

# THE WORD OF TRUTH

Published Monthly

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

Volume 19

MAY, 1975

Number 5

*"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

### DRAWING NEAR UNTO GOD

*"Let us draw near . . ." — Heb. 10:22*

There are many privileges that have been extended to the saints of the Most High God! They have been brought by grace into an area where they may "serve" the Lord (Heb. 9:14) with "gladness" (Psa. 100:2). We also have been granted the honor in Christ's stead of being used of God; actually becoming "ambassadors of Christ" (II Cor. 5:20). We also have been made to "drink into one Spirit" (I Cor. 12:13). But as great as these and other kindred privileges are, they are not the greatest.

In my estimation, the great single privilege of the children of God is that of being able (and encouraged) to "draw near" to the Living God! What a singular honor is this! The children of Israel could not do this! Even Moses but saw the "hinder parts" of the Lord while hiding in the cleft of the rock (Ex. 33:23). But we are summoned to come boldly into the very presence of God the Father Himself; we are encouraged and even admonished to do so! What manner of love has been bestowed upon us! Do you not recall that the children of Israel, while at the foot of Mount Sinai, were admonished "Take heed to yourselves, that ye go not up into the mount, or touch the border of it . . . there shall not an hand touch it. . . . The people cannot come up to Mount Sinai for Thou chargest us, saying, Set bounds about the mount, and sanctify it" (Ex. 19:12, 13, 23). Even Moses, "the servant of God" (I Chron. 6:49), when standing before the burning bush, was told; "Draw not nigh hither . . ." (Ex. 3:5).

The entire old regime of Law was characterized by an aloofness from God; a NECESSARY aloofness. Man was not permitted to come into the very presence of God! At best, he could only stand before the symbolical presence of God in the "Most Holy" segment of the tabernacle—and then only "once a year" (Ex. 26:33, 34; Heb. 9:7, 25). Keep in mind that these were a covenanted people that were told to stand back; to refrain from coming into the presence of God Almighty; and that the *only* one that could come before the veiled presence of God once a year was the High Priest. Does all of this not illustrate very graphically the sinfulness of man; that something was needed to purify man before he could come into the presence of His Maker?

What is the difference between the Old Covenant and the New Covenant? Why are we urged to "draw near", while those of the former covenant were told to "draw not nigh hither"? Is it that we have attained to more understanding? That we now have a further illumination in the Scriptures, thereby qualifying us for entrance into the Divine Presence? Is it our scholastic advancement that has qualified us for such a unique privilege?

### ***In This Issue . . .***

**The Resurrection of the Dead - page 3**

**Bible Charades For Young People**

**by Richard Ebler - page 6**

## The Word of Truth

Published monthly by The Church at 78th and Independence, Merrillville, Indiana.

Author and Editor: Given O. Blakely

Circulation Managers: Mr. and Mrs. Al Stoner

Publication Office: 78th and Independence St., Merrillville, Indiana. (Send no correspondence to this address.)

Business Office: 10701 W. 124th Ave.

Cedar Lake, Ind. 46303

Address all correspondence to 10701 W. 124th Ave.

Cedar Lake, Ind. 46303

Sent Free upon request to all interested parties.

SECOND CLASS POSTAGE PAID AT  
CROWN POINT, INDIANA

### The Basis For This Privilege

"And having an High Priest over the house of God, LET US DRAW NEAR" (Heb. 10:21, 22a). This is the singular reason for our ability to draw near to God; our High Priest. It is He that shed His precious blood, as of a lamb without spot or blemish, in order that our sins might be expiated and we might enjoy the fellowship of the Lord. We enter, in fact, "by the blood of Jesus" (Heb. 10:19); and we enter into the "holiest"; i.e., into the very presence of the Almighty Himself—unhindered, unrestricted! If the Son of God had not "laid down" His life for us, we would forever have been admonished "Draw not nigh hither"! But the fact that He was "cut off out of the land of the living", and that He "tasted death for every man"—that He was "obedient unto death, even the death on the cross", has qualified us to enter into the "holiest" of all—the presence of God the Father. One life was lost, then taken up, that He (Christ) might not remain alone!

The way to God has been "consecrated", cleansed, perfected, and cleared for the redeemed! Thus is it written; "By a new and living way, which He hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh" (Heb. 10:20). Christ consecrated the way for us by, first of all, passing through the flesh; i.e., submitting to manhood in general. He came "in the likeness of sinful flesh" (Rom. 8:3), and because "the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself took part of the same . . ." (Heb. 2:14), and the fact that He did take part of flesh and blood has consecrated the way for us to come to God. Praise His Holy Name! Secondly, He passed through the veil of the flesh by dying; by being "put to death in the flesh" (I Pet. 3:18) and "through weakness" (II Cor. 13:4). Now the Scriptures refer in the past tense to "the days of His flesh" (Heb. 5:7). Earth-life was an experience through which our Savior passed that was most grievous, sorrowful, and exhausting to Him, but it was necessary that this be accomplished before we could draw near to God! The very fact that our Lord tasted of manhood, and that He tasted of death, has consecrated the way for us; we may come to God because of Him and through Him! There at the "right hand" of God, our Savior stands as the mighty Assurance of our acceptance to the Father (Mk. 16:19;

Heb. 1:3; 8:1; 10:12, 12:2; I Pet. 3:22; Col. 3:1; Rom. 8:34). We draw nigh because of Him, and in a consciousness of His position of Divine Approval! This is, of course, the strongest incentive for us to draw near to the Father; our Lord Jesus Christ is sitting at His Right Hand; the One that died for us, and Whom we have embraced by faith. The fact that our Lord Jesus was a man, and that He died, has consecrated and sanctified the way to the Father! We do well, therefore, to exploit this marvelous access by drawing "near".

### The Adjectives In The Passage

The Holy Spirit is explicit in the revelation of truth; explicit in order that our hearts may be convinced of sin, encouraged in righteousness, and comforted in our efforts that are characterized by displeasing weakness. Therefore, He speaks of a "TRUE heart", "FULL assurance", a heart that has been "sprinkled of an EVIL conscience", and "PURE water". Now, these are requisites for drawing near to God; they cannot be tritely ignored. God is not merely concerned with an individual coming near to Him, there are CERTAIN individuals that are encouraged to come near to Him! If we do not fall into this class of persons, then we are to exercise ourselves in a godly way so as to become one of them in truth. A "TRUE HEART" is a "good heart" (Lk. 8:15); one that has received the Word of God honestly, energetically, joyfully, and obediently. It is a heart that is "single", with the one purpose of pleasing "the Father of lights" with Whom we have to do (Acts 2:46). The "true heart" is one with "purpose"—i.e., one that is "cleaving unto the Lord with purpose of heart" (Acts 11:23). This speaks of a heart that has been "established with grace, and not with meats" (Heb. 13:9); i.e., it has been stabilized by what the Lord has done rather than by feeble self-effort. Those that possess such hearts are true worshippers, worshipping the Father in "spirit and truth" (Jno. 4:23, 24).

The "FULL ASSURANCE OF FAITH" speaks of that persuasion of the "truth of the Gospel" which resulted from it being received "not in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost" (I Thess. 1:5). It is that hope which forms an anchor for the soul, also called the "full assurance of hope" (Heb. 6:11, 19). The full assurance of faith means that we have taken God on His Word, and that we are resting implicitly upon His declaration of the case. It means that we have, in fact, repudiated any teaching, or any feeling, or any circumstance which seems to contradict the affirmations of the Lord. Faith believes that what Jesus did, He did for me; and in that confidence and assurance I draw near to the Father in heaven.

A heart that has been "SPRINKLED OF AN EVIL CONSCIENCE" is one that is not harassed by condemnation. It is one that has, in truth, laid hold of this verity; "There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 8:1). In such a state, our hearts do not "condemn" us, but we possess confidence and boldness to draw near to the "Throne of the Majesty in the heavens" (I Jno. 3:20-21). This speaks of a heart that enables a man NOT to condemn himself in the thing he does (Rom. 14:22). In such a case, the blood of Christ has

*(Please turn to page 7)*

## THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD

“. . . the resurrection of the dead”—I Cor. 15:42

Man's life upon earth is neither permanent nor primary! "In the body" is a term denoting a temporary state, as well as a secondary state (II Cor. 5:6). It is during this time that we are (1. subject to the "devices" of Satan, (2. brought into intimate contact with "principalities and powers, and spiritual wickedness in high places, and the rulers of the darkness of this world" (Eph. 6:12), (3. called upon to "abstain from fleshly lusts of the flesh that war against the soul" (I Pet. 2:11), (4. are in a sense "absent from the Lord" (II Cor. 5:6), (5. brought to a state where we willingly confess that we are "strangers and pilgrims" in the earth (I Pet. 2:11, Heb. 11:13), (6. and endure the seemingly interminable conflict between our old and new natures (Rom. 7). These conditions, together with others, would be most intolerable were it not for the "hope and the resurrection" (Acts 23:6). Saints of old were given a veiled but vital sense of this hope, as is expressed in such statements as; "Yet in my flesh shall I see God" (Job 19:26); "I shall go to him (deceased son), but he cannot come to me" (II Sam. 12:23), etc. The teaching concerning the resurrection was clear enough in the Scriptures so that some **creedal** concepts were formulated around the basic postulate of the resurrection. Thus it is written of the Pharisees that they believed "there shall be a resurrection of the dead" (Acts 23:8; 24:15). However, the truth was somewhat obscure to the people, requiring further light and illumination. Our Lord Jesus Christ was the One through Whom the revelation came! It is written that "life and immortality" were "**brought to light** through the Gospel" (II Tim. 1:10), lifting the matter of the "world to come" (and "the quick and the dead") from obscurity to the light of day!

Now, that there shall, indeed, be a resurrection of the dead is not generally disputed in "Christian" communities. However, there is a wide divergence of opinions relative to the nature, time, and division of the resurrection. A significant number of those that stand beneath the banner of Christ declare, and teach quite forcibly, that there shall be two separate and distinct resurrections of the dead; one resurrection of the righteous, and one resurrection of the wicked. It is also asserted that these distinct resurrections are separated by one thousand years—a millennium. This concept is developed and built upon the foundation of a single text of Scripture: ". . . and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection" (Rev. 20:4-5). It is toward this heresy that we particularly desire to direct our attention. It is to be admitted that it is both widespread in presentation and popular in acceptance. This particular doctrine stands, as it were, as an idol to many. They are hesitant to let it go, even though it has neither blessed nor

strengthened them, succoured nor encouraged them! Even though we may appear to be mere iconoclasts, we fully intend to exert effort to tear this idol down because we see it to be a blatant contradiction of "the truth as it is in Christ Jesus," a menace to spiritual sound-mindedness, and a wresting of truths which are essential to understanding, comfort, edification, and stability! We consider it to be a classic example of sophistry, perversion, ignorance, sectarianism, and carnality. This doctrine produces infinitely more questions than it ever answers, fabricates a false sense of security, disarms believers for the conflict and dishonors those that have shed their blood for the Lord Jesus and His Word.

### Some Preliminary Observations

First, this resurrection is preceded by a restriction of Satan's desuasive activities (verses 1-3). Deception is said to not be the portion of the "nations" during this time, as they are liberated to believe the truth. Secondly, Satan is loosed for a "little season" after this particular resurrection and thousand year reign—loosed because he "**must** be loosed" (verse 3b). Third, what John beheld were "souls", not bodies, thus indicating that he was describing a spiritual resurrection, not a bodily one. Fourth, those that were raised were not the entire body of the redeemed; in fact, they were a small percentage of them. Observe that these were they that had borne "the witness of Jesus"; i.e., they had been witnesses of His power and redemption. This would eliminate saints from Adam to John the Baptist, generally speaking. Also, these were a select group of those that had tasted of the redemption in Christ Jesus; they had been "**beheaded** for the witness of Jesus". That further reduces the number of constituents mentioned here. It is to be noted that these were they that had "not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads or in their hands". This places them after the time of apostasy, or the "falling away" to which Paul alluded in II Thessalonians 2:3. The "beast" is depicted as earthly government in the book of Revelation, and the "image of the beast" is the same principle disguised as the "church", elsewhere called "babylon" and the "great whore" (Rev. 17:5; 18:10, 21; 17:1, 15, 16; 19:2). In short, the "souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God" spoke of those that lived immediately under the great falling away, when those that pretended to be of God, and even named the Name of Christ actually slew and murdered the children of God because they clave unto their way. The passage indicates that while, in the judgement of the world, these martyrs were not worthy of life; and while it appears as though their ministry was in vain, and that their words did not meet with success, yet God shall honor their words by causing them to come to the position of dominancy. The truth shall yet prevail, and "the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea" (Hab. 2:14). **The lives of those martyrs of old were not lived in vain; their words did not merely go into the air! Their**

testimony shall be revived, given impetus, and received by those that possess "the love of the truth". Those whose words live like that shall never taste of the second death, neither shall they that receive with gladness that "everlasting gospel", spurned and rejected by the wicked world!

Fifthly, this resurrection is termed "the FIRST resurrection", indicating that it is not chronologically first, but first by gender. The words "first" and "second" are often used in Scripture to denote different orders, divers kinds, or separate genders. For instance, Adam is called the "first man" (I Cor. 15:45), and the Lord Jesus is called "the second man" (I Cor. 15:47). Obviously this does not speak of chronology, but of kind. Adam was the first of the natural order, Jesus began an entirely new order of creation—a combination of the Divine and the created, the heavenly and the earthly, the eternal and the temporal; thus is He termed the "second (order of) man". The Old Testament, or the covenant given to Moses on "tables of stone" (Deut. 10:1; 9:9-11; Ex. 34:28; Deut 9:9) was termed "the first", while the New Testament ratified by the blood of Christ is referred to as "the second" (Heb. 10:9). It is certainly not that there were only two covenants made by God; or that no covenants were made between the "first" and the "second". However, there were only two manner of covenants; one established upon the activity of man, and one upon the activity of God (Jer. 31:31-34; Heb. 8; Heb. 10). Without being overly burdensome on this point, the "first resurrection" speaks of a different order of resurrection than is normally mentioned in the Scripture. The general usage of the word "resurrection" refers to the raising of the bodies from the grave; however, because John was establishing the truth of a different kind of resurrection here, he used the term "first" not to denote chronology but to separate its distinct KIND of resurrection. The same means of conveyance was employed in describing death. The "second death" is "second" by reason of its different gender, and it is distinguished from the general definition of "death" (the separation of the spirit from the body) by the word "second." In short, if we are born twice, we will die only once; but if we are born only once, we will die twice. Having briefly dealt with this particular heretical dogma concerning "the resurrection", permit me to proceed.

### **The Resurrection Is Always Mentioned In The Singular**

We never do read of a "second" resurrection in Scripture, nor do we confront the word "resurrections." **The very concept of the resurrection is carefully preserved in the singular by the Holy Spirit.** With meticulous consistency this principle is seen in Scripture. Our Lord Jesus spoke of "THE resurrection" (Matt. 22:30, 31; Luke 14:14; 20:36). The Apostles spoke of "THE resurrection" (Acts 4:2; 17:18; 24:15, 21; I Cor. 15:21 42; Phil. 3:11, II Tim. 2:18). Further, the Scriptures speak of "THE DEAD" being "raised" (I Cor. 15:35), and declare that the "earth shall cast out the dead" (Isa. 26:19), certainly language that is very general in nature.

There are, of course, verses of Scripture which may appear to indicate two resurrections separated

by time. It might be well to mention them here: ". . . thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just" (Luke 14:14); "Neither can they die any more: for they are equal into the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection" (Luke 20:36); ". . . and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation" (Jno. 5:29). The term "resurrection of the just" is employed for comfort, not for chronological specificity. It simply means that **the justified shall, indeed, be raised from the dead in order to vindication and reward.** It is another way of saying, "when the just ones are raised from the dead they shall receive their reward". The wicked are not even in contemplation here. Secondly, those that are the "children of the resurrection" are those that have truly been ushered into a state of profitable existence and ministry by the resurrection; they have, so to speak, been "born", having received their new bodies or houses (II Cor. 5:1ff). "Children of the resurrection" are those whose earthly lives were but a preparation for the resurrection; who resided, as it were, in the womb of the earth until it brought them forth into glory. **Thirdly, our Lord's reference to those that shall come forth unto the "resurrection of life" or the "resurrection of damnation" speaks not of two different resurrections but of two different classes of people participating in the resurrection.** Our Lord specifically indicated this in the previous verses; "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which ALL THAT ARE IN THE GRAVES shall hear His voice, and they shall come forth . . ." (Jno. 5:28). The passage is so clear that one wonders how it can even be misconstrued—and yet it is. The meaning is that our Lord shall empty the graves ("ALL THAT ARE IN THE GRAVES") of both wicked and righteous, good and evil, holy and profane, and that, at that time, either life or damnation shall be the portion of every individual!

Suffice it to say, at this point, that the word "resurrections" is never used in reference to the graves yielding up their dead, nor is the term "second resurrection" employed in Scripture. Again, this word, to say nothing of the concept itself, is consistently used in the singular!

### **The Resurrection Of The Dead Defeats Death**

A partial resurrection leaves some in the graves, thereby permitting a partial reign of death. Such a phenomenon is offensive to those that have come to understand the coming day of victory. It is written; "So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" (I Cor. 15:54). In this particular segment of the Scriptures, the Apostle is considering the blessedness of the life to come, when the saints shall, indeed, be "delivered from the bondage of corruption", along with the "whole creation" (Rom. 8:21). To underscore the fact that this is the grand climax of the ages, the Holy Spirit witnesses that at the very time that the saints are raised from the dead, death shall have

been "swallowed up in victory", the grave shall have lost its power completely and totally, having no more authority to retain a single mortal within its confines! The time during which this takes place in concisely termed the time when "the DEAD (not merely the saints) shall be raised" (I Cor. 15:52), and lest there be some sophist that is presumptuous enough to think that he is here speaking of the spiritually dead, or the wicked, the Apostle specifically identifies the saints with this resurrection ("we"—verse 47-52; "We . . . shall also bear the image of the heavenly . . . we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed . . . we shall be changed").

Now, if the two-resurrection hypothesis is correct (i.e., that the "dead in Christ" shall first be raised, and then, after a one thousand year span of time, the wicked shall be raised), then death shall not have been defeated at the resurrection of the righteous. It shall still have retained a considerable number of Adam's race in the bowels of the earth and sea. Does that sound like **victory** over the grave? Like death being **swallowed up in victory**? **The grave shall not be defeated in degrees, but in one grand flush of life!** This shall transpire at "the last trump" when there is "a shout, the voice of the archangel, and the trump of God" (I Cor. 15:51; I Thess. 4:16)—certainly a graphic picture of a climactic and victorious moment; i.e., a "twinkling of an eye" (I Cor. 15:52). **One** bodily resurrection, **one** triumph, **one** victory, **one** grand defeat—involving two basic constituents: the wicked and the good, the righteous and the evil, the saved and the lost, the wheat and the tares! As is the custom with mortals, men have confused the issue by saying there are two resurrections, each with one division of men. However, there is **one** resurrection with two divisions of men, which, again, appears almost juvenile in its simplicity. It is a constant marvel to many of us that so simple a matter as "the resurrection of the dead" (Heb. 6:2)—one of the "first principles"—could be so confounded by religious teachers. It is no wonder that the more profound declarations of the Scripture are so little known when a vast segment of theologians (so called) have not even been able to contend with the "footmen" of revelation (Jer. 12:5).

### "The Dead In Christ Shall Rise First"

A passage (of no small concern to many people) in First Thessalonians states that "**the dead in Christ shall rise first**" (I Thess. 4:16). It is affirmed, upon the basis of this Scripture, that believers shall be raised before unbelievers; that the saved shall be resurrected before the lost. It is also asserted that a one thousand year period stands between these two distinct resurrections. However, the passage indicates something quite of another sort. Firstly, the unbelievers or the "lost" are not even under consideration here. The Thessalonian brethren were concerned for those saints that had "fallen asleep in Jesus" (I Cor. 5:18). In regards to them, the Apostle wrote; "But I would not have you ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope" (I Thess. 4:13). Those that were asleep were certainly not

the "lost", or the "tares of the field." Such a postulation borders on the verge of spiritual insanity. It is poignantly stated, in direct relation with "them which are asleep" that "them also WHICH SLEEP IN JESUS will GOD bring with Him" (verse 14). It is the Living God that has charge of "them", and they shall be brought "by God" together with Christ. In short, those that have fallen asleep have not missed the "great and notable day of the Lord!" In fact, they shall be raised "first"—i.e., before the living are "changed". Thus it is written; ". . . we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent (or precede) them which are fallen asleep. For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise FIRST: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord . . ." (I Thess. 4:15-17). And, does it not meet with sound reason that the "dead in Christ" shall be raised first; they fought the fight first, they finished the course first, they kept the faith first, they ran the race first. In regards to those that were martyred for Jesus, their cause has remained unvindicated the longest, their blood unavenged, and their enemies unrequited. One individual commenting on this Divine order of transformation said; "Those that are dead in Christ have further to come"! If those that are "alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord" are to be "caught up together" with those that have fallen asleep, then it stands to reason that "the dead in Christ shall rise first". To make more out of that passage than is clearly taught by the Lord appears to me to be an indication of a factious and sectarian spirit, as well as a bad and faulty heart!

### Conclusion

The resurrection of the dead is not merely a surety, it is also a comfort; "**Wherefore comfort one another with these words**", wrote the Apostle to those that were concerned about these things (I Thess. 4:17). It is also something which is aptly termed "a **better** resurrection" (Heb. 11:35). It is better than that of Lazarus, Jairus' daughter, and the son of the widow of Nain! It is better than that of the young man that touched the bones of the prophet Elisha (II Kgs. 13:32), or the young lad that was raised by Elisha for the Shunammite widow (II Kgs. 4:35). It is a "better resurrection" than that from which Abraham received Isaac "in the figure" (Heb. 11:19). It is even "better" than the resurrection of "many bodies of the saints" which took place when our Lord and Savior died (Matt. 27:52-53). It is "**better**" because it is **final, complete, and thorough**. Death shall be overthrown, Satan's last stronghold upon the race of men broken, and the grave robbed of its victory. The bondage of corruption shall fall as the green withes that once bound Samson of old. Sin shall be finished; unrighteousness shall be finally put away; temporality, suffering, mourning, persecution, and sorrow shall flee away from

(Please turn to page 8)

## BIBLE CHARADES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

By Richard Ebler

After years of experience in trying to teach the Bible to the young, this writer has found a very remarkable, enjoyable, and successful teaching technique: Bible Charades, i.e., short pantomime skits (involving any number of youngsters) which are designed to recreate a brief scene from a Bible story. These are performed in front of the youth group and/or the regular church assembly. It becomes a challenge for the audience to try to guess correctly the names of the principal actors and the scene involved.

I have been using this technique for several months and it has proved successful beyond all expectation. Our attendance has increased and so has the general enthusiasm. I have many eager volunteers every time we meet and they are always sorry to see the meeting close. I very seldom have time to give the charades that I myself have prepared because the young people themselves have spent the week in creating skits of their own and rehearsing them in anticipation of our meeting.

My group consists of approximately twenty young people who have a meeting every Lord's day evening just before the regular Sunday night service. There is a wide variety of age levels, ranging from five-year-olds to those in their upper teens. Yet the charades provide something for everyone. The primary, elementary, and pre-teen students are the most eager actors because they are at the age when their creativity and imagination are especially strong. Younger ones are natural ham actors when they are before an audience. They like to pretend. They also like the opportunity to challenge the older ones to guess some of the more obscure Bible characters, such as, Jael, Abimilech, Jephthah, etc. They can always get help from Mom through the week and I find many of them getting ideas from their Bible coloring books.

The teen-agers make good spectators and guessers (since they are supposed to be older, more dignified, and knowledgeable). I frequently ask them if they can perceive any profound spiritual lessons imbedded within the simple Bible stories. If they cannot, then I try to point out some spiritual application of the story to their lives. I have found that even theology can be taught from the stories of the Bible if we have the eyes to see the real meanings behind them.

Certainly there is a wealth of material to work with because approximately  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the Bible is written in story form. Note the stories of Abraham, Moses, Elijah, Elisha, Joshua, Samson, David, Solomon, Mehemiah, and Esther. We also have a lengthy account of Christ's earthly ministry and the Acts of the Apostles.

These stories are not only true, but they are exciting, colorful, and impressive when they fall upon the ear of a young person. There is nothing more exciting to a young mind than to hear the true story of David killing the giant, of the donkey talking to Balaam, of Absalom hanging by his hair from a tree, of Noah and the animals in the ark, of Jonah being swallowed by the whale, etc. I often think that many of the Bible accounts were maneuvered by God and written down for

the express purpose of providing colorful, exciting, profoundly spiritual stories for the fascination of children. (Since God commanded adult believers to raise their children in the faith, it makes sense that He would provide the tools). Even the gospel itself is the story of Christ's death, burial, and resurrection (I Cor. 15:1-4). Believe in it and it will save the soul!! Theologians have written thousands of volumes expounding the implications of that simple story. Yet the essential basic facts of the story itself are easy for a child to grasp.

Another benefit of Bible charades is that memories are being created in the minds of these youngsters which they will never forget. The stories become more real to them because they are acting them out for themselves. Maybe they will not see all of the implications of the stories, but the basic facts will stay in their minds where the Holy Spirit can use them in later years. They will learn some of the more obscure yet important Bible characters. Those who are shy will get used to being in front of an audience so that they will have less trouble with stage fright in later years if they ever have the speak before a group.

We have done over 100 of these charades over the last few months and I will now present a few choice selections as samples, all of which have been created by our young people.

### ESTHER:

Esther approaches the king who is seated on a throne (chair). The king holds out a short stick or staff (scepter) and she touches it. The audience tries to guess both her name and that of the king (Ahasuerus). The adult leader explains a brief summary of the story of Esther who was risking her life to save the lives of her people. The spiritual lesson in this is that we can only approach God because of our mediator, Christ the golden scepter, who has been extended to us in token of our welcome and acceptance.

### DAVID:

David kills the giant. A larger boy takes the role of Goliath. A smaller boy takes the role of David. They approach one another. David makes a swinging motion of the ancient-type sling. Goliath puts his hand to his forehead and dramatically falls to the ground. Again, the full story can be briefly expounded in summary form, telling how the Philistines were represented by this champion. David, like Christ, represented us in his battle with Satan and won the victory for us at the cross and resurrection. He used Satan's own sword (death) against him.

### JONAH:

Jonah is cast overboard; One small child lies down as though he were asleep (Jonah asleep in the hold of the ship). Several others who are standing a few feet away suddenly begin to stagger and reel to and fro as though they were sailors being tossed in a storm. Then one of them walks over, picks up Jonah, carries him a few feet, and gently lets him down to the floor. After the guessing has ended, the leader can tell why Jonah was cast overboard and summarize the story. Jonah's three days and nights in the belly of the whale are compared to Christ's burial in Matthew 12:39-40.

*(Please turn to page 8)*

## Drawing Near Unto God

(From page 2)

“purged the conscience from dead works to serve the living God” (Heb. 9:14). Once it truly registers upon the conscience that “Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures” (I Cor. 15:1-3), the conscience is freed from the condemnation of the past. Praise the Lord!

Having our bodies “WASHED WITH PURE WATER” speaks of that gracious submission to the “form of the doctrine which was delivered unto us” (Rom. 6:17); i.e., we were “buried with Him by baptism into death . . .” (Rom. 6:3, 4). This is that obedience which is called “the answer of a good conscience toward God” (I Pet. 3:21), when, having received the Word of God with joy, we were “baptized into Christ”, thereby “putting” Him “on” (Gal. 3:27, 28). It was here that we experienced the true circumcision of the heart (Col. 2:10-12), that inward operation which accompanied a heart-felt obedience to the commandment “Repent and be baptized” (Acts 2:38), and the wonderful promise of the Lord Jesus Himself; “He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved” (Mk. 16:16). O, we are well aware that this does chaff against the conscience of many—but that is only because they are restricted by a false theology which they have received from their fathers! There is too much about this “washing of regeneration” (Tit. 3:5) to treat it with sophistry. Furthermore, I find it difficult to believe that one that does not submit to this most elemental of all commandments could possess the true spiritual courage and fortitude to draw near to the very God that commanded it. Let us draw near to God “having our bodies washed with pure water”. **That purity is created by the heart—“obeying from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered to us”.**

It’s observed that **those whose hearts are not true, whose assurance is not full, whose conscience has not been purged, and whose bodies have not been washed, CANNOT truly draw near to God.** It is not a mere matter of legality: their very condition contradicts the privilege; further, they will have no real inclination to draw near. However, if these things be possessed, there is that blessed inclination to draw near. To make sure that it is not quenched, and that the disciple learns to treasure these most gracious gifts and conditions, the Lord firmly exhorts and admonishes that such draw near; press in to the Throne of the Most High, in order that they might “obtain mercy and find grace to help in the time of need” (Heb. 4:16).

### The Verbs In This Passage

In the matter of drawing near to God, we are to maintain a certain posture of heart and life. Also, in our very lives themselves, certain godly characteristics are to be found. Firstly, we are to “DRAW NEAR”—let us not shun to do it! God has not revealed Himself to us to frighten us away, but to draw us near to Himself. He has affirmed that He takes “no pleasure” in that soul that “draweth back” (Heb. 10:38-39). We truly can best please the Lord by COMING to Him (Isa. 55:1; Matt. 11:28; Jno. 7:37; Rev. 22:17). Whatever your state, you are urged to COME! If you

are thirsty for righteousness, COME; if you are poor in spirit, COME; if you are heavy laden, COME! We honor the Father when we come to Him because we confess His great Nature and Sufficiency by doing so. We honor the Lord Jesus Christ when we come to Him by admitting to the efficacy and sufficiency of His sacrifice in our behalf. By saying “DRAW” near, an emphasis is placed upon humility, upon godly caution, and upon godly fear. We are not to come presumptuously, complacently, or in a frivolous attitude!

Secondly, we are to “HOLD FAST the profession of our faith”; i.e., continuing to purify ourselves “even as He is pure” (I Jno. 3:3). This involves “cleaving unto the Lord with purpose of heart” (Acts 11:23). We have identified ourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ by profession. Let us hold that profession fast, now, by continuing to live before the Lord—uprightly. Let us continue to let our requests be made known unto Him (Phil. 4:6), thereby confessing our reliance upon Him. We are to be devoted to the purifying and cleansing of ourselves of “all filthiness of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord” (II Cor. 7:1). Let us maintain our profession by “holding it unto the end” and fighting “the good fight of faith”!

Thirdly, let us “CONSIDER ONE ANOTHER”—that horizontal relationship which is so vital to the believer. **There is no point in the faith-life where we may completely divorce ourselves from the remainder of the body of Christ!** Our consideration of one another is not to merely involve earthly relationships, although, it is true, that is sometimes a necessity. Rather, we are to consider one another in the matter of going to glory together by making our very lives an incentive for fellow believers, “provoking one another unto love and good works”. The chief means here cited whereby this is accomplished is “not forsaking the assembling of yourselves together” (Heb. 10:25). **It is in the congregation of the righteous that great spiritual incentives are created in the hearts of believers.** As we commune with one another, we often acknowledge the truth of Scripture; “Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious ointment upon the head that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron’s beard; that went down to the skirts of his garments. As the dew of Hermon and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion. For there the Lord commanded the blessing even life forevermore (Psa. 133). That commanded blessing in the assembly of the saints provides strong encouragement to all with eyes to see and hearts to perceive!

### What Shall We Say To These Things?

Let us draw near to the “God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ”; but let us draw near with a “pure heart,” with the “full assurance of faith”, with a heart that has been “sprinkled of an evil conscience”, and with our bodies “washed with pure water!” Let us “hold fast the profession of our faith”, and let us do it “without wavering”, for He is faithful that promised! Let us emulate His faithfulness in our lives, thereby bringing glory to Him. Let us “consider one another” by

18. Ruth gleanes in the field.
19. Nehemiah builds the wall.
20. Cain kills Abel.
21. 700 warriors of Benjamin swing their slings left-handed.
22. Dorcas is sewing.
23. Ruth lies at the feet of Boaz.
24. Jesus has his feet washed by the woman.
25. The angel is asked by Joshua, "Art thou for us or for our adversaries?"
26. Jacob tells Esau, "Sell me thy birthright."
27. Ruth says to Naomi, "Whither thou goest I will go."

assembling together, striving to bring encouragement to those brethren that are in the battle of the Lord, fighting the good fight of faith and laying hold on eternal life. By doing these things heartily, sincerely, eagerly, and zealously, we shall not only benefit one another, but we shall both glorify God and draw the attention of men and angels to the fact that our Lord Jesus did not die in vain!

### Bible Charades For Young People

(From page 6)

The adults enjoy watching these skits because they are watching their own children developing and learning right before their very eyes. Also there are always those cute unrehearsed things that children add when they get before an audience.

I might add that when we first began to do these charades there was need for some gentle prodding to get them started because some were a little shy. But after the bolder ones got started, the others quickly followed along. Some easy charades to start out with are: Abraham sitting at his tent door while being approached by three men; Hannah praying for a child; and Jacob sleeping on a rock.

I will close with a brief listing of some others that were created by our own young people:

1. Jesus prays in the garden of Gethsemane while three of his disciples are asleep.
2. Jehudi reads the Scripture to the king and cuts out sections of it and throws it into a fire burning on a hearth before the king while the king's court looks on.
3. Jubal plays the harp and the organ.
4. Jael pins Sisera's head to the ground.
5. Ish-bosheth is beheaded while asleep in bed.
6. Jesus drives the money-changers out of the temple.
7. Manna is gathered from the ground and put into sacks.
8. The Egyptians whip the Hebrew slaves while they are at their tasks.
9. Samuel lights the lamps in the house of the Lord.
10. The blood of the passover lamb is put on the door-posts.
11. Stephen is stoned by the Jews.
12. Abraham offers Isaac.
13. Jehu drives furiously.
14. Samson's hair is cut off.
15. Moses removes his shoes at the burning bush.
16. The mantle falls on Elisha.
17. Jesus the carpenter is at work.

### The Resurrection Of The Dead

(From page 5)

the saints of the Most High God, never again to be experienced in any form!

It is no wonder that Satan has diligently labored to garble this doctrine, to confuse the hearts of men concerning it, and to make it a point of controversy rather than an element of comfort. Who knows what joy, what comfort, what consolation, has been forfeited and obscured by the wresting of the precious truth of the "resurrection of the dead"! How many hearts have sat in consternation at the varied and heterogenous doctrines of the resurrection rather than letting the hope of the resurrection become a balm in Gilead for their weary hearts! The Lord rebuke the false and despicable prophets that have created two mass bodily resurrections! The resurrection in its Scriptural simplicity and pureness brings "hope" (Acts 23:6), "comfort" (I Thess. 4:16, 17), and "power" (Phil. 3:10-11). Let no man, dear reader, wrest that from your hearts! **There shall be a resurrection of the dead!** There shall be! It will be unto life for some, and unto damnation for others. It will be a time of begetting into liberty all glorious for some, and eternal bondage and fetters for others! Corruption, mortality, weakness, naturalness, and dishonor shall dissipate and fade away for the godly at this time! They shall come up out of the graves characterized by and observed for their "incorruption; not their corruption; for "power" instead of weakness; for "immortality" instead of mortality! They shall be completely spiritual, with no vestige of "nature" (i.e. Adamic nature) left in them! Thoroughly, completely, and finally "sanctified body, soul, and spirit" (I Thess. 5:23). Such a hope as this ought not to be obscured! It ought not to become the custodianship of unfaithful stewards, and those that are unlearned and ignorant in the ways of God. There is too unsure concerning its reality or nature.

It is affirmed that God "raised up" Jesus (Acts 2:24; 3:15; 4:10; 5:30; 10:40; 13:30; 17:31; Rom. 10:9; Gal. 1:1; Eph. 1:20), and that He shall also "raise up us by His own power" (I Cor. 6:14; II Cor. 4:14). Then you will reap! Then you will rejoice with "exceeding joy," then you will "know as you are known", then you will "enter into rest" in the fullest sense of the word!