh may the same be said about all of us someday.

ABRAHAM STOOD YET BEFORE THE LORD

The angels shared with Abraham what He had in mind to do in Sodom, then turned to leave for Sodom. Abraham remained to plead before God for the righteous who lived in this wicked city. HE STOOD YET BEFORE THE LORD as no doubt he had done many times before. May the Lord help us to stand before the Lord and plead before God on behalf of this sin cursed, dying world. May we not give in to the pressure of this world, to sickness, death, moral breakdown, etc. Our only hope and the world’s only hope is found in Christ Jesus, who is the Head of the Body of Christ, the Church. The Church, as the salt of the earth must never lose its savor. The world knows what it is looking for and will eventually turn to God through the Church, the Body of Christ, to deliver it out of its dilemma. Frustration and confusion has so captivated the minds of people that they would believe a lie.

II Thessalonians 2:7, “For the mystery of iniquity doth already work:

only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way.

And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming:

Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders,

And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.

And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie:

That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.”

This must have been the state of Sodom, and God dealt with it by sending fire to destroy it. Abraham endeavored to act as an intermediary, as we must do now, in the time that we are now living on this earth. I am sure that Sodom was like a Sunday School picnic to what we have in the world today. May WE STAND YET BEFORE THE LORD with ears that can hear, eyes that can see and hearts that can understand.

PREPARATION

Revelation 19:7, “Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to him: for the marriage of the lamb is come, and HIS WIFE HATH MADE HERSELF READY.” We need to prepare ourselves for what lies ahead.

I Samuel 7:3, “And Samuel spake unto all the house of Israel, saying, If ye do return unto the Lord with all your hearts, then put away the strange gods and Ashtaroth from among you, and PREPARE YOUR HEARTS UNTO THE LORD, AND SERVE HIM ONLY: and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines.”

Idols can come in different forms. We always associated idols with images of wood and stone; the dictionary describes it as being a worshiped image or hero. There are many things that come into our lives that can become our idols, such as: our jobs, sports, people, yes, even our families. These things demand our time and attention and can easily crowd out the Lord and our ministering before Him. Samuel spoke to God’s people and told them if they were serious about returning to God, they must get rid of any foreign gods and Ashtaroth (which was a Canaanite goddess), and serve Him only. Today God is asking us not to harden our hearts, but to hearken to what the Holy Spirit is saying. God expects us to hold down a job, to enjoy a measure of relaxed sport activity, to enjoy our families, etc., but not to let these things become our gods. Moderation is a word seldom used today, but is very important. We must all learn to realize when these

various things begin to rule our lives to a point of us losing out with our God. The time has come when we must all become SERIOUS about our daily walk and relationship with God and begin as never before to set our priorities right.

THE SABBATH

The word 'Sabbath' means 'day of rest'. I read once, that our physical bodies require a day of rest each week. Mark 2:27, "And he said unto them, the Sabbath WAS MADE FOR MAN, and NOT man for the Sabbath." The paraphrase says it this way, "But the Sabbath was made to BENEFIT MAN, and not man to benefit the Sabbath."

I realize that present conditions in the work force, etc. dictate a great deal to the way we have to conduct ourselves in this age, however, we do have some control over the situation and should endeavor to do all that we can to keep it holy. Exodus 20:8-11, "REMEMBER THE SABBATH DAY TO KEEP IT HOLY. Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work: BUT the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy man servant, nor thy maid servant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and RESTED THE SEVENTH DAY: wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day, and HALLOWED IT," (or set it aside).

There are what we might call, "the work of necessity" - things that need to be done, cows have to be milked, many jobs must be done by someone seven days a week, etc. and we are not about to tell people what they can do, or not do, on the Sabbath, but we are required before God to keep the Sabbath holy. In this busy world we live in, I have heard people say such things as, "Sunday is the only day I have to do this or that" and that might be so, however, we should put forth every effort to not make Sunday just another "business as usual day". There is no need to become "religious" in this matter, but as in everything we should let the Holy Spirit guide us. Painting the fence, fertilizing the lawn, etc. I am sure can be worked in during the week, remember the seventh day is meant to be a day of rest, a time when we cease from our labors as God did from His. Church attendance should hold "top priority".

We are not, under any circumstances to forsake the assembling of ourselves together. Hebrews 10:25, "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, AS THE MANNER OF SOME IS. I have heard the comment that "God is out there in the middle of the lake while I'm fishing", and there is no argument there, BUT we are told in God's Word to assemble ourselves together, and that should come first. Much more could be said but I believe

enough has been said to give us direction as to the Sabbath Day and the keeping of it holy.

GOD'S COVENANTS

These solemn promises that God has left us in His word, the Bible, are precious and shall endure throughout all the ages to come. In closing let me leave you with four things about God's covenants that we can be absolutely sure of:

1. God's covenants were always a revelation of His purposes.
2. God's covenant was meant to be a security and guarantee.
3. God's covenant is to give man a hold upon God (something to hold on to).
4. The whole dispensation of the Spirit, the whole economy of grace in Christ, our health - our strength - is provided for and secured IN THE NEW COVENANT.

These covenants given to Abraham covered his seed and the generations to follow, Genesis 15:8, "In the same day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying, UNTO THY SEED HAVE I GIVEN THIS LAND . . ."

God help us to accept and believe God's covenant left us.

EXCUSES

Whenever anyone makes an excuse, we always feel we have a good one, whether in reality, it is legitimate or not. Regardless of how young or old we are, we have all made, at one time or another, what we felt was a good excuse for not doing something, etc. Usually, good and all as our reasons are, they fall short of the mark and we end up meeting face to face with reality. We make excuses to one another and many times even dare to try it with God, who sees down into the depths of our hearts, He knows our thoughts and actions and in most cases, our best excuses are totally unacceptable with God. The truth behind any excuse is the fact we just did not want to do what had been asked of us. We can often fool our friends, but NEVER GOD.

One of the best examples found in the scriptures, is the parable of the Great Supper found in Luke 14:15-24, "And when one of them sat at meat with them heard these things, he said unto him, Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God. Then said he unto him, A certain man made a great supper, and bade many: And sent his servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden (invited), come for all things are now ready. And all they with one consent BEGAN TO MAKE EXCUSE. The first said unto him, I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it: I pray thee have me excused. And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen,

and I go to prove (try) them: I pray thee have me excused. And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come. So that servant came, and shewed his lord these things. Then the master of the house being angry said to his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and the lanes of the city, and bring hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind. And the servant said, Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room. And the Lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled. For I say unto you, That none of those men which were bidden (invited) shall taste of my supper.”

I have been asking myself this question lately, “How serious am I about seeing God’s Kingdom established here on this earth in my life time?” The time that we are living in right now, are days of preparation, when God is speaking, first to the house of Israel, HIS OWN HOUSE, THE CHURCH, THE BODY OF CHRIST. As Christians or believers, His disciples, yes you and I, we can no longer procrastinate, we must either come to His Great Supper or go on making our excuses and miss it, the Kingdom.

Elijah, the prophet asked this question, I Kings 18:21, “And Elijah came unto all the people, and said, HOW LONG HALT YE BETWEEN TWO OPINIONS? if the Lord be God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered not a word.” How long are we, as believers, going to halt between two opinions, either we are on the Lord’s side or the world’s, there is no way we can straddle the fence any longer. How much longer can we believe one thing in our hearts and do the opposite? How long shall we read God’s word and make excuses not to obey it? We have encircled this mountain of unbelief long enough, it is time to destroy Jericho, it is time for the walls of unbelief to come down. Never before have we stood where we do in 1992. How much longer shall we make our excuses and expect that God the Creator of all things is going to ignore them? Not one excuse given in the parable we just read held any legitimacy, those invited to the feast just did not want to attend and we often do the same. We stay away from attending church meetings for just as foolish reasons, somehow thinking that God does not see through our foolish scheme, BUT HE DOES. I well remember on one occasion, kneeling down by my bed, when I was in my teens and sort of propositioning God (I thought); I said, if He would do this certain thing for me, I in turn would do something for Him, but all the while I knew I had absolutely no intentions of ever holding up my end of the agreement, needless to say, He never heard my foolish prayer. When are we going to learn that we have a responsibility toward God and when He makes clear to us, by the Holy Spirit, what He wants of us, that we are then obligated to act upon what he asks and not endeavor to excuse

away His demand? Doing God's will is not only necessary, but a **MUST**. We often treat it like we do many other things in life, like dieting, we keep putting it off to a more appropriate time that fits in more with our schedule, rather than God's time clock. Attending church, has become so sort of 'comfortable', that we hear God's Word, read it Sunday after Sunday and never pay attention to what it says. In our courts of Law, they use the Bible to swear in a witness before they give their testimony, they put their hand on the Bible then repeat; Do you swear (on the Bible) to tell the whole truth and nothing but the truth, so help me God?" Then they answer "I do", yet the court itself constantly challenges, in its executing of our laws, the very things in the Bible they swear by, how unreal and foolish can we mortals be?

I would like to emphasize here the need of us not only believing God and accepting His word for what it says, and not just sort of taking it for granted, and never doing anything about what it says to us. When His word fails to speak to us and not only comfort and encourage us, but sometimes convict us, **AS BELIEVING CHRISTIANS**, it ceases to be God's Holy Word and becomes a history book. We must begin to take more seriously what it says and especially when what we read and hear is quickened to us by the Holy Spirit. We are not responsible for the light and revelation of tomorrow today, but as tomorrow unfolds its truth, then we are responsible to walk in its light as He is in the light.

We hear of many who are disgruntled with their particular church where they attend, but continue to attend and support rather than act upon what the Holy Spirit is trying to tell them. How long dear people can we go on sort of living a lie, we must begin to take to heart what God is telling us. God gave to Joshua clear orders as to what the children of Israel had to do in order to conquer Jericho. They were to march around the city once every day for seven days, then on the seventh day they were to march around the city seven times; seven priests, bearing seven trumpets, (not six but seven) were to go before them; "And it shall come to pass, that when they make a long blast with the ram's horn, and when ye hear the sound of the trumpet, **ALL THE PEOPLE SHALL SHOUT WITH A GREAT SHOUT**; and the wall of the city shall fall down flat, and the people shall ascend up every man straight before him," Joshua 5:5. If the people had failed to follow God's instructions given to Joshua, they could be marching around the wall to this day and the walls would be still intact. They, I am sure, could have made a lot of excuses, that they were tired of walking around the walls, they had a headache and didn't feel like walking (going to church) or they just did not agree with what the prophet said etc., excuses, excuses, nevertheless, if they were to ever see the walls come down, they had to comply with God's formula, **NOT THEIR OWN**. We have come to the place where we are

making excuses for sin and then wonder what is going wrong. The Devil is pulling the wool over our eyes and as Isaiah the prophet prophesied in Isaiah 5:20, “Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter”! We are literally throwing away the Divine truth of God’s Word and despising the teaching of the scriptures and then we wonder why we do not see the power of God manifested in the Church, the power of deliverance to save, heal and conquer the evil forces of Satan that are arrayed against the Church of the living God. Oh dear people of God, we can and shall be **MORE THAN CONQUERORS THROUGH HIM THAT LOVES US**, Romans 8:37. May the Lord help us to be serious and realize the time has come to awaken out of our sleep and start, not only listening to God and His Word, but doing something about it; “For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.” Ephesians 6:12. We must set our priorities right and put first things first. It appears, sometimes, that we want God to fit into our plans rather than us fitting into His, but that will never, never work, we either submit to God’s way of doing things or we will totally miss the Kingdom.

We are living in a time of much activity as far as this world is concerned, we allow ourselves to become too much involved with what look like harmless pleasures, which often cause us to neglect those things that are needful to help us grow spiritually. Jesus spoke to the Scribes and

Pharisees and called them hypocrites because they paid their tithe of mint, anise and cummin, ... and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy and faith: "THESE OUGHT YE TO HAVE DONE AND NOT TO LEAVE THE OTHER UNDONE," Matthew 23:23. We must all be very careful not to over emphasize one part of the revelation and by so doing neglect something else that is just as important; I have found this to be so true when people will take one point of doctrine and try to build on it without the support and assistance of the rest of the truth. The full truth can never be understood without all the other parts of the truth (puzzle).

Going back to Luke 14:12-14 we read, "Then said he also to him that bade (invited) him, When thou makes a dinner or supper, call NOT thy friends, nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen, nor thy rich neighbors; lest they also bid thee again, and a recompense be made thee. But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind: AND THOU SHALT BE BLESSED; for they cannot recompense (pay back) thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just." These verses would take away the desire to be recognized for our good deeds, a willingness to serve the Lord without recompense, but do our good deed as unto the Lord. It also suggests that we minister to those who are really in need, who also, I am sure, would appreciate your ministry to them. It would almost seem, especially in Canada and the United States, that because of such affluence and access to the message of the gospel, we are working with "burnt over soil". There is not much need of help, we have it all, that is what money can purchase, but Spiritually we are like the Laodiceans; "I know thy works, that thou are neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot. So then because thou are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth. Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou are wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked:" Revelations 3:16,17. I have wondered what judgments of God will have to be brought upon our lethargy and unwillingness before we will harken unto His voice. How long shall we halt between two opinions before we return unto the Lord and do as Deuteronomy 6:5 teaches us, "And thou shalt love the Lord thy God WITH ALL THINE HEART, AND WITH ALL THY SOUL, AND WITH ALL THY MIGHT." Are we teaching our children as described in verse 7, "And thou shalt teach them DILIGENTLY TO THY CHILDREN, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up," or are we as parents, making excuses for what our children do, where they go, the music they listen to, who they marry and their lack of interest in spiritual things and attending church? God help us as parents and grandparents, not

to compromise, not to be overcome with immoral looseness of this present age, when sex outside of marriage is acceptable or illicit sex in marriage is accepted as just an “affair” and not what the Bible teaches as sinful and fornications or adulterous. When should a child’s so-called rights eliminate or override the parent’s good sound judgment? These are questions, those of us who are supposed to know better, will someday have to answer for. Even the laws of our land stand and often rule in favor of a child’s rights, though the book they use to swear upon declares it different, such hypocrisy! Who has the right or authority to interpret God’s Holy Word to twist it to comply with the sins of mankind, who I say? Only the prophets of old and those endowed with the power of the Holy Spirit had the right to interpret the Holy Scriptures and not man engineered preachers, teachers or judges. Isaiah teaches us in Isaiah 1:26,27, and please listen carefully to what it says: “And I will restore thy judges as at the first, and thy counselors as at the beginning: afterward thou shalt be called, The city of righteousness, the faithful city. Zion shall BE REDEEMED WITH JUDGMENT, and her converts with righteousness.” This verse would indicate that there had been a falling away, Zion had lost her reputation as being the righteous, faithful city, and the only way it could be restored is for God to restore her judges and counselors and by righteous judgment, Zion would be restored to what it was at the beginning. May God restore, in the church, judges and counselors, who, with God’s help, can reconcile the church to Himself and deliver us all from the foolishness and nonsense that prevails everywhere in Christendom today.

I would like to refer back to this business of making excuses and see just how foolish were the reasons given for not attending the feast.

(1) “I have bought a piece of ground and must needs go see it.” Now just what kind of a person would invest in a piece of property, before going to see it first? We would all agree that would be poor business to purchase land without knowing more about it and at least to have seen it.

(2) “I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them,” In today’s world, that would be like buying a truck sight unseen, without having even taken it for a drive. How foolish to even think the host of this great supper would accept that as a reason for not attending.

(3) “I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.” How many times have husbands used their wives as an excuse for not doing something they should have? Possibly the wives have done the same thing! I remember an man who would always use his wife as an excuse but after she died I found that it was not so much his wife but himself that did not want to go. All these excuses were unacceptable and the host sent his servant out to invite the poor, maimed, lame and the blind, those who would not only

accept the invitation with gladness and thanksgiving, but would appreciate having been asked to attend.

The gospel of the Kingdom, Jesus said; would be preached in ALL THE WORLD for a witness unto ALL NATIONS, before the end of this world would come. I wonder sometimes, because of the availability of the message of the gospel and God's Holy Word, if it has not lulled our spiritual appetites to sleep?, it is like trying to offer someone food who has just got up from a banquet. We hear of people who travel by boat, in shark infested rivers, for two hours there and two hours back, just to attend a local church meeting, and here in North America, where we have access to every type of transportation known to man, we find those who make excuses of one sort or another not to attend. If we had not eaten for awhile and were hungry enough we would find our way to the table, somehow, I am sure.

In closing may I ask the question over again, "How serious are we to see the Kingdom established on this earth IN OUR LIFE TIME?" I trust we will adhere to what Jesus Himself admonishes us to do in Matthew 6:33, "But seek YE FIRST THE KINGDOM OF GOD, AND HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS: and these things SHALL be added unto you." Can we all believe that? Dare we step out in faith and take Jesus at His word? It's just a case of us all putting our priorities in order and acknowledging and accepting God at His Word.

I trust because of the plainness of speech used in this article, that as you have read it, you will not take offense, but may you be able to accept what has been written in the same spirit as I felt to write it. May the Lord help us all to work and pray that the Lord's prayer for us may be fulfilled; "THY KINGDOM COME, THY WILL BE DONE IN US AS IT IS IN HEAVEN."

SUCH AS I HAVE

Some weeks ago, I woke up early in the morning with these words sort of ringing in my mind and heart. They are found in Acts 3:6, "BUT SUCH AS I HAVE GIVE I THEE: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk". You will notice he does not say: "what I have", or "how much I have", but "SUCH AS I HAVE".

The significant thing is that Peter KNEW WHAT HE HAD and secondly he knew in his own heart that he could deliver or share what he had with this impotent man, whom he had passed by many times on his way into the temple.

I have heard people say what they would do if they had a million dollars, things which would have been honorable and just to do, if they had the

million dollars, but God is not the least bit interested in what we would do with what we do not have, but is extremely interested or concerned about what we are doing with “WHAT WE HAVE”.

God knows, whether we fully realize it or not, that without God and the help of the Holy Spirit, we can do nothing of ourselves. We undoubtedly, unconsciously, depend upon God for everything, for even the most insignificant things of life, we need Divine help.

PRODUCTIVITY

For some time now, I have personally been greatly concerned about the productivity of my own life and ministry and that of the Church, the Body of Christ as a whole. I suppose as we grow older, we have a tendency to reflect back and sort of take inventory every now and then, just to see how we are doing and just how much fruit our particular part of the Vine is producing. The blossoms and green foliage, at least, assure us that productive life is still flowing through the vine, but what about the yield, are we producing to our fullest capacity?

The intent of this article is not to point fingers or find fault, but endeavor to stir up and put to the best use THAT WHICH WE HAVE. Since God visited the Church with another out-pouring of His Holy Spirit, we have been favored and blessed above all people on the face of the earth. In His kindness and grace, He has revealed by the Holy Spirit, many wonderful things such as: what the Church, the Body of Christ is, how it functions by the use of Spiritual Gifts and ministries. He has revealed the order for the home and the Church and the role it should play in the earth. These are only but a few of the tremendous attributes of this Spiritual Body called the Church. The foundation upon which God’s House is founded and built has all been uncovered by the Holy Spirit to such creatures as you and I, in just the last forty odd years, and this is wonderful and so vital to the growth and functions of the Church. The New Testament Church is NOT an organization but an organism, it is not a denomination governed by creeds and dogmas, it is neither democratic or a dictatorship but it is a THEOCRACY which means it is Divinely ruled by God Himself, through the Holy Spirit, which energizes the various members of the Body.

GOD’S FOREORDAINED WILL AND PURPOSE

God’s foreordained will and purpose, is bringing to mankind, through the death and resurrection of His only begotten Son, was not just to forgive us of our sins, though we should never cease to thank God for what was accomplished at Calvary, but that we might be workers TOGETHER WITH GOD, to reconcile that which suffered through the fall of man in the garden of Eden. There is a sense in which according to God’s own plan and

choosing, that He is incomplete without us and we certainly are incomplete without Him. Colossians 2:9,10 reads, "For in Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. And YE ARE COMPLETE IN HIM, which is the head of all principality and power." The Phillips translation says, "Yet it is in him that God gives a full and complete expression of himself (within the physical limits that he sets himself in Christ). Moreover, YOUR OWN COMPLETENESS IS ONLY REALIZED IN HIM, who is the authority over all authorities, and the supreme power over all powers." It is by this Divine authority over all authorities and this supreme power over all powers, that we dare to even make claim of "SUCH AS I HAVE", we receive it from God the Father, through His Son Jesus Christ.

Lest I STRAY FROM THE POINT, MAY I now ask, first myself, and then all who may read these few lines: "WHAT ARE WE DOING WITH THE SUCH AS I HAVE PORTION OF OUR LIVES?"

THE WIDOWS MITE

I am reminded here of the "widows mite". Mark 12:41, "And Jesus sat over against the treasury, and beheld how the people cast money into the treasury: and many that were rich cast in much. And there came a certain poor widow, and she threw in two mites, which make a farthing (two pennies). And he called unto him his disciples, and saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That this poor widow has cast more in, than all they which cast into the treasury: For all they did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even her living." There are many lessons to be learned from this account, but what seems to be the predominant purpose is, she gave her all. There is certainly nothing wrong with giving much of what we have a lot of, but sometimes God requires of us to GIVE MUCH OF WHAT LITTLE WE HAVE, however, we cannot give away what we do not have, "SUCH AS I HAVE" Peter said, give I unto you. Here is where we all, whether rich or poor, educated or uneducated, male or female, must depend upon God, because many times, as portrayed in this sixth verse, they need what WE do not have. There are times when, the one standing in need, does not really understand what they need themselves. This man who sat at the temple gate expressed, by his begging, his material need, alms, when his real need was such that all the money in the world could have never ministered to his REAL NEED. Peter and John recognized this fact and said to him, "Silver and gold have I none," what are you asking me for I do not have, but what you really need, I HAVE, "In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, RISE UP AND WALK,".

How many times, in countries like Africa, Korea, and the West Indies have I passed by a dear elderly lady or gentleman, or a young widow with her children by her side, sitting on the hard cement looking so pitifully at

us, begging for help. I well remember, many years ago, when in the West Indies, coming out of the post office and just as I was getting out of the car, which pulled up by me and was waiting for me to get in, this elderly woman (a mother I am sure) said something to me which I did not understand and held out her hand. This instance bothered me all day and I prayed about it and remember saying to the Lord, that even if I had given this dear soul a few coins, that was not the solution to her problem. On another occasion we were taken to a little one room dwelling of a young pregnant girl and her five or six year old son. This was a tiny little one roomed dwelling, with a bed and a table in it, not even a chair to sit on. As we stood in this humble little dwelling, that was spotlessly clean, the silence that came over us seemed so heavy you could have cut the atmosphere with an axe, so to speak, then one of us broke the silence and asked the brother that had taken us there what her present need was and he replied food. We all contributed a few dollars to assist her, but as we left, I again said to the Lord, what about tomorrow, she may get through a day or two with the few dollars we gave her, but what then? It is true we gave her what we had to give, money, to help her with her material needs, but her real need stretched beyond what dollars could buy. What we had to give and what she really needed, it seems, we fell so short and how often does this happen both in and out of the church today.

When our boys were growing up, they joined the Boy Scouts and I became active in the parent-group committee. One way we had of raising money for the boys activities, was delivering flyers from house to house and I well remember on this one occasion, this department store truck being parked outside the Scout Hall. This was a Transcanada Sale and the flyers were as thick as your Sunday Newspaper. As we opened the doors of this truck, piled to the roof were these papers and there we stood, two or three parents and possible half a dozen boys. One of the boys, whose father was in the furniture business, sent some money instead of appearing personally, and though his donation was appreciated, at the moment it was not money that we needed, it was bodies to help us deliver this mountain of papers. He gave, as it were "such as he had" but that did not meet the need, he could have given more by being there to help.

THE NEEDS OF CHURCH AND WORLD

Without despising the goodness of God towards us as individuals and as a body of God's people, let us acknowledge before Him our utmost need. The needs of both the Church and the world are tremendous, and might I add beyond the reach or realm of the natural. What the world needs today is Jesus and the manifestation of His Divine power and authority, which can meet and supply ALL OF OUR NEEDS, regardless whether they are material, physical or Spiritual. We see on our television screens such poverty and absolute devastation, and it is wonderful to see the countries around the world, regardless of their political beliefs, joins hands to minister food and some of the necessities of life to those dear starving human beings. "SUCH AS WE HAVE" we are sharing with those who have not, but the thought came to me the other day, what will happen when the United Nations and the peace corps leave for home, has the problem really been solved or will it revert back to where it was before they arrived? They gave what they had to give, but what about the cause that creates the problems, have those needs been met? The solution to the global needs of the world are not natural problems but Spiritual, and they can never be met or solved by just legislation or man made governments. This I believe, is where the Church the Body of Christ comes into play. It is wonderful and very satisfying to share with others such as we have, but the time has come that we must all earnestly seek God to entrust to us the power and authority to administer on His behalf, those things that in ourselves we do not have. There was absolutely no question in Peter's mind what he did not have(money) but what he possessed and was able to administer to the desperate need of his impotent man. Peter knew that he had it. So convincing was this, declaring what he had, verse 7, "And he(Peter) took him by the right hand, and lifted him up; and IMMEDIATELY his feet and ankle bones received strength." There was no need for Peter or John to stand shouting and commanding the evil spirit to come out of him, and it seems that the man himself did not have to exercise much faith in this particular instance, because Peter KNEW WHAT HE HAD and just gave it to this poor crippled man.

MISINTERPRETED

How misinterpreted this whole instance seemed to be by those who witnessed what had taken place. I am sure many standing by had seen this helpless cripple sitting begging alms at the gate of the temple, possible for years. After they had gone into the temple, praising God for what had happened, as they were about to leave, the lame man, Peter and John stood on the porch that was called Solomon's, and all the people came wondering (naturally) at what had happened. "And when Peter saw it, he answered unto the people, ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this? Or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made

this man to walk.” After the miracle had been performed at the hands of the Apostles, it was extremely necessary and important that the attention be not focused on the two humble servants, but that all the glory and honor be given to the ONE who caused it to happen. It was necessary in verse 4 that the lame man “LOOKED ON THE APOSTLES”; they were his liason between himself and God, but after he became the recipient of God the Father’s expression of love, that he and those who witnessed the miracle give all the glory to God.

WHAT CAN WE DO

There are two very important steps that we, as believers and members of the Body of Christ must do. Firstly, we must seek God to sort of re-confirm in our own hearts what our personal call or responsibility is before God. We must allow the Holy Spirit to stir up our pure minds unto remembrance to what God said to us by prophecy and the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery. It is important that we realize, regardless of what was prophesied over us, that we have a very personal obligation to seek God for His anointing and power to operate THROUGH US what He by the Spirit revealed concerning us. We must KNOW WHAT WE HAVE, what we possess, before we can share it. What we as individuals and the whole church universal needs, is a fresh out-pouring of the Holy Ghost and with fire. We need the fire of the Spirit to burn out all the dross, the part of us that still belongs to self and the flesh. We must allow ourselves to come to the place where it is no longer I but Christ. John 3:30 tells us, “HE MUST INCREASE, BUT I MUST DECREASE”. Are we prepared to lay our ALL UPON THE ALTAR, without any personal reservations? Are we willing to make whatever personal sacrifices God might require of us to make, in order that we may KNOW WHAT WE HAVE IN GOD? Are we willing to surrender in Him more of our time and talents? Are we prepared to put first things first and set our priorities right, in order that God the Father, through His Son, may fully entrust to each one of us what is required for us to know, “SUCH AS I HAVE”? There are some of the questions that we all must face sincerely, to the point, that we are willing to literally do what needs to be done and not just think about it and never really answer God’s call. We are living in such a busy, time consuming world and it is so easy to become so involved with making a living, sport, the activities of our children, hobbies, etc., etc., that we have so little time for God. PLEASE, STOP AND THINK on these things, are we robbing God of our time?

Secondly, that all important question is WHAT ARE WE DOING ABOUT IT AND WHEN? Procrastination can defeat and rob the Church of its God-given power and authority. There is no point in God fulfilling

His responsibilities toward us, if we are not prepared to go to work WITH HIM, NOT FOR HIM. The Holy Spirit is speaking to all of us; those of us who fill the office or eldership or as a deacon, and of course all the people. Are we waiting on our ministries, how much time in our busy week do we devote to God and the fulfilling of our ministries, in showing mercy, prayer, study, visiting the widow and the fatherless, which James tells us is PURE RELIGION? It is that kind of religion that gets us out of our chairs and puts feet and energy under our prayers. James 2:17 tells us, “Even so faith, IF IT HATH NOT WORKS, IS DEAD, being along.” Verse 26 says, “For as the body without the Spirit is dead, SO FAITH WITHOUT WORKS IS DEAD ALSO.” Chapter 4:17, “Therefore, to him (or her) that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, TO HIM (HER) IT IS SIN.” Our good intentions, good and all as they may be, will never get the job done, we must become actively engaged in what the Holy Spirit is indicating needs to be done. We must become more and more DOERS OF THE WORD and not hearers only, DECEIVING OUR OWN SELVES. It is easy to sit in a meeting and amen what is being said, but what are we doing about it?

Sometime ago I was in the hospital for a few days and I witnessed something I will not soon forget. Sharing the room with me was a brother in the Lord, who I knew, who attended and was actively involved in the Salvation Army. He was scheduled to go down for surgery at 7 a.m. the next morning and just a few minutes before they came to get him, the captain from the local citadel stood in the doorway in full uniform. I could hear their conversation and he said to the brother, “I have a promise to leave with you this morning,” which he quoted to him, then had a brief prayer with him committing him to the Lord and left. After he was gone, I told my friend how wonderful and thoughtful that was, here it is 7 a.m. on a cold morning, and he came to minister to him. He then told me that his brother does that for anyone from the church and to make it more impressive, he said, “He hates visiting hospitals”. I immediately thought of the many times that I have expressed publicly the same feelings, the only difference being the captain did something about it and I had not. I am sure there was a measure of sacrifice involved in this act of mercy, he no doubt could have stayed in bed and prayed for this member of his congregation, but no, he put “legs to his prayers” and personally went and assured my friend that he would be praying for him as he went down to the operating room. I am not suggesting here that every elder or shower of mercy do what this faithful servant felt on his heart to do, but wish to emphasize the need of all of us to be devoted and willing to do whatever the Holy Spirit inspires us to do. Doing the will of God TAKES EFFORT on our part and may occasionally interfere with our pre-arranged plans.

SUCH AS I HAVE

To deliver the goods, so to speak, requires consecration and much dedication, and before we can ever hope to see manifested in the midst of the Church, the power of God, we as members of it, must be more willing that what we have in the past. We cannot be members of the Body of Christ and not HAVE SOMETHING TO GIVE, that is what the Church is all about, that is our mission or call. We are members one of another, we have all been baptized by the same Spirit, we have diversities of gifts by the same Spirit, we are NOW THE BODY OF CHRIST AND MEMBERS IN PARTICULAR.

GROWTH

As I mentioned at the beginning of this article, I am personally, and I know I speak for all the brethren, concerned about the growth of the Church in two ways:

(1) We need that manifestation of the power and authority of the Holy Spirit to increase within this Spiritual Body, called the Church. We must see more evidence in the prayer of the elders in anointing with oil and the prayer of faith, also the gifts of divine healing in operation. We have been assured by Christ Himself that the very gates of hell shall not prevail against the Church of the living God. This will and shall come about as each one of us take more seriously our Divine responsibility as members of the Body of Christ.

(2) We must begin to see the Church grow numerically and we will as we desire before God to allow step number one to be developed in each one of us. Our concern for the lost and dying in this sin cursed world must become more and more a part of our walk with God. I fully realize no one can be added to the Church or to the Lord, without He draw men and women unto Himself, but I wonder many times if He is so willing but we so uncooperative, possibly He needs you and I to be the messengers, the good Samaritans. Are we ashamed to ask people to church or have we adopted the misconceived idea that if God wants them there He will bring them, He doesn't need us, that is not right, remember we DO NOT WORK FOR GOD BUT WITH HIM.

IN CONCLUSION

We stand on the threshold of the greatest hour in the history of the Church, God has privileged us to be here to be a part of and participate in the establishing of the Church, the Body of Christ, in preparation for His Kingdom being established on this earth and may the Lord help us not miss it. It will require a great deal more of our efforts and consecration in order for this to happen and I pray the Lord will give us the strength and wisdom to be able

to fulfill the part that He has designed for each of us. I suppose you could say, this article is designed to convey the need of the hour and to stir up in each one of us that desire to see His will done on earth as it is in heaven.

In the book of Ezra, it speaks about God stirring up the spirit of Cyrus King of Persia, to rebuild the temple. It also speaks in chapter 1:5,6 about stirring up the spirit of the people, "Then rose up the chief or the fathers of Judah and Benjamin, and the priests, and the Levites, **WITH ALL THEM WHOSE SPIRIT GOD HAD RAISED**, to go up to build the house of the Lord which is in Jerusalem. And all they that were about them strengthened their hands with vessels of silver, with gold, with goods, and with beasts, and with precious things, beside all that was **WILLINGLY** offered."

We are not at a time such as described in these verses, when God is rebuilding the house of the Lord. Out of all the rubble and disorder that now prevails in the midst of God's people throughout the earth, He is reconstructing the Church according to His pattern and will and purpose. There is no question that God could do this completely independent of anyone, but He has chosen rather that those who believe in Him be **WORKERS TOGETHER WITH HIM** and He is raising up the spirit of those who will play a part in rebuilding the New Testament Church. He will not force anyone to be a part of this tremendous task, but only those who are **WILLING** will He raise up. In Haggai 1:14, "And the Lord **STIRRED UP THE SPIRIT OF** Zerrubabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and the spirit of Joshua the son of Josedech, the high priest, and the spirit of all the remnant of the people; and they came and did work in the house of the Lord of hosts, their God." Oh may God come by His Holy Spirit and stir up our hearts in 1993 that we too might work in the house of the Lord of hosts our God.

May God richly bless young and old, boys and girls as we devote ourselves to the building of God's house in the day which we live in. What joy it will bring to be a troubled world and what tranquility it will bring to such a restless age as we are living in. The invitation is extended to you and I, come and be **WORKERS TOGETHER WITH GOD, NOT FOR HIM.**

DIVORCE

"**HE THAT HATH AN EAR, LET HIM HEAR WHAT THE SPIRIT SAITH UNTO THE CHURCHES.**" Revelations 3:6.

Hebrews 13:22 (Weymouth); "Bear with me, brethren, I thus exhort you; for, in fact it is but a short letter that I have written you."

As we approach this important subject, may the following serve as a letter to all the Church the Body of Christ and to those who have an ear to hear.

Very subtly, the devil, as he always does, is endeavoring to tear down

and destroy that which constitutes the very vitals of the Church of the living God, THE HOME.

That time has come, when as brethren we must take a firm stand and make very clear our position before God on the issue of divorce.

Numbers 25:11-13 (please read). In this account, Israel had sinned against God. The young men started dating the Moabite girls. The young women invited the young men to attend their services and feasts, soon they were bowing down to their gods and before long ALL Israel were freely worshiping Baal. Phinehas, through his zeal for God, saved the judgment of God continuing upon Israel, though 24,000 had already died.

Sometimes young men and women think that parents and the church are hard and sort of “straight-laced” on the matter of their dating, but there is a good reason for such a stand. They think that nobody understands, they do not realize how much in love they are, etc. etc. This is not the case, there is a Divine law and principle involved here, which we can not shun or just turn our backs on. We often hear the statement, “he or she is going to come to church after we are married.” We can assure you that this rarely ever happens, be sure that the one you are interested in is WELL ESTABLISHED on the foundation, not just coming to the services, before you get too serious and certainly before you even consider engagement. There is far too much at stake to take any unnecessary chances. If it is in God’s plan for you to be married NOTHING will keep you apart but it must be done on His terms not yours.

A Spiritual union or marriage, consists of a man and a woman, WHO BEFORE GOD, vow and promise to come together AS ONE; (“for this cause shall a man leave his father and mother and be joined unto his wife, and THEY TWO SHALL BE ONE FLESH.” Ephesians 5:30), in an inseparable unity and seal that joining together by a vow, which means and is a “SOLEMN PROMISE”, which is made before God and man. Though scripturally a woman can break a vow, there is NO WAY the man can, so marriage is “until death do us part”.

In dealing with this subject, may we make ourselves very clear, there are areas and situations that will arise which will necessitate each case being judged on its own merits, but we feel there is sufficient material in the scriptures that give us very solid guide lines to follow, which should, if considered carefully and prayerfully, give every believer the necessary truth to govern their lives by.

Marriage is a very serious step in one’s life and should NEVER be entered into lightly, it is certainly instituted by God and should be one of the most wonderful, fulfilling experiences in one’s life. If a marriage takes place outside of the church it could, note I did not say would, but could end up

to be the most unpleasant experience.

When a couple begin to have intentions of getting married, they should first of all inform their parents, and secondly the elders of the church. They should then be open before God, that either parents or elders, who have their best interests at heart, can offer their assistance in making sure they understand what all is involved in marriage, etc.

In today's world, sex rates possibly number one on the list of reasons why you should get married, but may we say, that there is far more to marriage than the physical, though that too, is instituted by God. You should allow and freely cooperate with your elders in conducting several, **NOT JUST ONE BEFORE THE WEDDING DAY**, counseling sessions. Many times marriages end up in the divorce courts because after several years of living together they suddenly find out they are not compatible. **NONSENSE**. If there are things in each other's disposition etc. that you find hard to cope with, you better take another good look at the whole situation. We have had people say that he or she is this, that or the other thing, that we are sure did not just come into one's character overnight, examine such things and weigh them carefully **BEFORE MARRIAGE**. That is what courtship is all about, to see whether or not you are suited to each other etc.

NOTE TO ELDERS: Be sure you take the time to set up counseling sessions well in advance and if a couple should spring a wedding on you, not leaving sufficient time to do a proper job, you should ask for a longer time or refuse to conduct the ceremony, **THIS IS SERIOUS BUSINESS**.

Separation - When Both Parties Are Believers

I Corinthians 7:10,11, "And unto the married I **COMMAND, YET NOT I, BUT THE LORD**, LET NOT the wife depart from her husband, but if she depart, let her **REMAIN UNMARRIED**, or be reconciled to her husband; and let not the husband put away his wife." By this, there is no way that two believers can divorce. They can separate, live apart, but **NOT REMARRY**. By so doing, and if both parties are sincere and honest before God and each other, there is still a possibility of them being reconciled, but if they divorce that is final. Remember the above applies where both parties are Christians.

Verse 12, **TO THE REST**, or Phillips says, "**TO OTHER PEOPLE**" and will you please notice here, Paul makes a decision on this matter, he says it is his advice, Phillip says, "though this is not a divine command". If a brother has a wife or a sister a husband, who is not a believer or Christian, and the non-believer is pleased to live with the believer, **THE BELIEVER SHOULD NOT PUT THE NON-BELIEVER OUT**. The onus is placed on the believer, who after all knows God's mind on the matter, or at least should. Here is something well worth considering, the unbeliever is sanctified (**SET APART**) by the fact (God's law) that they are joined to the believer and God says **THEY ARE ONE**, otherwise their children would be unholy which

the scripture says they are not.

May we just add here, that the union of marriage is far beyond a natural, physical tie or relationship, and regardless what men and women do to that relationship on the surface, will never and can never annul and erase that union except in the case of death, that then, by God's law, terminates that union and releases the other party completely. If however, (please note) the UNBELIEVER decides they want to leave, they may do so and Paul makes this decision, the remaining party is no longer held or bound to that union. According to Mosaic law, after they divorce they may never remarry the same person again, Deuteronomy 24:4.

The Weymouth translation used the word, "hallowed" in place of sanctified. "For the unbelieving husband is HALLOWED by union with a Christian woman, and the unbelieving wife is HALLOWED by the union with a Christian brother." This certainly confirms the strength of that spiritual union, it is something not meant to be tampered with.

Matthew 5:31,32, "It hath been said, whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement, BUT I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication (sexual intercourse with unmarried persons) causeth her to commit adultery (violate the marriage vows) and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery."

Matthew 19:3-12. In this passage of scripture, Jesus gives the reason why Moses gave the bill of divorcement which was FOR THE HARDNESS OF THEIR HEARTS, but please notice what Jesus says immediately following, "BUT FROM THE BEGINNING IT WAS NOT SO". The original teaching was NO DIVORCE and that is the way, as believers, we should look on the matter today, NO DIVORCE.

The arguments the natural mind presents, which are keeping with the present day attitudes and beliefs, really have no place in the Church of the living God. We are called to be different, to set the pace, to lead the way, to be living epistles that are known and read of all men and although the general consensus of our present day society accepts the break down in marriages, does not alter the truth of God's word. As soon as a few high waves arise in the lives of two individuals they start thinking divorce because they think all of a sudden they are not compatible, etc., this should NEVER cross our minds as believers and if it ever does we should dismiss the thought immediately.

Luke 16:14-18. Jesus here was teaching the Pharisees concerning such things as the stewardship of life, "He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much; and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much," verse ten. In verse 15, Jesus said unto them, "Ye are they that jus-

tify YOURSELVES before men; but GOD KNOWETH YOUR HEARTS; for that which is highly esteemed among men is ABOMINATION IN THE SIGHT OF GOD.” Then Jesus said, verse 17, “And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass, THAN ONE TITTLE OF THE LAW TO FAIL,” And the HE in lieu of what was just said, in only one verse refers to divorce being forbidden; “Whosoever putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery; and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from her husband committeth adultery.” From this there should be no question as to the stand Jesus took concerning divorce and the church MUST take the same position. The Pharisees tried to justify themselves in many things, but that never altered the truth of God’s word and though men today endeavor to do the same, saying, we are living in the twentieth century and everybody is doing it etc., STILL DOES NOT ALTER THE TRUTH.

NOTE: Though we find a condition allowed here by God, we must emphasize the words of our Lord Himself, “BUT FROM THE BEGINNING IT WAS NOT SO,” Matthew 19:8. If your attitude is to find loop-holes to satisfy and justify your carnality, you will find them, but if you desire to please God and walk in accordance with His statutes, you will find them also.

To this point we have dealt with a situation where either one is a believer or both are Christians. Now what about two individuals who are divorced and remarried BEFORE they were converted. In this situation both parties were ignorant of the laws of God and the Word tells us that He “winks at our ignorance”. God would never hold us responsible or punish us for having done something we were ignorant was wrong, however, because of the laws of God, instituted to govern believer and unbeliever alike, two people could never anticipate and enter into divorce, at least the first time, without feeling a measure of guilt. We must remember, there are solemn vows involved in a marriage, which are made before God and He is going to remind those involved of what they have done and what they are thinking of doing.

Shacking Up

I must say, I despise this term, but it is so commonly used today, I will use it so that no mistake is made as to what we are referring to. Another term quite frequently used is, “living common-law” which all means that a man and a woman are living together as husband and wife outside of marriage or having been joined together by God. The scripture calls it living in fornication or indulging in unlawful sexual intercourse. Now some might say, there is more to marriage than standing before a minister or judge and having him read a prepared ceremony and we agree, but one must also remember that by so doing, the minister as a representative of God, along with those in attendance, hear the vows that are made, which we

have already stated can not be broken. Living outside of marriage removes all Divine responsibility and dignity and the parties involved are at liberty to break the (note) relationship at anytime, nothing is binding. Living in fornication is generally accepted in our society today but who is to say society is right, when we desert the scriptures and turn our backs upon its simple truths, we are in error, and absolutely no where do we find permission to live adulterous lives, It definitely teaches against it. No excuses please, you may say we are “square” or “old fashioned” or call it what you like, it alters not the truth of what the scriptures declare or teach. Such teaching is not generally accepted for sadly to say, divorce has crept into the religious church of today, where once it was frowned upon and taught against, it is now permissible . I was shocked to learn recently that in one of our leading denominational churches in Canada, that 25% of its ministers are divorced. As a brother once said in my hearing, “as the head goes, so goes the body”, it is impossible to teach what the Bible declares as truth, when the teacher is guilty of the same sin and sin it is.

Homosexuality - or as they say today ‘Gay’

Homosexuality means, having sexual desire for those of the same sex.

Here again, we run head on with the so called freedom of rights etc. as talked about so much today.

My personal view, for what it is worth, is there is nothing so obnoxious as to even think of than two men living together for such reasons. There is nothing so unnatural or unreal. God never intended such to be and to think that some of our religious denominations accept them into the clergy. This just shows how far we have drifted from the teaching of the Bible, and the day we forsake the clarity of the scriptures, we find ourselves walking into total spiritual darkness. There is absolutely no scriptural way that the Church of the Living God, the Body of Christ, can accept or condone homosexuality or lesbianism.

May God help us as believers to take our stand against such debauchery and teach our children the right and the wrongs of such living. Our young people are getting indoctrinated in the evil ways of our present society, where marriage holds no sanctity or dignity or holiness about it, it has become nothing more than a glorified love affair. If God never intended marriage to be holy, how could He compare the relationship of husband and wife to the union between Christ and the Church. Paul in writing to the Ephesians makes this comparison, chapter 5:30-32, “For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. THIS IS A GREAT MYSTERY: BUT I SPEAK CONCERNING

CHRIST AND THE CHURCH.” There is no way that Paul would make such a comparison as to the union and relationship of a husband to his wife if it were not meant to be holy. I fear that the relationship of the so called church of today to Christ is not too far removed from what exists in countless numbers of marriages today, little wonder the church, the religious system has become powerless and irresponsible, instead of being the head it has become the tail, but I declare to you that there has begun in the earth in our generation, a rising up and a coming forth of the real, that which shall one day be a glorious church without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, where do you belong, where do you desire to be found, in the sinking ship of the traditions of men or part of the ever growing coming together of the Body of Christ. If we want to be part of what God has ordained then we must walk in accordance with His commandments and statutes. As long as Israel walked right God was with her but the moment she forsook the laws of God she was on her own, so it is today.

Even our governments encourage such sinfulness in that two unmarried people, living together, can draw more social assistance than a married couple. Such licentious living shall be the downfall and the deterioration of our nation, for our nations and the church, can only be as strong as the people and families who comprise it.

Listen all you who name the name of Jesus, let us not sit back and bury our heads in the sands like the ostrich and console ourselves by saying there is nothing we can do, there is lots that we can do. We must take a firm stand against such sinfulness and resist such evil ways in our homes, teach our children what is right and with much prayer and supplication you will protect your family from the onslaught of the enemy. It is not easy, but silence often registers agreement or consent and to this no sincere believer can endorse. Deuteronomy 6:6, “And these words, which I COMMAND thee this day, shall be in thine hearts; and THOU SHALT TEACH THEM DILIGENTLY UNTO THY CHILDREN, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.” We should talk freely in our homes to our families, for better they hear it the right way, around the dinner table or devotions, than get the twisted warped ideas of the world.

For what it is worth

There are many things to be considered, and especially where children are involved.

First of all, two people have shared and revealed the total privacy of their lives to each other. Though our moral standards have been desecrated to an all time low, there are more than just morals involved. Where two people yield themselves, unreservedly to each other, they are not just satisfying the

desires of the human heart, but they are fulfilling a Divine law which states the reason a man will leave his mother and father and be joined or cleave to his wife is by so doing, by a Divine act of God, they being two become ONE FLESH. That is the culmination of a Divine act or law, which cannot be easily broken. Really, the only way it can be broken legally before God, is when another Divine law overrides it, which states that when one or the other dies, the remaining person is no longer bound by the first law. We cannot over emphasize the all important fact here, that the bringing together of male and female in a marriage union reaches far far beyond the physical, it reaches and establishes itself in the Spiritual realms, even though the couple involved may not at the time realize its depth in God.

Where children are involved it becomes so much more complicated. A child comes into being by God's eternal blessing resting upon the union of a man and woman. There is more to the birth of a child than a biological relationship. One of the ten commandments is that we are to honor our father and our mother, or as one translator put it, HONOR THOSE WHO GAVE US LIFE. All life comes from God we know, but until the 'seed' is planted in the receptacle ordained of God, which is the woman, it lies dormant. Parenthood is ordained of God and what therefore God hath joined together let NO MAN PUT ASUNDER, Matthew 19:6.

When a home is broken up by separation or divorce, think what that does to an innocent child. God never intended children to have to make that kind of a decision between father and mother, who they both love and are an intricate part of. They are incapable of handling that kind of a problem and it is a proven fact it affects them and causes damage in their lives for the rest of their days.

It is little wonder that many young people and yes even children become addicted to drugs, attempted suicides etc., when they are subjected to an act of defiance of God's law by their parents. Single parent's homes are becoming a common thing, where a child is raised either without a father or a mother, and although organizations have been formed in an endeavor to cope with the need, they can never take the place or substitute for God's law. A child, regardless of what age, needs both mother and father in order for it to grow up and mature properly in this world. It is very unfair to subject children to such circumstances and our hope is that parents will stop and consider the harm they are imposing upon THEIR OFFSPRING by even considering divorce or separation.

It has been stated before and we repeat it again, no problem could ever arise, especially between two believers that are adults, that you cannot find the solution to. WITH GOD'S HELP, IF YOU REALLY WANT IT TO BE SOLVED. It will no doubt require compromise from both husband and

wife, but we must remember what the Beatitudes teach us, “Blessed are the peacemakers; for they shall be called the children of God. Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness sake; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile (ill-treat) you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake, Rejoice, and be exceedingly glad; for great is your reward in heaven; for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.” Matthew 5:9-12.

In summing up we will in brief, outline point by point our prayerful decision which will serve to give both elders and all those concerned, direction in handling and dealing with this unpleasant problem of divorce.

1. The Church, the Body of Christ, does NOT CONDONE DIVORCE among the members of the Body Christ. This statement covers in general our belief, realizing that each individual case must be viewed and dealt with upon the merits involved and the scriptural pattern used to judge each case whatever category they may fall into as outlined in the scriptures.

2. When both are believers there is no way that one can justify divorce as members one of another and of the Body of Christ.

3. One believer married to an unbeliever would occur when one party got saved after marriage. The responsibility of keeping that home together lies mainly on the believer and no thought or action should be taken to put out of the non-believer as long as they agree to live together.

NOTE: I am reluctant to spell this out as clear as I have, but one must keep in mind that the Church does not agree with divorce or separation and though it appears under these circumstances one may pursue this course, every effort MUST be put forth to avoid such a thing ever happening. As mentioned earlier, if one is looking for loopholes you will find them, but our earnest desire should be to walk in accordance with God’s will and purpose for our lives which will always be in harmony with His word.

4. When a couple have been divorced and remarried before conversion of either or both parties, being ignorant of God’s laws, their life in the second marriage would begin according to the scriptural pattern.

5. When two believers separate or divorce, they cannot remarry until the death of one or the other. Death by the scriptures seems to be the only thing that really dissolves a marriage.

As brethren we strongly advocate that divorce does not belong in the Church and if it should arise, it should be dealt with according to the scriptures and the prayerful decision of the elders of the local church assisted by the brethren where necessary, and that decision should be accepted and adhered to by those involved. Paul seemed to practice this policy where in I Corinthians 7:10 he said, “And unto the married I command, yet not I,

but the Lord,” then in verse 12, “But to the rest speak I, not the Lord.” In verse 17 he concludes by saying, “And so ordained I in ALL CHURCHES.”

The Holy Spirit has brought to our attention the necessity of the Church, the Body of Christ, avoiding and staying clear of the general accepted ideas of society and sadly to say many many spirit filled organizations, that divorce is the accepted way. Regardless of how men may endeavor to justify themselves and argue away their positions, it alters not the laws of an eternal God.

If or when any couple begin to have difficulties in their marriage they should discuss their problems immediately with their elders, the spiritual fathers of the church, before what could have been avoided gets to the point of no return. The stakes are too high, the results of divorce and separation are too devastating to treat lightly.

In closing let me refer you to a verse of scripture that bears out the need and the joy we should find in conducting our lives according to the scriptures.

Solomon, in the writing of his wise sayings, I believe, makes it very clear, speaking to a son regarding keeping the commandments of his father and mother, Proverbs 6:22, “When thou goest, it shall lead thee; when thou sleepest, it shall keep thee; and when thou awakest, it shall talk with thee.” What tremendous direction and protection this verse assures us as we adhere to God’s promises. I particularly like the Revised Standard version of this passage, “When you walk, they will lead you; when you lie down, they will watch over you; and when you awake, they will talk with you.” God’s word will as we walk lead us, when we sleep protect us and when we rise talk to us, praise His Name.

This letter send we to all the churches and to those who will have an ear to hear.

THE STRANGER

Who is a stranger, or what does it mean to be classified as a stranger?

The word simply means, an outsider -newcomer- foreigner or a person unaccustomed to something specified - a guest or visitor. However one may wish to express the word, it associates a particular person or persons with a feeling of sort of being on the outside looking in. The word does not reveal warmth or closeness, but rather distant, one that is unfamiliar either with a person or a certain situation.

The Spirit of God is revealing in this hour what the responsibility of the church is to those termed as strangers. It was quite a revelation to me personally as I began to read the various passages of scriptures relative to the subject and to find that we as believers, as members of the Body of Christ, have a definite responsibility before God toward the stranger.

One Sunday morning just recently, we had a stranger, (NEWCOMER) - a person unaccustomed to our type of service and as the service progressed, the Spirit of God impressed upon my own heart just how selfish we were. To one who was a newcomer and unaccustomed to what was going on, we did absolutely nothing to assist them to find out what it all meant. Oh to us who were accustomed to what everything meant, it was no problem, but even when someone asked for a very familiar hymn, "How Great Thou Art", which fit perfectly into the theme of the meeting, we struggled through two verses, getting the words to one verse mixed up with the other verse and there they sat, not able to even enter into the singing, not having any words or book to follow.

In writing about these matters, I fear being misunderstood, but let the church of the Living God know, we have come to the time in our experience and walk with God, when we must march on and allow thy Holy Spirit to readjust our lives and ways of doing things to suit the day into which He has brought us.

May the Spirit of God make this very clear at this point, we are not going back, much less looking back, we are pressing on to deeper depths and higher heights with Him.

We worry far too often about going back; there is positively NO WAY OF GOING BACK PROVIDED YOUR EYES ARE UPON THE LORD. In II Chronicles 20, there was no way Judah could go back, although the odds were against them, as long as they listened to the word of the Lord spoken by the prophets. There was no need to be afraid or dismayed, all they had to do was, verse 12, "KEEP THEIR EYES UPON THE LORD".

The general Sunday gathering of the Church is going to have to change somewhat, in order to accommodate the strangers - newcomers, that God is going to bring in. I am sure the stranger in our service recently went home empty as there was nothing served or set before them that even created an appetite and yet Jesus told the disciples, when a man hungers feed him, if he was in need of water, give him to drink. Whatever state they found a man, they ministered to his need, whether it be for body, or soul, or spirit.

The parable, (which is an earthly story with a heavenly meaning) of the sheep and the goats portrays the true teaching of Jesus. Matthew 25:35-45, "For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a STRANGER, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto

them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these MY brethren, Ye have done it unto me.” This parable depicts the true ministry of the Son of God, our elder brother Jesus, the Church of which we are a part. Jesus said, and please notice the broad scope of His ministry here; when I:

hungered - you fed me. thirsty - you gave me drink. STRANGER - you took me in. naked - you clothed me. sick - you visited me. imprisoned - you came unto me.

It seems as though regardless of what the conditions or circumstances were, Jesus ministered to whoever He was dealing with, first on the level on which they lived and secondly according to their PRESENT need. Jesus prayed in that great prayer of intercession in John 17:18, “As thou hast sent me into the WORLD, even so have I also sent THEM INTO THE WORLD.”

One of the best examples one could think of to bear out this point, when you invite a young couple to your home with their newborn babe and set them down to a roast beef dinner and all the trimmings, I am sure all would enjoy the meal except one and that is the new member, the one who is a newcomer, the one unaccustomed to the meal being served that everyone else so enjoyed. Though the hostess may not be concerned, which I’m sure she would be, there is one who is deeply concerned about the welfare of this newcomer, this unaccustomed little stranger, and that is mother, she would make it her business to see that the newcomer is not left out, and is not sent away hungry. **SO OUGHT IT TO BE IN THE CHURCH.** The Holy Spirit is about to swing wide the door and bid all to come to the banquet, He is commissioning us to go out into the highways and byways and COMPEL them to come in. God help us to have the welcome mat out; God help us to take them in, for the stranger - newcomer - unaccustomed one **IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE CHURCH.**

Let us look at a few scriptures that reveal how the stranger and the Church are linked together, and may the Holy Spirit open our eyes and our hearts to receive the truth of God’s Word.

Exodus 22:21-24, “Thou shalt not vex (misuse), nor oppress him: **FOR YE WERE STRANGERS IN THE LAND OF EGYPT.** Ye shall not afflict **ANY WIDOW,** or fatherless child. If thou afflict them in **ANY WISE,** and they cry at all unto me, I will hear their cry: and my wrath shall wax hot, and I will kill you with the sword; and your wives shall be widows and your children fatherless.” This passage broadens the functions of the church beyond the area of our subject, but please take heed. Notice verse twenty-one tells us not to oppress the stranger, this newcomer, not to make it any more difficult for them than what is necessary. **REMEMBERING** that we once were in exactly that same place, that they are now. How soon

we forget, how soon we forget the struggles and days of anxiety we once had, wondering whether or not what the Spirit had introduced us to was really of God or man. How we appreciated that little added attention, that measure of kindness, the warm handshake of embrace, someone giving us the words to the new song being sung, someone cared, someone saw us sitting at the table trying to find some nourishment at this unaccustomed table and slipped us a little sincere milk of the word, I Peter 2:2, "As new born (newcomers) babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, THAT YE MAY GROW THEREBY." There may be those who genuinely desire the milk but how can they receive it unless they are fed it? Exodus 23:9, "Also thou shalt not oppress a stranger; FOR YE KNOW THE HEART OF A STRANGER SEEING YE WERE STRANGERS IN THE LAND OF EGYPT." Another translation puts it this way, "Do not make life hard for the foreigner; you know the alien's attitude, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt."

Having traveled in foreign countries, I know how much more difficult and almost impossible it would have been if it were not for the assistance and help of those who were accustomed to such things as language, customs, etc. One is not there too long until you begin to find your way into the various oddities of their particular way of life, however, it would be almost an impossible task without the help of those who understood the ways of the people, etc. Can you imagine, and I know some of you are well aware what its like, to be in a Sunday morning meeting where you heard people in an audible voice praise the Lord and shouting hallelujah, singing songs you never heard before etc., etc., for the first time! But one must remember, that when the Spirit is moving and inspiring people to do such things though strange, will not cause offense, but here is where Elders should give consideration and pour a little skim milk on the pudding, so that the stranger, that newcomer, may receive at least enough to create a deeper desire and appetite for more of that which as yet, he is unaccustomed to. Leviticus 19:32-34, "Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head, and honor the face of the old man, and fear thy God; I am the Lord, And if a stranger (newcomer) sojourn with thee in the land, ye shall not vex him. But the stranger that dwelleth with you shall be unto you AS ONE BORN AMONG YOU AND THOU SHALT LOVE HIM AS THYSELF; for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt; I am the Lord your God." When a stranger journeyed, or made his home in the midst of God's people they were not to oppress him but accept him and if he came to live with them, he was to be treated as one of the family. You will notice the constant reference made to the time when Israel were strangers or foreigners in Egypt. Again we can apply the truth of these instances to our day. There are those who seem to sojourn with us, they do not really see and understand what God is doing, but they desire to journey along with God's people. We must not oppress or discourage

them or form our own opinions about them and say such things as one often hears, “they don’t see this”, or “they are not part of this”. Who are we to be their judge? The word of God tells us that if such as a one wants to sojourn with us, we must accept him and endeavor to help them see what they are unaccustomed to now. Again those who seem to move right in and make themselves at home, these we must accept as though they were born into the family and treat them as a member of the great family of God.

Leviticus 25:35-38, “And if thy brother be waxen poor, and fallen in decay WITH THEE; then thou shalt relieve him; yea though he be a STRANGER, or a SOJOURNER; that he may live with thee. Take thou no usury of him or increase. I am the Lord your God, which brought YOU forth out of the land of Egypt, to give you the land of Canaan, and to be your God.” There is something very significant here that we must not overlook. This relationship of brotherhood, whether it be in the realm of the flesh or spirit, is a closely knit tie. Israel, according to law, were not able to charge their physical or spiritual brothers usury or interest. This scripture we have just read speaks of a brother and a stranger or sojourner on the same level, the stranger was to be treated as a brother, no interest charges, or could they make any profit off of them and the year of jubilee released all his debits the same as it did to God’s people.

Those we may consider as sojourners or strangers, even though they seem to belong just to get in on the benefits, must be given consideration. Though such people, and many there are, do receive the rains as it falls upon the just and the unjust, still rob themselves of the joy of true inheritance, which can only belong to those who make that complete surrender and commitment to God.

Deuteronomy 10:18,19, “He doth execute the judgment of the fatherless and widow, and LOVETH THE STRANGER in giving him food and raiment. LOVE THEREFORE THE STRANGER: FOR YE WERE STRANGERS IN THE LAND OF EGYPT.”

Although we are dealing mainly with the stranger, let us note our responsibility here to the fatherless and widow. Oh what a glorious state the world will be in when the order of God is established in the earth, “They kingdom come, Thy will be done, in earth as it is in heaven.”

Deuteronomy 31:12,13, “Gather the people together, men and women, and children and thy STRANGER that is within thy gates, that THEY may hear, and LEARN to fear the Lord your God, and observe to do all the words of the law: And that their children WHICH HAVE NOT KNOWN ANY THING, MAY HEAR AND LEARN TO FEAR (reverence) THE LORD YOUR GOD, as long as ye shall live in the land whither ye go over Jordan to possess it.” Whenever God desired to speak to His people EV-

EVERYONE, adults, young people, children and yes even the strangers, were to be gathered together. God was about to speak and it was very important that everyone hear what He was about to say unto the people. No one was excluded, not even the stranger.

I would appear there were certain ground rules that governed all, strangers included and such applies today. This should apply not only in the church and church meetings, but in every home. The scriptures teach us Ephesians 6:1,2, “Children obey your parents in the Lord; **FOR THIS IS RIGHT. HONOR THY FATHER AND MOTHER**; which is the first commandment with a promise.” Every household have their own set of what we might call rules. It is the moral obligation that, as long as young people and children remain in the home they should **REVERENCE** the rules. These rules adjust to the circumstances naturally. A child going to school may be required to be in by nine o’clock; a young man still living at home but earning his own living will no doubt have this restriction, at least extended, but if the desire of the parents is that he be in at a reasonable hour he should abide by the rules of the home, he has no right as long as he or she is part of that household to make their own set of rules. This also applies in the Spiritual household. A sojourner and stranger, once they expressed the desire to be associated with the Household of God, come under the same Divine Order. If they appreciate what the church means to them though they may not understand everything, they will find great joy and certainly a rest by submitting to the order established by God. So shall children and young people find a rest, a sense of security and a peace in entering in and being a part of the home. Note: That big old world looks tempting and adventurous and glamorous to many young folks, but there is a lot of sadness and unrest out there. Take a good look at things before you cut the ties of home, **BE SURE** you are ready for it.

The laws and statutes of God concern **EVERYBODY**, young and old alike. Verse 13 teaches us that parents and elders should be taking the time to teach and instill the ways of the Lord into the hearts of our children. I repeat here the words of II Peter 3:1, “I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance.” It is absolutely necessary for the young and help to re-establish the older ones in the ways of the Lord, as we teach and stir up our memories in truths perhaps forgotten or overlooked. Jeremiah 7:6,7, “If ye oppress (burden) **NOT THE STRANGER; THE FATHERLESS AND THE WIDOW** and shed not innocent blood in this place, neither walk after other gods to **YOUR HURT**; **THEN** will I cause you to dwell in this place, in the land I gave to your fathers, forever and ever,” (their heritage).

Part of receiving the fullness of our inheritance is us fulfilling our responsibilities before God. The Divine purpose and roll of the Body of

Christ, the Church, is far-reaching; it must touch and influence the lives of people without as well as within. Open up the gates and remove the walls that hinder and let the King of Glory manifest Himself through the instruments of mercy which He has raised up in the earth in His Own Body the Church. The stage is being set for the return of the prodigal sons, let us who have the unspeakable privilege of making such preparations, begin NOW to make OURSELVES ready to accept and receive them. Yes, those who have scoffed and ridiculed and made light of the things so precious and real to you; those who have done you wrong; prepare ye the way of the Lord for the visitation and time of ingathering, such as we have never seen, is at hand. The preparation of OUR OWN HEARTS to receive these STRANGERS, newcomers, will be as great and necessary as the making room in their hearts to receive and enter into the way of the Lord. Let us not be as the elder son when he saw what his father was doing for his wayward brother, he was angry and would not go in and celebrate the return of his brother, but said to this father, "These many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment; and yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends" Luke 15:29-32. All this son could see was the external, as his father said in verse 31, "All I have is thine". His heart was not ready and prepared to receive his brother; he could not see that the family was incomplete WITHOUT this wayward brother; this one who had become unacquainted with his father's ways. He was not willing to be his brother's keeper; he had adopted the theory that he was capable of looking after himself; he was well versed and familiar with his father's ways; he knew the order; he could sing all the songs by heart; he understood everything his father spoke, but his brother had, through his own foolishness, separated himself from the comforts; security of home; he had made himself as a foreigner or stranger in his own home; now that he desired to return to father and home his brother refused to put the song book in his hand; to extend to him the right hand of fellowship and welcome he who had been dead in his trespasses and sins; lost and now found; he whom the Spirit had spoken to and touched and brought back to life. Instead of helping him, he vexed and oppressed him. Contrary to scripture, he went off in the corner to sulk, judging him as being foolish and not seeing the order, etc. etc. He was not willing to be his brother's keeper, are you?

Over the years we have almost discouraged people in any way going out into the highways and byways, but we have come to the time of great changes. Let us be reminded once again of the prophet Joel's prophecy, that, "In the last days God would pour out of His Spirit upon ALL, UPON ALL FLESH". Not just a few, but as the great creator sowed down the earth with grass, trees and flowers in such abundance, so is His precious

Holy Spirit being shed abroad throughout all the earth, upon all the peoples of the earth, red and yellow, black and white. Praise God! His promise is to be fulfilled in ALL FLESH, His Divine purpose is BEING fulfilled in all the earth and in all of mankind. When in the history of the church has such multitudes of people received the infilling of the Holy Spirit as in this day? People who once turned their backs on such heresy and considered those who professed such an experience as religious fanatics, have lived to see the day when God's Spirit would be poured out upon all flesh and have entered into the same experience and now rejoice in their new found joy. "He would pour out of His Spirit upon ALL flesh."

In absolutely no way are we departing from the original revelation of God calling out His elect. Let us all remember that there is a time and a season for everything and, as is recorded in the book of Acts 2:47, "And the Lord added to the church DAILY SUCH AS SHOULD BE SAVED", and again in Acts 13:43, "And when the Gentiles heard this they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord, and as many as were ORDAINED TO ETERNAL LIFE BELIEVED." These scriptures definitely reveal that God has a plan and order in doing all things, but let us who believe make ourselves available and ready to do His Divine will. We can be too over-cautious and fearful of letting God lead us on and submitting to the mind and will of God.

It is far too often expressed about being careful of going back or getting back into the "old order". Egypt is behind us, we are pressing on to higher ground, to Canaan's land, and we could linger on the banks of Jordan endlessly, when the message has been spread through the camp by the officers saying, "When ye see the ark of the covenant of your Lord your God, and the priests the Levites bearing it, then YE SHALL REMOVE FROM YOUR PLACE, and go after it. Yet there shall be a space between you and it, about two thousand cubits by measure; come not near unto it, that ye may know the way by which ye MUST GO; FOR YE HAVE NOT PASSED THIS WAY HERETOFORE. And Joshua said unto the people, SANCTIFY (to make Holy - to set apart - to make free from sin) YOURSELVES: FOR TOMORROW THE LORD WILL DO WONDERS AMONG YOU." There is no question that even in Joshua's day there were skeptics, there were those who had to pray a little more about it to be sure they heard right and had the mind of God. Listen dear people, in actuality we are the mind of God, it is through us as members of His Body that He reveals His mind and His will. The call has come, prepare yourselves for the Bridegroom cometh, prepare yourselves and trim your lamps and be sure to have ample supply of oil (Spirit) for God is moving throughout all the earth. Move on thou distant waves and carry to yonder shores the tidings of peace and deliverance to all nations; swell thou mighty tumults and blow thou tidal waves and bring to all nations this gospel of the Kingdom; lift thou the fallen and strengthen

thou the feeble, for this is the day that the Lord hath made and every man and creeping thing the fish of the sea and the fowls of the air shall know that it is the **DAY OF THE LORD**.

We may ask, what does God require of me? Where do I as a member of His Body fit in such a plan? We have been taught for twenty-eight years, this is the day all of creation of us in the same as was required of us is the same as was required of God's people in Joshua's day, sanctify ourselves and be ready to do what God has prepared us and called us to do, just prepare ye the way of the Lord, as John the Baptist came preaching in Matthew 3:2,3, "Repent ye; for the Kingdom of heaven is at hand. For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, **PREPARE YE THE WAY OF THE LORD, MAKE HIS PATHS STRAIGHT**. May the Holy Spirit arouse our spirits to **ACTION**; we have encircled this mountain long enough and as the Psalmist declared 24:7, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lifted up ye everlasting doors; and the **KING OF GLORY SHALL COME IN**. Who is this King of Glory? **THE LORD STRONG AND MIGHTY, THE LORD MIGHTY IN BATTLE.**" Why ought we to fear; "**GREATER IS HE THAT IS IN YOU THAN HE THAT IS IN THE WORLD.**" I John 4:4.

No doubt some will take to the streets as messengers of good tidings, others will steal away to the mountain of prayer and bear before the Throne of Grace and the burden of the Lord as a woman in travail, others will stand before the multitudes as Jesus and Paul of old and declare, "This is the way, walk ye in it", and still again there will be those who shall magnify His Name and share of His Grace in song and in praise, for it is as **EVERY JOINT SUPPLIES**, that shall usher in the great and notable Day of the Lord. Oh trees of the field clap your hands; oh birds of the air wing your flight; for the day breaks upon the horizon and soon the darkness shall bring forth the day.

This Body, **MUST MAKE INCREASE OF ITSELF IN LOVE**, Ephesians 4:16. The Holy Spirit most definitely has His part to play, but we **ARE** living in the time of one of the greatest outpourings of the Holy Spirit that the earth has ever known, **WE MUST RESPOND**, Elders, Deacons, members of the Body of Christ look around you, take a real serious spiritual look at your own local church. Is what you see wonderful and all as each member is, is this the extent of the work of God in your particular area? If we are all honest, I am sure we realize we must confess there must be more in the offing and may your hearts be assured there is. If we will allow ourselves to be satisfied with the way, but begin **NOW TO BELIEVE TO WORK TOGETHER AND SEE THE SALVATION OF THE LORD** performed before your very eyes. Together let us believe God for the impossible and as it is in the home, nothing seems to bring more joy or happiness as

when there is an addition to the family and so it will be in this great Family of God, as He adds the strangers, those newcomers, those that are as yet unaccustomed to the ways of the Lord, great shall be the rejoicing in the midst of God's people.

Let us all pray as Paul of old, Ephesians 6:18-20, "Praying always with all prayer and supplication IN THE SPIRIT, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints; And for me, THAT UTTERANCE MAY BE GIVEN UNTO ME THAT I MAY OPEN MY MOUTH BOLDLY TO MAKE KNOWN THE MYSTERY OF THE GOSPEL, For which I am an AMBASSADOR in bonds; that therein I may speak boldly as I ought to speak." If this man of God felt the need to pray such a prayer how much more we?

Come Holy Spirit we need Thee, Come sweet Spirit we pray, Come in Thy Strength And Thy Power, Come, oh come in Thine own gentle way.

THANKFULNESS

Living in such affluent times as we are today, we often take things for granted and neglect to be thankful.

In the spring of this year we were threatened with a drought as it was so dry, especially with having so little snow last winter. There were many throughout the country that were praying that it would rain. Then the forest fires got out of control in the northern part of our province and once again the cry for rain was heard upon the lips of many people, "if only it would rain". Then one day, it happened, the rain began to fall and watered the dry and thirsty ground, the grass seemed to come to life, and the leaves on the trees burst forth from their winter slumber. Everything about us took on new life, people were happy, our prayers had been answered. This is all so wonderful, but the thought comes to me, I wonder how many of us stopped to give thanks for the rain that so many of us had prayed for? It was not long after the rain had come that you could hear people complaining about all the wet weather. How ungrateful we can be!

I would like to turn your thoughts to the book of Deuteronomy and the eighth chapter. In this chapter the wonders of the wilderness were recalled. God reminded His people about how He fed them Manna and how that their clothes never wore out nor their feet swelled during that forty year journey. He reminded them of what He had prepared for them in the promised land, a land that flowed with milk and honey, etc. I would appreciate it if you would take your Bible and turn and read the eighth chapter.

Verse one tells us that there were certain conditions to be met, and that was that Israel was to observe and DO all of the commandments that God

had given them and if they did, they would live and multiply and go in and possess the land which the Lord had sworn unto their fathers. He also went on to tell them why they had passed through the wilderness experience. I wonder if you ever wondered why it was that you had to go through some experiences in life. I'm sure we all have. Let us read that 2nd verse, "And thou shalt remember ALL the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to: 1. Prove thee. 2. To know what is in thine heart. 3. To humble thee. 4. To feed thee manna (utter dependence upon God, no corner store.) 5. That he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread ONLY, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord.

The Lord knows more about what is really in our hearts than we do ourselves. He wants, by these various experiences that He permits in our lives, to prove us to see if we really love Him, if our trust and our confidence is really in Him, or in the arm of the flesh.

Verse 5 tells us the Lord chastens us like a father does his son, not because He does not love us, but because He wants to enrich our relationship with Him and ever and ever draw us closer to Himself.

The chapter then goes on from verse 7 to 9 to reveal what God has in store for them if they will but walk with Him and obey Him. As I read this account, I thought that the prophet was writing about our land Canada. He speaks of "A good land, flowing with brooks, fountains and springs, valleys and hills, a land of wheat, and barley and vines, and fig trees and pomegranates; a land of oil and honey, a land WHERE IN THOU SHALT EAT BREAD WITHOUT SCARCENESS, thou shalt NOT LACK ANYTHING IN IT; a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills thou mayest dig brass." Just stop and think for a moment, we as Israel of old, are blessed beyond measure, God is so good to us and how few of us really stop to give thanks to Him for His goodness. I trust that the spirit of conviction will rest upon all of us and we will take the time to return thanks to our Heavenly Father, who showers us with His goodness.

Now notice verse 10, "When thou has eaten and art full, then thou shalt bless the Lord thy God for the good land which he hath given thee." Remember the Lord had told His people that they had to obey in all things and therefore they must now give thanks for the blessing of the Lord upon them and upon their land. Verse 11, "Beware that thou forget not the Lord thy God, in keeping his commandments, and his judgments, and his statutes, which I commanded thee this day."

Verse 12 to 16 once again reminds the people of the goodness of God that He had so lavished upon them; how He had preserved them and kept them through the wilderness journey where there were serpents and scorpions and

drought, and where there was no water, and how He gave them water out of the rock and fed them manna. I would like you to pay particular attention to verses 17 and 18, “and thou say in thine heart, **MY POWER AND THE MIGHT OF MINE HAND HATH GOTTEN ME THIS WEALTH. BUT THOU SHALT REMEMBER THE LORD THY GOD: FOR IT IS HE THAT GIVETH THEE POWER TO GET WEALTH**, that he may establish his covenant which he sware unto thy fathers, as it is this day.” Let us all listen very, very carefully to what the scriptures teach us here. Notice it says that it is **HE** that giveth us power to get wealth, it is not our great skillful abilities and brain power, it is nothing less than the blessing of God upon a man’s life that gives him the ability to do (whatever it is) that prospers him. A farmer can look at his crop and pride himself in what he has accomplished, which is alright to a point, providing he stops and gives thanks to God for His blessing upon the seed and the land in giving him the sunshine and the rain just when it needs it. Regardless of what profession or walk of life we may be in, always remember, none of us could accomplish a single thing if it were not for the goodness of God upon our lives. We should all have a reverence, not a fear, but a reverence before God and realize that we have no power of ourselves to prosper in anything without His help. You may think that it was all your doings, you may have a brilliant mind, you may be skillful with your hands, you may be an accomplished physician, teacher, musician or whatever, but one must realize we could lose all of that at a moments notice if God were to withdraw our ability to even think. It is a sobering thought, but God help us all that we may stop and take inventory and then return to give thanks where it rightfully belongs, and that is to the One who fashioned and created us and breathed into us of the breath of life and has blessed us with all spiritual, physical and material blessings. I Thessalonians 5:18, “In **EVERYTHING** give thanks; for this **IS** the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.”

The scriptures relate an account which show how easy it is for all of us to take so much for granted and that is the account found in Luke 17:11-19, the story of the ten lepers. As Jesus was entering the village He met these ten lepers, who must have heard of His fame throughout the land and immediately, as they stood afar off, called unto Him and said, “Jesus, Master, have mercy on us”. How simple this all was. There was no asking questions and trying to find out all that Jesus believed and taught, their main concern at the moment was the disease they carried, that of leprosy. It has often been said, that many times we are far more concerned about what we believe rather than in **WHOM** we believe. From what the scriptures reveal here, Jesus never even prayed for them, He just told them to do something, and it was by doing what He asked of them that expressed their faith and

confidence in Him. He told them to go and show themselves to the priests, who in all probability did not believe in Jesus. This was not a hard thing He asked them to do, but very simple and because of their willingness to obey, which as I said, automatically expressed their faith in Him, they were healed.

May we pause here for just a moment to emphasize just how simple all this was. There was not a great prayer prayed, no sermons preached, just an acceptance of what Jesus said. The whole thing is so simple that it is hard to believe that one could receive so much by doing so little, but that is the way it is with the Lord. Jesus has paid it all, all we must do is accept what He has said. He has done and accomplished on the Cross for all of mankind the answer and solution of all of life's problems, if we would only believe and receive of Him. Man has a way of complicating things, when God never intended them to be that way - so hard to find or understand. He spoke words, that He Himself said a child could understand, but by the time we mortals get finished adding and subtracting what we think it means or does not mean, we have depleted His word until it means nothing. More and more I see personally, that the scripture needs very little interpretation, if we will just learn to accept it the way Jesus gave it to us. These lepers must have done just that, because they made their way to show the priests and were instantly healed.

There is a great lesson to learn in this account and may the Holy Spirit embed the truth of it down deep in all of our hearts. No doubt these lepers had sought out every source of medical help that was available to them but to no avail. Somewhere in their travels they had learned about Jesus and the miracles that He had performed. The Holy Spirit must have borne witness in their hearts that the things they had heard and possibly seen of this man Jesus were real, so immediately when they came in contact with Him they were ready to receive that which only He alone could give them. In His love and mercy He gave them that which they asked for, no doubt from the depths of their hearts, for they could find help nowhere else. They received that for which they had asked of Him, but miserably failed after they had received by not returning to give thanks to Him. Only one and he was a Samaritan, not one of His own race, returned to give thanks. The others just took it for granted. When the Samaritan saw that he was healed, he turned back and with a LOUD voice glorified God and fell down on his face at

his feet, giving Him thanks. Oh how often this happens today! Our nation and we as subjects of it, have been blessed beyond words, beyond measure, and how few take the time to return to the One from whence has come the blessing to even say thank you. We seem to just take it all for granted, just as if the Lord owed it to us.

Have you ever given a gift to someone, it may have cost you a great deal perhaps, you have had to go without yourself in order to purchase the gift for them and after they had received it, they never as much as said thank you? When such a thing happens it sort of turns us away from ever remembering them again and rightly so. God has given to us and the world a priceless gift, His Son. He gave Him that He might give His life-blood for the redemption of the entire human race and in that great plan of redemption He gave to all who would believe, or take Him at His word, forgiveness for all of their sins and all of their unrighteousness. This was the greatest, most expensive gift that anyone could ever give and yet so few have acknowledged their gift of His son, or expressed their thanks and appreciation for what God has done for mankind. Verse 17, as one reads it, senses a note of sadness as Jesus said, “were there not ten cleansed: but WHERE ARE THE NINE?” It is marvelous to think that Jesus would heal even those who did not even thank Him, but this is just the way He is. He will allow rain to fall upon the just and the unjust alike, on those who are thankful and those that just take it for granted. Where do we stand? Jesus said in verse 18, “There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this STRANGER.” This is so often the case, the ones that are most appreciative are the ones that are the furthest away from you, it certainly showed up those of His own kin. Whether the nine retained their healing or not the scriptures do not relate, but to the Samaritan Jesus said, “Arise, go thy way, THY FAITH HATH MADE THEE WHOLE.” Do you see here just how simple faith is? All the man did was ask, and believe, and returned to give thanks, and the scriptures declare that HIS FAITH made him whole.

When was the last time you children or young people said to Mother, “Thanks Mom for the wonderful dinner or for ironing my skirt or my shirt?” When was it? Far too often we take these everyday things for granted also. We never miss that water till the well runs dry, we never miss having Mother around the house until she is not there, then we begin to realize just how much she does for us. I think it would be well for all of us just to stop for a moment and take stock. Are we guilty of just accepting things and never showing our appreciation for what we have received? If we find ourselves in this position, (as the writer of this article has often found himself), let us stop and give thanks for the abundant blessing of God that rests upon us

daily. For those of you that need a touch of God upon your lives, take heart, BELIEVE what Jesus has said, for the scriptures declare that according to YOUR FAITH you SHALL receive.

Thank you God for sending Jesus, Thank you Jesus that you came, Holy Spirit won't you tell us, More about that lovely Name?

UNIVERSAL CALL

Acts 2:16-21; (Joel 2:28), "But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel: And it shall come to pass in that last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon All Flesh; and your sons and daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams. And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy. And I will shew wonders in heaven above and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapor of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable of the Lord come. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved."

Matthew 24:14, "And this gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached In All The World for a witness unto All Nations; and then shall the end come."

Mark 16:15, "And he said unto them, Go Ye Into All The World, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. And these signs Shall Follow Them That Believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover."

Acts 16:9, "And a vision appeared to Paul in the night; There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come Over Into Macedonia, And Help Us."

All of these scriptures reveal the mind and will of God for the hour that we are now living in. Acts 2:17 tells us that the time would come when God would pour out of His Spirit Upon All Flesh. Regardless of their nationality, religious beliefs, their sin and wickedness. He said, I will literally pour out my Spirit upon all of mankind. It would appear as though it would be a sovereign act of God. Never before in the history of Christendom have we witnessed such an outpouring as now. People who once shunned and spoke against tongues and such, are enjoying that glorious experience. This same scripture goes on to say that we would recognize this outpouring because our sons and daughters would prophesy, our young men would begin to see visions and our old men would dream dreams. The fulfillment of Joel's

prophecy can be witnessed throughout the length and breadth of the earth; the move is on; God is manifesting Himself by His Holy Spirit.

Matthew has told us that This Gospel of The Kingdom will be preached in all the world, then the end shall come. Never before have we experienced such an influx of requests for help as we have in the last couple of years.

The Macedonian call has come to come and help us; the move is on; the could is moving on; and we Must move on with it.

Mark described what events would take place as these tremendous days begin to unfold to us. His commission also was to Go Into All The World. This message of the kingdom is to the Whosoever Will. Our God is no respecter of persons. He said He would pour out of His Spirit upon All Flesh and that is exactly what He is doing, upon the rich and poor alike, upon the educated and the illiterate, upon the young and old, God IS moving by His Spirit. Mark writes that as we go, signs would follow. We should expect to see devils cast out, people speaking in tongues, the protective hand of God outstretched to us and as hands are laid upon the sick they Should recover. All this is a witness to the great outpouring, the fulfillment of God's word according to the prophecies.

This is the hour when all denominational barriers Must Be Taken Down. We must take them down, we must be willing to submit to God's will for the hour in which we are living. There is absolutely NO place for our little kingdoms; God has begun to build His kingdom in this earth. Let us not be foolish and try to cling to and preserve the traditions of the elders; God is moving us on; open up our hearts and let the King of glory come in; and who is this King of Glory? The Lord, Strong and Mighty, The Lord Mighty in Battle. He is the Lord of hosts. Read that 24th Psalm and let its message thrill and inspire you. David said, "The earth is the Lords' and the fullness thereof; The World And They That Dwell Therein." He has Everything in control, He knows exactly what is going on even though we often wonder how things are going to pan out.

Isaiah 45 certainly assures us of this. Take time and prayerfully read this entire chapter. Recently I read this chapter and circled in red the excessive use of the personal pronoun, "I" and "He". This chapter begins by God's call to Cyrus and tells Cyrus what He would do for him. In those first five verses the personal pronoun, "I" will go before thee, and make crooked places straight. I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, that thou mayest know that I, the Lord, which call thee by name, Am The God Of Israel." These are but a few of the promises given to Cyrus.

Verses 6 to 21 speaks of God's omnipotence, all powerful. He makes such statements as these, "I form light and create darkness; I make peace

and create evil. I, the Lord, do All These Things.” verse 7 and verse 12, “I have made the earth and created man upon it. I, even my hands, have stretched out the heavens and all their hosts have I commanded.” Verses 22-25 tells us of the plan God has to display His greatness. Verse 22, “Look Unto Me, and be ye saved, All The Ends Of The Earth, for I Am God And There Is No Other.” We must all remember God is still the Great I Am. He is still the Alpha (Beginning) and the Omega (the end) - the Lord God Almighty and as it is expressed no less than six times in Isaiah 45, “For I Am God, And There Is None Else.” This Great I Am is revealing Himself by His Spirit unto all nations, the call is going out universally, to all men to arise and shine thy light has come, the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee, For behold the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people but the Lord Shall Arise Upon Thee, And His Glory Shall Be Seen Upon Thee. And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of Thy Rising. Lift up thine eyes round about and see; and they gather themselves together, they come from far, and thy daughters shall be nursed at thy side. Then Thou Shalt See, And Flow Together, and thine heart shall fear, and be enlarged; because the Abundance Of The Sea Shall Be Converted Unto Thee, the forces of the Gentiles shall come to thee.” These promises reassure our hearts that God at this time is going to speak to All Nations that all men may learn to know Him whom to know is life eternal. We must arise and let the King of glory, the Lord God Almighty, shine through us as Matthew 4:16 says, “The people which sat in darkness saw a great light, and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death, Light Is Sprung Up,” Though darkness covers the earth and gross darkness the people, the hour for the rising of the SON in the SONS HAS COME WHICH WILL DISPEL THE DARKNESS.

I John 1:5, “This then is the message which we have heard of Him, and declare unto you, That God is Light, and in Him is no darkness at all.” Yes, this Gospel Of The Kingdom Is Universal - it is for the whosoever will.

Isaiah 55:1, “Ho, Everyone that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.” Let everyone come and eat and drink of this fountain of life, all may come and be satisfied. All we have to do is COME. We do not have to bring, just come; whosoever will may purchase though he has aught to purchase with.

John 7:37-39, “In the last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, if Any Man thirst, Let Him Come Unto Me And Drink, He that believeth on me as the scripture hath said, out of his belly (from within him or from his innermost being) shall flow rivers of Living Water. But this spake He of the spirit which they that believe on Him should receive; for

the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.”
If we are thirsty, all we have to do is COME.

Romans 10:1-13, “Brethren, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved.

For I bear them record that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge.

For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.

For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.

For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law, that the man which doeth those things shall live by them.

But the righteousness which is of faith speaketh on this wise; say not in thine heart, who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above).

Or, who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead).

But what saith it? The word is nigh thee; even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach.

That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.

For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

For the scripture saith; whosoever believeth on Him, shall not be ashamed.

For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek; for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon Him.

For Whosoever Shall Call Upon The Name Of The Lord Shall Be Saved.”

The Apostle Paul was greatly concerned about Israel, they had the zeal, but lacked the knowledge of God. This is very true in many cases today, people are truly zealous for God but are ignorant of what God’s plan and will is for the hour in which we live. This troubled Paul so much - their lack of understanding that in the 9th chapter and verses 1-3 he writes, “I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience bear me witness in the Holy Ghost; That I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. For I could wish that myself were accursed (or cut off) from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh.” Here they were heirs of all the promises of God and yet they only had a zeal or passion for God about it was all lip service, not based or founded on experience. It is not sufficient enough for any of us to know all about the plan and order of God for the Church or our own lives and not be able to apply through our knowledge and understanding of God, His Divine purpose in it all. As Paul wrote to Timothy in the second epistle, Chapter 3:7, “Ever Learning and Never Able To Come To The Knowledge Of The Truth,” Whether it be doctrine or education, unless we are able to put what we have learned to good use, it is of little value to us. Just to say I belong and am a part of the Body of Christ, the Church, but never really applying what it means to belong to the Body, is empty and vain. God has a reason and purpose for Everything; God help us to allow the Holy Spirit to acquaint us more and more with that purpose and also enable us to begin, by faith, to fulfill the divine plan and purpose. Verse 3 tells us that when we are ignorant or do not really understand God’s righteousness, we immediately begin to establish our own righteousness which automatically shows that we have not fully submitted ourselves to the righteousness of God. When we do not fully understand the ways of God, we do the only thing left for us as human beings to do; we begin to establish ourselves in the ways of men or the traditions of the Elders. We die hard to the old system; I am sure there are traces yet of the elders’ traditions of yester-years still around us.

In the foreign fields they are often steeped in tradition, which must eventually go. The scriptures speak concerning some of these traditions; let us look at a few.

Matthew 15:1-6, “Then came Jesus scribes and Pharisees which were of Jerusalem, saying, Why do the disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? for they wash not their hands when they eat bread. But He answered and said unto them, Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your traditions? For God commanded saying, Honor thy father and thy mother, and he that curseth father or mother, let him die the death. But ye say, whosoever shall say to his father or his mother, It is a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; And honor not his father or

his mother, he shall be free. Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition.”

Verse 2, the scribes and pharisees asked Jesus why His disciples had forsaken the tradition of the elders by not washing their hands when they ate. It would appear, though I am sure Jesus was concerned about cleanliness, that the religious leaders were looking for some loop-hole to find fault with what Jesus was doing. This is true today, if a person wants to find fault, the Spirit will give them lots of opportunity. You will notice, Jesus never answered their questions but reversed the tables of them, by saying, “Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition?” To the Pharisees the disciples broke the tradition of the elders, but they, by exercising their tradition, broke the commandment of God.

I ask you, which is worse, to fall away from the ideas of men or the will of God? It is much more pleasing in the sight of God to honor Him and His ways and leave behind the traditions of men. Note verse 8 where Jesus quoted from Isaiah, “This people draweth nigh unto me with their lips, But Their Heart Is Far From Me.” Phillips translation puts it this way, “This people honoreth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain do they worship me teaching as their doctrines the precepts of men.”

Only the moving of God’s Holy Spirit can ever shake man loose of these old traditions and fill our hearts with all the fullness of God Himself.

The Pharisees were more concerned about what went into a man than what comes out, and by so doing rejected the commandment of God.

Mark 7:9, “Full well ye reject the commandment of God that ye may keep your own tradition.” Verse 15, “There is nothing from without a man, that entering into him can defile him: but things which come out of him, those are they that defile the man.”

The apostle Paul wrote to the Galatians concerning his zealousness for the traditions of his fathers in Galatians 1:14-16, there was no one more wrapped up in the Jewish traditions than Paul, but verse 15-16 says, “But When It Pleaseth God, who separated me from my mother’s womb, and called me by His grace To Reveal His Son In Me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood.” Phillips translation says it this way, “But when the time came for God (who had chosen me from the moment of my birth, and then called me, by His grace) To Reveal His Son Within Me so that I might proclaim him to the non Jewish world, I did not, as might be expected talk over the matter with any human being.” Paul did not seek the suggestions or counseling of human minds, rather he went to Arabia and never conversed with any of the other apostles for three years. I am sure after spending that length of time pondering over in his heart before God the things God has said to

him, he was ready for anything God might request of him.

Paul in writing to the church at Colosse Chapter 2:8-10 told them this, "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy (intellectualism) and vain deceit, after the traditions of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. For in Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. And Ye Are Complete in Him, which is the head of all principality and power." Our completeness, our fulfillment is in God, not the things we know, good and all as they may be, we are made complete in Christ.

Paul in writing to the Church at Thessalonika, admonished them to hold fast to the teachings they had received of him. II Thessalonians 2:15. I am not suggesting in referring to the leaving behind of the traditions, that we totally remove all the old landmarks, but what we must see here is that doctrine, wonderful and all as it may be, must be pliable enough to adjust to present truth. When the cloud moves on, we must move with it. Present truth, that which the Holy Spirit is bringing to our attention NOW, is something we ought not to neglect. II Peter 1:12, "Wherefore, I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and Be Established In The Present Truth."

Psalms 22:28, "Remove not the ancient landmarks, which thy fathers have set."

There are many things in the great plan and purpose of God that never change, but when God by His Holy Spirit moves us on into a better understanding unto a more rich and full way, we MUST move on.

I Peter 1:18, "For as much as ye know that ye were NOT redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by Tradition From Your Fathers." The world is full of cults and creeds and traditions that hinder the believer from going on and growing into maturity into the Fullness Of The Stature of Christ." Such things we must be willing to part with. I do not think it is necessary to make a list of such things - our own hearts will dictate those things that hinder the moving of God's Spirit in our lives. Yesterday's manna is not sufficient for today; we need that fresh, divine revelation of God, inspired by the spirit, to daily feed our souls upon the bread of life.

One of the most prominent questions asked Jesus was when the Kingdom would be restored. In Acts 1:6,7,8 the disciples asked Jesus again, "Lord wilt thou at this time restore again the Kingdom of Israel? And He said unto them, It Is Not Given To You To Know The Times And Seasons, Which The Father Hath Put In His Own Power. But, ye shall receive Power After That The Holy Ghost Is Come Upon You: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and Unto The Uttermost Part Of The Earth."

The disciples here, like many of us today, were concerned about matters

that God had not ordained they ever have control over. You would hardly imagine the absolute confusion there would be in the earth if such times and seasons were put in man's control. We have enough confusion now. Jesus as much as said to them leave those matters in the Father's hands, but He said I can prophesy to you what will happen, you shall be given power, after the Holy Ghost comes upon you, which will enable you to be a proper witness to that coming Kingdom; God the Father will place in your hands the tools to help bring about the establishing of His Kingdom in the earth.

As we mentioned before, never before has there been such an outpouring of the Holy Spirit as we are witnessing now. Truly we are witnessing the fulfillment of Joel's prophecy.

The outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon all flesh is ordained of God for a reason and that being, by the receiving of the Holy Spirit, we may receive the divine ability to function and operate by the use of the gifts of the Spirit, as a member of the Body of Christ, the Church.

Receiving the Holy Spirit is more than just being able to speak with other tongues, necessary and wonderful as that is. Well it be to emphasize the importance of speaking in another tongue. Paul said in I Corinthians 14:4,5, "He that speaketh in an unknown tongue edifieth himself (builds himself up) and he would that ALL would speak with tongues. If any one is questioning speaking in other tongues and you are not just trying to argue away the truth with your own reasoning or doctrine, you will prayerfully read the entire 14th chapter and ask God to make it real to your heart, you will see the proper use of tongues and also see how important it is that we ALL speak with tongues. But the speaking in other tongues sort of acts as a sign of the Holy Spirit really taking a hold of your life. Receiving the Holy Spirit is not just to make a noise with, to dance and shout, wonderful and all as they can be in their place, but God wants to teach us all how to channel the moving of the Holy Spirit into the use of our gifts and ministeries.

We have all experienced being in meetings when a great deal of exuberance was manifested and it sometimes reminds one of the old steam locomotive that when it was ready to leave, having on a full head of steam would release some out on the tracks which made a lot of noise; however, as long as the steam was being sprayed on the tracks, nothing moved. But once that tremendous pressure was directed into the proper flues and cylinders, then you would see those huge wheels begin to turn and sent the great 'iron horse' on its way. I wish to leave no misunderstanding here to be able to rejoice in the Lord and clap your hands and dance, and shout forth His praises - this all has its place and I wish all of God's people could let go every now and then. It certainly does something for you that nothing else can do, but a lot of people think they have to be "blessed" as they call it,

and do these outward things in order to have and possess the Holy Spirit, and this is not so.

Regardless of what frame of mind you may be in or the circumstances that may surround you, I John 2:20-24, tells us what we have an unction (anointing) from the Holy One and that anointing Abides In You, it Never leaves you. So whether you are joyful or sad, on the mountain top or in the valley, the Holy Spirit is constantly with you, Hallelujah.

It is by the Holy Spirit that we not only receive the gifts of the Spirit, but operate those gifts. I Corinthians 12:8-11, let us note here that Paul says over and over again, "For to one is given by the Spirit. In the 4,5,6 verses, Paul explains how we receive these gifts by the Spirit. Verse 4 tells us there are diversities (Different) gifts But The Same Spirit. The Holy Spirit gives to us, as members of the Body of Christ, gifts. Verse 5 says, "there are different administrations (MINISTRIES) but the same LORD." Christ takes what the Holy Spirit has given us and forms out of those gifts a ministry. Then verse 6 tells us GOD takes those ministries and gives the operations of those ministries to the world; in other words, He is enabling us to be Witnesses for Him by the use of these gifts and ministries given to us by the Holy Spirit.

The scriptures tell us that these gifts and ministries are imparted to us by the laying on of hands and prophecy.

I Timothy 4:14, "Neglect not the gift that is IN THEE, which was given thee By Prophecy, With The Laying On Of The Hands of the presbytery." The laying on of hands by the proper ministries (Not Just Anyone) imparts to the individual the right or authority, along with the power (anointing) to properly use those particular talents or gifts. One should never become discouraged if you do not immediately see that anointing or power of God active in your life and ministry. Often times, waiting on God will cultivate and prepare the vessel for to fill its rightful place; this is especially true where the power gifts, such as healing, working of miracles, etc. are evident. Wrongly used, these gifts could cause more harm than good. Therefore, we must allow the Holy Spirit to guide and direct us into their operation, which He Will Do. Hebrews 2:8,9, "Thou Hast Put All Things in subjection under Him, He left Nothing that is NOT put under Him. But Now We See Not Yet all things put under Him. But We See Jesus." How true this is - we do not, as yet, see everything put under the control of the Body of Christ, the Church, of which Christ is the Head, but we, as members of the Body, the Church, must keep our eye on Christ who is our Head and take our signals and directions from Him, by the Holy Spirit.

Paul in writing to the Romans tells us in Chapter 8 of that traveling prayer of intercession and of that hope which is ministered unto us by the

Spirit. The same Spirit will give us the patience to wait for the fulfillment of the promises. Verse 26, Phillips translation says, "The Spirit of God not only maintains this hope within us, but helps us in our Present Limitations," The Body of Christ, the Church is at present still very 'limited'. We all, as members of this Body, long to see more of the fulfillment of God's word, through the functions of the various members of this Spiritual Body the Church. We rejoice in which we have seen and bear witness of the same, but we are still relatively limited in our functions; however, God understands this and He has promised to keep that hope of better things alive within our hearts and at the same time help us in our present state, praise His Name.

I Timothy 2:1-5, "I exhort you therefore, that first of all, supplications 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 Savior; Who will have All Men To Be Saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. For there is One God, One Mediator (go between) between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.

God is moving by His Spirit and is moving in ALL The Earth. He is bringing from the North, South, the East and West, the members of His Body, the Church, and by His Holy Spirit is joining together, bone to its bone, the great and wonderful and glorious Body of Christ. As the hymn writer has expressed it, "I'm so glad I'm a part of the Family of God." As it was once said, salvation is free, but the Kingdom will cost us everything. May God Give us all grace and strength to fulfill what God's plan and purpose is for our lives. Amen.

SCRIPTURE STUDIES

During the month of November we had Scripture Studies here in North Battleford. The following article was used as notes by Bro. Whitter on the Book of Ephesians. He has written the notes in this manner hoping to be able to convey to you, the readers, the message that the Book of Ephesians contains.

INTRODUCTION: THE CHURCH - THE BODY OF CHRIST A. Its purpose. B. Its functions. C. Its members.

A. **ITS PURPOSE** - Definition of the word Church - an edifice devoted to worship. The Church is the Body of Christ - spiritual body - temple devoted to fulfilling the mind and will of God who inhabits it. Paul said in Ephesians 1:12 (Weymouth) that we ought to be given over to the extolling (to praise) of His glorious attributes (characteristics).

Ephesians 1: Reveals God's plan and purpose for the Body of Christ. 1: Believers should be adopted as His own children. 2: That we might learn to praise or appreciate His plan and generosity that has included and permitted us to be His children. 1John 3:1 (Phillips) 3: That God's wisdom may be manifest, revealed, displayed by and through His Body - The Church. Ephesians 3:10 (Phillips)

B. ITS FUNCTIONS -1: To reveal the manifold wisdom of God as a Body by the using and exercising of every joint (member or part). 2: To bring into being the perfect mind and will of God which is outlined in the Scriptures. The functions of the Church - The Body of Christ is to act on His behalf, its movements and acts to portray the mind of God which is to reconcile or bring into harmony with Himself the world that has drifted and fallen away from that which is His mind and will.

C. ITS MEMBERS -1: Consists of those who believe in God and have committed their lives unto Him and asked His forgiveness for their sins.

THE BOOK OF EPHESIANS

MAIN THEME - Unity of Believers.

The Book of Ephesians not only emphasizes the necessity of Unity, but also deals with the Church and how it fits into the great foreordained plan of God with regards to:

A. THE PLAN OF SALVATION

B. PRACTICAL APPLICATION

Paul spent his life teaching Gentiles that they could be Christians without becoming Jewish proselytes (converts). He taught the Gentiles to stand like rocks but to hold no prejudice against their Jewish brothers.

Paul did not want to see two churches - a Jewish church and a Gentile church - but ONE CHURCH Jews and Gentiles one in Christ.

Chapters 1, 2, & 3 deal with God's plan and Chapters 4, 5, & 6 with the application of the plan.

After his word of greetings, he begins right in to outline the purpose of God for His children.

Verse 3 - God has given us all possible benefits which enables us to become citizens in that spiritual realm. I would say it is more than 50-50 possible 70-30.

Verse 4 - PREDESTINATION - (foreordained, appointed, or chosen before).

(a) Nervousness about this subject simply because we endeavor to

place God within our present limitations. Remember, He is the GREAT I AM - He is the Alpha and Omega, He is the Beginning - He is the End of all things wherever that is E.G. In everyday life, the principle of predestination or being chosen before-hand is practiced. Endeavor to loop upon it as an appointment (Divine appointment). This is done in secular work. A certain individual is appointed -ordained - chosen for to fill a particular office or roll, possible long before the business is established that particular person is chosen - set aside - labeled for such a position. The final decision rests with him as to whether he accepts or rejects, nevertheless, his gift has made room for him to fulfill that particular position.

(b) There seems to be a very fine line here as to the sovereignty of God and man's responsibility. We can rest assured of this that the ultimate objective of God will be met and fulfilled eventually as the Scriptures bear record. I Corinthians 15:24, "The cometh the end, when He shall have delivered up the kingdom of God, even the Father; when He shall have put down ALL rule and ALL authority and power." Disobedience can rob us of our inheritance, but nevertheless it is there and ours to possess if WE so desire. Don't worry if you cannot understand predestination - in His good time and pleasure He shall by His Spirit reveal what it really means and then only can we understand it. In an endeavor to bring these two factions together and display UNITY, Paul took a large offering of money from the Gentile churches back to the poor saints in the "Mother Church at Jerusalem".

Paul's belief in Christ was that in Christ there was room for not only Jew and Gentile with all their varied viewpoints and prejudices, but in HIM there was power to solve the problems of all of mankind, and to reconcile (bring into harmony with God) not only all earthly social and family life, (Ephesians 5:22 -6:9) but even the numbers of beings in the infinite (endless, vast) universe. (3:10) This, I am sure is the ultimate plan and purpose of the "Great I Am".

CHAPTER 1

Chapter 1 speaks of God's Eternal Purpose - verses 3-14. Eternal means -lasting forever. Purpose means - aim or goal. (God's everlasting aim or goal). These verses give a magnificent outline of God's plan to be brought to pass through the exercise of His will through the Church, the Body of Christ, such marvelous things as:

1. REDEMPTION - Verse 7 (means to buy back, turn in for a prize). Christ gave His own life-blood in order to buy us back. He traded His blood and life for our sins in order that we could be heirs

to the fullness of His Divine Plan and Will.

2. **ADOPTION** - Verse 7 - Take legally as one's child; take as one's own. In redeeming us, He took us as His very own and set us into the inner family circle of God. (Romans 8:15 - Phillips translation).

3. **FORGIVENESS** - Verse 7 - (Give up wanting to punish; to pardon). Christ has given us complete and full forgiveness. He has no desire to punish mankind beyond His purpose - He gives full pardon - absolutely no prejudice or animosity.

4. **DIVINE SEALING OF A PEOPLE FOR HIS OWN POSSESSION** - Verse 13 - God's full intention in separating and sealing off a people as His own was to bring together and form a Body (Body of Christ) wherein He might live and move and have His being.

5. **FORMED IN GOD BEFOREHAND** - (Predestinated) - Verse 4, 5. Predestinated - Foreordained - Appointed - Chosen before N. E. B. - "In Christ, He chose us before the world was founded, **TO BE DEDICATED** (set apart for a purpose, to be without blemish in **HIS SIGHT**, to be full of love and He destined (intended) us - such was His will and pleasure - to be accepted as His Sons through Jesus Christ." **NOTE:** God set us apart with a specific purpose in mind and that was (and is) that He would redeem or purchase us back, then take us in His family circle as His own, pardon us and set His seal upon us in order that in the (Verse 10) dispensation (ordering of events under divine authority) of the fullness of times, he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are in earth; even in Him. In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated (chosen beforehand) according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will. (Weymouth, verse 11, 12).

It would appear, though we were chosen beforehand by God **IN CHRIST**, (this of course qualifies us), we still have a measure of responsibility to fulfill the perfect mind and will of God. **NOTE:** We should **NEVER** allow such hard-to-understand truths to deprive us in any way from reaching for the completeness of God, though ignorant of many things. Philippians 3:15, "Let us therefore, as many as be perfect (full-grown), be thus minded: and if in **ANYTHING** ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you". (Phillips) **HEAVENLY PLACES** seems to be a key phrase throughout the book. Mentioned in 1:3, 10, 20; 2:6; 3:10; 6:12. It means **THE UNSEEN SPHERE ABOVE THIS WORLD OF SENSE**, which ought to be our ultimate goal, and even now we have a measure of communication.

Paul's prayer for the church at Ephesus was in harmony with

God's merciful purpose for the Church Universal - 1:16-23 - things he prayed for:

1. SPIRIT OF WISDOM AND REVELATION - verse 17 - N.E.B.
“May give you the spiritual powers of wisdom and vision by which there comes the knowledge of Him.

2. EYES OF UNDERSTANDING BEING ENLIGHTENED - inward eyes may be illuminated (enlightened; light up). Your hearts flooded with light (L.B.) SO THAT - (a) You may know the hope of His calling, N.E.B. You may know the hope (trust that what is want-

ed will occur) to which He calls you (L.B.) “I pray that your hearts will be flooded with the light so that you can see something of the future He has called you to share”.

(b) What the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints. His inheritance - what you receive as being an heir. He wants us to realize the wealth, the magnificent splendor of our inheritance, (what He has promised us) as being members of His inner family circle, as members of His body.

(c) What is the exceeding greatness of His power to usward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power. Paul prayed that we might realize how tremendous the power available to those who believe and how vast the resources of that power to those that believe.

In His prayer it makes a comparison of this tremendous power afforded those who put their trust in Him. In verse 20 he compares it to that same power of divine energy which was demonstrated in Christ when He raised Him from the dead. POWER - ability to do - strength - authority. ENERGY - power to work -force. God therefore, in raising Christ from the dead demonstrated (to explain -show; show feelings - prove). He proved His power of ability, He manifested His Divine authority over the powers of death, hell and the grave because Christ rose triumphant over all such powers.

Paul prayed that the same Divine energy and power that raised Christ victor over death and set Him at God’s right side in the unseen sphere above this world of sense (heavenly realm) that is far above all governments and authorities, all power and dominion and any title of sovereignty that can be named, not only in the age Christ lived, but in the ages to come, be granted to the Church universal, the Body of Christ, with Christ as the Head of the Body in everything. God has so desired that in that Body, the Body of Christ, the Church of the living God, that in that body would live FULLY the One who fills the whole wide universe with Himself (Read Phillips, N.E.B. Weymouth). NOTE: This authority power has been granted to the Christ, the Head, by His Father, and EVERYTHING has been placed under the FEET OF THE CHURCH of which you are a living member.

SUMMARY - CHAPTER 1

I. Portrays’ God’s eternal purpose for those who will put their trust in Him. Redemption - Adoption - Forgiveness - Divine Sealing of His Holy Spirit -Foreordained plan of God.

II. It clearly reveals God's intentions in sharing with men who trust Him of His greatness and His power in placing EVERYTHING under his controls as His Body. NOTE: There is absolutely NO WAY God could place such authority to any individual or group of individuals, the only way He would dare share such tremendous power is to channel it through His son who is the head of all things to the Body. Verse 22. All the more reason why there is one head and one body.

CHAPTER 2 - THE UNIVERSAL CHURCH

This chapter begins to break down anything that would in any way divide the church, the Body of Christ. Paul begins by saying, "You hath He quickened who are dead in trespasses and in sins. What He is actually saying here is that the Body of Christ is being built up of unworthy, sinful men who have been quickened, made alive, by the Holy Spirit and responded to His bidding. Note verse 3 - At one time we, too, were under the same influence, under the prince of the power of the air (N.E.B. Verse 2 - when you obeyed the commander of the spiritual powers of the air), even as many as still today. It would be well that we take special heed not to allow ourselves to be influenced by such forces, as no such element can ever have place in the plan and purpose of God. We must give ourselves ever more and more, as we approach the great and notable day of the Lord, to waiting upon God in order that we may know unmistakably His hope in calling us and what His will and purpose is for our lives. You will note the constant use of the word, TOGETHER, in this chapter - five times in all - in verses 5,6,21, and 22. The word TOGETHER expresses the harmony and relationship that must exist between God, Christ, and the members of His Body. As these scriptures bear out, we do nothing of ourselves but always in harmony with God's mind and will, also that He shares with us the greatness of His sovereign will. Let us now look at what He has willed for us TOGETHER.

Verse 5: When we were dead in our sins, He quickened us together with Christ. Better translated - He had given us life together with Christ which we received by grace (undeserved, or unmerited favor) of God. It is not by any achievements of our own that we qualify for such marvelous recognitions by the God of all the ages - it is through Him that we have access to such marvelous spiritual heights.

Verses 6 & 7 - (Weymouth): We are enthroned with Him in (heavenly places) the unseen sphere above this world of sense as being in

Christ. He has lifted us right out of the old life to take our place with Him in Christ Jesus. This He did in order that He might display for all time, to the ages to come, His great love, kindness and mercy to His children.

Verse 21: Paul tells us that we are built upon a foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief corner stone. He is speaking here of those lively stones in this spiritual house. I Peter 2:5. Phillips translation puts it this way, "In Him each separate piece of building, properly fitting into its neighbor, grows together into a temple consecrated to the Lord". By the Spirit we are bonded together to form this spiritual temple or dwelling place. Again notice the intimate relationship one to another and to God. It is literally impossible for us as individuals to grow without the assistance of each and every member of the Body.

Verse 22: This verse bears out the truth that we together, along with all the rest, in ages past, consummate this evergrowing Body of believers, the Body of Christ. Think of it, the God of all the ages forming and making a habitation where in HE HIMSELF might live and move and have His being.

ONCE ONE NATION - NOW ALL NATIONS

CIRCUMCISION means the cutting away of the flesh. This term was used as a name of the Jews as distinct from other nations which were spoken of and referred to as the "uncircumcision". Verse 11. At that particular time the Jews were God's chosen people and other nations were excluded, thus circumcision was a fleshly sign. Now, through the shedding of Jesus' blood and by His grace ALL NATIONS and peoples are included and can be joined to God's household, the Body of Christ. Verse 12 tells us that once we were aliens (strangers, foreigners) to the commonwealth of God's people (Israel), strangers from the covenants of promise, have no hope and without God in the world, but we have been brought nigh by the blood of Christ. He has become our peace and taken away this wall or partition of circumcision from us and out of two peoples has made one. He has also abolished in His flesh the enmity (ill-will; hatred) and has brought peace by reconciling (or bringing into harmony with God) these two factions into one body.

This great and glorious message of the Kingdom, the coming together of the Body of Christ, is for all nations. Matthew 24:14 - "And this gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations and then shall the end come". Witness-sign as a witness - one who saw and can testify to a thing.

The tearing down of all enemy strongholds that would in any way

separate God's chosen people. That which once separated Israel from the Gentile had been abolished through Christ's death and resurrection. This we **MUST** accept and adhere to and never allow the enemy of souls to build again these partitions such as doctrinal issues as to water baptism, tongues, etc., etc., etc. He has paid the supreme price once and for all. Let us allow the Spirit of God to join us **ALL TOGETHER IN ONE BODY.**

IV. This spiritual house, as all other structure, **MUST** be built upon a proper foundation as outlined in verse 20. The super structure will be as strong as the foundation it rests upon. We must therefore be careful how we build upon this foundation. I Corinthians 3:10-11.

SUMMARY - CHAPTER 2

I. It is through Christ and the shedding of His blood and through His unmerited favor that we are acceptable to receive the promise of our complete redemption. It is through no merits of our own.

II. Great emphasis is placed on **TOGETHERNESS.** It is absolutely necessary that we be joined to each other and to **HIM** by His Spirit. As the members of our bodies are fitted together, so must we as members one of another and of Him.

III. We are built upon a foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ being the chief cornerstone.

CHAPTER 3

Verse 3-9. Paul reveals the mystery of Christ which means that all nations are heirs of the promises of God, which up until then was exclusively for the Jews. This mystery had been hidden or concealed until the coming of Christ who was to bring redemption to the entire human race. The fullness of God's intended plan and purpose was now to be fulfilled in all of mankind.

Paul had been commissioned by the Holy Spirit to take this message to the Gentile world. Note in verse 9 - it states, "To make **ALL** men see". This gospel of the kingdom, this coming together of the Body of Christ, must be proclaimed in all nations before the end can or will come. Matthew 24:14.

It has always been God's intention to use the Church, the Body of Christ, to display the manifold wisdom of God. (Phillips 3:10 - N.E.B.). The wisdom that fashioned and created the universe is at the disposal of the Church. This wisdom will be instrumental in

bringing together the Church, the Body of Christ. Marvelous as it may seem, we all have the same Father, Christ is our elder brother, we shall bear His likeness (I John 3:2) and His name, verse 15. Through the Church, God shall unite and bring together all the hostile elements of the human race into ONE BODY and shall demonstrate His wisdom and power by bringing about such an accomplishment.

Paul ends this chapter with a prayer, Verses 14-21. He desired that the Ephesians, and I believe we today, might know the strength of the Spirit's inner reinforcement (Phillips) and that Christ may ACTUALLY LIVE IN OUR HEARTS BY OUR FAITH. He emphasized the necessity of fixing ourselves in love and be able to comprehend with all saints the greatness of God's love revealed to us through Christ. He closes by saying that we may be filled through all our being with GOD HIMSELF.

SUMMARY - CHAPTER 3

I. Paul unfold God's will for His people which up until then had remained a mystery. This responsibility rested upon Paul.

II. This mystery was that God would use the Church, to unfold to the whole world the greatness of His wisdom - that wisdom that would bring the whole world into harmony with Himself and tear and break down any contentious factions.

III. Paul's prayer for the church in entering into this level of experience that God had foreordained to His glory.

CHAPTER 4

Paul stresses in this chapter the importance of UNITY. He begins in verse 1 by admonishing the Ephesians to walk worthy of the high calling they have in Christ. In so doing, they must strive to achieve five things, namely: 1. Lowliness - humble 2. Meekness - gentle - not inclined to anger or resentment 3. Longsuffering - being injuries, insults, trouble, etc. patiently for a long time 4. Forbearing one another in Love 5. Unity of the Spirit

This seems to be the theme of his message to the Church to strive to attain this unity, harmony in the Spirit. Without this vital Spiritual commodity, we can never hope to see the fulfillment of God's mind and will brought about in this earth. It is nothing less than the work of the enemy of our souls to keep believers divided into little camps. Christ died to tear down and destroy ALL of these walls of partition

to make His Body - The Church - ONE IN HIM. John 17:21, "That they ALL MAY BE ONE". Note: In verses 4, 5, and 6 the use of the word ONE (Phillips): ONE - Body ONE - Spirit ONE - Calling to one hope ONE - Lord ONE - Faith (?) ONE - Baptism ONE - God and Father

These verses should have absolutely NO DOUBT as to the solidarity (unity) of the Church - the Body of Christ - only man, betrayed and brought into delusion by the enemy of our souls can bring such disorder and division in the Church. God's will in this end time is to bring TOGETHER into ONE everything He has created INTO ONE and into harmony with Himself.

In order for this coming together to come to pass, EVERY ONE OF US has to fulfill our ordained roll. Note: EVERYONE OF US and in order for us to assume such responsibility, God has given us sufficient grace. Note verse 7 (Phillips - N.E.B.). This grace (favor) has been given to each member of this Body in DIFFERENT WAYS from the generous heart of God. There is NO WAY that we could either be part of or function as part of the Body of Christ - the Church - if it were not for the generosity of God in allowing us to be part of His Body, the Church.

Verses 8, 9, and 10 portray how Christ and the members of His Body are all part of the ordained will and plan and purpose of God. BOTH are part of the whole - BOTH are necessary in order to complete the perfect mind and will of God.

His gifts (special abilities - L.B.) unto men were varied. He had a reason and purpose for giving these gifts to men. Verse 11 - He gave to some the special ability to fill the role or function as : (a) Apostles - one sent forth (b) Prophets - interpreter of God's will - one who speaks for God (c) Evangelists - publisher (messenger) of good tidings (d) Pastors - shepherd - (one who keeps Christ's flocks) (e) Teachers - instructors - helps to learn

God's reason for giving men such special abilities was: (a) The church is in unity of faith (b) Into the knowledge of the son of God (c) Perfect man (d) Fulness of Christ (e) Maturity

These five gifts given to man as a gift of God to the Church will always exist as long as the Church is not in unity and growing up into the FULLNESS OF CHRIST. Never, never allow anyone to say the ministry of an apostle and prophet was only for the early church - if ever the Church needed to be perfected, it is now; if ever the Church needed to be edified, it is now; if ever the Church needed to be built up, it is now; if ever we needed to be brought into unity, it is

NOW. Verse 14 emphasizes the need for growing up and becoming mature. Far too often we are tossed to and fro with the ideas of man, which have originated in their own minds. We must **GROW UP** and the Church, the Body Of Christ, can never come to the growth in God as long as she is divided by the doctrines of men. **WE MUST** grow up into the **HEAD** which is **CHRIST IN ALL THINGS -EVERYTHING.** We must begin to reveal and display His nature, His characteristics, (Ephesians 1:13 -Weymouth) and the **ONLY** way this will ever come to pass is when each one of us as a member of His Body takes on our responsibility and begins to function as **EVERY JOINT SUPPLIES.** This Body has the ability and power within itself to make increase and grow.

The Body of Christ, with its many individual members, ought to mature. It is not God's purpose for the Church - collectively or as individual members - to remain in childhood. It **MUST** mature, grow up into the **FULLNESS OF CHRIST.**

It is sad to think that the Church, nearly 2000 years old, and in many respects is still in its childhood state. It has not yet, in its visible manifestation as a whole, know **UNITY.** Paul fought continuously against factional elements in local churches, and of course, the Jew-Gentile dissension. The 2nd and 4th centuries brought the Imperial Church which had its outward semblance of Unity under State authority but poisonous blight of its spiritual life. Then the Papal Hierarchy with its Unity of Authority that robbed men of their rights of conscience and drove the Bible out of circulation. Four hundred years ago the Protestant break for freedom when men began to think for themselves after being under Papal bondage, they saw things somewhat differently and thus even until our day, the Protestant Movement has gone down different streams. These factions still exist and perhaps are stronger now than ever before and Christendom is thus divided. It is nothing less that the work of the arch enemy of our souls to keep God's people divided into separated camps. He knows where there is unity there is strength, such strength that he could never cope with. However, if we mortals believe, which we do, that God hears and answers our prayers, how much more the prayers of our elder brother, Jesus. When He prayed in that great prayer of intercession in John 17:21, "That they **ALL MAY BE ONE**".

In the remaining verses 25-32, Paul gives the Church a few words of caution. He stresses things that, as individuals, we must do in order to bring this **UNITY** and **ONENESS** necessary in the bringing

together of this Body. He calls for a separating of ourselves from the ways and systems of the world. There is a leaving of the old way of life and an entering into that new life in Jesus Christ. He mentions such things we must leave behind us as is in the world today, the earth is full of these lusts of the flesh. He closed in verse 32 by exhorting the Church to be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving, “even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you”.

SUMMARY - CHAPTER 4

1. Paul once again stresses the necessity of UNITY. ONE body, Spirit, Hope, Lord, Faith, Baptism, God and Father. 2. The need of the five-fold ministry, reasons for existence and results. 3. Emphasizes the need for growing up and how this growth takes place by EVERY joint supplying. 4. Paul calls for separation from the world.

CHAPTERS 5 & 6

These chapters speak to us of NEW OBLIGATIONS, things that are required of us, as believers. FORNICATION means immorally, promiscuous sexual indulgence between men and women outside of marriage. It little matters what society today accepts as right or wrong regarding sex, the Scriptures have never changed. This idea of a sort of freedom in sexual relations dates away back to heathen worship, which indicates which way we are heading in our day. Paul taught against such practices and so do we; this sort of whoring around as is prevalent in the world today will bring us to disaster as it did in the days of Sodom and Gomorrah. Paul again stresses the importance of a changed life. Verse 8, “For ye were sometimes darkness but now are ye light in the Lord. WALK AS CHILDREN OF LIGHT”. Verse 15 (Phillips) “Live life, then, with a due sense of responsibility, not as men who do not know the meaning and purpose of life, but as those who do”. If anyone of earth should know what the purpose of living is all about, it should be the believers. It is necessary that we know what God has in mind of the day and age that we are living in and find where we fit in the scheme of things, then trust God for the grace, strength and wisdom to perform and do that which is His mind and will concerning us. He tells us not to get our stimulus (anything causing activity) from wine as is the case in the world today but BE FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT singing: 1. Psalms 2. Hymns 3. Spiritual Songs Three ways Paul says we can minister to each other by the use of singing. In Colossians 3:15 Paul says that

we can teach and admonish (warn) one another by singing Psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Much could be said about this wonderful instrument that God has placed in His Body, the Church, but that is another subject altogether.

GIVING THANKS. This is very important in our growth in God. We should spend much time giving thanks to God for the answer to our prayers as we do making our petition.

HUSBANDS AND WIVES

It has been said that the Church is as strong as its members and so it is. The Body of Christ is as strong as those that comprise the Church. A home is as strong as the members of it. The relationship between a husband and wife is vital if the family is to be strong. The relationship between husband and wife teaches us a great deal concerning the relationship between Christ and the Church.

Verse 21 - **SUBMIT** - (to yield to the action, control, power of another). Paul asks us (Phillips) “to fit in with each other, because of our common reverence for Christ”. When something is “fitted” it means it is tailored to blend together with another object, such as a fitted garment or like a glove fitting your hand. Paul calls upon us to be joined together in our common reverence (respect) for Christ. In no way can there be **ANY TYPE OR SORT OF DIVISION**.

Verse 22 - **WIVES** - must submit themselves to their own husbands. This sounds somewhat harsh but all it means is that a wife yields herself to the control of her husband. In other words, she acknowledges him to be the one ordained of God to take the lead in the home. The husband is the head of the home as Christ take the lead and bears the responsibilities, which will make him a better man and her a better woman. This no doubt is contrary once again to the ideas of the world and all its liberation movements, but nevertheless, it is what the Bible teaches and a must, if this Body of Christ is to become **ONE**.

Verse 25 - **HUSBANDS** - “Must love their wives as Christ loves the Church”. Just because the Scriptures teaches that the husband is the head does not mean he is the “boss”. A husband must sort of set the pace and lead the way. The only difference between a husband and a wife is the office they hold. The one is not greater or lesser than the other. The secret to a happy marriage and home is just learning to reverence and respect each other’s office and ministries. It is exactly the same in the Church. The only difference between a local elder and the elders of the universal Church is the office each holds. The

one needs the other -we are all so dependent upon one another.

Verse 28 (Phillips) “Men ought to give their wives the love they naturally have for their own bodies. The love a man gives his wife is the **EXTENDING OF HIS LOVE FOR HIMSELF TO ENFOLD** (envelope or embrace) **HER**.

Verse 31 - This verse answers all questions or should settle any doubts as to who is the greatest, etc. “For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother and shall be joined (Unite - become a part or member of) unto his wife, and they two shall be **ONE FLESH**”. Here a man and woman lose their identity in each other - two but now **ONE**. The union of marriage is spiritual and actually is a closer tie than we realize and though it is common to break such ties, according to the world’s standards, they are not so easily discarded as far as God is concerned. (I Corinthians 6:16 L.B.)

Verse 31 - This union demonstrates the true relationship of Christ and the Church, the Body of Christ. Through the shedding of His blood He has broken down the walls of partition between religions, cults and nations, and joined us unto Himself in **ONE BODY** - in other words - we lose our identity in Him. Ephesians 2:15.

SUMMARY

1. Continues exhortation on purity and separation. 2. Be filled with the Spirit - edify one another by singing and giving thanks. 3. Instruction to: (a) Husbands (b) Wives 4. Relationships of Christ and the Body of Christ.

CHAPTER 6

CHILDREN: Obedience is a **MUST** and where we begin this lesson is in childhood, for obedience is something that we must all exercise in every step and level of life. Obedience is something that is lacking in our present system of doing things. We begin this lesson in the home by recognizing the authority that **GOD HAS PUT OVER US** in our parents. There is absolutely no way any one can by pass authority or any level and sort of go to God direct. God has set parents, ministries, elders, etc. and entrusted them with His wisdom and authority to act on His behalf; we must all recognize such authority and reverence it as we do God. A child must learn to obey his parents and it is the parents’ responsibility before God to see to it that they do.

Verse 2 - “**HONOR thy father and Mother**”. **HONOR** means high

regard or reputation. Children, regardless of age (adults with living parents) should have high regard and act and speak the same of their parents.

It is impossible for anyone to revere God and respect Him and His authority whom we have never seen and still reject or deny the authority He has placed over us in our parents. We should stop and think very seriously on this point for Paul goes on to say that by acknowledging this Divine authority, we have the key to long life on earth. Note verse 2 (Phillips) - "Honor thy father and mother that it may be well with thee and that thou mayest live long on the earth". Here is our introduction to life in such a simple, down-to-earth thing and we could easily stumble over it and miss it.

Now Paul gives instruction to the fathers to help them assist their children in entering into and receiving the fulness of the promise. Verse 4 (Phillips), "Fathers, don't ever correct your children or make it difficult for them to obey the commandment. Bring them up with Christian teaching IN Christian discipline".

Over-correcting, or as another translation puts it, goading, scolding, nagging, will only bring a resentment and confusion. Correction should never be administered in anger or in the heat of an argument, but to bring the best results, one should do it with much prayer and careful consideration. This does not mean one must hold a prayer meeting to solve every little problem. But, especially in dealing with young people who are in that particular stage of life when much direction and guidance is required, don't be too quick to give the answer. Ask God for wisdom which He has promised to those who ask. (James 1:5) May it be established here and now - there is no such thing as the "generation gap". Adults and youth must keep the lines of communication open and by so doing will find they need each other. The young need the old and the old need the young. Children and young people should never resent being told something, for experience in just living along teaches us many, many things that are never taught or found in a text book. Adults should be tactful and understanding in the manner and way they give instruction. If all will acknowledge each other's ministries and position in life, God can do a work in all concerned. EMPLOYEES - Verse 5. If we have been properly instructed as children in obedience and discipline, when we join the labor force we should have NO PROBLEMS AT ALL obeying those that employ us.

Paul instructs us that we should not only obey our employer, but do so in sincerity with a proper sense of respect and responsibility.

We ought to serve our employer as a service rendered to Christ (not just the employer) not with any idea or just pleasing men, but as the servants of Christ, conscientiously doing what you believe to be the will of God for you. (Verse 5, 6, 7, Phillips) This statement is very clear; what Paul is actually saying is that if we cannot please God and do our work as unto Him, then we should not be doing what we are doing. Never try to break up your life in sort of departments such as your spiritual life, your home and your job. It is actually ALL YOU and is all spiritual. Yes - even pounding nails or clerking or nursing should fit and blend right into God's mind, will and purpose for your life.

Believers should rank among the very best on the job. Do not let yourself get caught in this worldly squeeze and do as little as possible for as much pay as possible. A good rule to follow is this, "WHAT-EVER IS WORTH DOING, IS WORTH DOING WELL". Always remember this, God has taught us not to be slothful (lazy) in business (Romans 12:11) because verse 8 (Phillips) tells us, "You may be sure that God will reward a man for good work". Even though the employer may fall down on this point, just remember, you are NOT just working for him - you are serving God by what you are doing and He will never see you "shortchanged".

EMPLOYERS - Verse 9 (Phillips), "Be as conscientious and responsible towards those who serve (work) you as you expect them to be towards you, neither misusing the power over others that has been put in your hands, nor forgetting that you are responsible yourselves to a heavenly employer who makes no distinction between master and man."

The employer then is as responsible before God as the employee is. If such a system were followed in the world today, there would be absolutely no need of unions or strikes, etc.

Why is Paul bringing out these various things in this particular book? Simply because in order for us to become members of His Body, the Church, we must learn to submit and obey one another. We must allow the Holy Spirit of God to "fit us together" and reverence one another and begin to realize just how much we need and depend upon the other members of this many membered Body - the Church - the Body of Christ.

In bringing this wonderful book to a close, Paul shows why it is so important to be joined together in one body and what actually lies ahead and faces the Church of the living God. May we just add here - there is positively NO WAY anyone can make it on their own; each member needs the other member for even collectively we are no

match for the enemy without this union and the Holy Spirit working in and through this Body - the Church.

Verses 10-24. The reason man alone, as an individual or collectively as a body, can never hope to win the battle and conflict of life is because it is a spiritual war, not a natural one.

Paul admonishes us to be strong in the Lord and in the power of his boundless resources. The Church universal must be prepared for this conflict and must put on the whole armor of God, not the flesh, in order to resist and withstand all the forces of evil that shall be arrayed against the Church in that day.

Verse 12. We wrestle (fight) not against flesh and blood or any physical enemy, but against principalities (organizations), and powers that are spiritual, against rulers or unseen powers (cosmic powers relating to the universe) that controls this dark world against spiritual wickedness (agents) in high places". There is only one way that such can be perceived and recognized and that is by the Spirit. So Paul says the Church must put on the whole armor of God which consists of : 1. Loins girt about with truth (Phillips) belt of truth 2. Breastplate of righteousness 3. Feet shod with the gospel of peace 4. Shield of faith 5. Helmet of salvation 6. Sword of the Spirit - word of God 7. Prayer and supplication

This armor can only fit and protect ONE BODY - that one body is the Church, not churches.

SUMMARY

- 1. Exhortation to children regarding obedience - key to long life.**
- 2. Exhortation to Fathers not to over correct. 3. Exhortation to employees. 4. Exhortation to employers. 5. Exhortation to Church to prepare and be properly equipped for the battle by putting on the whole armor of God.**

