

THE WORD OF TRUTH

Published Monthly

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

Volume 13

NOVEMBER, 1969

Number 10

"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

THE MINIMIZATION OF SIN

The minimization of sin is always perpetrated by Satan. Never, I say never, does the Holy Spirit leave a willing sinner comfortable, or permit him to sustain a hope of being forever with the Lord. Christ died because of sin, and that makes sin major, never minor (Gal. 1:4; I Cor. 15:3; Heb. 1:3; I Pet. 2:24, etc.). In the Babylonish church (which is merely the world garbed as a sheep), there is a devilish doctrine afoot which not only minimizes sin, but actually fails to put a check upon its increase. This doctrine has to do with what is commonly called "service", and asserts that a Christian that is living in sin forfeits the privilege of being used in the service of the King. He shall still be finally saved, asserts this damnable heresy (II Pet. 2:1), but has merely forfeited the honor of serving Him here upon the earth. The effect of this teaching is that countless numbers of church members live in spiritual complacency, devoting little or no attention and diligence to the perfection of holiness in the fear of the Lord (II Cor. 7:1). The *assumption* is made, in this teaching, that a person actually sustains any genuine interest at all in the Kingdom of God's Dear Son (Col. 1:13), or that he is even a saint. God's eternal purpose (Eph. 1:11) involved the predestination of those whom He "foreknew" to be "conformed to the image of His Son" (Rom. 8:29-30). The Holy Spirit, furthermore, transforms us into that same image as we behold the Lord "with open face" (II Cor. 3:18), thus being changed "from glory unto glory." *The absence of such a work obviously casts a shadow of doubt upon the reality of any profession that may be espoused.*

Those that dwell in sin do not dwell in Christ! That is axiomatic; "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts" (Gal. 5:24). Again, "If any man be in Christ He is a new creature; old things are passed away, behold all things are become new" (II Cor. 5:17). Notice the positive declaration of those passages; is there any room for habitual sin? "If Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin", witnesses the Spirit in Romans 8:10. "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him" (I John 2:15); "Whosoever is a friend of the world is the enemy of God" (James 4:4). So positive a matter is this that the unequivocal declaration of the Lord is; "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the Kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolators, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the Kingdom of God" (I Cor. 6:9-10); "Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience" (Eph. 5:6). Be sure of this, reader, that if you live a life of service to sin, regardless of your profession, you shall land in hell itself,

In This Issue . . .

An Iconoclastic Ministry - Pg. 2

Presumptuous Faith Versus The Faith of God's Elect - Pg. 3

Commentary On Philippians - Pg. 7

The Word of Truth

Published monthly by The Church Meeting at 26th and Colfax Street, Gary, Indiana.

Author and Editor: Given O. Blakely
Contributing Author: Richard Ebler

Circulation Managers: Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Powers

Publication Office: 26th and Colfax St., Gary, Indiana. (Send no correspondence to this address.)

Business Offices: 7903 Hendricks Place,
Merrillville, Ind. 46410

Address all correspondence to 7903 Hendricks Place,
Merrillville, Indiana 46410

Sent Free upon request to all interested parties.

SECOND CLASS POSTAGE PAID AT
CROWN POINT, INDIANA

not being suffered to enter "the Kingdom of Christ and of God." A "perpetual backsliding" (Jer. 8:5) and the "sleep of death" (Psa. 13:3) belies any profession of faith, and we refuse, quite frankly, to comfort such in any way. Those in such a case must "repent" or they shall "likewise perish" (Luke 13:3-5).

If sin is a regular factor in your life, unrestrained and unchecked by holy and Divine aspiration, then you are certainly in "danger of hellfire" (Matt. 5:21). Further, if such is the case with you, you simply do not hate sin enough, for "he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin" (I Pet. 4:1). At the same time, an absence of a hate for sin indicates the absence of a love for the Savior from sin. Let us put from our minds those false notions about carnal or worldly Christians. That is the same thing as saying that there are heavenly devils! A man is either carnal or spiritual, heavenly or earthly, Christ-like or world-like. The Corinthian despots were not called carnal Christians, of Christian worldings; they were called "carnal" just plain "carnal" (I Cor. 3:3).

It is true that a person's earth-bentness or heavenly-bentness indicates what he really is, in spite of what he may say. Speech is really irrelevant when the life contradicts the profession (Titus 1:16). "He that DOETH righteousness is righteous", is the declaration of Scripture (I John 3:7). Somehow, it seems to me that the line of demarcation between earth and heaven has been wiped away in myriads of minds because of this heresy that I have mentioned. Multitudes with no real interest in eternal things, whose Bibles lie closed, and whose minds are not occupied with the "law of God night and day" (Psalms 1), are placated into believing that they are, after all, really God's children, really saved; really religious. The only regret is that they may be deprived of some service rendered Godward here on earth, and possibly forfeit some small degree of reward in glory. Certainly this is a master stroke of the Evil one, who is pledged to make men at home in this world, knowing full well that whoever is in such a case has no lot nor inheritance with the saints in

An Iconoclastic Ministry

An iconoclast is one who attacks cherished religious beliefs. While I do not seek to be identified with any who attack the "faith once delivered to the saints" (Jude 3) and "wrest the Scriptures to their own destruction" (II Pet. 3:16), I do stand against all "other gospels" which are really "not another" (Gal. 1:6-7), however cherished they may be by those who embrace them. Let it be clearly understood that error is damning when heartily embraced, and the preachment of another gospel brings a certain "curse" (Gal. 1:7-9). I neither tolerate the perversion of the Scriptures in the interest of unity or with the subterfuge of a false love. My love, along with the rest of God's children, is pre-eminently for the "God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ", for the "Only Begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth", and for the "Truth" itself. **The false notions of even our dearest brethren are to be thrown down with vigor in order to their perfection.** If some take offence at these exposures, let them come into a greater love for the truth which will permit nulification and violent overthrow of Satan's lies, however cherished and palpable they might have been.

In the Holy city of old, there was a "dung gate" (Neh. 3:13,14; 12:31) through which all of the refuse was to be carried. If someone entertained an improper or inordinate affection for garbage, esteeming it to be of some extraordinary value, it still was to be carried out of the "dung gate." It is even so in the "city of the living God" (Heb. 12:22) and the experience of its constituents. **Provision is made in the "whole counsel of God" (Acts 20:27) for the carrying away of theological garbage.** If people esteem it highly, it is only because their thinking is warped and they have not yet beheld the Lord's glory in that matter. Notwithstanding, I shall devote myself to the ministry of the "dung gate" as well as the "water gate" (Neh. 3:26; 8:1, 31, 16); to the tearing down of idol "groves" as well as the building of true altars; to iconoclasm as well as fortification. The staff of THE WORD OF TRUTH holds no respect for that which is not of itself respectable, no honor for that which is inherently dishonorable; no esteem for that which obscures "the truth as it is in Christ Jesus" (Eph. 4:20). If the Lord has not proclaimed the matter, we cannot proclaim it; if He has not emphasized a matter, we cannot emphasize it! Further, we are devoted opponents of all that the Lord has not proclaimed which is yet purported to be from Him, and of all emphases which are not found in the Scriptures.

It is written that those who preach "another Gospel", whether man or angel, are under the curse of God (Gal. 1:7-9). The true Gospel, praise the Lord, is a liberating message to man's spirit — **it bears the news of an accomplishment that transcends the ability, perception, and desire of man!** The very use of the term ("Gospel") in the Word

light. In view of these things, we are set to resist all doctrines that place sin anywhere but in hell, or deny that it issues forth from a hellish nature. It is not to be excused, either in our own selves or in you, our readers. Pledge yourself, with us, to resist it fully, in mind and in body.

Presumptuous Faith Versus The Faith Of God's Elect

denotes its true substance; (1. "The Gospel of Christ" (Rom. 1:16). (2. "The Gospel of God" (Rom. 15:16). (3. "The glorious Gospel of Christ" (II Cor. 4:4). (4. "The glorious Gospel of the Blessed God" (I Tim. 1:11). (5. "The Gospel of the Grace of God" (Acts 20:24). (6. "The Gospel of peace" (Eph. 6:15). In these various terms you will at once see that the emphasis is placed upon atonement and justification. "Christ" is the "anointed One", chosen by God and sent by God for the execution of salvation in the behalf of the elect. It is glorious because it displays the power, wisdom, and love of God in magnificent degrees. God's grace is an integral part of the Gospel because it conveys the undeserved favor that He lavished upon those He Himself chose before the foundation of the world (Eph. 1:4); the proclamation of that grace in Christ Jesus is a sound most pleasant and good! Need we comment on the "Gospel of peace"; it sets forth the truth of peace with God through Christ Jesus the Lord (Rom. 5:1). "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them" (II Cor. 5:17ff); the glorious outcome of that is peace, and the proclamation of such is Gospel indeed! Acceptance in the Beloved (Eph. 1:6), fellow citizens with the household of God (Eph. 2:19), access to God (Rom. 5:2; Eph. 2:18; 3:12), the blotting out of our transgressions as a "thick cloud" (Isa. 44:22) — that is the Gospel as demonstrated and accomplished in the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ Jesus the Lord. It is, once again, called "the Gospel of Christ" because it announces the good news that God's Anointed One has thoroughly satisfied the Father in respect to our massive debt, thus reconciling us. It is called the "Gospel of God" because it was accomplished by Omnipotence and within the confines of the Divine will and purpose. The term "Gospel of the Grace of God" emphasizes the good sound of God's unmerited and unearned favor as the basis for the forgiveness of sins. "The Gospel of the Blessed God" proclaims the glad tidings that Jehovah is pleased and Divinely rejoicing in the vicarious sacrifice of His only begotten Son. You will observe that all of these postulate men as estranged and alienated from God through sin, but now accepted (in His Omniscient Eye) in Christ Jesus — that is the Gospel. Once not a people, now the people of God (I Pet. 2:9, 10) — entirely independent of man and man's efforts. Glorious message!

There are, however, "other Gospels" (Gal. 1:6, 7), which are not really gospels, circulating among the sheepfold. There is the gospel of the church, the gospel of distinctive experiences, the gospel of the Holy Spirit, the gospel of healing, the gospel of happiness, the gospel of inner power, the gospel of success, etc. But these are really no gospels! Their centre and focal point is man and man's endeavors. These are primary emphases, and are used to lure unsuspecting people into an established system of theology. Though cherished by myriads, we are set in opposition to them — devoted to their destruction and overthrow. Although we are well aware that not all shall appreciate our efforts in this direction, the readers of THE WORD

All purported faith is not true faith. There is a faith that is genuine and one that is simulated, and blessed is the man that can distinguish between the two. Real faith is firm and unyielding. It lays hold of eternal verity and impresses upon man's spirit the persuasion of that verity. It is not delusory, nor is it imaginative. It does not rest upon mere wishes or aspirations, but upon the immutable integrity of Jehovah God. It brings to the heart "joy and peace" (Rom. 15:13), and gives glory to God (Rom. 4:20). It is spiritual substance and evidence (Heb. 11:1), and is such as may dictate the entire scope and direction of our lives. As it is written, "The just shall live by faith" (Rom. 1:17).

In mentioning "the faith of God's elect", I at once stir up questions in the minds of some. It should at once ease them to know, however, that this is a phrase inaugurated and employed by the Holy Spirit of God (Titus 1:1). Perhaps, however, a few remarks may be in order for the novices and the unlearned at this point. **The term "the faith of God's elect" is, as I understand it, intended to denote the absolute distinction of true faith.** There are some that trust in horses and chariots (Psa. 20:7) — their faith is not true faith; it is not the same sort as that of "God's elect". **The Object of true faith is God Himself as revealed by Christ Jesus, His only begotten, full of grace and truth (Jno. 1:14).** It is not produced nor maintained by human ingenuity or creativeness, but is rather "obtained" (IIPet. 1:1), or "given" (Rom. 12:3). It is, furthermore, the evidence of God's ordination (Acts 13:48), and is the Divinely appointed means of appropriating Grace (Eph. 2:8, 9). It belongs peculiarly to God's elect — those "chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will" (Eph. 1:4, 11), who have "not been appointed to wrath, but to obtain salvation" (I Thess. 5:9). Without this imparted faith "it is impossible to please God" (Heb. 11:6), whatever other merits might seem to appear.

This faith of which I speak has no earthly parallel. It deals with the heart being persuaded of reality that is of another order — reality that is not discernible with any natural faculties. **To be persuaded of the sensible and tangible is not faith** — but to possess the "evidence" of things not seen

shall often find themselves at the "dung gate" of the city, watching the bearing of theological garbage and false gospels to the refuse heap where they belong. For this we make no apologies at all, either for our manner of speaking or the content of it. We have learned to hate what God hates, and thus cannot speak charitably or tolerantly of such things. We trust that those who have "received the love of the truth that they might be saved" (II Thess. 2:10) will join in this detestation of the false and the untrue by devoting their lives and their gifted measure of speech to its overthrow.

THE VOICE OF TRUTH

TAPE MINISTRY

Under the direction of Brother Jerry Wilson, a variety of recorded tapes in both monaural and stereo can be especially produced for our readers at a nominal expense. Over 100 messages delivered to the brethren meeting at 26th and Colfax Streets in Gary, Indiana, are offered, together with numerous Gospel songs by prominent quartets and other recording artists. These tapes will be sent, to those who are interested, at lower costs than regular blank 5" and 7" reels. We urge our readers to avail themselves of this ministry without hesitation. Direct all correspondence for further information to:

THE TAPE MINISTRY
Brother Jerry Wilson
7903 Hendricks Place
Merrillville, Ind. 46410

(beyond the scope of mortal vision), and the "substance" of things hoped for (not yet realized fully) — that is faith. O, the glory of faith; it is the possession of possessions, for through it we have Christ, the Spirit, righteousness, grace, joy, peace, and access to God. Without faith we cannot please God, and with faith we please and glorify Him.

But I have spoken of presumptuous faith — a faith that does not reckon on reality, but upon supposition. Such pseudo-faith must be avoided with great diligence and perseverance. Especially in our day is Satan spewing a gigantic flood of delusion on this subject of faith. Myriads are caught in the swelling tide of this delusion and have come to rest in a faith that is really not faith, but imagination. This perverted concept of faith teaches men to depend upon God to fulfill their own "inventions" (Eccl. 7:29). "Just believe God", such teachers say — and yet God has not spoken on the matter concerning which they profess and urge faith. It is presumption to suppose that our Lord will confirm all of our wishes, especially when we realize that "we know not what we should pray for as we ought" (Rom. 8:26). Further, it is possible for our God and Father to give men "the desires of their hearts", but at the same time send "leanness into their souls" (Psa. 106:15). It is certainly a "great transgression" with God to approach "presumptuously" to His Throne of all grace (Psa. 19:13), imputing our self-conceived desires to Him and expecting Him to do what He has simply not committed Himself to do. In short, **presumptuous faith has no promise from God, no commitment from Him.** Rather, it deigns to suppose that God works around the center of our purpose rather than us working about the center of His purpose. Because I desire a matter does not mean that my desire is even proper, to say nothing of the fact that I should not build by aspirations around such uncertain matters. You cannot "simply believe God" for this or for that — faith is not like that; it rests upon something more firm than mere aspiration or desire.

True faith says; "God, I believe what you say." The truth of the matter is that there can be no faith where there is no word from God! If God has not spoken, how can we believe Him? "How shall they believe on Him of whom they have not heard" (Rom. 10:14ff). **If the Lord had made no promises, we could have no faith, for faith lays hold of God's promises.** Abraham "believed God" (Rom. 4:3), and Sarah received strength to conceive because she "judged Him faithful that had promised" (Heb. 11:11). It was the beloved Apostle Paul that declared, "I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me" (Acts 27:25), along with Moses, Joshua, Gideon, etc. In each instance God had made a declaration of His purpose, and it was that declaration that the saints of old believed. **Their faith centered in the revelation of the purpose of Jehovah God, not in their own mundane desires.** O, that such a faith were more prominent in our day — a faith that would not shrink at the glorious promises of God! In our day the great sphere of ignorance is the knowledge of God. People are grossly ignorant of His purposes and counsels. "The life that now is" — that is the fundamental thing with the masses, with little or no thought being devoted to the glorious "will" by which we "are sanctified" (Heb. 10:10). In such cases the great promises of the Word are not food for the soul, but rather the Bible is sought to be used to facilitate carnal or even apparently religious ambitions. What shall we say to such disheartening things? What can we do but lament!

And what of you, dear reader! Do you believe God? or do you have any real knowledge of what God has committed Himself to do. How can you believe God if you know not what He has said? Can it be that you are resting upon what your church says, or upon what a friend says, or even upon what your "deceitful" heart has said (Jer. 7:19)? Have you been "eating" God's word (Ezek. 3:1), even desiring it more "than your necessary food" (Job 23:12)? **Do you feel woefully deficient in your knowledge of God's Word? Then, friend, you are woefully deficient in faith. Your measure of faith is directly proportionate to your apprehension of the promises of God!**

If God has not promised unequivocally to do a thing, you cannot believe that He will do it. You can "let your requests be made known" (Phi. 4:6-7), and "lean not to your own understanding" (Prov. 3:5-6), knowing that "the Judge of all the earth shall do right" (Gen. 18:25). In such instances, God has promised that "the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your heart and minds through Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4:7), and that He will "direct thy path" (Prov. 3:6). That you may believe, and upon that your faith can rest! **Faith substantially rests upon what thus saith the Lord! Apart from that there can actually be no faith, for our only access to the unseen world of the Spirit is the revelation of He who resides in it — and that revelation is embodied in His Word: — His revelation of His own purpose and will.** This is why "faith COMETH by hearing." (Rom. 10:17), and if there is no word from God, there can surely be no faith in Him.

Let each saint remember that the Scriptures

speaking of man's real "need" (Phil. 4:19), and all of the promises and committals of our great God are directed toward the fulfillment of that essential and singular "need." As our Lord said, "One thing is needful" (Luke 10:42), and to that declaration our spirits acquiesce. For faith to "increase" (II Cor. 10:15), I must therefore familiarize myself with God's revelation — it is just that simple. Apart from this, I presume upon God. If my desire is not echoed in the Scripture, I am not to assume that I may have faith in the matter being wrought. I can only believe that if I make it known unto my Father in heaven He will grant me peace transcendent to the situation, and do what is right. If, on the other hand, I find the concepts of Scripture and the desires therein portrayed within my own heart, I may take courage, knowing that the Lord shall surely finish the good work that He has begun in me. That is real faith — the "faith of God's elect."

Phrases From Psalms

To assist the people of God in the development of a spiritual nomenclature, we offer these words of indirect instruction. The Psalms are filled with phrases that connote great significance in the spirit-world. It is vital to the saint of God to think in these terms, having his conceptions molded and developed aright by them. As is usually the case when dealing with the truth of Holy Scripture, it will at once become evident that these phrases are not at all common in churchdom — as a matter of fact, they even have a strange and heterogenous sound to them. Notwithstanding, they convey truth that liberates the spirit and schools the heart in the truth of the Kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. We commit them to you for deliberation and meditation. All of them are taken from the first portion of the book of Psalms, and are a very infinitesimally small portion of like phrases in the writings of that "sweet psalmist of Israel" (II Sam. 23:1).

1. "Counsel of the ungodly" — 1:1
2. "The way of sinners" — 1:1
3. "The seat of the scornful" — 1:1
4. "The congregation of the righteous" — 1:5
5. "The way of the righteous" — 1:5
6. "God of my righteousness" — 4:1
7. "Sacrifices of righteousness" — 4:5
8. "Light of Thy countenance" — 4:6
9. "Perpetual end" — 9:6
10. "Inquisition for blood" — 9:12
11. "Gates of death" — 9:14
12. "Expectations of the poor" — 9:18
13. "Helper of the fatherless" — 10:14
14. "Arm of the wicked" — 10:15
15. "Sleep of death" — 13:3
16. "Workers of iniquity" — 14:4
17. "Generation of the righteous" — 14:5
18. "Counsel of the poor" — 14:6
19. "Path of life" — 16:11
20. "Fulness of joy" — 16:11
21. "Apple of the eye" — 17:8

22. "Men which are Thy hand" — 17:14
23. "Horn of my salvation" — 18:2
24. "Sorrows of death" — 8:4
25. "Floods of ungodly men" — 18:4
26. "Sorrows of hell" — 18:5
27. "Snares of death" — 18:5
28. "Cleansness of my hands" — 18:20
29. "Shield of thy salvation" — 18:35
30. "Strivings of the people" — 18:43
31. "God of my salvation" — 18:46
32. "Law of the Lord" — 18:7
33. "Testimony of the Lord" — 19:7
34. "Statutes of the Lord" — 19:8
35. "Commandment of the Lord" — 19:8
36. "Fear of the Lord" — 19:9
37. "Judgement of the Lord" — 19:9
38. "Judgements of the Lord" — 19:9
39. "Words of my mouth" — 19:14
40. "Meditations of my heart" — 19:14
41. "Day of trouble" — 20:1
42. "Request of the lips" — 21:2
43. "Blessings of goodness" — 21:3
44. "Despised of the people" — 22:6
45. "The power of the dog" — 22:20
46. "Horns of the unicorns" — 22:21
47. "Affliction of the afflicted" — 22:24
48. "Paths of righteousness" — 23:3
49. "Valley of the shadow of death" — 23:4
50. "King of glory" — 24:9
51. "Sins of my youth" — 25:2
52. "Voice of thanksgiving" — 26:7
53. "Habitation of Thy house" — 26:8
54. "Sacrifices of joy" — 27:6

CAN MAN CREATE A SPIRITUAL ENVIRONMENT?

Can man create a spiritual environment? This question may seem to be without purpose, but it has a great bearing upon man's activities in the Kingdom of God. Within the confines of that awesome dwelling place of spiritual Babylon, there resides one common defect — one obvious display of earthiness; their **attempt** to create a spiritual or religious atmosphere. Where faith is not present man will inevitably engage in a sort of pseudo-creativity wherein they seek to bring about a spiritual or religious environ. They become thus engaged because of the absence of true spiritual sensitivity to the reality of the Lord and His promises. There are abundant illustrations of this truth, and the recitation of them will, no doubt, bring some degree of alarm to the more spiritually naive. Let our hearts grasp the truth that God is the **only** Creator — the only Creator of **anything!** Nothing is brought about without God; He is the great cause behind all things, for "all things are of Him and through Him and to Him" (Rom. 11:36), and again, "all things are of God" (II Cor. 5:18). When men seek to become creators instead of receivers, they have gone beyond the "bounds of their habitation." Especially is the child of God to cease from

experimentation with his soul and with environment in an effort to produce a certain frame in which the soul may be set. Understanding that this is a great tendency in man, it becomes imperative to speak a brief word upon the subject, drawing from the vast reservoir of God's Word, truth, and from the cesspool of Babylon the sights of truth's abuse.

Roman Catholicism, the mother of harlots, is known for her stateliness and carnal beauty. Her structures are replete with finery that is appealing to the natural eye, while her services are marked with an appearance that draws attention to the flesh. Appearances are purposefully created in order to the production of a supposed spiritual or "religious" atmosphere. When the sights of statues, images, robes, candles, etc., come into the eye, there is at once a projection into what is thought to be the presence of the Lord. Those whose hearts are caught up in this environ and who enjoy and revel in it are said to be in a state of "worship."

Among the "protestant" churches, on the other hand, are many stilted and stately groups which speak not truth, but which do have a certain carnal beauty about their organization. Their preachers speak precisely and eloquently; their choirs sing astutely their sombre anthems, and their pomp is thought to surely be spiritual in the highest sense. A certain voice is employed in reading, people rise and sit at a given time, while the organ gives forth with strains of classical music thought to be the epitome of spiritual production. Such denominations as the Methodists, the Presbyterians, the Lutherans, the Episcopalians, etc., fall into this category. While we confess unashamedly that the Lord has some sheep scattered throughout their strictly carnal organization, it is equally admitted that the affiliation with the Savior that they sustain is in spite of their church identification, not because of it.

Equally true, there is a common bond with these powerless organizations by churches who prefer to be called "fundamentalists" and "evangelicals." Their attempt to create a spiritual environment is quite different from the former. There is more liveliness and jubilation; spirited singing and louder preaching. An invitation is given, which is the center point of the whole service, transcending the proclamation of the message and the praise (purported) in song. If no one responds to this invitation, the meeting is considered to be rather futile, and not too significant. Everything is directed toward people responding to this public offer of salvation by means of works; i.e., achieving certain requirements set forth in the spoken or unspoken creed of the denomination. The circumstances are made quite favorable for such responses with certain songs, easily memorized prayers, and simply repeating words after a man that is more learned in the ways of the church. The point I want you to see is that this whole procedure is considered to be synonymous with spirituality; the success of this segment of the meeting is the gauge which determines the spirituality of it. Thus do men concentrate on it, attempting feebly to create what they believe to be a spiritual atmosphere or environment.

There is yet another segment of the apostate church which makes its own attempt to create a sphere of high spirituality. These branches of Babylon are often termed "holiness" or "pentecostal", and their particular brand of spirituality is different from all of the others. Uplifted hands, the presence of an "altar", and impromptu songs of ecstasy denote the presence of the Spirit and consequently a very spiritual meeting. The entire service is often pitched in this direction, purposefully and deliberately, believing that it will bring the blessing of God.

All of these groups have committed the same error; they have trusted in the flesh, in the expressions of the natural man. They have thought to stir up God with their works, to provide for the spirits of believers by creating a certain external condition around them. The flaw in such attempts is simply this; that man cannot create. His creations are really fabrications and are temporal. **While they may have an instantaneous effect which approximates reality, yet they will not evenuate in the refinement of the soul. A spiritual environment is produced when people dominated by the new creation of God emanate spiritual life. This emanation is brought about through means of the truth. It is by the "word of truth" that the Father hath begotten us "of His own will" (James 1:18), and it is by the truth that we have been made "free" (John 8:32). The proclamation of truth in the power of the Spirit and by an enlightened mind will make for a spiritual atmosphere.** All reactions to it may not be essentially the same in manifestation; but the heart that is stirred Godward is evidence of a great work of God. Let men assemble to meet the Lord, to abandon their sin, to seek retreat from the effects of a transitory world, to feed upon the Word of God, and to breathe earnest prayers and supplications. Whatever form their fellowship may or may not take is not important at this point; if their heart is right Christ will meet with them, in their midst, and such a spiritual atmosphere shall be created as will make for edification, comfort, and exhortation.

It may appear to many of our readers that these things are really not very important, but for the enlightened mind, their value is at once seen, for we are the circumcision which rejoice in Christ Jesus, worship God in the spirit, and have no confidence in the flesh (Phil. 3:3). **I have no confidence in my natural endowments - whether speech or action - to bring me into a spiritual frame of mind. It is only as I walk in intimacy with the Lord Jesus that I am spiritual, only as I open my heart and mind to the Word of God that I remain aloof from sin, and only as I cast myself upon His mercy that I am built up in the most holy faith.** Systems, orders, rituals, traditions - of all sorts and forms—are powerless; the arm of flesh will bring a weakness, and trusting in man is a snare. Religious flesh is not spiritual, it is merely flesh dressed and adorned with that which is disdainful to the spirit within. But the heart - ah, the heart; prepare that and keep it diligently, and you shall not have to worry about an atmosphere conducive to worship, dear reader. **Those who step out of a life of private fellowship with the Lord into the fellowship of believers are well on their way to respect to purposeful meetings.**

Commentary On Philipians

By Richard Ebler

Chapter One (cont.)

(v. 27) "Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel;"

Brother Alexander Cruden points out that the word "conversation" in the King James Version never carries the meaning of discoursing with another person, but always means "behavior" or "manner of life" (II Peter 2:7, James 3:13, Heb. 13:5, I Tim. 4:12, Eph. 2:3, Psa. 37:14). This verse is also translated "Behave as citizens worthy of the gospel," and in chapter three of this same book we read "For our citizenship is in heaven," i.e. we are from another world and of another order. The exhortation, then, is that we ought to behave as such. Through heavenly birth we partake of the divine nature and become strangers and pilgrims upon the earth as we look for a better country, a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God (Heb. 11:10, 13-16). This is that "heavenly Jerusalem" (Heb. 12:22, 23), the gathering place and home of all sanctified spirits whether in the body or out of the body. This is the Jerusalem which is above, which is free, and is the mother of us all (Gal. 4:26). It is that kingdom which cannot be shaken, where we worship God before His throne in fellowship with an innumerable company of angels and the spirits of just men made perfect. It is, in short, to be lifted up in spirit through the enemy hosts of the prince of the power of the air (Eph 2:2) into the very throne-room and presence of God, for by faith the spirit of man is unrestricted so that it can rise into the heavenlies and be made to sit there with Christ (Eph. 2:6 cf., I Cor. 5:3, 4). Truly, we are even now at times residents of heaven as well as citizens thereof.

To further demonstrate our heavenly citizenship, let us note the resemblance between heaven itself and the gospel church, its outpost and "gate" (Gen. 28:17). If the tabernacle of old was a figure of the true, even heaven itself, we should not be surprised to find it so with the church (Heb. 9:24).

The resemblance is seen in the fourth chapter of Revelation which describes the attributes of a gospel minister under the character of four beasts: the lion, the calf, the man, and the flying eagle. They are all full of eyes, showing their watchfulness over the flock and insight into spiritual things, even as prophets were beforetime called "seers" (I Sam. 9:9). They are as courageous as a lion and are able to oppose the enemies of the gospel. They are as laborious as the oxen (cf. Ezekiel 1:10), as human and sympathetic as a man (Heb. 5:1-4), and as far-sighted and close to heaven as an eagle dwelling in the top level of the ark of grace (Gen. 6:16, 20). The four and twenty elders can be emblematic of the whole of God's elect on both sides of the cross, whether springing from the twelve patriarchs or the twelve apostles. It was when the beasts fell down and worshipped that the congregation did so. And is it not the same in a gospel church? As the word of God goes forth the people rejoice and worship.

Being citizens of this other country makes us a mystery to the ungodly. They think it strange that we run not with them (I Peter 4:4) and they cannot comprehend us (I Cor. 2:15). As the wind is a mystery, so are the godly to the ungodly (John 3:8). The natural man cannot see the things of the Spirit of God (John 3:3, I Cor. 2:14), nor can he speak the language of Canaan, but can only say, as it were, "Sibboleth" (Judges 12:6). The things of God are as puzzling as Samson's riddle to him until he is converted by repentance and faith in Christ (Acts 20:21).

Although the ungodly do observe us as a city set on a hill that cannot be hid, and we are to walk in wisdom toward them that are without, giving no offence in any thing, thus putting to silence the ignorance of foolish men and adorning the doctrine of God, yet this verse seems to be focusing upon the behavior of the saints toward one another in their local assembly. The allusion is to cities which have their peculiar rules and laws to which citizens are to conform. Paul, then, is exhorting them to heavenly unity. As there is no discord in heaven, so let there be none in the church. As there is no sin, carnality, and worldliness in heaven, so let there be none in the church. Let your walk be worthy of a citizen of heaven and of a heaven-sent gospel, which, when fully embraced, does bring a measure of heaven to earth and give power to live a holy, orderly life.

The chief and key way in which we are counted worthy of the gospel is by our willingness to suffer for it. Since the best of our works are imperfect and unable to commend us to God, our God-given faith commends us to Him, especially when our faith costs us something. We suffer things that we might be counted worthy of the kingdom which He has appointed for us (II Thess. 1:5, Matt. 5:12).

When Paul mentions his visiting them or hearing of their affairs, we get a glimpse of Paul, the shepherd. Upon him came daily the care of all the churches (II Cor. 11:28), and he frequently traveled to see how brethren were faring in the Lord, or else sent men like Timothy or Epaphroditus who were especially suited to such a work (Phil. 2:19, 25).

The exhortation to stand fast is so common in Scripture that it clearly implies that the common experience of the saints is to endure many "hard knocks" from the devil and his servants who seek to unsettle them by false doctrine of threat of harm. However, with the whole armour of God we are able to stand in the evil day (Eph. 6:10-18) and to defend our field of lentiles as valiantly as Shammah did (II Sam. 23:11, 12). The real battleground is our mind and heart. Our real goal is to keep the faith. As long as we are fully persuaded of the reality of the things of God, we are conquerors.

Calvin expounds his translation "one spirit, one soul" as follows: "The first is, that we agree among ourselves; the second, that we be united in heart. For when these two terms are connected, spirit denotes the understanding, and soul the will. Moreover, agreement comes first in order; and then from it springs union of will."

ever, being terrified by adversaries is the result of lack of this vision. The servant of Elisha was terrified by the enemy hosts until his eyes were opened to the heavenly fiery chariots on the mountains round about them (II Kings 6:17). The situation was ordered of God for His own glory. It is **God** with whom we have to do. He reigns over all, and none other is worthy of our prime attention. Rather than fear our adversaries, let us fear God (Luke 12:45).

From this text we learn that it is important to suffer in the right manner, that is, calmly, lest we disgrace our Lord by lack of composure under the heat of persecution. When Jesus suffered, he opened not his mouth but committed himself to God, leaving us an example to follow (I Peter 2:21-23). We will be in **nothing** terrified when we have forsaken **all** for Christ and made Him pre-eminent (Luke 13:33).

The real meaning of this text lies in the word "which." It refers to the calmness and composure of a saint under persecution. The **Amplified New Testament** renders it thus: "And do not (for a moment) be frightened or intimidated in anything by your opponents and adversaries, for such (constancy and fearlessness) will be a clear sign (proof and seal) to them of (their impending) destruction; but (a sure token and evidence) of your deliverance and salvation, and that from God." The adversary here spoken of is probably a religious one or else he would not be thinking in terms of damnation.

We have an illustration of this verse in the religious persecutors of Stephen who must have sensed their own wrongness and wickedness by his supernatural calmness, joy, and power in triumphant martyrdom. The record tells us that they gnashed on him with their teeth, cried out with a loud voice, stopped their ears, and ran upon him (Acts 7:54-60). "Persecutions are seals of adoption to the children of God, if they endure them with fortitude and calmness. The wicked give a token of their condemnation, because they stumble against a stone by which they shall be annihilated." "The condition of the persecuted is much better than the condition of the persecutor."

The last four words of our text read "and that of God." The salvation which is in the soul of the saint is of God (I Peter 1:8, 9), the persecution which this salvation engenders is of God (I Thess. 3:3), and ministers to his eternal reward in heaven (Matt. 5:10). In fact, it is because our appointed reward is great that we must suffer in order to be counted worthy of it (II Thess. 1:5).

Our salvation is of God from start to finish. He is the author and the finisher of our faith (Heb. 12:2). It began with God before the world was created when He elected some to salvation (Eph. 1:4). It was of God that He sent Christ to die on the cross (Gal 4:4, 5). It is of God that He brings all of His elect into their natural being through the birth of water (Jer. 1:5). It is of God that He sends a gospel preacher to them (Rom. 10:15) and that they believe (Acts 13:48, 8:29, 10:1-48); and it is of God that all the elect are kept preserved in the way of holiness unto the end (John 10:27-30).

Jonah 2:9). Nebuchadnezzar confessed it after seven years of unspeakable abasement (Dan 4:28-37). Let us confess it by faith in the Word!

This epistle is much occupied in exhorting the saints to unity (ch. 2:2, 4:2, 3:16). The importance of unity among believers cannot be over-emphasized because the fruits of righteousness are sown in peace (James 3:18). Spiritual growth is stifled by constant fleshly strife and discord. Satan delights to divide us since we are the only ones who pose a threat to his kingdom. On the other hand, those who strive together for the faith of the gospel will not be likely to strive with each other. May it be so with all believers. Amen.

(v. 28) "And in nothing terrified by your adversaries: which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God."

This verse teaches us that those who have their conversation as it becomes the gospel of Christ will indeed have adversaries. It is good to know this and to be ready for it, understanding why the adversaries exist. There is a warfare between two worlds now in progress: the kingdom of Satan which could be called "earthdom" and is marked by the seen, the temporal, the love of this present life, the pleasurable appetites of the flesh, selfishness, sin, and godlessness; against the kingdom of God which is called the kingdom of heaven, and is marked by the unseen eternal realities, the expectation of the next life, the appetites of the Spirit, unselfishness, holiness, righteousness, and Christ-centeredness. Now the inhabitants of the earth are basically in servitude to one or the other of these two spirit-worlds. Those who cling to Christ and keep His ordinances will undoubtedly incur the wrath and ridicule of the ungodly. "Yea and **all** that will live godly in Christ Jesus **shall** suffer persecution" (II Tim. 3:12). They bring persecution upon themselves inadvertently by living single-heartedly unto the Lord. Their very lives and existence condemns the world and bears witness of it that the works thereof are evil. Stronger lights will bring on more severe persecution but are automatically better equipped to bear it; while weaker flames endure less and are able to bear less. Therefore, we see how that by obeying verse twenty-seven that we bring upon ourselves the persecution of verse twenty-eight.

The Lord stirs up our adversaries; as it is written, "the Lord stirred up an adversary unto Solomon, Hadad the Edomite;" and again, "God stirred him up another adversary" (I Kings 11:14, 23); and again, "The Lord hath made all things for himself: yea, even the wicked for the day of evil" (Prov. 16:4). Adversaries are sent to buffet our faith that it might endure by grace to the glory of God before the hosts of heaven (Eph. 3:10). How-