

# THE WORD OF TRUTH

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*"And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free"—Jno. 8:32.*

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*"Of His own will begat He us with the Word of Truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures" (James 1:18).*

## SET FOR THE DEFENSE OF THE GOSPEL

### SPIRITUAL DEADNESS AND ITS REMEDY

I am reminded everywhere that I go of the reality of spiritual deadness that is so prevalent - such a soreness does it bring to the heart! Profession is abundant, possession is at a premium! Scarcely can one find an individual that is satisfied with that glorious union with Christ Jesus that is found in the New Covenant. Church affiliation, imaginary works of goodness, and religious activity consummates in the placating of the conscience, the hardening of the heart, and the dulling of the ears. There is much about us that passes itself off as Christian, but the heart of the elect senses the emptiness that pervades it all. There is nothing there to feed the heart, to strengthen the spirit, and fortify the inner man. To those that have eyes to see and ears to hear, there is a great valley of dry bones confronting us in the religious world - and the bones are "very dry."

It appears clear that the Gentiles have arrived at approximately the same spiritual state as did the Jews at the coming of the Son of God, "made of a woman, made under the Law" (Gal. 1:4) When our Lord was manifested, there were divisions among the chosen people - sects of all sorts: essenes, zealots, scribes, pharisees, etc. There was a spiritual deadness that pervaded the whole of the nation - utter lifelessness. Moses and the prophets were read in the synagogues day after day, but yet the veil remained over their eyes, none receiving the message of truth in their hearts (Acts 15:21). It was in this time that our Lord "came unto His own, and His own received Him not" (John 1:11). Men's hearts were oblivious to the greatness of the revelation that had been burst upon them - the revelation of "the Lord from heaven". This general condition was described to Ezekiel the prophet in the vision of the valley of dry bones. The "whole house of Israel" was there unfolded (Ezek. 37:11). It is pictured as being "in the midst of the valley" (Ezek. 37:1), thus indicating its lowness in respect to Jehovah God. Whereas He dwelleth in the "high and lofty place" (Isa. 57:15; Psa. 113:5), Israel (His own by adoption - Rom. 9:4) were dwelling "in the midst of the valley." O, the travail of soul that such a condition summons forth. Jesus, in contemplation of it, stood over Jerusalem and wept as He considered their provision and their neglect (Matt. 23:37; Luke 13:34). Paul, after being delivered from that valley of death, looked at Israel and cried; "I have great heaviness of heart and continual sorrow of heart. For I could wish myself were accursed from Christ for the Brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh: who are Israelites . . ." (Rom. 9:1-4). Those of us that live in God's bosom have a peculiar fellowship in this respect concerning the church of our day. Truly it too is in "the midst of the valley!"

**In This Issue . . .**

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## The Word of Truth

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### The Condition

Not only was the location of the children of Israel, and the present situation of the professing church, in the MIDST of a valley; but their condition is most aptly described as that of "bones"; i.e., without life, without covering, without motivation, without beauty, without nourishment, without vitality. They were in the "open valley", accessible to the scorching sun, and thus were "very dry." No moisture within them; i.e., no hope; everything had withered and died. They were utterly useless, and thoroughly uncomely. O, is not this the condition that God wanted Ezekiel to contemplate and ponder in his heart? Did He not cause the prophet to "pass by them round about" (Ezek. 37:2)? **God did not desire for his prophet to hide his face from the stern realities that were about him.** There is no room in the faith life for ignorment of uncomely conditions; they must be confronted; weighed, and corrected according to the effectual instruction of the Lord. But these bones were indicative of men **slain**; of a great slaughter. The children of Israel had been slaughtered by deceived hearts and unfaithful leaders. Did not the Lord command the old prophet to prophesy unto the wind and say: "O breath . . . breathe upon these SLAIN" (Ezek. 37:9). O, the tragedy of a people slain by their leaders; but so was it with Israel; "My people have been lost sheep: **their shepherds have caused them to go astray**, they have turned them away on the mountains" (Jer. 50:6); "O my people, **they which lead thee cause thee to err**, and destroy the way of thy paths" (Isa. 3:12); "**The leaders of this people cause them to err**: and they that are led of them are destroyed" (Isa. 9:16); "**Many pastors have destroyed My vineyard**, they have trodden my portion under foot, they have made my pleasant portion a desolate wilderness" (Jer. 12:10); "Woe be unto **the pastors that destroy and scatter the sheep of my pasture** saith the Lord" (Jer. 23:1). Ezekiel the prophet saw the result of false shepherding, corrupt teaching, and wayward hearts.

But, dear reader, the same situation is prevalent in our day. The sects and schisms, the errors of doctrine, and the institutional "shibboleths"

(Judges 12:6) have all had their results in the professing church. Its life has been taken from it, and it lies like a field of very dry bones — not mere bones, but dry bones; yea, not mere dry bones, but "very dry" — "VERY dry"! There is no similitude of life among them, and though many come to their defence, yet those who are given to pass about the valley still find institutions and organized religion "very dry." From across the country cries of heartache and despair, of vexation and concern, are heard from the mouths of those that have been given to see the valley of dry bones. They all conclude the same — "very dry." This is the spirit of deadness of which I speak; of aloofness from the Lord God, of receptivity to the spirit of the world. God speaks and they hear not; He calls and they content themselves to wallow in the emptiness of its profession! **This general condition has been brought on, in part, by the professed representatives of the Lord.** As their doctrine has distilled, it has left the sediment of fleshly conceptions and ambitions. The result has been a great body of slain men — slain spiritually, the life being extracted from their beings: higher motivations quenched, spiritual yearnings buried, and the conviction of personal sin covered up with institutional activity. O, have you not sensed the condition about you; are you not cognizant of the death that surrounds you? Do not shrink from the sight, dear reader — it is too great to neglect. God carried Ezekiel out in the Spirit and set him down in the midst of the valley. He also "caused" him to pass by them round about (Ezek. 37:1-2). **There was no ignorment of this condition allowable! Occupation with personal matters was not permitted; withdrawing from the deplorable condition that confronted the prophet was not allowable.** He had to squarely face the state of the people; see it like it was; be impressed with the spiritual deadness that existed. To all who live in the bosom of the Lord, similar showings are given. O, it is not pleasant to the heart to see these things, yet, they must be seen! The appearing church has been slain, and its members lie all about us as a valley of blanched and dry bones. Receptivity to the Lord is rare, interest in eternal verities is virtually unheard of in many circles, and the Word of God is a relatively closed book. That is the condition of things — let us peruse it with honest hearts.

### The Question

When the valley of dry bones had been thoroughly examined by the prophet, a question was put to him; "Son of man, **can these bones live**?" What an interrogation is this? Bones, not men, was the sight! The vision was filled with dry bones — a picture of utter desolation and hopelessness. Yet, the Almighty plies the faith of the prophet with the question: "**Can these bones live**?"

Let the mind that delights to delve into curious matters, to probe into the depths of philosophy — let that mind dwell upon this question with the prophet. View the church as it is before you: split into factions and sects, blinded by the god of this world. Here and there a true sheep may be found, starving and struggling amongst the briars of denominationalism, lean and weak from the conditions in which it finds itself. No longer

is the church recognized as "the pillar and ground of the truth" (I Tim. 3:15); no! it is a social organization, an addition to the community, a contributor to social functions. Its ministers are acceptable men in the community; they speak at the social functions, and their churches are recognized as assets to the community. Its members are part of the world; their presence on the job, in the community, in the social affairs of life, does not constitute a bright and shining light for the Lord. They are neither salt nor light, righteous nor fruit-bearing. Come now, ye that know "the truth as it is in Christ Jesus". What conditions do you see about you? How are the impressions that are left upon thy soul? Are you oblivious to the spiritual deadness about you? If not, then I ask you the question — **Can these bones live? Can there be a revival of spirits? Can hearts be revived in the paths of righteousness again? Can the contemporary church be filled with life and vitality?** These are questions designed to draw out your faith. They summon us to the Lord and to His strength and power.

Observe the answer of the prophet — it is spiritually honest; "O Lord God, **Thou knowest!**" There it is — **we should not take impossible decisions upon ourselves!** We are not to acquiesce to a view of fate, nor reconcile our hearts to a continued state of deadness about us! **The circumstances about us are not to affect our judgment.** As the Lord said elsewhere: "Judge not according to appearance, but judge righteous judgment" (Matt. 7:24). It is true that the deadness of religion about us appears to give reason for despair — but such ought not to be the portion of any believer! Only recently I was with a group of brethren that were discussing the coming of the Lord Jesus. They expressed the thought that the world could not possibly be improved without a personal return from the Lord; that the church was so dead it could never again be recovered to its pure state. Their musings were, of course, but the product of a doctrine which they had embraced. **But it is better for men to rise above the doctrines of men — far above them — and answer to the inquiries of the Lord, "O Lord God, Thou knowest."** It is ever true that **impossible circumstances are to be referred to the Lord.** His queries test our faith; they, in a way, examine us, to see if we are in the faith. Let us submit honorably to our Father's questions by permitting Him to answer those things that are not evident to our spirits.

### The Remedy

The Lord did not answer the question of the liveability of the bones — He does not always commit Himself to men. The answer was not to be found in a simple "yes" or "no". **The Lord has high purposes which may not always be served by short complete answers.** His first response to the prophet was: "Prophesy upon these bones, and say unto them, O ye dry bones, hear the word of the Lord" (37:4). Once again, the faith of the prophet is tested! **To be sure, the audience was not a lively one, nor was there any reason within the confines of the flesh to expect a response to the message.** Yet, it was to be preached, and what a glorious message was conveyed. It was not a

message of responsibility, it was not a series of commandments, nor an unveiling of the condition of death that prevailed. No! Here was the word — a word of what the Lord was about to do: "Thus saith the Lord God unto these bones; Behold, **I will cause breath to enter into you, and ye shall live: and I will lay sinews upon you, and cover you with skin, and put breath into you, and ye shall live; and ye shall know that I am the Lord**" (37:5-6). Glorious message! The proclamation of the working of the Lord God. Not a message of what **could** be done, nor of what **should** be done; but a message of what **WOULD** be done. That is the most effectual message that can be preached! **Observe that God undertook the entire responsibility for this valley of dry bones and their eventual quickening.** The message may be summarized in these two phrases: "I will . . . ye shall". Praise the Lord. Not "Ye shall and I will", but "I will and ye shall" — **that is the Divine order of things!**

This is the message that we have to bring to the world today; a message of the Lord's doings which is "marvelous in our eyes" (Psa. 118:23). "All things are of God, who hath reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ. . . . God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them" (II Cor. 5:18ff). The message of the New Covenant is this: "I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: and they shall not teach every man his neighbor and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more" (Heb. 8:10-12). Praise the Lord for that truth! A wonderful message, indeed, has been given to us to proclaim "to every creature" (Mark 16:15). **The Gospel consists of the message of an accomplished work — the work of God!** He hath verily "made an end of transgression" (Dan. 9:24), having "abolished death and brought life and immortality to light" (II Tim. 1:10). The proclamation of that truth in the power and energy of the Holy Spirit dissimulates the darkness of the Evil one and liberates the spirit of man. "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32).

Let every representative of the King learn the message of the Gospel, that it is not an announcement of what **can** be done, or what **may** be done; nor is it an announcement of requisites that are to be met by man. It is a "report" (Rom. 10:16) — an announcement, or relating, of **accomplished realities**; yea, a proclamation of "the Lord's doing" (Psa. 118:23). This is why "preaching" is so vital in God's dealings with men; "Now to Him that is of power to stablish you according to my Gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ." (Rom. 16:25); "For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness, but to us that are saved, it is the power of God" (I Cor. 1:18); "In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began; but hath in due times manifested His word through preaching"

## AN OPEN DOOR FOR THE BRETHREN MEETING AT 26th AND COLFAX

Recently the Lord has opened a door of opportunity for the brethren meeting at 26th and Colfax. Having labored in the community in which we now find ourselves for some ten years, we have been impressed with the immunity that it possesses toward the Gospel of Christ. For some time now we have been concerned over this condition, and having lifted it up to the Lord, we are beginning to behold His wondrous workings in this matter. We have tentatively made an agreement to procure an abandoned building in Independence Hill, Indiana — not far from where we presently gather together. This building was once occupied by the Roman Catholics of this town. The price for which it is to be obtained, the Lord willing, is only a fraction of its worth. We desire that all interested readers share our joy in this prospect, and join us in earnest prayer and supplication for the will of the Lord to be done.

### PEWS NEEDED

We stand in need of a rather large quantity of pews for this new location, as well as other financial help. If any of our brethren are able to help us in these matters, we will be glad to hear from them.

(Titus 1:2-3): "How shall they hear without a preacher" (Rom. 10:14-17).

The remedy for the dry bones that we see about us today is to be found in the same holy activity to which the prophet Ezekiel was summoned — **preaching**. From around the world, the sound must echo forth, "O earth, earth, earth; hear the word of the Lord" (Jer. 22:29). From barren pulpits, and dry hearts there must come the spring of life and vitality in Holy Spirit anointed preaching! Unless there is a revival of this holy activity men are helplessly in unbelief. The shackles of Satan were broken in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost through the **preached** word; Samaria was brought to its knees through **preaching** (Acts 8:5ff); the Ethiopian eunuch was brought into communion with the Lord through **preaching** (Acts 8:35); Corinth was turned from idols to serve the living God through the means of **preaching** (II Cor. 1:19). Time and time again it is emphasized in the Scriptures that we are to "**preach the Word**" (II Tim. 4:2). Let all be encouraged therefore, in this work of preaching. Perhaps, as it is undergirded by the prayers of the elect, we too may see the bones move and come together, "bone unto his bone." Yes, the remedy for the dryness that we see about us is the proclamation of the "wonderful works of God" (Acts 2:11).

But our preaching is to be accompanied by the power of the Holy Spirit. When Ezekiel had preached the message wherewith he was bidden to preach, the bones came together, sinews and skin covered them, and flesh was there. But there

was no life; no vitality, no "breath in them" (Ezek. 37:8). It was then that the Lord said: "Prophesy 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" (Ezek. 37:9). When the man of God prophesied as he was bidden, breath came into the reconstituted bones before him, and they "stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army" (verse 10). O, that is what we need today — prophets who may cry unto the winds from the four corners of the earth, and, in the Name of the Lord, bring forth the Holy Spirit to breathe upon the slain all about us. Around us are some that are no longer mere dry bones. **They possess all that is necessary for appearance; they are Scriptural in their conduct and conversation, they confess to the proper things, they seem to be the right places at the right time — but their lives are absent of Divine power; they have no spiritual vitality and exuberance. It is the pulsating freshness of the Holy Spirit that is missing!** The things of heaven are not vital to their spirit; the freshness of eternal glory and the joy of justification are absent. O, such as this are altogether trying to the spirits of those that live in the bosom of the Lord. Thus must they both preach and pray; prophesy to men and to the Spirit. This is the only remedy, and when men engage in these matters at the stimulus of the Lord, we too shall see an exceeding great **army** (militant and aggressive) stand forth in the Name of the Lord. God hasten the day!

### Is It Right To Take Issue?

Some of the more refined element in religious circles are set against taking issue with others. Often such people charge those that do such with being antagonistic or factious; but such is not always the case. **There are matters with which the believer should take harsh issue.** The morals of our day should be exposed by saints for what they are, and opposed openly and effectually by preachers of the Word. **There are great social injustices abroad in the land; but they are not the primary issues. They have only sprang from the looseness of moral standards that prevails since the Lord and His Law have been obviated as an integral part of our culture.** Rather than prattling long and hard about equal rights, etc., those that know the Lord should be sounding out against the deplorable tendencies of men to remove moral standards, the attempt to elevate human reasoning, the justification of fleshly indulgences and gratification, etc. These are matters that **produce** the situations that lie all about us — men's hearts are riveted to the earth, and thus their affections are deficient. As watchmen on the wall, we must sound out against these things, and take our side with the Lord, "having no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reproving them" (Eph. 5:11). Let each believer in his own way, and according to his own abilities, take serious issue by life, word, and thought, with the trends of our day. **Your personal influence against these matters is a great deterrent, as well as a manifestation of your relationship to the Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.**

# Commentary On Philippians

By Richard W. Ebler

Chapter Two (cont.)

(vs. 9-11) "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

In the preceding verses Paul has spoken of the humiliation of Christ. Prior to this humiliation the Logos dwelt in that glory which He had with the Father before the world was (John 1:1, 17:5). His majesty was such that even to behold the things that are in heaven He would necessarily have to humble himself. Yet this exalted Being who was in the "form of God" (v. 6) took upon himself the "form of a servant" (v. 7), that is, the form of man (who is a creature of servitude) and made Himself of no reputation among the spirit-world by laying aside his independent exercise of the Divine attributes. Realizing this was not enough, He further humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, **even** the death of the cross. None ever humbled himself as much as Christ. None was ever exalted as much. In fact, His exaltation was in proportion to His humility. Here was the supreme demonstration of the truth: "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted" (Luke 14:11).

Christ's exaltation began from the lowest point, even in Hades itself, "the lower parts of the earth" (Eph. 4:9), and preached the gospel to the antediluvian spirits in prison during the three-day interim following his crucifixion (I Peter 3:19, 20; 4:6). However, the gates of hell did not prevail against the rock of His divinity, and, like Samson, He tore off the gates of the "city" and ascended up through Satan's territory, the air (Eph. 2:2), leading captivity captive and sat down at the right hand of the majesty on high, denoting that his triumphant work was finished. There from David's throne he reigns as head over all things for the good of the church, dispensing gifts (as David did, I Sam. 30:21-25) to his chosen people. The fact that the Spirit was poured out on the day of Pentecost evidenced His reign to Peter and the apostles (Acts 2:16-18, 25-33).

The glorious exaltation and reign of Christ, however, like other mysteries of the kingdom, is not apparent to the flesh. It is only apprehended by faith. Sin **appears** to be an over-throw of His purposes, when in reality it is **serving** His purposes by providing a contrast to His righteousness, and giving occasion for Him to manifest His grace on some and His justice on others.

In verse nine we read that God gave His exalted son "a name which is above every name." Some think that the name referred to is "Jesus" (v. 10) which means "Saviour" and denotes that His work of salvation brought Him the greatest glory. Others think that since "Jesus" was a common name in His time (Col. 4:11) the name "Christ" is meant (Acts 17:3). Others that "Lord" (v. 11) is intended. But it seems not probable to this writer that "name" in verse nine refers to the majesty, glory,

status, authority, and dignity of the exalted Son of God. Note that the Holy Ghost did not say "the name Jesus" but "the name of Jesus." When God proclaimed "the name of the Lord" to Moses, He proclaimed His attributes and offices (Exodus 34:5-7). If a good name is rather to be chosen than great riches (Prov. 22:1), then how rich is our exalted Head! He Himself is a proper object of our worship. His Divine method of obtaining a name was in marked contrast to that of the proud and carnal men of Babel (Gen. 11:4). Christ renounced his glory and thereby ultimately increased it.

Not only has the exalted Son received honour, but power as well, for every knee shall bow to him at the last day (Rom. 14:11, 12; Phil. 2:10, 11) and every tongue shall confess Him Lord. This is a reference to Isaiah 45:23 where Jehovah makes this claim for Himself. From this we see the Divinity of our Lord. This universal homage to the Lamb is also depicted in Revelation 5:13. All creation is seen worshipping Him in whom creation is united to its Creator. God's will that all men should honor the Son even as they honor the Father will then be fulfilled (John 5:23). From this passage we also learn that both the body and soul ought to be involved in true worship since our entire being is redeemed. We also see how vain are those who imagine that they can know God apart from Christ (John 14:6).

Some far-fetched theological implications could be drawn from this text, but we are to take it as it stands and let it minister to us. The marvel is that here is an exalted representative **Man** ruling the universe as a forerunner of His people who shall ultimately reign with Him and fulfill God's original purpose for man to reign and have dominion (Gen. 1:28). This is testified of by the writer to the Hebrews: "What is man, that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that thou visitest him? Thou madest him a little lower than the angels: thou crownedst him with glory and honour, and didst set him over the works of thy hands: Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all 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 . . . crowned with glory and honour . . ." (Heb. 2:6-9).

Finally, this universal confession on the Day of Judgment will be to the glory of God the Father as the **author** of this grand and glorious scheme of redemption. For when all things shall be subdued unto Christ, then shall the Son also be subject unto the Father that God may be all in all (I Cor. 15:28). The ultimate end of the whole plan of redemption, then, is to "bring us to God." Ought this not to be enough to challenge us to earnestly seek after God in this life? We shall bow the knee sooner or later, either now or on the Day of Judgment. How much better to worship Him and confess Him as our Lord in this life!  
Amen!

(vs. 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."

Paul begins with the word "Wherefore" in order to connect these verses with previous thoughts; to wit, that in view of Christ's humble subjection to the Father and His subsequent exaltation, let us follow His example.

He calls the Philippians his beloved to show their endearment to him and the more to gain their ear. These were they who had ministered to him in his necessities both in his presence and in his absence from them.

Next the apostle brings up the matter of obedience. No man will be saved apart from obedience, grace notwithstanding, for the righteousness of the law is fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit (Rom. 8:4). "Let no man deceive you, he that doeth righteousness is righteous" (I John 3:7). "If ye live after the flesh ye shall die" (Rom. 8:13). We are never to turn the grace of God into lasciviousness, but to make constant and unremitting war against our own personal sin lest it damn us (I Cor. 9:27). God's purpose has never changed. It is to get man to obey Him. It is true that the moral law drives us to Christ for justification (Gal. 3:24, Rom. 10:4, Gal. 2:16). But Christ sends us back to Moses with grace to live a holy life (Rom. 8:4) to prove that we have truly been with Him.

Paul says "not as in my presence only," showing that the Philippians were not hypocrites. True faith obeys in solitude as well as before the eyes of men (Col. 3:22). On the other hand, it should be a terror to the hypocrite to know that the sins he commits in secret are still within full view of the unseen hosts and God himself. Also, our private transgressions shall shortly be judged openly before the assembled universe (I Tim. 5:21, Rom. 2:16). This same fact, however, will be a comfort to the godly who inwardly strive against sin notwithstanding their failures and infirmities.

"Much more" refers to the added diligence needed when exhorters like Paul are no longer present to spur one on.

He says "Work out your own salvation." "We must not only work **at** our salvation, by doing something now and then about it; but we must work **out** our salvation, by doing all that is to be done, and persevering therein to the end. Salvation is the great thing we should mind."

By using the term "work" Paul reproves our laziness, lest our flesh should make the truth of the grace of God working **all** spiritually good things in us as an occasion for sloth. Those who abuse God's truth in this manner will be found inexcusable for they have taken the highest form of truth which was designed to produce the highest degree of holiness and used it as an excuse for sin.

By the term "fear and trembling" he reproves pride and carnal confidence, for these two arise from an awareness of how wretched we are, and devoid of all good. Paul says, "You have all things from God; therefore be careful and humble." "There is nothing that should train us more to modesty and fear than when we hear that it is by the grace of God alone that we stand, and

that we instantly collapse if He even in the slightest degree withdraws His hand. On the other hand, all who confide in their own strength grow insolent through arrogance and sleep in carelessness."

The apostle does not say our actions work out salvation, but, Work out your own salvation, which is much different. It were absurd to say, because the Jews were enjoined to eat the passover with loins girt, that loins girt were eating the passover." Holy living is the road to glory and on it we must stay if we are to arrive safely home. But the road is not the procuring cause nor the propelling cause. Christ's blood procured salvation for us and His grace propels us on this road because of God's free choice of us from eternity (Eph. 1:3-5). Ultimately holiness is an evidence, not a cause, of salvation. On our part it is a thank-offering for our free justification by faith in Christ's merit. A justifying faith in Christ will purify the heart and bring forth the fruit of holiness (Acts 15:9), but this faith respects the embracing of Christ's merit and not the earning of our own. Signing our paycheck does not earn the money. Boasting is excluded because we **ought** to believe God. When we have done this, we can still say that we are unprofitable servants. Furthermore, God had to give us the faith as a free gift in the first place. He works **in us both to will** and to **do** of his **own good** pleasure; therefore, since He does **all** the work of our salvation, He deserves **all** the glory.

Nevertheless, having a renewed will and having our spirit blended with His Spirit, we are energetically involved in perseverance, so that it is truly said in Scripture that **we** work and we believe (I Cor. 6:17, Col. 1:29, II Cor. 6:1, John 3:36).

Notice also that it is "your **own** salvation" that should be your chief aim. No human friend can work it for you. "Every man shall bear his own burden" (Gal. 6:5). We must take heed to ourselves first, before we can help others (I Tim. 4:16). So let us be doing it!

—o—

If God were not already in heaven, all of the faith in the world could not put Him there. On the other hand, if God is in heaven, all of the unbelief and scepticism in the world cannot remove Him. We rejoice that the latter is true, and laugh at the vain attempts of sceptics and worldly-wise men to deny what our hearts know to be the truth.

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Attitudes really have no bearing upon reality. Reality is not variable, but constant. My view of it and response to it really have no effect upon it. Reality is objective, not subjective; it affects us, we do not affect it. Once this is truly seen, the "things of the Spirit" become the center of our attention, not man's conception of them.

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The difference between a traditional and a real faith lies in the fact that one is persuaded by reasonings, and the other by spiritual realities; one rests upon man's conception (true or false), and the other upon spiritual vision; one is founded upon salesmanship, the other upon experience.

# An Appeal To A Godless Nation

by Sister Beverly Brunner

Oakley, Illinois

When I listen to the news and hear all that is going on throughout this land, something inside of me wells up, and I either have to speak out or write my feelings down on paper. I believe it is the Lord compelling me to do this, for this feeling is so strong at times that I have to stop whatever I am doing and write them down. The other day I talked to a person who was not able to receive the ways of the Lord. When you tell such people of how God works; that He works through peoples, nations, events, and so on, they get a certain kind of look on their faces, the tone of their voices changes, and they give you the old HEE HAW attitude, which is nothing more than unbelief. Whether they believe or don't believe, it makes no difference; truth is truth! God is not a liar; "Let God be true and every MAN a liar." You can expect this attitude from those of the world; but when you talk with those that claim to know God and they emulate this kind of attitude, O how it must grieve the Lord! As bad as it is to scorn God, what an abomination a person must be who claims to know Him, and yet denies Him in every way.

Man hates and he despises war; and why? Because of all that it stands for; death and destruction, kill or be killed, the maimed and the disfigured, the devastation of countries and lands, and families being torn apart. They ask, Why O why do we have to have war? But I ask you how can there be anything else but war? Look at yourselves, look down deep inside, look at this nation, look hard! What do you see? Your ways are not pleasing to the Lord, for it says in the Scriptures; "When a man's ways please the Lord, he maketh even his enemies to be at peace with Him" (Prov. 16:17). Your thoughts are not Godward, your ways are not Godward. "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own ways" (Isa. 53:6). Search the Scriptures and you shall see why there is war and not peace. Whenever Israel sinned against God, He would bring the different nations against them, and there was war and destruction and death, and they were brought into captivity to the other nations. "Oh that my people had hearkened to me, and Israel had walked in my ways! I should soon have subdued their enemies, and turned my hand against their adversaries" (Psa. 13:14). You see not the error of your ways, you have been blinded by Satan and are walking in darkness. How can there be peace when you know not what true peace is? True peace is peace between God and man through Jesus Christ. Without this relationship there is no such thing as peace!

"This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form

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of godliness, but denying the power thereof" (II Tim. 3:1-3). So weep not so much because of war, and because of the loss of someone that you love, but weep because you and this nation are living in sin. Repent and turn to God!

—o—

## A Lesson From Current News

The recent return of the American astronauts to earth from a foiled moon-mission demonstrated several facts:

1. The imperfections of man.
2. The unexpected tendency of harnessed power.
3. The inadequacy of purely human innovations.
4. The reduction of man and his inventions within the framework of a larger and more incomprehensible creation.

Notwithstanding, there was also demonstrated in that event something which should serve as an incentive for believers in their crusade against the flesh. In jeopardy of their lives, and more than 200,000 miles from earth, these three men retained their composure, exhibiting phenomenal prowess and dexterity in handling their crippled vessel. Working with what faculties they had, the Lord enabled them to maneuver through several very trying situations. Their eventual return to the earth was confounding to all because of its precision, as they landed but 300 yards from their appointed destination.

As I thought upon these things, I was once again reminded of the immobility that too often characterizes Christians. In the mortification of sin in their members, together with the evidence of establishment by Grace, more individual effort and ingenuity could be employed than is generally the case. There are many latent powers in the believer's breast which need to be utilized in the commendable work of "perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord" (II Cor. 7:1). **The truth is that if all professed believers were as thoughtful, wise, and cunning in getting to heaven as those astronauts were in getting back to earth — well, need any more be said?**

## *Trust In The Lord*

by Sister Suzette Weil

Trust in the Lord with all your heart  
That is the way to get a new start.  
He will help in your troubles, struggles, and woes  
By conquering the chiefest of your foes.  
He will deliver and save your soul  
And He will make you completely whole.  
He can heal your spirit, body, and mind  
And show you how peace to find.  
Your heart will be filled with joy and love,  
As you continue to look to Him above.  
Problems and temptations will not end,  
But amid them you will find a friend.  
So trust in the Lord for everything,  
And a new full life to you He'll bring.

—o—

## *Things That Abide*

by Brother Jesse A. Mason

The year has passed: the record's made,  
Though good or bad, it be!  
'Twas made by us; but kept by God,  
Unchanged, eternally!

Time passes on; but deeds still live!  
All deeds, both great and small;  
Kind deeds, that lighter burdens, make:  
Harsh words, we would recall!

Time passes on; but words still live;  
In hearts of men, they fall:  
Kind words that banish grief and pain;  
Harsh words, we would recall!

Time passes on; but thoughts still live,  
To create words and deeds;  
Pure thoughts, that make men good and great!  
Vile words, we would recall!

The thoughts we think: the words we speak:  
The deeds, we now perform;  
Though we, ourselves, shall pass to dust,  
Will live in lives, unborn!

Thus, all our thoughts, and words, and deeds,  
Live on, for weel or woe;  
To face us at the throne of God,  
To bless; or curse, bestow!

So, while the year is in the dawn,  
Let's firm resolve, now make,  
To guard our thoughts, and words, and deeds;  
And of Christ's way, partake!

His way is just, and kind and pure;  
And 'tis best, by far, to live!  
It makes lives clean, and pure, and strong;  
And, eternal life, 'twill give!

Amen!

The above poem was written by brother Jesse A. Mason of Texarkana, Arkansas. A saint of over ninety years of age, brother Mason has a godly concern for those who live unthoughtfully. He conveys his heart in this prose, speaking to our spirits, and urging us toward the perfection of heart and life which is fitting of children of the King. May we all give diligent heed to these things.

## **Tantalizing Thoughts**

by Brother Harold Lohse

Brother Harold Lohse is an elder at the church meeting at 26th and Colfax, and has blessed us many times with his wisdom and perception in the Kingdom. While he has passed the fifty mark in earthly years, he has been in a conscious awareness of God for less than five. Yet, the Lord has blessed him with rapid and firm growth, so that he is truly an "elder" beloved whom we esteem and honor highly for his works sake. Every Friday evening Brother Harold delivers a message to the brethren here, currently ministering out of the book of Luke. Below are some tantalizing thoughts that he presented in connection with Luke 4:19-20.

\* \* \*

Jesus was not an entertainer — He was **great** with the Holy Spirit!

\* \* \*

There is a certain seriousness to Scripture, and after reading it before the Lord, as we slowly descend, as it were, back to earth, we too will wonder at His gracious words and knowledge, for He speaks with authority.

\* \* \*

You can hardly plant seeds when anger is all about you; the fruits of righteousness are sown in peace.

\* \* \*

We are not exactly promised the keys to the kingdom; all has been unlocked for us, and He is waiting for us with the gate ajar.

\* \* \*

One full of the Spirit has a definite advantage over the folk in the assembly.

\* \* \*

Spiritual admiration can give way to fleshly familiarity.

\* \* \*

If we believe "it is finished", Jesus will fight our battles for us, and in no time at all we will be in the promised land.

\* \* \*

The spiritual live off of the earnest of their inheritance.

\* \* \*

True faith will stand without the support of miracles.

\* \* \*

Anytime we put anything before God, we are guilty of forming another god.